

The Economic Club of New York

23rd Meeting

Efficient City Government

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Introduction

James Speyer, President

Ladies and gentlemen and members of the Economic Club. As a rule the financial and commercial center of a country is also the political capital of that country. New York is unique in that it is the metropolis financially but not the seat of our national government. I sometimes think that it would be advantageous if some of our legislators would live in New York and come in contact with the business people of this town for whom they love to make laws, most of them disagreeable ones. (Applause) However that may be, we know that it is a disappointment that we do not see more of the men who occupy the prominent places in our national government and particularly of those men who represent the great foreign countries in Washington. Tonight we have with us a representative of one of the greatest countries of Europe. (Applause) We are particularly pleased and honored to have Count von Bernstoff, the German Ambassador here. Count Bernstoff is a scion of an old aristocratic Russian family which has served its king and country for generations and with distinction. (Applause) His career has taken him from his own country to Constantinople, St. Petersburg, Cairo and London, and, finally, his Emperor sent him here when he was nearly fifty years old, - or not yet fifty years old. Even if Count Bernstoff had not married an American lady; even if his better half was not an American; even if he had not received almost a dozen honorary degrees from American universities, we would like to call him half an American; but I prefer to look at him as a good representative of the German in sympathy with his country.

Count Bernstoff is one of the few men who realize the high ideal of the American people, who is in sympathy with their aspirations. Count Bernstoff has made the trip from Washington to New York today on purpose to be with us tonight. (Applause) He is going to return on the midnight train, but he has been kind enough to agree to say a few words to us about the method they have evolved in Germany for efficient city government. I know that you who have been in Germany have been surprised at how they govern their towns, and those who have studied the subject are astonished at the small cost of efficient city government in Germany.

Now I am going to ask you to listen to Count Bernstoff explain to us how they have done it. His Excellency Count Johann von Bernstoff, Ambassador of Germany to the United States.

First Speaker

Excellency Count Johann von Bernstoff

Ambassador of Germany to the United States

Mr. President of the Economic Club, ladies and gentlemen: I wish to thank you most sincerely for the privilege of appearing before you this evening and for the friendly and cordial reception which you have just given me. I wish also to thank your chairman for the kind words which he addressed to me, and all the pleasant things he said about me. I naturally cannot endorse all he

said about myself because it was too kind, but one thing I should like to endorse very heartily that he said, - that I was in sympathy with the American people. (Applause)

I must confess that I feel rather shy about speaking on city government to you tonight because the secretary of your club wrote to me that I was to speak on my experience with city government. Now, I have absolutely no experience on city governments at all, and we ambassadors are not generally allowed to speak about those things we do have experience in. So you will have to listen to what I have learned myself about city governments in Germany, and one thing I feel perfectly sure that my experience would not allow me to run a great city - this beautiful city - as well as my friend the Mayor who is present here this evening. (Applause) this beautiful city where the wonders of civilization evoke the admiration of the whole world; and as to the other distinguished Mayor, my friend Mr. Blankenburg, who is going to speak after me (Applause) he is like myself "Made in Germany;" (Applause) I suppose that he knows more about German cities than I do myself.

The old historical self-government of our cities of which we are very proud, was reinstated on modern principles by one of our greatest statesmen, Baron Stein, after the collapse of Prussia in the year 1806. The system, therefore, was peculiarly Stein's own idea, and the practical measure of carrying it into effect was his work alone. Its cornerstone was the right of the people to act upon their own local interests. The reform, which has been fruitful in blessings ever since, began at the base, giving self-government to the cities, schooling them in managing their own affairs, in

checking their own functionaries, in taking their own responsibility. While keeping the central monarch strong, his greatest exertion was to restore fitness for public life in the country at large. He, therefore, sought to interest the city populations in public affairs. Since the days of Stein time has, of course brought about very many changes in city government. It has largely been developed to meet new needs, but the system is still the same. It has been well said that this system has been shaped by the conviction that the work of governing a city is so important that it requires the power and thought of able men who have acquired special knowledge of city government and who know that if they are guilty of neglect of their duty or act dishonestly they will be ruined for life by losing their position, the salaries on which they live and the confidence of the public, without which they cannot obtain further appointment.

While a considerable number of persons of the city council are permanent officials, the majority of members are elected by the rate payers, and it is the elected members who appoint the burgomaster, who has to assist him two or three other burgomasters and other officials, invariable men of high educational standing and great experience. The first Burgomaster holds his office practically for life, but he is subject to re-election for shorter terms of office. The members of the city council are elected by sections, so that the composition of a municipal body is never completely changed.

One other feature of the system may be of special interest to Americans, as it differs wholly from the system in this country. To be a Burgher of a city in Germany, one must have a definite and

tangible interest in the community. In the practice of city governments in Europe a city has always been regarded as a corporation, which has its business to conduct and property to administer. According to this theory distinction is made between the civil and political rights on one side, and on the other what may be called municipal rights, - the right to take an active part in administering city property and determining city policy. As to the latter right it is felt in Germany that the people exercising it should have an evident stake in the corporation, whose affairs they called upon to control and administer. The first thing that will strike a foreigner in German cities is the number and variety of the functions with which, for the benefit of the public, the authority charges itself. Most city councils not only supply water, gas, electric lights, and make a good profit in relief of local expenditure, but also command the hospitals, treatment of phthisis and all the schools, including colleges for advanced technical education. In most places the municipality runs a number of tramways with very low fares and very high profits. They maintain fire stations, with the most advanced apparatus. They have abattoirs, regulated by veterinary experts, for the slaughter of animals for human food. In such cities as Cologne, Frankfort, and Manheim they manage enormous docks for the accommodation of fresh water navigation. They maintain for the recreation of the citizens museums, picture galleries, parks, playgrounds, baths, bands of music, and even theatres. In the modern German city the streets are never the creation of private labor. It is not the owner of the land who makes the plan for new streets according to his own interests, but the city council plans the streets in accordance with the interests and the need of the whole population. There are no restrictions for the widths of the streets or as to their construction, so that the city council has full liberty to consider the

requirements of different districts. The city council decides in what streets front gardens are to be permitted, how large they must be, what streets are to be planted with trees, and where public squares, playgrounds, etc., are to be situated. In this way a distribution of open spaces and playgrounds all over the city is secured. It is all the more necessary to provide plenty of open space, because in many parts of Germany people cannot afford to have houses of their own. The working classes, and even the middle classes, are compelled to live in apartments, because the price of land, and in consequence the rent of houses, is very high. The cities, therefore, are devoting ever increasing attention to the housing of their workmen employed by them and of the less prosperous inhabitants of their districts in general. On the one hand they construct cheap buildings so small in size for municipal workmen, or they stipulate by statute that such dwellings constructed by them may only be less let or sold to workmen and subaltern officials, and, on the other hand, they encourage private builders and building societies to construct such dwellings by granting them certain favors, or subvention in money, and by conceding municipal ground to build on. Besides they endeavor to improve the dwellings in existence and help the requirements of supply and demand by omitting police regulations for the conditions of dwellings and by appointing inspectors of dwellings.

