

# The Activities of Civic Organizations for Municipal Improvement in the United States

A SYMPOSIUM

## INTRODUCTION.—THE CO-ORDINATION OF CIVIC EFFORT

By Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Esq.

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Two years ago, in an article in "The Annals," entitled, "The Nationalization of Municipal Movements," I described the work of the National Municipal League, the American Society of Municipal Improvement, the League of American Municipalities, the American Park and Outdoor Art Association and of the American League for Civic Improvement, five organizations busily engaged in stimulating and educating public interest in various phases of the municipal problem and in providing ways and means for its solution. The article, after describing the objects and purposes of these bodies, concluded with this paragraph: "The suggestion has been made that there should be a closer co-operation between these several bodies, and perhaps federation, so that any possible duplication of effort may be avoided, at the same time insuring an increase of efficiency and a more complete co-ordination of activity. As several of the organizations appeal to different constituencies and pursue different lines, it is doubtful whether the time is ripe for so radical a step as federation, but the suggestion of a permanent secretary, to serve all five bodies and to be made a centre of municipal endeavor in the United States, is a feasible step which can and should be undertaken without delay."

Much greater progress toward co-ordination of effort and practical co-operation has been accomplished during the intervening two years than was at that time thought possible. The American Park and Outdoor Art Association and the American League for Civic Improvement, which were devoting their attention and energies to substantially similar phases of the civic problem, although approaching them along somewhat different lines, have been merged into one strong organization, under the name of the "American Civic Association." It represents not only the combination or merger of the two older societies, but a new element of influence and activity. Moreover, since the article was written there has been formed a working committee or clearing

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house, known as the "Alliance of Civic Organizations," having for its express purpose the bringing into closer communication and co-operation the general organizations interested in municipal and civic affairs. The alliance, although organized a year ago, has only recently begun to take active steps to carry out the purpose of its formation, the first secretary elected having been unable to continue the work.

According to its constitution, the alliance shall be composed of "organizations having for an object the improvement of political, educational, artistic, sanitary, material or moral conditions in American cities." Its purpose is declared to be: "To facilitate the exchange, accumulation and distribution of pertinent information, to promote a more complete understanding and co-operation among its members and to assist them in increasing influence and efficiency and avoiding any unnecessary duplication or overlapping of their respective lines of work." The alliance is controlled and directed by trustees, elected or appointed by the associations belonging to it, each of such associations electing or appointing three trustees. Thus far the organizations represented in the alliance are: The National Municipal League, the League of American Municipalities, the American Civic Association, the Conference of Eastern Public Education Associations and the Architectural League of America. Power is given by the constitution to admit national and general organizations to membership, and to admit local organizations and individuals as associate or contributing members or subscribers, but such local organizations or individuals shall have no voting or governing powers.

One of the duties of the secretary will be to obtain reports and information from each association for transmission to all the members, either in full or in the form of abstracts or summaries or bulletins; another duty will be to prepare and furnish for general publication such information as may accord with and promote the purposes of the alliance. He is also expected to make suggestions as to ways and means for promoting the objects and purposes of the various organizations represented.

From this brief description of the objects and purposes of the alliance, and of the powers of the board of trustees, and of the duties of the secretary, it will be seen that there has been established what amounts, for all practical purposes, to a clearing house for municipal and civic bodies.

The need for such a clearing house must be obvious to the most casual observer. During the decade 1894 to 1904 there was a great multiplication of organizations for municipal and civic reform. Although pursuing various lines of activity, in many instances their efforts overlapped. Duplication was frequent, and only the sincerity of interest on the part of those in charge of the work prevented friction. Just as in banking, clearing houses have become essential, so in the field of civic endeavor a civic clearing house has become essential, and the alliance is the outcome. Just how effectively the alliance will meet the requirements of the situation is yet to be demonstrated, but its secretary, Frederick S. Hall, is a man of resource, deeply interested in the work and thoroughly convinced of its need. Moreover, his connection with the City Club of New York, of which he is the assistant secretary, places him in a position where he can secure the assistance and

co-operation of the various activities which centre in that institution. Altogether a better understanding exists between all the agencies working for local improvement throughout the country as a result of the agitation, which was begun as far back as 1900 by the National Municipal League and continued by the American Park and Outdoor Art Association at its meeting in Boston, in 1902.

