

the situation when they are already anxious to do so, but cannot get needed sites on profitable terms. Think of urging builders to relieve the congestion when it is caused by exorbitant prices demanded by land monopolists for building sites. Think of urging landlords to do this when your own taxing authority exacts heavy tribute of builders for building, while it exempts land monopolists with lavish generosity. Tax these monopolists more and builders less, and appeals to builders need not be made. They would erect small apartment buildings as fast as needed, and competition among them would keep rents down to a moderate sum. Perhaps "Charities" has some such thought in mind, for it makes its suggestion regarding remedies only as a matter of "the greatest immediate need." There is in that phrase something like a hint of concealed knowledge, which makes one suspect that "Charities" is more knowing, perhaps, than it thinks wise to "let on" just now.

Steps were taken at the last meeting of the Chicago Federation of Labor to execute the mandate of the people on the referendum with reference to electing the Chicago school board. At this referendum (pp. 7, 19) the vote stood 57,121 against and 115,553 in favor of popular election of the board, a majority for the proposition of over 58,000 in a total vote of 172,000. A committee on the condition of the schools, appointed by the Federation, has now reported a recommendation that members of the board be elected at large; that they be elected at a special election called for the purpose, like that for the election of judges; and that candidates be nominated by petition only.

This recommendation is a wise one. As at present chosen, the school board, when not the playing of "business" interests that starve the schools by false economies for the benefit of monopolies, is part of the stock in trade of

spoilsmen in politics. It flip-flops alternately from "business" graft to political push and pull. The only remedy for the evil is the one proposed by the committee of the Federation of Labor. Elect the board, and all appointive influences are removed. Elect it on a ticket at large, and log rolling between representatives of wards and districts is eliminated. Elect it at a special election, and public attention is concentrated upon school questions. Nominate only by petition, and partisan boss-ship is reduced to the minimum.

Naturally enough, however, the beneficiaries of mismanagement, whether allied to the "business" graft faction or the political spoils faction, are opposed to any kind of popular election of the board, and they offer plausible objections. Yet an elective school board has proved so successful in St. Louis that President Eliot of Harvard declares his belief that the St. Louis school board is the best board of education in the United States. If an elective board can succeed so well in that city of "business" graft and political spoils, why not try the experiment in Chicago?

It is refreshing to see now and then in the public prints something about maintaining public order, which is democratic in spirit and thoughtful in presentation. Very seldom can the newspaper reader of the United States enjoy refreshment of that kind. To symbolize the American idea of order some scheme of bull dogs, bloodhounds, policemen, jails and gibbets would be necessary. In Canada there is a better spirit, of which the following extract from the Ottawa Journal is an excellent expression. It is none the less acceptable for its criticism of reactionary tendencies on this side of the line and even in our own raw city of Chicago:

The business of the law and those who enforce it is to assert and maintain the right of the individual and to prevent aggression upon the weak and simple by the strong and cunning. But the danger is that those who are intrusted with

the power of the people in enforcing the law may themselves become aggressors upon individual rights. Merely to call this high-handed conduct "maintaining order" does not make it any less disorderly. The czar is only "maintaining order" in Finland at this moment, but his process means the stamping out of civilization by sheer barbaric force. We of British blood have had to fight this cause out many a time against magistrates, lords and kings. Not only have we asserted the right of the individual as against the mere might of the ruler, but we have set up plain constitutional marks, in order that we might know at once when the sacred territory of individual right was being invaded. The right to think freely, to speak freely in private or in public, so long as common decency is maintained; the right to a speedy and open trial; the right to be held innocent until proven guilty; these and other boundary marks are unquestioned with us, as yet. The United States inherited the standards of British liberty, as we did. Their object in making themselves a nation was to "set the bounds of freedom broader yet." In the spirit shown by the examples just given and by others that might be given, they indicate themselves apostates to the faith. It is not for us to judge them or to plume ourselves upon superior virtue. It may be that we sin in other respects and have earned condemnation in our own special way. Or it may be that temptation has not come to us as strong or as insidious as that which assailed them. But we have a right to note our neighbors' errors if we do it with a sincere desire to avoid similar errors in our own conduct. For, be it noted, this plea of "maintaining order," however honest those may be who use it, may be a sheer illusion. Arbitrary power may be granted for the public good, but it is always in the long run used against the people and in the interest of those upon whom it is conferred. Those familiar with great cities make much of the difference between London and Chicago in the matter of police protection. In London the police are under iron discipline and must observe scrupulously the rights of every individual, from the lord mayor to Bill Sykes himself. And in London life and property are safer, and order is better maintained, than in any other great city on earth. On the other hand, Chicago gives its police great latitude. The club and the "sweat box" are theirs, to use at their discretion. And in Chicago crime and the police are partners. The law-abiding citizen who would keep his property and go about the streets unmolested must know and observe the terms of that partnership and go abroad only when and where it is safe to do so. Liberty is sacrificed to a too cowardly love of order, and order is sacrificed to the tyranny of those whom the people have been weak enough to clothe with arbitrary power.