

Labor Organizations in Local Politics.

In response to the call (vol. viii., p. 872) for a convention to formulate plans for controlling party primaries in Chicago in the interest of the labor vote, 300 delegates assembled at Brand's Hall on the 8th. They represented 52 labor unions and 8 civic societies identified with the labor movement. Arthur McCracken was elected chairman and a permanent organization was formed under the name of "The Chicago Progressive Alliance." The apparent importance of this convention in its bearing upon the labor movement in local politics throughout the United States, warrants the reproduction in full of its platform, in which its spirit and purpose are stated:

Realizing that we are at the mercy of an industrial despotism more absolute and cruel than the Russian autocracy, more far-reaching in its effects upon the people's weal, and more dangerous to the happiness, peace and perpetuation of the Republic than the condition of affairs which led to the Civil War; realizing that our wage-earning millions are regarded as soulless machines, enslaved by debauching the very governmental machinery instituted to protect the people and safeguard their right; realizing that these piratical operations are made possible only by the alliance with and control of party machines, which by nominating the tools of these pirates become parties with them in crime; realizing, further, that the prey of the pirates is the wealth-producing toilers from whose labors must come not alone the support of the toilers and their families, but also the hoards of wealth of which they are despoiled, and which form the over-abundance of the idle rich and corporate power with which we are familiar, and, realizing with Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Labor, that "there is but one thing left us now—that is, to make labor's power felt in the elections"—we present the following platform to the voters of Chicago and pledge our candidates to its support:

1. Liberty to the individual to pursue natural enjoyments which do not interfere with the equal rights or liberties of others. And we denounce all interference with these rights and liberties of the people as unjust, tyrannical and opposed to the genius of American institutions.
2. That the people may fully and rationally enjoy their suffrage, we favor an enactment requiring the suspension of business on primary and election days.
3. The nomination of all candidates for elective offices by direct vote of the people at primaries to be held for that purpose.
4. Uncontrolled representative government being debauched and corrupted by those who buy privilege, we favor the adoption of the initiative and referendum, whereby the people may initiate the legislation they desire, which is refused them by their servants, and may veto legislation which their servants attempt to thrust upon them.
5. We favor that most rational and necessary change in the method of dealing with public servants, that of the power of recalling the faithless ones. No business house that was compelled to retain those employees who were faithless to it could long survive, nor can city, State or nation survive that is compelled to retain those servants that betray it.
6. The only issue before the people in the matter of the public utilities is whether the money paid by the people for service shall, as at present, go into the pockets of resident and foreign stockholders, who use our money to pollute the stream of legislation and to corrupt political parties and public servants, and whose insatiate demands for dividends prevent the people getting service and employes obtaining proper wages or working conditions, or whether the operation of them shall inure to the benefit of the people who use the utilities, in better wages and better working conditions for employes and improved service and reduced charges for patrons, that can be obtained through municipal and government ownership and operation; we therefore favor the government ownership of railroads and telegraphs and the municipal ownership of street railways, telephones, lighting and water systems.
7. Taxation, once a matter of exact computation and

paid in proportion to protection afforded by government, has latterly become a political asset and a thing of bargain and sale. The privilege that purchases legislation also purchases exemption from taxation. That the inequalities in taxation may be remedied and that the enactment of matters affecting taxation may be brought within the purview of the people to be affected by it, we favor local option in taxation, and, pending the obtaining of it, we favor an apportionment of police, fire and other protection by wards in proportion to the amount of taxes paid by each ward.

8. Feeling that the abuse of the writ of injunction by certain corporation stalking horses, who have by various devices obtained place on the bench in Federal and State courts, requires a limitation to be placed upon it, we favor such legislation as will require a trial by jury of alleged acts of contempt of court committed out of the presence of the court.

9. Recognizing the fact that Chicago, the metropolis of the Mississippi Valley, the peerless city of the western hemisphere, has outgrown the limitations placed upon her by the aged cities and villages act, and that legislators assembled from all over our State, some of whom are ignorant of our needs, others of whom are not in harmony with our aspirations, still others of whom are mere hirelings, who, for a consideration, would sell us in to further bondage, are not competent to deal with Chicago's needs and desires, leads us to pledge our earnest and utmost endeavors to obtaining for our city a charter that will give to the people of Chicago complete control of their own affairs.

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Similar action, though not in the same form, has been taken by organized labor in Sangamon County, Illinois. At Springfield on the 8th, the Federation of Labor of that city began a campaign to secure the nomination and election of workmen and friends of organized labor, to the lower house of the Illinois legislature, and to that end it has indorsed two members of trade unions, one a Republican and the other a Democrat. It also voted to oppose any candidate for office who would not declare for municipal ownership. This Federation represents 20,000 trade unionists, at least 4,000 of whom are miners. The secretary of the Illinois State Federation of Labor, James F. Morris, is reported as announcing that its membership intends to—

Support representatives of labor and the friends of labor, no matter what ticket they may be upon. It is time for labor to go into politics. I have reports from all parts of the state that the labor people are going to make an earnest campaign to place the right kind of men in the legislature and all other legislative bodies.

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The Traction Question in Chicago.

The official canvass of the Chicago vote on the three traction questions (p. 6) voted upon at the recent municipal election was completed on the 6th and formally announced on the 9th. It is as follows:

For municipal ownership.....	110,225
Against municipal ownership....	106,559
Affirmative majority	3,666
For municipal operation	121,916
Against municipal operation	110,323
Affirmative majority	11,593
Majority required by law	17,428
Lost by.....	5,835
Against granting franchises	111,955
For granting franchises	108,087
Majority against	3,868

In this canvass over 1,000 votes were added to the affirmative vote on operation as originally reported.