"The Annals" article of two years ago was substantially a report prepared for the use of the Executive Committee of the National Municipal League in considering the question of closer relationship, with similar bodies. The idea was taken up by the American Park and Outdoor Art Association at its Boston meeting, one whole session being devoted to addresses by representatives of the various bodies. As a result, a committee was appointed which led eventually to the formation of the alliance. At the National Municipal League meeting, held in Detroit in 1903, the subject of the "federation of civic forces" was presented by J. Horace McFarland, representing the American League for Civic Improvement; Charles Mulford Robinson, representing the American Park and Outdoor Art Association; Charles Richardson, representing the National Municipal League, and Charles Carroll Brown, representing the American Society of Municipal Improvement, and the movement formally indorsed and authorized.

As the secretary of the National Municipal League, in his annual review for 1904, entitled, "A Year's Disclosure and Development," said: "Just as the National Municipal League was needed to bring into harmonious and effective co-operation for exchange of opinions and the formulation of plans of those who were and are interested in the highly important political, administrative and educational phases of the municipal problem, so now there is a need for effective co-ordination of all the various bodies at work in various parts of the same field." Another important movement had its genesis at the Boston meeting of the American Park and Outdoor Art Association, and that was the merger of that organization with the American League for Civic Improvement, the final consummation of which is described in the article attached to this paper on the American Civic Association.

"Civic Day" at St. Louis, October 6, 1904, assisted in bringing about not only a clearer understanding of the work of each of the organizations there represented, but a more harmonious co-operation among the workers.

To illustrate what is being done in the way of municipal and civic improvement, the representatives of the various national and general organizations now represented or likely to be represented in the near future in the alliance have been asked to prepare a statement of the scope of their activities and accomplishments. These constitute a most interesting and important exhibit of forward work, and should fill the hearts of those who are giving time, thought and attention to the solution of municipal problems with high hope and encouragement. The past achievements of these bodies and their present prospects justify the expectation that the future will see a very rapid development of enlightened, educated public opinion on municipal questions.

THE NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE<sup>1</sup>

BY CLINTON ROGERS WOODRUFF, ESQ., Secretary.

Organized in May, 1894, the National Municipal League has carefully studied the municipal problem from various points of view. It has striven to arouse a wider and a deeper interest in city affairs among the people of the United States. It has sought to learn the cause of present evils and to suggest ways and means for their correction. Through its annual conferences it enables the workers in behalf of municipal betterment to come into personal touch and exchange views. At the Chicago meeting there was one round table conference of nearly five hours' duration, participated in by forty representatives of leading local bodies. Through its active committees the League has brought together groups of acknowledged experts and public men of experience, who have formulated reports of great value to students and administrators. The constant and increasing use of these reports is the surest test of their value. Through its executive officers the League is in constant touch with local and national movements concerned with municipal questions, supplying literature, answering inquiries, suggesting plans, ways and means, and co-ordinating the forces making for municipal improvement constitute their everyday duties and activities. The volumes published by the League are in continuous use in the libraries, among students, administrators and public-spirited citizens. They constitute a municipal literature of importance and usefulness.

In addition to the annual volumes the League issues occasional literature in the shape of leaflets, pamphlets and newspaper articles which has been influential in creating a more general interest in municipal questions. One series of articles was reproduced in a list of papers with a combined circulation of 3,000,000.

The framework of government of our cities needs readjustment to modern conditions. The movement for charter reform is the result. What should our cities do to meet the new conditions and eliminate the existing evils? The Municipal Program is the answer. It is a substantial volume of 246 pages, published by the Macmillan Company. It represents two years' hard and persistent effort on the part of experts in municipal work. It has been praised by discriminating critics and used by every constitutional convention which has been held since it was published.