In their treatment of this problem the German municipalities have an advantage in their favor in the landed estates, which commonly forms an important part of the cities assets. It is for the most part land un-built upon and not always within the municipal area, yet it is eligible for public and residential and increases every year as the means of locomotion increase. Berlin, Cologne,

Manheim, Dresden, and Frankfort, among the larger German cities, are especially rich in this respect, thanks largely to the foresight of their eminent burgomasters. Few places of any consequence are entirely without such land. There are also few which do not entrust to their statistical bureau, which occupies so important and so constructive a department of municipal government, the duty of enumerating houses with detail as to character, proportion, number of rooms and of inhabitants, rent, and so forth, so full and so exact as to be in this respect of high social value. Leipzig is one of the cities- and there are many of them - which have devoted a portion of their real estate to the housing of the working classes.

The Imperial Workman's Insurance has had a great influence on the German cities in giving an impetus to them, which led to the creation of many useful municipal institutions. The cities are burdened by the Workmen's Insurance partly in their quality as administrative authorities, having to perform a certain amount of work for the execution of the three branches of the insurance; partly as the responsible executors of the Government Sick Insurance, which often requires subvention out of communal funds, and partly as employers in the municipal public works, such as gas works, water works, electricity, and tramways. Considering that the workingman is only entitled to claim the benefits of the insurance in case of sickness, accident, invalidity, and old age, in his position as a workingman, from a legal or statutory point of view defined, many cities have taken measures to the effect that every healthy workingman gets a position of possible, and remains insured. For that purpose labor registry offices have been instituted, which under responsible direction form the central office for the labor market, or assist

the workman in looking for employment. They supply to the unemployed quick and gratuitous information about vacancies, and so reduce the time of unemployment and enable him to earn his living, and at the same time to found his legal claim for further assistance. Hardly any German city of industrial importance can be named which has not a regularly operating and efficient labor registry.

The cities are further endeavoring to reduce involuntary idleness by preparing for work; namely have distress work executed. This kind of work has been undertaken by the cities to a great extent during period of economic depression. The municipalities are recognizing the opportunity if not so readily the duty of offering a helping hand to the laboring class in times of need. In most of the large cities the undertaking of distress work in times of exceptional unemployment, is now a part of a well devised scheme to regulate in every detail with elaborate municipal statutes or by law. As a rule these works are carried out during the winter months only. From the beginning of December to the end or the middle of March, and yet the fact should be emphasized that the municipalities are adverse to any form recognition of public responsibility for the employment of the workless among their citizens. Even in cities where the provision of distress work is systematic and requires unerringly with the evolution of the year, the authorities in self protection generally disclaim any particular social obligation. They act out of grace, and not from moral obligation.

Sound reason points to the desirability of such a policy of prudence. The confession of the principle of the right to work involves a responsibility which, whether justifiable or not, is one of enormous significance. Moreover, if a municipality is morally bound to provide its members with employment, it is obvious that such a responsibility cannot be extended to outsiders of roaming ways, encouraged by an adventurous life, or genuine desire for work, may have brought to the city. If a uniform right to work be admitted, the question becomes a national one, and the state must, in that event, intervene. At the same time it is recognized that it is a wise policy to keep deserving people from the poor law, so helping them to retain the spirit of independence and self reliance and not less than to protect them from idleness, which is so fruitful a cause of demoralization in every class of society.

It is a recognition of this fact more than other considerations that have led so many municipalities in Germany to override objections and difficulties and under proper safeguard to provide facilities for work in time of special scarcity.

The cities are further endeavoring to satisfy the requirements of the working classes for education, for these requirements are steadily increasing with the improvement of the working man's material condition. For that reason a number of communities have instituted compulsory industrial schools, public libraries, reading rooms, lectures, housekeeping schools for inhabitants, especially the workingmen; for the true ambition of the masses of the German nation is for education, - is less for economics and much less for economic amelioration. Every man who has

followed the movement of the German working classes and is acquainted with the intellectual life of the German nation will be ready to testify to the widespread popular desire for education, for knowledge, and for a greater share in the spiritual treasure of the time. The masses see in education endless perspective, their thirst for knowledge, like their ambition, impels them to one air, - to be educated. Everyone more or less will acknowledge that this more than anything else determines a man's rank in modern society; that personality is won by force of education. All the means of extending and deriving education are seized with zeal and often with passion.

What I have mentioned will be sufficient to show that the German cities feel their social responsibility and consider it a duty to assist the weaker classes in their struggle for existence and to help them to attain a higher social, moral and intellectual standard. (Applause)

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Second Speaker

Honorable William J. Gaynor

Mayor of the City of New York

Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the Economic Club: Mr. Speyer says that he doesn't know whether the two Mayors here, one from Philadelphia and the other from the West are abused quite as much by the newspapers as the Mayor here is. He says he hopes not. I will hope not also.

(Laughter) I don't know anything about it, but I hope not; that is as much as I will say.

(Laughter) and yet we stand it pretty well here after all. I look pretty well, don't I? I think I can stand it nearly as well as they do if not a great deal better.

The topic of the evening, Efficient City Government, is one interesting to all, but we have really come here not to hear locally on the subject, but to hear from the two distinguished Mayors who are to address you, and I shall not occupy your time.

You can hear me almost any hour in the day. (Laughter) And when you can't hear me, I will write you a letter. (Applause) Which is the better way after all?

