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THE PROSPECTIVE CONSOLIDATION WITH THE A. C. A. FROM THE LEAGUE'S STANDPOINT

BY RICHARD S. CHILDS

A VARIETY of facts made a union of the American Civic Association and the National Municipal League opportune at this time.

The personnel of the American Civic Association staff was changing. We had a monthly magazine which could, and did, cover much of their subject territory, and yet reached only 18 per cent of their members. They had no magazine but had a variety of pamphlets that we could use and some of which we need. Mr. Woodruff, our honorary secretary, is their vice-president and Mr. McFarland, their president, is our vice-president. A roster of their active spirits and attendants at conventions would make any National Municipal League member feel entirely at home.

Our recent co-operation with the city-planning fraternity whereby our REVIEW became the official organ of the City-Planning Conference increased still further our overlapping of active personnel. Mr. McFarland, who has from the first been the moving spirit of the American Civic Association, was in a mood to welcome the relief which union would bring to his

overburdened energy. The National Municipal League was disposed to alter its name and that of the REVIEW, for the word "Municipal" was a misnomer in view of our interest in state and county problems, and for a year the council had been equipped with authority from the Cleveland convention to change the names. This reduced on our side the problem of institutional pride in an old name and made the project for a new composite name much more acceptable to us. On the other hand the American Civic Association is easily satisfied with any variation that includes their salient word "Civic."

A more urgent reason lay in the existing duplication. The American Civic Association field included city planning, zoning, municipal art commissions, park and playground questions, and all the external physical problems of government which are included roughly in the old phrase "City Beautiful." For years the League had been lapping over into that field for the natural reason that our members, as local civic reformers, were a choice audience for that propaganda.

Topics, speakers and even some papers, at the conventions of the two organizations, were frequently identical. Both had pamphlets on the subject of "Zoning" and there was one narrow escape from an almost simultaneous duplication of expensive pamphlets on "Billboard Control." Some economies could be achieved by union in handling membership detail and still more by enabling the American Civic Association to reach its membership by a monthly magazine instead of by special letters and pamphlets.

Accordingly a "trial marriage" was arranged and approved unanimously at the Indianapolis convention. Overlapping councils were chosen. The REVIEW is made the official organ of the American Civic Association. That is all for the present. The American Civic Association retains its office in Washington where Miss Harlean James replaces Miss Eleanor Marshall, who seems to like a certain fortunate man better than she does the office. A joint convention is scheduled for 1921 at

which identical governing boards can be elected and a composite name adopted.

A manifest result is the addition of, we hope, fully a thousand subscribers to our magazine out of the 1400 American Civic Association members who are not already subscribers, bringing our edition up to 4,000. The American Civic Association members are being billed for the REVIEW, their new official organ, for the unexpired terms of their American Civic Association membership. The new American Civic Association minimum dues will be \$5 plus \$2.50 optional for the magazine. Higher classes of American Civic Association membership will include the magazine without the surcharge.

If the consolidation is completed at the 1921 convention—and there is no visible opposition—the organization thus united will be the one big general association of the United States devoted to civic affairs, and more than ever the natural clearing-house for service and inspiration to those who press for progress in the local fields.

BRACKETING THE NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE WITH THE AMERICAN CIVIC ASSOCIATION

BY J. HORACE McFARLAND

The President of the American Civic Association discusses the proposed consolidation with the National Municipal League. Both have been pioneer organizations. :: :: :: :: :: :: ::

THE readers of this publication need no introduction to the National Municipal League, nor is it in point here to recount its achievements or its history.

A recent inquiry showed that less than 20 per cent of the membership of the National Municipal League had also membership in the American Civic

Association. In view of the expressed desire on the part of the League to sit close to the association for mutual advantage, and with the possibility of an eventual consolidation, it seems therefore now most desirable to acquaint the readers of the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW with that civic organization.