Dr. Delos F. Wilcox, author of *The American City*, in an article on the Program thus reviews its use: "It has nowhere been enacted into law as a whole, but its influence has been felt practically everywhere 'under the flag' that charters have been framed, constitutions revised or municipal reform agitated. It was published in full in Honolulu for the benefit of the Hawaiian

<sup>1</sup> The Officers of the National Municipal League for 1904-5 are: President, Charles J. Bonaparte, Baltimore; 1st Vice-President, Charles Richardson, Philadelphia; and Vice-President, Samuel B. Capen, Boston; 3rd Vice-President, Thomas N. Strong, Portland, Oregon; 4th Vice-President, Dr. H. Dickson Bruns, New Orleans, La.; 5th Vice-President, Edmund J. James, University of Illinois, Champaign, Ill.; Secretary, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, North American Building, Philadelphia; Treasurer, George Burnham, Jr., Philadelphia.

Legislature. It was used by the Havana Charter Commission and by the Porto Rican and Philippine Commissions. It has left marked traces in the new constitutions of Virginia and Alabama, and has formed the basis for a sweeping amendment to the Colorado Constitution. The Charter Commission of Portland, Ore., used it. The Charter Revision Commission of New York City adopted some of its provisions. The Duluth and St. Paul charters are in line with it in important respects. It has formed the basis for agitation for charter reform in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, Delaware, and doubtless many other states. Its experience in Ohio, however, has been unfortunate. The Municipal Code Commission in that state was at work at the time of the Columbus Conference for Good City Government, at which the program was adopted. Perhaps on account of their proximity, the Commissioners absorbed so many reform ideas that their code was rejected by the Ohio politicians."

The accounts of American cities are, as a rule, as hopelessly complicated and involved as are their charters. In 1900, at Milwaukee, a committee was authorized to report "such methods or systems of municipal accounting and collection of municipal statistics as it may find to be most advisable." How well this committee, which is still at work, has discharged the duties thus assigned to it, may be gathered from the following statement from Professor F. A. Cleveland, of Haskins & Sells, and of the University of the City of New York: "For guidance they have gone to the charters and organic laws. They have also availed themselves of the results of research of political scientists, and of the experience of professional accountants and officers of municipal control. Each result has thus been brought to a critical test. So useful were the schedules of classification thus formulated that, from the date of their first publication, they have been utilized by cities attempting to restate their reports. In fact, the progress of the work of the committee may be traced in the new classification from time to time adopted by municipalities. Today there are no less than eighty cities whose financial statements bear the stamp of the work of the League; and the United States census officers have made use of them in the collection and classification of municipal statistics. At the last conference of the League it was thought the success of this part of the work of the committee warranted an enlargement of the scope of its labor. The committee was therefore continued and instructed to report in outline a complete system of municipal accounts and reports." The committee is composed of Dr. Edward M. Hartwell, Chairman, City Statistician of Boston and a group of practical accountants, city officials, state examiners and well-known students.

The education of coming generations is essential to steady and substantial improvement. This fact has been fully appreciated by the League and no small part of its work has been devoted to purely educational work. In 1900, at Milwaukee, a committee, with the late President Thomas M. Drown, of Lehigh University, as Chairman, was appointed to inquire as to the amount of instruction given in colleges and universities and to bring the necessity for such instruction to the attention of the authorities in charge of these institutions. Two reports were prepared and sent to every college in the

country. They have stirred up interest. They have supplied outlines, syllabi and practical directions. They have resulted in the introduction of numerous courses. At Detroit, in 1903, a new committee was authorized to carry on the work among the secondary schools of the country, and it is now at work under the chairmanship of Dr. William H. Maxwell, Superintendent of the Schools of New York. The committee is made up of a distinguished group of educators, including college presidents, superintendents and teachers.

Nomination reform is a burning question in every state and city in the Union. How candidates for municipal elective offices shall be nominated is a fundamentally important question. This is the problem the League's committee on the subject, appointed at Boston in 1901, has set itself to study. It is going about its work very much as the Municipal Program Committee did, and equally fruitful results are to be expected. Horace E. Deming, of New York, is Chairman of this committee.