I came into the city government from my own profession, and after having been a judge for sixteen years, I think. That was a profession in which we had to be exact, in which we had to be efficient, in which we had to know what we were doing, and measure our words. But I am going to

say to you tonight, for the benefits of my associates in the government, that the revelations of efficiency and exactness in the government of this city, which I have witnessed since I have been mayor, are equal to anything which I say while a Justice of the supreme Court. (Applause) Of course there are other people who do not happen to be in the government who can do all these things much better than we are doing them. (Laughter) I doubt, however, if you will ever elect any of these people to try it. I don't think you will take them at their word. Heretofore in city government, as in other things, every man in this country thought he knew how to do everything. He was jack-of-all-trades. He had contempt for the fellow, as he called him, who "learned how." In his opinion it was not necessary to learn. He knew it all; but the day of the self-sufficient all-sufficient, insufficient fellow has gone by in this country, and especially in city government. (Applause) there are many here who could do it much better than we do. During my term as Mayor it has so happened that we have had many important things to do. The subways, a gigantic piece of work, the largest on foot anywhere in the world today; the great west side improvement, including the relocation of the New York Central Railroad; the docks, and other things which I will not stop to enumerate to you. I wish I had here to hold up to you the two contracts for the subways; two volumes in themselves. We have editorial writers here who could do that all overnight, as easily as any of you could eat a cookie and much quicker. (Laughter) They are impatient at the delay, and then when it is done they are impatient that it is done at all. (Laughter) Whenever I read what these people say, or hear what some of them have to say, I always think to myself, within, "Here is a man of vast and various misinformation; of brilliant mental incapacity," and sometimes I add, "and of prodigious moral requirements." (Laughter and

Applause) they know it all. But the engineering work, the legal work, the days and the months and the years of such continuous work which has brought out the subway contract is beyond their comprehension entirely. They would not know what it was if they read it. (Laughter) I advise every one of you here, intelligent men, to get the subway contracts and read them yourselves and know what is in them, and not to be fooled by the scamps and scoundrels who say what is in them, but which is not in them at all. One of their greatest grievances, now that the thing is over, is that we went to bankers to get the money. (Laughter) How is that, Speyer? We should have gone to cobblers. Three hundred and sixteen millions of dollars have to be advanced. These railroad companies cannot sign these contracts until they have the money bargained for. They can't pick it up in the street. They have been working on their problem while we have been working on ours, and the chief grievance now is that they have a contract with bankers to produce the money. Hearst and the Pulitzers, I suppose, thought they would pick it up on the street as they went along, (Laughter) but that is not a feasible thing. These things all require efficiency. I wish I had the time and did not have to give way to the two gentlemen who are here to enlighten us until I was able to tell you the time that the Comptroller of this city has spent in that work and in these conferences; (Applause) the time that the committee of the Board of Estimate and Apportionment, which I appointed, have spent in them; the long discussions, the days when we thought everything was settled, only to have to see something else pop us tomorrow to make us almost begin all over again. All I wish to impress upon you, gentlemen, is that to do these things, - and I leave myself out of the consideration entirely, - you have to have efficient men. The old notion that anybody is fit to be Mayor or governor or hold public office

must go by the board if you want efficient government. (Applause) The engineering problem, the legal problem, the political problem have to be met by persons who are capable of meeting them. They have to be met by persons who have some experience. I do not suppose there is anybody here who, if he had to have his leg cut off, would send for a cobbler to cut it off. I admit that the cobbler would cut it off, but, my dear me, what a mess he would make of it! (Laughter) And yet the notion has been that anybody is fit for this great problems of government, far more intricate, far more difficult, requiring a far higher order of intelligence than is required to cut your leg off, though that is quite a job too.

So that, in order to have efficient government in our cities, we have to look to it that competent men come in. In the past the great obstacle to efficient government has been that those put in office were under the control of somebody on the outside. I hope that day is gone in the city of New York forever. (Applause) those elected to office here should be subservient to nobody but you. If they are in the service of a political organization which dictates their appointments to them, tells them what to do, bad government would be inevitable from the first day to the last.

I suppose I may properly say that when I came in I summed up all the fortitude that I had in the midst of all sorts of obstacles, to begin with my Dock Commission, my Water Commission, and to go through them all, and to absolutely appoint a man to every one of them who was under no obligations to anybody on earth except the government of this city, (Applause) and if we are to have efficiency, we have to get it in that way.

Your Borough Presidents are efficient. All your officials, excepting, of course, your Mayor, who is deficient in everything, certainly make up an efficient government in this city and this state.

I was glad to hear what Count von Bernstoff said about the German cities. It is very nice to listen to. I have observed the government of the British cities to some extent, and also the cities on the continent of Europe, and I am bound to say that during the last fifteen years we have made great strides to approach the best forms of government that they have. Don't be under the delusion that everything over there is just right. We who travel over there know better than that, Count von Bernstoff. (Laughter) They are all right in Germany - since you are here, (Laughter) but not all right everywhere else. The Count gave us a good paper on the subject of city government. He started out by deprecating that a man should talk about things that he don't know any too much about. That is no obstacle in the city of New York. (Laughter) those who have the most to say over here generally know the least, but they make themselves heard, though. The noise of them is something fierce. (Laughter) the din and the confusion; whatever we do is wrong. There is a minority of good people over here. In Germany, I suppose, the majority are good people, and we have a minority of good people over here, and by that I mean people who think they are good; and by they I mean people who think they are better than the rest of us, who are more efficient and know more, I suppose, on all subject than all the rest of us, and make more noise than all the rest of us. They always remind me of that saying that one stridulate grasshopper in the corner of the fence makes more noise than a thousand cattle in the field nearby. That illustrates these

people. But no more. I did not come here to address you. I am very anxious indeed to hear what our friend from Philadelphia, from the land of William Penn and Benjamin Franklin, has to say. If they have not good government over there, where on earth should they have it? (Laughter) There is no better article of government on this earth than William Penn prefaced to his law for the Colony of Pennsylvania, a classic that no man could do better than read.

And then our friend here from Cincinnati. I don't know what to hear from him, he looks so young. (Laughter) It has been the rule heretofore, that wise men came from the East (Laughter) but that is all reversed. They seem to come from the West now. We ought to have Brand Whitlock here now. I suppose he might let a little light in on us, or we might possibly let a great flood of light in on him. I say that with due respect to some things of his which I read lately.

So, my friends, I am very glad to see you all come here in such numbers to listen to what may be said about efficient government by these gentlemen who come so far to address you. (Applause)

.....Two Pages Missing.....