One of the first official acts of Mayor Dunne after the announcement of the above result was the employment, as special traction counsel in place of Clarence S. Darrow, resigned (vol. viii., p. 511), of Walter L. Fisher. Mr. Fisher was until recently the president of the Municipal Voters' League. He has been prominent for several years in the movement in Chicago for municipal good government, and both professionally as a lawyer, and in connection with civic organizations, has participated from the beginning in the traction agitation. At the municipal election a year ago he supported Mr. Harlan against Judge Dunne for the mayoralty. It was his opposition to the franchise grant proposed last Winter by the transportation committee of the City Council (vol. viii., p. 673) that caused its defeat and opened the way for the submission to the people of the municipal ownership ordinance (vol. viii., p. 707). Upon accepting the position of traction counsel on the 10th, Mr. Fisher said:

After a long conference with the Mayor I am convinced a plan for the treatment of the traction question can be worked out in entire harmony with his views and upon which people of all shades of disinterested opinion can and should unite. It is obvious that any plan must recognize that the people have voted definitely in favor of the \$75,000,000 ordinance, and that, if valid, it has become a law. The first thing therefore is to provide for an adequate test of the validity of this ordinance and for the interpretation of the Mueller law. While these matters are pending in the courts definite arrangements should be made, and made as promptly as possible, for the reconstruction of the entire street railway system and the consequent immediate improvement of the intolerable service with which the city has been afflicted. These arrangements must be upon terms which will protect the public interests, including the right of the city, upon fair terms, to put into effect that policy which the people prefer as to the ownership and operation of their public utilities. If the existing companies are willing to recognize the situation which they themselves have created and which has now been defined by the Supreme Court of the United States, Mayor Dunne has indicated his willingness to deal with them upon a basis which fully protects all their legitimate interests. The essential principle upon which he insists is that the city shall have the right at any time, upon fair terms and reasonable notice, to take over the street railways when it has determined its legal and financial ability to do so. If such terms cannot be made with the present companies, then arrangements must be made at once with a construction company or along the lines of the so-called "contract plan" for taking possession of the streets as rapidly as possible and installing in that way a modern system, with the best equipment and the best possible service. Before going publicly into any further details as to the Mayor's position, I wish to confer with leading members of the City Council on both sides of the municipal ownership controversy, and especially with the members of the new committee on local transportation. I have no intimation as to the probable membership of this committee. I have spoken to no member of the non-partisan organization committee as to the composition of any of the committees of the City Council or as to any individual member of any committee. I have entire confidence the next Council will be organized upon the basis of honesty and efficiency, and that a constructive policy on the traction question will meet the approval of a majority of its members.

The City Council was organized on the 18th on a non-partisan basis in the distribution of committeemen. The judiciary committee and the local transportation committee, the important ones at this juncture, are under the chairmanship, respectively, of Aldermen Dever and Werno, both of whom have been strong supporters of Mayor Dunne's policy.

At the opening of the new Council on the 18th Mayor Dunne submitted a long message dealing minutely with city affairs. On the traction question he said:

The people of Chicago having plainly manifested their desire for municipal ownership of street railroads with the least possible delay, I have diligently sought, since my inauguration as Mayor, for the best information and advice to this end and already have presented two plans to your honorable body. I again ask your co-operation in executing the duty with which we have been jointly charged by the people in this connection. . . . Every important trunk line in the network of street railways and many branch lines now stand at Chicago's hand to be taken under municipal control. Pay for the tangible property and a few unexpired term grants and the city can take over this system and settle this traction problem for all time. The people have demanded that this be done, and it is your duty, as public officials, to execute the public will. As the first step toward this end there should be a test of the street railway certificates. To this end I ask your co-operation. From time to time I may request such action as may enable a prompt test of the so-called Mueller law under which these certificates issue. . . . While the test in the courts is under way I may ask that your honorable body take steps toward putting into operation the "contract plan," which I outlined in my message of July 5, 1905, or some similar plan, for the taking over of the street car lines. I commend this plan because of its manifest superiority as a means of accomplishing the object with which we are charged—namely, the earliest possible installation of good service and the establishment of municipal ownership of the entire street railway system of Chicago by construction, purchase or condemnation. Because of the condition of our traction lines, reduced to the lowest level of bad service under the system of private ownership which has prevailed, every element of delay in rehabilitation should be avoided as far as possible with due regard for the street railway policy which the people have demanded and the enabling terms of the Mueller law.

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The Cleveland Traction Question.

A decision of the United States Supreme Court, rendered on the 9th, will probably delay Mayor Johnson's plans for forcing the traction companies to adopt the 3-cent fare. Franchises had been granted, pursuant to Mayor Johnson's policy, to a rival company agreeing to operate for 3-cent fares, and over these there had been much litigation, among the lawsuits being one in the Federal Court prohibiting the operation by the new company of a line on Woodland avenue (vol. vii., p. 553; vol. viii., p. 806), where the old companies claimed exclusive rights until 1914. The original franchise of the old companies for this street had expired in 1904, but the companies claimed an extension by implication. In this contention they are now partly supported by the Supreme Court, which decides that the implied extensions do not expire prior to February, 1908. In delivering the opinion of the court, Justice McKenna said:

There can be no other reasonable meaning of what the city did or of the language it used. It recognized a main line not in one ordinance, but in many ordinances. The purpose was to join the initial grant and its extensions together, and continue thus combined until 1908. There could have been no mistake in the language used or misunderstanding of it. We might suppose a mistake in one ordinance, but we cannot suppose a mistake in four ordinances. The matters dealt with were important, and it is a reasonable presumption that no provision concerning them escaped attention or was misunderstood. It is not a question of power to pass the ordinances, but of the intention of the city in passing them, and the latter we have sufficiently considered. It is only necessary to add