Municipal taxation is closely associated in importance and relative value with the question of uniform accounting and statistics. To supplement the work already done by the League along these lines and to co-ordinate the work done in behalf of improved methods of municipal taxation by various local bodies throughout the country, the League at its Chicago meeting in 1904 authorized a committee "to consider what changes may be necessary and desirable in the constitutions and laws of the various states, and to make a report setting forth the general principles which should govern such amendments." Lawson Purdy, secretary of the New York Tax Reform Association, is chairman of this committee.

At Chicago the appointment of a committee was authorized to include those actually conducting courses in municipal government, to give to each the benefit of the others' experience and to secure greater co-ordination and unity of effort. The work of this committee will supplement the work done by President Drown's committee of two years ago and carry it to a logical and effective conclusion. Professor L. S. Rowe, of the University of Pennsylvania, has been made Chairman of this Committee on the Co-ordination of Instruction in Municipal Government.

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## THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF MUNICIPAL IMPROVEMENTS<sup>2</sup>

PROF. A. PRESCOTT FOLWELL, President.

This society was organized in Buffalo, N. Y., September 19, 1894, by about sixty representatives of seventeen cities, who responded to an invitation issued by M. J. Murphy, Street Commissioner of St. Louis, who was elected the first president. The object of the society is stated in the constitution to be "to disseminate information and experience upon, and to

<sup>2</sup> The Officers of the American Society of Municipal Improvements, 1904-5: President, A. Prescott Folwell, Easton, Pa.; 1st Vice-President, Charles Carroll Brown, Indianapolis, Ind.; and Vice-President, John R. Barlow, Montreal, Canada; 3rd Vice-President, William B. Howe, Concord, N. H.; Secretary, George W. Tillson, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Treasurer, F. J. O'Brien, Oswego, N. Y.; Chairman Finance Committee, Alcide Chausse, Montreal, Canada.

promote the best methods to be employed in, the management of municipal departments and in the construction of municipal works, by means of annual conventions, the reading and discussion of papers upon municipal improvements, and by social and friendly intercourse at such conventions, and to circulate among its members, by means of an annual publication, the information thus obtained."

The society as organized contained twenty-nine (50 per cent.) members of boards of public works, eight (14 per cent.) mayors and councilmen, six (10 per cent.) city engineers, seven (12 per cent.) street and sewer commissioners, and a few others. The following year 34 per cent. of the members were members of boards of public works, 7 per cent. mayors and councilmen, 24 per cent. city engineers, 7 per cent. street and sewer commissioners, 7 per cent. water works officials, and 20 per cent. held other positions. In 1904, 16 per cent. were members of boards of public works, 6 per cent. mayors and councilmen, 22 per cent. city engineers, 19 per cent. other engineers in city service, 7 per cent. street and sewer commissioners, and 11 per cent. water works officials. Its presidents have been in succession a street commissioner, president of board of public works, president of board of administration, member of board of public works, engineer of highways, city engineer, president of board of public improvements, city engineer, city engineer, chairman of water committee and consulting municipal engineer. Canada and most of the States east of the Rockies are represented in the society's membership, and conventions have been held at Buffalo, Cincinnati, Chicago, Nashville, Washington, D. C., Toronto, Milwaukee, Niagara Falls, Rochester, Indianapolis and St. Louis. The next is to be held at Montreal, September 4th to 6th.

The original idea was that municipalities should become members, to be represented by such "engineer, officer or director" of "public or municipal department work" as should choose to join; such individuals to lose their eligibility and membership with their public office. This was found to be cumbersome and inconvenient, the first president losing his membership before the end of his term. Provision was made in 1895 that such might remain as associate members; and in 1900 that they might retain full membership. In the same year it was also made a provision of the constitution that "any person interested in municipal improvements or work as a contractor or contracting agent, or who is a manufacturer or dealer in municipal supplies may become an associate member who shall enjoy all the rights and privileges of full membership excepting that of holding office or voting." One of the advantages of this society has been that it is not composed entirely of engineers or of administrative officers, but that all classes who are interested in the physical improvement of cities exchange views at its conventions. The chief disadvantage under which it originally labored was the brief time for which many of its members retained their eligibility. Five years after its organization, when the above change in the constitution was made, but six of the original members remained; but more than a third of those who were then members are still so, although most of them no longer hold office.