Third Speaker

Honorable Rudolph Blankenburg

Mayor of Philadelphia

Mr. President, members of the Economic Club, ladies and gentlemen: If this is a pulpit, I deliver a sermon; if it is a platform, I deliver an address. It was whispered in my ear that a sermon would be in order in New York. (Laughter) You may need it, (laughter) but if you do, perhaps the Mayor from Cincinnati, who looks more like a clergyman than I do, will accommodate you. (Laughter)

I was exceedingly interested in the address delivered by His Honor, Mayor Gaynor, who is perhaps, today the most abused man in the United States. He hopes that the Mayor of Cincinnati and the Mayor of Philadelphia fare better. Well, we might, but we don't. (Laughter) the trouble is, and always has been, that a man who tries to please everybody pleases nobody; therefore I have made up my mind, from the day I entered office, as I could not please everybody, I tried to please myself. And that I have religiously done. (Laughter) Sometimes, perhaps, to the great detriment of the feeling of my supporters when I was a candidate for office. But that is the fate of all men. The more eager they are to do right, the more complaints are lodged against them. We are having a subway problem in Philadelphia; not quite as serious and extensive a one as you have in New York; we are very modest; in fact entirely too modest; that is the reason you New Yorkers get ahead of us. (Laughter) One hundred years ago Philadelphia was the greatest city in

the Union. Today it is only the third city. We intend to build subways and elevated railroads, and we will be satisfied to spend thirty or forty million dollars. You spend three or four hundred, even five or six hundred million dollars. It was one of the promises made by me that I would do everything to give Philadelphia subways, about twenty miles. I had not been in office six months before I was publicly charged that I had done nothing so far, because even the subways had not been finished. (Laughter)

Now, I am to talk on Efficient Municipal Government. For thirty years I have been a militant reformer, if you know what that means. For fifteen months - not quite- I have occupied the high office as Mayor of Philadelphia. Ordinarily I prefer to talk of the general subject, the good government, not only municipally but also state and national; but tonight I must confine myself to the municipal problem.

Now, the great trouble in our country has been, and is today, that we have not yet learned to separate politics from municipal affairs. (Applause) what has politics to do with an efficient Director of Public Works in the City of Philadelphia, or with your Comptroller? When I was in business I didn't ask a man who came and applied for a place, "Are you a Republican? Are you a Democrat?" or today I might even add, "Are you a Bull Mooser?" (Laughter) The simple question was "What can you do?" If you can perform the duties of the Office, I want to appoint you, you are my man; if you can't, I don't want you."

Now, we find in our municipal government all over this land - there are a few exceptions - but there is a new feeling all over our country that municipal government must be absolutely separated from politics, (Applause) and as soon as this feeling become widespread, intelligent people of this country take an interest in government, the day will be won. But the trouble, gentlemen, and I believe you will agree with me, that too many of us and especially those called good citizens, are lazy, too indifferent or too cowardly to take part in public affairs. (Applause)

What is Philadelphia? A great corporation, magnificent city, but it is nothing but a corporation, with more than a million and a half of stockholders. Every man, woman and child in Philadelphia is a stockholder in that corporation, the same as every man, woman and child in Greater New York is a stockholder in this greater corporation. If the Pennsylvania Railroad (if any New York Central men are here I hope they will forgive me if I speak of the Pennsylvania Railroad) (Laughter) did not appoint people to office, from the president down, who are thoroughly versed in the management of that part of the business assigned to them, the stockholders would soon find it out. Therefore the Pennsylvania Railroad believes in and has the best kind of civil service, and that is what has made it one of the strongest and best of railroads in any part of the world.

Now, gentlemen, why should not we apply the same principle to municipal government? I am sure the smoke that issues from the chimneys - you don't have it in New York; you have good laws here - but in Philadelphia we have black soot issuing form the chimneys. We have not been able to prevent it as yet. It is neither Democratic nor Republican smoke. (Laughter) It is smoke

that enters our homes, spoils our gardens, our furniture. The ladies will appreciate that (Laughter) because the curtains have to be cleaned every little while. Now, why should we make a difference between Democratic smoke or Republican smoke? What we want is no smoke at all of that character. (Applause)

Three besetting sins of the American people - and although I was made, as the distinguished Ambassador said, in Germany, and I am very proud of it, because a large majority of you who are here are indirectly descendants from the Fatherland, whether you come from Germany, from Ireland, or from England. The Saxons, in the fifth century, invaded England and made England what it is. (Laughter) Then people got tired of living over there and they came to the United States, and they called themselves the great Anglo-Saxon race. Both the Angles and the Saxons came from the mouth of the river Elbe, in the northern part of Germany; so the name itself betrays that you owe a great deal to Germany and the sooner you acknowledge it the better it will be all around (Laughter) - the three besetting sins of the American people are selfishness, indifference and cowardice, as I said before. The selfishness displayed by men who are in politics, not for the good of the government but for their own benefit. We could soon expurgate them if we wanted to, if we only had the courage. And there are indifferent people, who don't even go the polls. Why, gentlemen, if we have three hundred and fifty thousand voters registered in Philadelphia and only two hundred and fifty thousand go to the polls, as they have done, there are one hundred thousand very bad citizens, (applause) because the hundred thousand very bad

citizens are the ones that might turn the tide and give us good government to which we are entitled.

Then there is cowardice. Why, in Russia there are thousands and tens of thousand of people who would shed their last drop of blood to have even a tithe of the free government that we enjoy here. But in our own country there are hundred of thousands and tens of thousands of people who are too cowardly to face the boss because they fear the boss, and when you look at the boss at close range, he is but a very indifferent looking specimen of humanity, (Laughter and Applause) and if you approach him in the right way he will cower in less that no time and you will be the master.

We had a president of a trust company in Philadelphia who was an honored reformer with me for many, many years. Then he was elected as president of the trust company and that was his undoing. He immediately neglected attending meetings, no interest in reform at all, and when I asked him why is that? He said “Well, you see some of the leading politicians in Philadelphia re our depositors, and I cannot afford to offend them.” Now, gentlemen that is the kind of cowardice that ought never to be tolerated. They are not physical cowards, but they are moral cowards, and the moral coward is a danger to his country.

