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Friday September 3, 1915.

Commended.

Several months ago, through the financial assistance of Mr. George Eastman, Mr. James G. Cutler and other prominent citizens of wealth, a branch of the New York Bureau of Municipal Research was instituted in Rochester and since that time has been engaged upon a "survey" of Rochester's municipal administration and resources.

A preliminary report has been made by this branch bureau in time to be of service to the citizens in studying the question of who to select in the election this fall as their municipal officers. In the main, there are no new facts presented in the report. Most of us, when we really expressed our candid and unbiased opinions, conceded that Rochester is a beautiful city, clean, well-lighted, and governed in a manner far superior and surely not excelled by any city in the country, whether under the newest form of commission, city manager or under the old style of a mayor and a board of aldermen.

Most of us knew that there were some defects in our method of administration, but where is the private concern that is managed just as we would have it, if we had the full say in determining methods and who were to administer these methods? And it must ever be borne in mind that the municipal government has to serve all the people, that it is held down by certain legal and governmental exactions, that employees cannot be hired and discharged at will, that expenditures can only be made after unrolling yards of red tape and that the public is an exceedingly jealous employer. Hence the comparison often made between private management and municipal management is not fair or exact.

Accordingly, it is a source of pleasure that the citizen reads that outside and supposedly impartial observers agree with the estimate placed by the average citizen upon the city of Rochester and its governmental management. To be sure, minor defects are found, in the opinion of the searchers. Some of these will not meet the approval of everybody. Some of their suggestions as to changes in present methods will not appeal to all of us or many of us as either feasible or meritorious. Nevertheless, the report as a whole, is gratifying to us all. We are told that Rochester is the equal of any city so far examined by the New York Bureau and the peer of many.

All of which goes to show that it makes little difference as to method of municipal government or selection of municipal officers, if public sentiment demands a good government, the officials will necessarily give it. If public sentiment is weak, lethargic, or spineless, then government will be lax or vicious, or both. In other words, So says Charlie Chapin.

words, the public generally gets just the sort of government it wants.

No Literacy Test!

Very sensibly, the constitution makers have halted a proposition vigorously pressed, to prohibit from voting, all citizens who cannot read and write the English language. While, at first blush, one might feel inclined to agree with the theoretical correctness of the proposition that no one should be permitted to exercise the franchise who cannot read and write the language of this country and that there is no room in the state of New York for any other than the English language, nevertheless, it must not be forgotten that many foreignborn citizens have been naturalized and admitted to citizenship before that proposed test was thought of. It would be decidedly unfair were these, at this late date, to be subjected to such a restriction. It would appear as though the courts might decide that this was an ex post facto legislation and hence not enforceable to naturalized citizens when the law took effect.

There is also no doubt that the proposed amendment was aimed directly at American citizens in New York state of foreign extraction. While it must be conceded that these should adopt our language and customs, still we have not hitherto made such test a pre-requisite to citizenship and, certainly, the franchise is one of the privileges commonly supposed to belong with citizenship. Again, many of the delegates thought the proposition emanated with the bigots and this also aroused a powerful opposition against its enactment. Those who applauded President Wilson's veto of the proposal to bar immigrants who could not read or write, certainly, can do no less than to approve the action of a majority of the delegates to the Constitutional convention in excluding a literacy test from the proposed new constitution of 1915!

Too Short Terms?

The Bureau of Municipal Research thinks that terms of municipal officers are too short and that they should be lengthened from two to four years, on the theory that two years is not sufficient for them to become well informed as to their duties and powers, and also because of the expense. With four terms, the number of municipal elections could be cut in half and much expense saved thereby. It is also urged that Rochester has too many election districts and that their number should be reduced. The number of election districts is fixed by state law, at least the state law says that not to exceed a certain given number of registered voters may be assigned to vote in one polling booth. For this reason the city of Rochester has nothing whatever to say about the number of election districts. Population and congestion are to blame for any increased number of election districts.

Whether four year terms would be an advantage time will tell, also public sentiment. It is likely to be conceded by all save the professional politicians, that while two years is not long enough for an executive who performs his duties well, it is much too long for an inefficient set of public officers. The same argument holds good were the fixed term four years.

However, we have an idea that the bureau's municipal searchers after information mean well even if they may not have had practical experience in applied politics and governmental science. Theories often look well on paper that work out exceedingly bad in practical operation.

Rain and baseball do not mix. In other well. So says Charlie Chapin.

Day and Evening Schools.

The fall term of the R. B. I. Day school opens in the Y. M. C. A. building, Tuesday, September 7th, and the Evening school in the same building on Monday, September 20th. Both day and evening schools will be transferred to our beautiful new building on Clinton Avenue in a few weeks. You can get a copy of our catalogue or evening school circular at our office any time, or at our booth No. 21, building No. 3, any day or evening during the exposition. Rochester Business Institute, Y. M. C. A. building, S. C. Williams, principal, John F. Forbes, associate principal. Adv.

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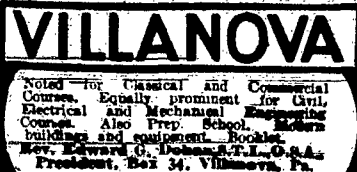
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