To prevent the work of the society from being confined to one or two narrow channels and to secure proper attention to each of the several more important branches of municipal improvements, there is appointed each year by the president, committees on street paving, electric street lighting, sewerage and sanitation, water works and water supply, taxation and assessments, city government and legislation, disposition of garbage and street cleaning, review, and municipal franchises; while special committees on municipal data and statistics and park development and maintenance have been appointed for several years past. Each of these committees generally presents a report at each convention, and also obtains one or more papers on subjects within its field of activity. These conventions are by no means junketing trips, but are devoted by all members to earnest endeavors to obtain and contribute the greatest amount of benefit possible, through conversation with officials from all parts of the country, inspection of such improvements as the convention city has to show, and papers and discussions—the last frequently more interesting than the papers which occasioned them. Most of the members are men whose business it is to do things and who wish to learn how to do them better.

The extent to which different parts of the field have actually been covered by the society is indicated by the number of reports and papers presented by the various committees. There have been about fifty-five papers (25 per cent.) on street paving, eighteen (7 per cent.) on other street improvements, thirty-five (16 per cent.) on water works, thirty (14 per cent.) on sewerage, fifteen (7 per cent.) on garbage disposal and street cleaning, twelve (6 per cent.) on taxation and assessments, ten (5 per cent.) on street lighting, nine (4 per cent.) on health, eight (4 per cent.) on legislative subjects, six (3 per cent.) on parks, and twenty miscellaneous. Of the good accomplished by the society, the greater part cannot be designated specifically since it consists of the improved usefulness of its members to their municipalities both as officials and as citizens. The writer has in mind instances, however, of improvements in street paving and repair, in street lighting and in garbage disposal in certain cities which were the direct result of these meetings; and undoubtedly others could be learned of in every branch of municipal activity. Uniformity of municipal statistics, so longed for by every collector of municipal data for whatsoever purpose, has been greatly promoted by this society. In all branches the aim has been not so much to deal with such technical details as might better be considered by an engineering society and would differ with local conditions as to discuss the broader principles of more general application, and along this line it believes it can perform and is performing a work of great and permanent benefit to American municipalities.



LEAGUE OF AMERICAN MUNICIPALITIES\*

BY THE HON. JOHN MACVICAR, Secretary.

The objects of the organization known as the League of American Municipalities are:—

“The general improvement and facilitation of every branch of municipal administration by the following means: First, the perpetuation of the organization as an agency for the co-operation of American cities in the practical study of all questions pertaining to municipal administration; second, the holding of annual conventions for the discussion of contemporaneous municipal affairs; third, the establishment and maintenance of a central bureau of information for the collection and compilation and dissemination of statistics, reports of all kinds of information relative to municipal government.”

It owes its origin to a call, signed by fifty mayors, headed by Samuel L. Black, then mayor of Columbus. In this call it was set forth that the purpose of the organization to be formed would be the “general improvement and facilitation of every branch of municipal administration, through the means of an interchange of experience and ideas of the city officials of the country.” It was further stated that “true municipal reform must necessarily come from the work of those actually engaged in the duties of municipal administration, from a discussion of municipal problems by the men who are actually in the work and know its conditions.” More than 1200 officials, representing about 150 cities, attended the first convention held at Columbus, Ohio, in September, 1897. Among those who figured prominently in the deliberations of this organization convention was the late Mayor Samuel M. Jones, of Toledo. In the constitution adopted, the objects of the league were clearly expressed in the words of the introductory paragraph of this article. The present secretary of the league was its first president. He was then mayor of Des Moines, Iowa. His successors in the presidential office have been Mayor Samuel L. Black, of Columbus; Mayor Henry V. Johnson, of Denver, Col.; Mayor J. A. Johnson, of Fargo, N. D.; Mayor Charles S. Ashley, of New Bedford, Mass.; Mayor J. Adger Smyth, of Charleston, S. C.; Mayor James M. Head, of Nashville, Tenn., and the present incumbent, Mayor William C. Crolius, of Joliet, Ill.