I am just making a few preliminary remarks; (Laughter) Oh, I have a few minutes yet - because I want to lead you up gradually to the revolt that took me into office in November, 1911. Now, the

success of that campaign, ladies and gentlemen, was largely due not to voters but to non-voters. The women of Philadelphia, almost to a man, stood back of my ticket. (Prolonged Applause and Laughter) Now, some of you may laugh in derision, but I believe the majority of you will understand the power of the women, even if they do not have the right of the ballot, if they are only asked to help. It was not only the women but the children. Why, the children sometimes had greater power than their parents. They listened; they hear; they go home; they tell their father and their mother what they hear on the street, and out of the mouths of babes there comes truth, and they did things all over the city that never had been heard of before. So, it was these agencies, besides the good men, who didn't stay at home in their parlors and used rocking chair - that is why I was elected Mayor of Philadelphia.

Well, my nominal majority was about five thousand. My actual majority could be multiplied several times, and that leads me to this one point, - if there is any man more dangerous than any other, it is the ballot thief. I don't know whether you have ever suffered from dishonest elections in Greater New York. I remember very well, though, some twenty years ago, of a certain gentleman named McKane who said "Injunctions don't go here," when he stood before Judge Gaynor and got five years imprisonment. (Applause) It was the best day's work Mayor Gaynor ever did. (Laughter and applause) And it is. Now, if anybody wants to challenge me I am right here. (Laughter)

After being elected, the greatest difficulty confronting me was the selection of my cabinet - five directors - of Public Safety, Public works, health and Charity, Supplies and Docks; and you have no idea - and I was so glad Mayor Gaynor spoke the way he did of how many people there were who thought they were able to fill the bill, - you have no idea how many people there were who thought they would fit the bill. I didn't think they would, and I was very particular to say so to so inform them. We had men who had been on the same ticket with me, others who had done good service in the campaign, made speeches morning, noon and night, but they were not fitted for the job. The pressure at last became so strong that I said, "Gentlemen, I would as soon permit you to pick out a wife for me when I am married, as I would permit you to select my cabinet for me."

(Applause)

Well, that settled it. (Laughter) Then, whom to take. There were many excellent men. It took me several weeks to make my selection, and in the first place I never thought of the man's politics. I never thought of his religion, and that resulted in my selecting five men, four of whom are young enough to be my sons, whom I challenge any municipality to match. (Applause) They are efficient in every way. We have adopted the system of efficiency in government. We meet once every week at least, and they come to me whenever any questions of great importance are to be handled, and discuss and consult with me; but I leave them absolutely on their own responsibility in the general management of their office, and that is why they are efficient. (Applause) I didn't for a moment inquire about their religion, so it happens one is a Catholic, one is a Hebrew, three

are Protestants, and with myself as half a Quaker, - on account of my wife who is a Quaker, - we have a cosmopolitan cabinet. (Laughter)

Another thing that I think is of great importance in any public official, be he President, Governor or Mayor, - he must learn to say no pleasantly. After he has learned that, and if he says it emphatically even, the battle is half won. That is one of the traits in our public men, many of them, which leads them on the wrong path; or rather they will not be as successful as if they are able to say no at the proper time.

Politics outside, efficiency inside, is the watchword of our administration. In the first place, I took the police out of politics. They are supposed to be the guardians of the peace, to look after the property and lives of our citizens. Under administration after administration in Philadelphia they were simple used to further the base ends of the political boss, but that has been eliminated today. They are today American freemen where formerly they were organization slaves.

Formerly they were told where they might live, today they can live wherever they choose.

Formerly they had to pay two or three or even four assessments a year, which went to enrich the political party and the political boss. Today they can carry every cent of their scant earnings home to their wives and their children. (Applause) Of course we have had our own experience with the police. I learned only last week that about two years ago a certain police officer used to go in a store kept by an Italian who sold shoes, and he deliberately picked up in a few weeks four pairs of shoes, took them home and never paid for them. He has paid for three of them already,

and he will pay for the other pair. Now that is a kind of graft of which you in New York would never be guilty. Why, shoes? What do they amount to? (Laughter) but I must not say anything about police departments and I don't want to. At the same time you can do your own thinking. (Laughter)

One of the troubles I have labored under, and I believe you in New York do, is that we have not sufficient home rule. If our municipalities, honestly administered, had the power to do things that are essentially municipal, it would help very materially; but we have to wait until the Legislature meets, which is only once in two years, then we may get legislation, or we may not. Therefore, I think one of the essentials for good municipal government is more home rule for our people.

(Applause)

A striking example of this is in our Board of Revision of Taxes in Philadelphia, a body of three men appointed by the Board of Judges - fifteen Common Pleas Judges; I have never yet known one of these men to be appointed on account of his efficiency. Politics has been rampant. Now, the matter got so bad that we made an earnest effort within the last two months to change that condition, and I am here more than glad to express the deep gratitude of the City of Philadelphia to your own Lawson Purdy, than whom there is no more efficient man in that line in the country.

(Applause) He was in Philadelphia about a week ago and delivered an address before a large audience that was so convincing that even the Board of Revision immediately said, "We will

come off the tree now; we are going to be good.” The system we have had for years favors those that didn’t need favors, while the houses of the poor were assessed at their full value.

Well, it is not an easy thing, Mayor Gaynor, to be the head of a great municipality. There are so many things come to us that are really amusing, and at the same time that show how little thought people have about the Mayor and the multitude of things he has to attend to. A lady came to my office not long ago, handsomely dressed. She wanted to see the Mayor. “What do you want to see him about?” “I want to Mayor to keep other women from running after my husband.” Now, I don’t know whether that ever happened to my friend Mayor Gaynor or not. We didn’t call on the police department, and I don’t know what the poor woman is doing. But how can I do a thing like that? (Laughter) Or how could you, Mayor Gaynor? We are not paid for that. I think we are earning the salary that is paid to us, and we really more than earn it.

A few Sundays ago I had a call on the phone from the northeastern part of the state, about six miles from my house. An angry voice at the other end said, “Are you the Mayor?” “Yes, this is the Mayor, What is the matter?” “It is an outrage! It is an outrage!” “What is an outrage?” “Why, my neighbor’s dog barked all last night, and I sent to the police station in the neighborhood this morning to stop it, and that infernal dog is still barking this evening, and I want you to come out immediately to stop it.” And that dog didn’t even pay a tax. (Laughter)

Reform must begin with the individual. No matter how loudly we may applaud when we celebrate the birthday of Abraham Lincoln, or George Washington; no matter how we feel at the moment what great men they were, if we do not consecrate ourselves to do whatever there is in us to do our applause goes for nothing. That is what we are suffering from. We are very patriotic in speech, very patriotic in our applause, but are we doing our share?