Among the well-known men who have been active in the work of the league, some as officers and others as members, are: James D. Phelan, who, for two terms, was mayor of San Francisco, and accomplished such remarkable reforms in that municipality; Samuel M. Jones, known the world

\* The Officers of the League for 1904-5 are: President, William C. Crolius, Mayor of Joliet, Ill.; 1st Vice-President, R. G. Rhett, Mayor of Charleston, S. C.; 2nd Vice-President, George Stewart Brown, Councilman of Baltimore, Md.; 3rd Vice-President, J. E. McCafferty, Councilman of Wilmington, Del.; Treasurer, William D. Morgan, Mayor of Georgetown, S. C.; Secretary, John MacVicar, Des Moines, Ia.; Trustees, Henry Bohl, President of the Board of Public Service of Columbus, O.; W. H. Baker, Mayor of Lockport, N. Y.; Louis Betz, Comptroller of St. Paul, Minn.; W. M. Drennen, Mayor of Birmingham, Ala.; M. A. Blouse, Mayor of Kokomo, Ind.; and Silas Cook, Mayor of East St. Louis, Ill.

over as "the Golden Rule" mayor of Toledo; Charles S. Ashley, who has the distinction of having been elected mayor of New Bedford, Mass., for fifteen successive terms; Josiah Quincy, rated as one of the best mayors Boston ever had; Carter H. Harrison, mayor of Chicago, and a prominent figure in national politics; the late Hazen S. Pingree, former mayor of Detroit, and later governor of Michigan; Thomas G. Hayes, whose work as mayor of Baltimore attracted widespread attention. The annual conventions of the league have been held in the following named cities: 1897, Columbus, O.; 1898, Detroit, Mich.; 1899, Syracuse, N. Y.; 1900, Charleston, S. C.; 1901, Jamestown, N. Y.; 1902, Grand Rapids, Mich.; 1903, Baltimore, Md.; 1904, St. Louis. Immediately after its organization the League of American Municipalities established a permanent bureau of information, in charge of the secretary. It is through this bureau that the organization does its most important and effective work, for this is the central office through which the interchange of experience and ideas is carried on all of the time. The work of the bureau is to collect and compile statistics, reports and all kinds of information relative to municipal government, and to answer all inquiries from officials of membership cities. Any member of the league may, at any time, call upon this bureau for information, and here he will find probably the most complete collection of municipal statements and reports in the United States. If the bureau has a call for any particular information which it has not on file it proceeds to secure that information. Nearly all of the regular and special reports of municipal departments and commissions throughout the country are promptly sent to this bureau of information, and the secretary and his assistant are constantly making special investigations and reports.

As a great part of the information collected by the Bureau of Information is of general interest to the league members, the executive committee several months ago decided to establish a regular monthly publication to be sent to all of the officials of membership cities. The first number of this publication, which is known as the *Bulletin of the League of American Municipalities*, appeared in September of the past year, and is a neatly printed 32-page magazine, and every issue contains a number of reports and articles of interest and value to city officials.

Through the assistance given by the league, the city of Baltimore enjoyed a great improvement in every one of its municipal departments during the administration of Mayor Thomas G. Hayes. Along toward the close of his remarkable administration Mayor Hayes, in a public speech, said: "I feel that if there has been any improvement in the administration of the government of the city of Baltimore, the League of American Municipalities is entitled to the credit for it, for I got my ideas from this league."