Now, it seems to be that every man and every woman has a certain sphere which he or she must fill. We all have a duty to perform. We all are citizens of this great country. If we all unite unselfishly, just look at the wonderful results that will be ours. But are we doing our duty? I ask you, gentlemen. Ask yourselves. I have been trying for thirty years to help lift the municipality of Philadelphia out of the degraded condition in which it was. We have succeeded. We have done quite a good deal. We expect to do a good deal more, but we will never succeed in doing everything that we should do unless we have the support of all the thinking people in the community. (Applause) That is the same condition which prevails in your city of New York.

If Philadelphia and New York should go hand in hand and establish good municipal government, it will spread all over our land, and in a very short time we will find that there is a new spirit, that there is an awakened spirit, something like the spirit of 1776, that threw off the foreign yoke. There is a more dangerous yoke threatening us in this country today and that is the domestic yoke of indifference, of cowardice and of selfishness. (Applause)

Gentlemen, why are we in this world - now I am going to preach just for a minute. Why are we here? How long do we stay here? I don't care whether a man has a million or a hundred million. When he dies, he will leave it. He will leave his money, but let him leave with his money a good name. (Applause) A man does not have to be a millionaire to leave a good name. The poor people leave in their sphere just as good names as those well to do or rich. Now, this sermon is a very short one. I want to make it very impressive.

We speak, you and I, of my mother, of my father, of my child. Let us speak in the same spirit of love and veneration of my city. If we do, think of the result. You love your families; you will do anything for them. Do the same for your Greater City of New York, as we are trying to do for the third city in the Union, Philadelphia. Gentlemen, let us dedicate ourselves to this one object, - to be good citizens and to leave a name, each one according to his power that will redound to the glory and benefit of our great country. We, in America, are and should be the guiding star for all the world, and if we in America united with the other nations related to us, if we do what our duty is, there is no doubt in my mind that not only the peace of the world will be conserved, but that the government of the country will be such as to be emulated all over the world. (Applause)

MR. SPEYER: Mayor Blankenburg, we thank you very much for your very interesting address, and for the very fine sentiment with which you concluded.

There is another Mayor here, as you know, gentlemen, who comes from a city in Ohio. He is still a young man and nobody can tell how high a citizen from Ohio will rise. Mayor Hunt has always been one of the advocates of divorcing politics from municipal government. He has been in the front ranks of those citizens who have taken interest in public affairs. It is only a little over a year since he was elected to be Mayor of Cincinnati, and we would like to hear from him what his experience has been so far. Mayor Hunt of Cincinnati. (Applause)

Fourth Speaker

Honorable Henry T. Hunt

Mayor of Cincinnati

Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen: It has become one of the most fascinating objects of American Mayors to hypnotize invitation committees through very efficient press agents. We find that a very enjoyable and desirable pastime. In the first place we can get away from home, get a slight vacation, meet charming people, and so impress the people at home by the fact that such a club as this has seen fit to invite us to address it. The papers do not care what we say, so it is appreciated all the more. The principal triumph of this visit of mine to this city was having the pleasure of meeting and hearing two distinguished Mayors who preceded me. One thing particularly struck me about both of them, which I think accounts for their success and for their very distinguished services to these two great cities, - that is their independence. They proceed without regard to results according to what they think best for the people of their cities. I can see

that these two Mayors brood over these cities as a father broods over his children, endeavoring to protect them from that which might affect their welfare, and endeavoring to safeguard their future and to proceed in that way absolutely. And after all, ladies and gentlemen, that is probably the most successful politics to play. No man is wise enough or farseeing enough to know the consequence of his act may be, and if he attempts to determine his conduct by political expediency, or by propriety, different from the propriety of justice and right, he becomes involved in such intricate calculations that he is bound to be confused, and the result is that always he is compelled to devote his thoughts to protect things himself; whereas if he proceeds as the two Mayors proceed, at least he preserves his self respect, and my experience is he preserves his political prestige also. And so I say, with a great deal of feeling, I count my visits here a particular privilege that I have had the pleasure of listening to and receiving new spirit from these two distinguished Mayors of American cities.

The nineteenth century, ladies and gentlemen, perhaps had three social goddesses, the Children of the French Revolution, - Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. The modern century has added as supplementary goddess, another deity, - Efficiency. This efficiency is coming to be more and more worshipped throughout the United States, and her propaganda has become so strenuous that it has even penetrated the chambers of conservative administration in American cities. These cities have for many years worshipped another deity, the deity of jobs, the deity of being able to provide themselves friends, but American Mayors are now studying efficiency, rather than

political expediency, and the methods whereby they can locate their political supporters in some municipal position.

In Cincinnati our greatest difficulty was the matter of personnel. No city can be efficient, of course, which does not enjoy a personnel devoted to the city's welfare. We had there an organization beside which Tammany, in its worst days, or the Philadelphia organization, were by amateur societies or novices. Cincinnati politicians regarded the efforts of these gentlemen in Philadelphia as crude and childish, and they were really so in comparison. (Laughter) The Cincinnati organization did not permit graft for a moment among any of the subordinates. It did not permit any subordinate to enrich himself by one dollar of money profit from the public. It permitted no scandal to grow, and it even pursued to the criminal courts absolutely any man who violated its confidence and destroyed its prestige by being false to his public position. However, the matter was so arranged that everything went to the head and obedience was all that was necessary to bring about the results from the men who held public positions. This organization was loyal to its head. The power to reward or the power to punish were strong enough to keep all city employees, all judges, even judges of the Supreme Court, even Mayors, Governors, even members of the General Assembly, in line with the wishes of the head of this organization. The result was that it was almost impossible to persuade the people of Cincinnati that they and anything there that was not perfectly proper and righteous. This leader, however, made this one mistake, one exception to this wise rule or policy of not permitting any one to be divided, and that was his undoing. He permitted the County Treasurers of Hamilton County, who had the duty of

depositing the county money in banks and paying the proceeds to the county, but who violated that duty by obtaining money secretly and putting the proceeds in his own pocket. He required these Treasurers to divide the proceeds with him, amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars a year, and that, as I say, was his undoing, a departure from his wise rule which constituted the stumbling block upon which the organization fell, I hope for all time. These Treasurers were forced to pay the money back, and they paid back not only the money that they received, but they paid back money that they received from this leader. That was disagreeable, and they made quite a large outcry. The result was it was necessary to ask this dictator about the rest of this money, and he proceeded to perform the part that Mayor Blankenburg has said these bosses always perform. Became craven and lied under oath about his participation in these transactions. The result was that we were able to prove these falsities and to show the people of Cincinnati that this great leader, this dictator, this wonderful creator of an organization, was, after all, but a coward and perjurer as well as a grafter, and consequently by reason of that fact, his organization was swept out of power.

When we came to create personnel, we had great difficulty. Every man who held public office in that city was absolutely the creature of this organization. His loyalty was to the organization and not to the city of Cincinnati. He was paid by the city, but his loyalty was to the organization; his services, first of all, were to them. His retention in office depended not upon his services to the city, but on his ability to carry his precinct or ward, as the case might be, and if he carried his precinct or ward, as long as he was agreeable to the people, as long as he performed his duties in

a more or less perfunctory fashion, he was retained or promoted to higher office. We had to substitute efficient men for these men who were absolutely impossible to change. The loyalty of these men to the organization is something remarkable, something incredible, in New York, where apparently there is no loyalty of that kind to the head of the organization, or very little, or in Philadelphia where I have understood that occasionally men indulge in proceedings in court of law; but the leaders of the organization in Cincinnati were able to command absolute respect from all their followers. We had to make a change. We couldn't endanger the welfare of the administration by permitting these men to exist for a moment, and accordingly we removed them almost absolutely, and made temporary appointments under the civil service law. We provided civil service examination with machinery to conduct the examination just as rapidly as possible, and after one year had elapsed we had made approximately ten times as many appointments from civil service lists as our predecessors, and the men now holding political positions in the city are devoted to the city and have no affiliations whatever with any political organization, nor are they permitted to contribute to any political expenses or anything of that kind. The result is that we are getting service from these men, service that the old organization could never obtain for the benefit of the city of Cincinnati.

In attacking the problem of efficiency, gentlemen, we thought it wise to proceed by preventive measures, to proceed upon the same principles applied in modern medicine. We find that prevention is better than cure, and we attempt to prevent crime, to reduce prostitution as a business, and to apply prophylactic methods everywhere; particularly in the fire department we

have found it perfectly possible to reduce fire loss in our city by employing firemen as inspectors. During the year 1912 we made some 46,000 inspections, with the result in decrease in fire loss of more than one third. The loss in 1912 was only two thirds that of 1911 and we hope that by insisting upon these methods further to bring about even greater results. This has several advantages to the department, as well as to the city. The men become familiar with the buildings they are called upon to investigate. They know where the stairways are, where the area ways are, where all the standpipes are, they become absolutely acquainted with all the facilities they have to employ when a fire does take place.

I am very glad to compliment the Mayor of New York on the fire department here. We are proposing to send some of our firemen to his school. You may not be aware that you have the most efficient fire department in the world. You may not be aware that you have a discipline in this department that is not transcended by the discipline in the Prussian army, with due appreciation to Count Bernstoff. (Applause) We are delighted to take a lesson out of the book of New York City, and to send our men here to learn what they can from this department.

But you must not imagine for a moment that you have everything in New York, and that we have nothing. We have, I believe, the most efficient purchasing department in the United States; a purchasing department which buys not only for sub-departments, but for all, and we do not buy merely on the trademark of some company which has more or less of a reputation. We buy on definite standard specifications, which are the result of examination by chemists, analysts,

investigators, etc., into all matters of merchandise purchasable by cities. You can understand the intricacies of this work when I tell you that the city does this entirely as well as the other functions. It is the only city in the United States which has such an institution, which is supported almost entirely by municipal funds. The purchasing department buys for all these institutions whatever they may be, for the hospitals surgical instruments, asphalt, gauze, everything imaginable. I won't take time to recount any large numbers of those matters that are supplied, but we found on coming to office that there was no manner of purchasing record at all; that they purchased just whatever the city needed, asked the price, sent whomsoever they saw fit as political preference decided.

Now all bids are made on open competitive bidding, and, best of all, on straight, definite specifications. In addition to the matter of specifications we have inspections. We see to it that the goods are supplied in quality and quantity as the specifications provide. It was rather amusing to find that vendors would rely upon their passing the first inspection. Some of these matters are tested in the university laboratory, such as coal and matters of that kind. These vendors supposed that after having past one test we would relax in our vigilance, and they would be able to sell to the city inferior articles; and after the first few carloads they proceeded to send us absolutely inferior articles. But they soon found that we were able to find out what they were doing, and to reject them in every case. Accordingly, now, the vendors in the city send us the very best quality that the specifications call for. I don't know whether these intricate purchase minutiae of administration interest this Club, but we found them fascinating.

Among the most difficult problems we had to solve was the problem of purchasing under on control, so that we would all move forward at one time with as little waste as possible. It seems to me, gentlemen, that there has been more waste in American cities on account of in coordination than on account of all the graft.

We found in our city large twilight zones in which no one could be found to perform the work necessary for the citizens' benefit. By the establishment of an efficiency board, so called, which meets once a week, composed of all the heads of departments, we have succeeded in bridging, in shortening these zones, and in assigning to some municipal department every piece of municipal work. This board meets once a week, discusses all problems involving more than one department, and the board has attached to it a corps of inspectors who are under the control of the Mayor. These inspectors are like efficiency engineers. They are sent to some department to make a survey, and they bring that department back charted, - its organization, functions, and so forth charted in the most definite and concise form, with recommendations for improvement, and those recommendations are discussed by the board and some action resolved upon. We thought at first that would be enough; that all we had to do would be to issue an order, which would accomplish the result. But we found, after experiment with these executive orders, that they tended to fade away the farther they got from their source, and finally that they reposed in some pigeon-hole is some department clerk found it impossible or troublesome to make the order coincide with the departmental organization or the routine in some other office, and so we found

it desirable to assign these inspectors to follow through these orders to their final result, and now we get results in every case where we make such orders.