Hon. Henry Bohl, president of the Board of Public Service of Columbus, gives this evidence: "In the great work of improving our public water supply, our street lighting system, and our sewerage system, in which we are investing upwards of \$4,000,000, the League of American Municipalities has given us very valuable aid. At many stages of the work we have been able

to secure from the league information that has enabled us to plan better and save money."

The league is not a reform organization in the generally accepted meaning of the term. It is not committed for or against municipal ownership of public utilities or to any other definite policy, aiming only to collect and disseminate information in a reliable and impartial manner, to the end that the municipal official may be aided in intelligently performing the functions of his office. Membership in the league is held in the name of the cities, and the privileges of membership run to all of the individual officials of membership cities. At the present time nearly every city of importance in the United States and Canada is a member of the organization.

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### THE AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

At the Boston meeting of the American Park and Outdoor Art Association, in August, 1902, a committee was appointed to consider the question of a closer affiliation and a possible merger with the American League for Civic Improvement. The latter, at its meeting at St. Paul, a few weeks later, took similar action. The two committees thus authorized met in joint session, discussed the whole question in all its phases, and reached the conclusion that merger was desirable and feasible. There were a great many interests involved, requiring thoughtful and careful consideration. The two committees reported to their respective bodies in 1903 their conclusions—that steps should be taken looking toward the consummation of the desired merger, but that final action should be postponed for another year, to assure harmonious, unanimous and effective action. The committees were enlarged by the addition of two members each, and the enlarged committees held a joint session in New York late in September, 1903. The action of this joint meeting was unanimously in favor of bringing about the merger of the two bodies at the meetings to be held by them in 1904, and further recommended: First, that the 1904 meetings of the two bodies be held jointly in St. Louis; second, that such publications as could be jointly issued should be so issued until the merger was actually accomplished; third, that there should be every possible interchange of courtesy and co-operation during the same period.

The American Park and Outdoor Art Association held a meeting on June 9, 1904, at St. Louis, at which the report of its committee was re-

<sup>4</sup>The Officers of the American Civic Association for 1904-5 are: President, J. Horace McFarland, Harrisburg, Pa.; 1st Vice-President, Clinton Rogers Woodruff, Philadelphia; Treasurer, William B. Howland, New York; General Vice-Presidents, George Foster Peabody, New York, Franklin MacVeagh, Chicago; Department Officers: Women's Outdoor Art League, Mrs. Chas. F. Millspaugh, Chicago; Parks and Public Reservations, G. A. Parker, Hartford, Conn.; Arts and Crafts, Mrs. M. F. Johnston, Richmond, Ind.; Children's Gardens, Dick J. Crosby, Washington; City Making, Frederick S. Lamb, New York; Outdoor Art, Warren H. Manning, Boston; Factory Betterment, Edwin L. Shuey, Dayton, Ohio; Libraries, Frank M. Crunden, St. Louis; Public Nuisances, Fred'k Law Olmstead, Brookline, Mass.; Public Recreation, Joseph Lee, Boston; Railroad Improvement, Mrs. A. E. McCrea, Chicago; Rural Improvements, O. C. Simonds, Chicago; School Extension, Charles Zueblin, Chicago; Press, Frank Chapin Bray, Chicago; Social Settlements, Mrs. Conde Hamlin, St. Paul.

ceived and approved, and liquidating trustees were appointed to carry out the recommendations of the committee. President Woodruff, of the association, appointed Warren H. Manning, of Boston; Charles Mulford Robinson, of Rochester; and Mrs. Charles F. Millspaugh, of Chicago, as the association's trustees.

The American League for Civic Improvement held a meeting on the afternoon of June 9th, received and approved the report of its committee, and authorized the appointment of trustees to carry out the recommendations of the committee. President McFarland was made a trustee by direct vote of the league, and he appointed as his colleagues Mrs. William Christian, of Houston, Tex., and Clinton Rogers Woodruff, of Philadelphia. These trustees were authorized to adopt a name, to draft a constitution and a set of by-laws, and to select the officers to carry them into force and effect. On June 10, the two groups of trustees met in joint session, and in a prolonged meeting unanimously agreed upon a name, a constitution and by-laws, and a list of officers. The constitution and by-laws and the list of officers were submitted to a joint meeting of the association, and the league, on June 11, and by that joint meeting, unanimously approved, and thus merger under the name of the American Civic Association was formally effected.