No one here, I am sure, except men in official life, appreciate or understand the intricacies, the difficulties of municipal employment or appointment. The burden of routine is tremendous and it is almost impossible for any executive to spend any time in thought. Every day his desk is piled up with an enormous amount of routine business, all of which is important and cannot be neglected, and purely creative work is impossible. I was very much amused to hear the complaint of my distinguished processor about the subservience of New York City and Philadelphia to the Legislatures of the two states. We have long passed that time in Ohio. We have now absolute power to frame our own charters and do exactly as we please, and I would welcome the distinguished Mayors to come out and investigate us and see how well it works. We don't have to go to Albany or Columbus or any other place. We have power to do as we please. The people themselves can frame their own charters, adopt them and perform any functions not specifically forbidden by the State of Ohio.

After all, gentlemen, what does efficiency mean? What is the difference between efficiency in business and efficiency in a municipality? Efficiency in business is in terms of dollars, but efficiency in cities is in terms of municipal service. Consequently it is certain that the difficulty of municipal service is much greater than that of a corporation, because the intricacies of ascertaining the desires and needs of the people is far more important and difficult than the

problem of managing a corporation; of managers of corporation to ascertain what the people desire and sell it to them for a price. Consequently it is incumbent upon all good citizens, as to seem to us, to encourage and support municipal executives to perform good service, as my predecessors have well pointed out, and that, after all, is the test of efficiency. No city government can exist for long which is more efficient or intelligent than the standard of efficiency or intelligence of the people of the city, and it is our particular problem, and the one we work on hardest, as I believe Mayor Gaynor does, to endeavor to interest the people in our city in our government, to insist that it is their government, or only performing their work, and it is incumbent upon them to appreciate it or to criticize it.

We found on coming into office that men came to the City Hall without any knowledge of where to file complaints and so forth. We established a department of information, and tried to find somebody who was capable and had the power to rectify the wrongs complained of. We found a very effective instrument in publicity. We asked all organizations and citizens to come in and assist in the formation of a political program, in the preparation of ordinances, and so forth, for that, after all, is the most comprehensive community program in Ohio, and they come and criticize. They came in many cases ignorant at the start, but finally came to appreciate in a wonderful degree the general welfare of the community as a whole. They are at first inclined to be narrow, to consider their own district; but when it is pointed out to them that it means a sacrifice to some more deserving part of the city, a sacrifice to a district of the city where

children are dying from lack of care and playground facilities, they are as generous as one can be, and resign their desires for the benefit of the community as a whole.

We have found it very profitable indeed to provide municipal exhibitions, which show the state of the city and which interest the people far more than any report could possibly do.

We are endeavoring to accomplish even this miracle, - to make municipal reports attractive and even interesting. We hope to have our reports ready this year for distribution by the first of March, which is about nine months in advance of the usual result in most cities. The City Hall is full of magnificently bound volumes in morocco, reports of Philadelphia and the City of New York, which come to us after they are two years old, and which are absolutely of no value to anybody. We propose to have in the hands of the Mayor of Philadelphia and the Mayor of New York our report, by which I am sure these Mayors, will very greatly profit, (Laughter) by, at any rate, the middle of March.

The most desirable asset, as the Mayor of Philadelphia pointed out, ladies and gentlemen, is prosperous and healthy men and women, and that after all is our principal effort to promote. We know that by removing the cause of immorality and crime, or by reducing them we can bring about health and prosperity to a very considerable extent.

We have no police problem in Cincinnati. That may be an astonishing thing to the Mayor of New York. The police department of Cincinnati has never had a scandal. Graft has never existed there. I am sure that no captain or lieutenant would commit any crime. He might perhaps be off his beat for a moment, perhaps commit some delinquency of a venal nature of that sort, but so far as indulging in bribery or being bribed or in another pursuit I see is common in Eastern cities, it doesn't exist, and we owe that in part to an accident, no doubt. In fact, unfortunate as were the results of a machine regime, we owe an honest police department to that regime. While the department permitted gambling and vice to exist, and permitted different sorts of crime to flourish, it never was paid for doing so. The pay went to the man at the head, the Chief of Police or Director of Public Safety, and they order the patrolman or lieutenant to let these things along; but so far as these men ever receiving anything for themselves, it didn't exist, in my opinion, and I think I know something about it. I was Prosecuting Attorney of Hamilton County three years, twice elected, and we were quite vigilant and active and not unwilling to find something wrong with the city administration at that time, and in no case were we able, in spite of all our efforts, in spite of the efforts of the best detectives we could get, in spite of going about at night and seeing what was going on and in tracing the matters that came to our attention, - in no case were we able to find any patrolman, lieutenant or captain false to his duty in the sense of receiving graft for failing to do his duty, and so we had to congratulate ourselves in not having these difficult problems which confront your great city.

And, now, my friends I am sure that I ought not to keep you longer. It has been a great pleasure to be with you. I only want to say one or two words. Something further occurs to me.

Now, one of the problems we had to face was the problem of endeavoring to distribute and arrange and coordinate charity, - municipal charity. We have in Cincinnati a great many hospitals, charitable societies, whose function it is to try to relieve destitution and distress. We found those societies were constantly interfering with each other, duplicating each others work, expending the city's money and the money of their donors and friends without any limitations. We have made considerable progress in coordination of all that sort of endeavor. There is now at the City Hall a bureau, a central bureau where are kept records of all the persons in the city who receive relief, a complete history of such persons, with the result that every society can ascertain whether or not these persons are worthy of relief, and not trespass upon the field of any other society. That, above other things, is an accomplishment toward efficiency.

When one considers the tremendous amount of work to be done in cities, the absence of sufficient funds to do it with, and that the work is unlimited, while the finances are limited, will see the necessity of making the municipal dollars go as far as possible, and we are earnestly endeavoring to bring that about, because we see so much work to be done that we can't afford to see extravagance or waste take place. In medieval times the best minds of the world were concerned with the hereafter. They suppressed their desires, castigated themselves. They removed themselves as far as possible from the affairs of the world, but nowadays, whether it be

material or not, we are endeavoring to make the earth as nearly as possible like Heaven and American cities, we hope, in the next generation at least, will be as near Heaven as ingenuity and enterprise can make them. I thank you. (Applause)

THE MEETING THEN ADJOURNED