The purpose of the new association thus formed was declared to be "the cultivation of higher ideals of civic life and beauty in America, the promotion of city, town and neighborhood improvement, the preservation and development of landscape, and the advancement of outdoor art."

A recent article on the work of the association made the following comment on the association and its work: "The observation of the Biblical writer that 'of the making of books there is no end,' is of equal force when applied to the making of organizations for the promotion of public good. Organized effort has so multiplied that the average man has been confused and burdened by the appeals for assistance and support which it makes. The man who makes one organization flourish where two grew before deserves to rank as a public benefactor; therefore, to twist somewhat the philosopher's reference to the propagation of grass: An organization which represents the consolidation of two organizations by the same token should have an especial appeal to the American public; and such a body is found in the American Civic Association. This association marks a distinct epoch in American development—the coming of the time when the reign of the almighty dollar is to be disputed by the love of beauty, which has heretofore remained dormant in the hearts of our people. For some years there were two bodies working in this field. That these organizations were able to live, with the names they bore, was a wonderful testimony to the vitality of the idea on which they were founded. A consolidation was effected at a joint meeting in St. Louis last spring. The American Civic Association, the result of this merger, represents about four hundred and eighty local improvement organizations."

The association proposes to agitate constantly the improvement in appearance of cities, towns, villages, farms and roadsides, and to bring a steady and direct influence to bear so that its force may be expended in a way to secure results. While much of the improvement sought can be ac-

completed only by the public authorities, as, for instance, improvement in the architecture of public buildings, the creation of civic centers, the acquisition of systems of parks, connected by parkways, yet the association urges action by individuals looking to improvement in the architecture of individual homes, the making of attractive back yards, as well as front yards, the general location of flower boxes at windows, particularly by contiguous householders, and the adoption of other similar ideas that are equally important. The association insists positively upon the æsthetic possibilities of railroad lines. It stands for the removal of artificial creations that destroy what there is of natural beauty, and particularly for the checking of obnoxious public advertising. It recognizes that the greatest improvement in a city can be made in the locality where there is the greatest ugliness and most disease-breeding squalor. The true beauty of a city depends on its worst locality as much as its best. The association's work has been divided into the following various departments: Women's Outdoor Art League, Parks, Arts and Crafts, Children's Gardens, City Making, Outdoor Art, Factory Betterment, Libraries, Public Nuisances, Public Recreation, Railroad Improvements, School Extension, Social Settlements, and the Press.

A number of short bulletins are being prepared on the general lines of the bulletins already issued which described the formation and resources of the association, also a series of department reports and pamphlets. It is being quickly realized that a body commanding the services of such men as Frederick Law Olmsted, G. A. Parker, Frederick S. Lamb, Warren H. Manning, O. C. Simonds, and a number of others who are actually writing the bulletins and reports of the association, is an organization which offers the fullest return for the membership dues and the efforts expended. The affiliated organizations pay a minimum of two dollars a year. The work is just beginning. The first object is to secure the co-operation of the 2300 local organizations that have been formed in the last few years throughout the country, and to obtain a large individual membership, so that every opportunity that presents itself may be accepted without fear of lack of funds. The association is carrying out an educational campaign through bulletins, leaflets, pamphlets, and a press bureau. Moreover, it is serving as a source of information and inspiration to workers all over the country, and to those seeking light. It is a clearing house for ideas, and through its departments is accumulating a mass of information and experience that will be of increasing value with each succeeding year.

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## THE AIMS AND WORK OF THE CONFERENCE OF PUBLIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATIONS<sup>5</sup>

By MRS. WILLIAM E. D. SCOTT, Secretary

The state is looked to as the proper conservator of public education, and it is believed that the elaborate system which has been developed for

<sup>5</sup> Secretary, Conference of Eastern Public Education Associations.