

PREFACE

IN so far as this volume carries a message it is that the American city lags behind the work it should properly perform. It is negative in its functions, rather than positive in its services. It has been stripped of power and responsibility. It is politically weak and lacks ideals of its possibilities. It has so little concern for its people that they in turn have little concern for it. We have failed to differentiate between those activities which are private and those which are public. We have failed, too, to provide protection to the individual from inequalities of power and position, and have left him a prey to forces as dangerous to his life and comfort as those against which the police are employed to protect. Further than this, we have failed to shift to society the burdens of industry which the coming of the city has created. We have permitted the sacrifice of low wages, irregular employment, and disease to be borne by the individual rather than by the community. Those who suffer from these conditions are in reality a vicarious sacrifice; a sacrifice which society has no right to accept.

These conditions can only be corrected by a programme of city building, of city service, through

compulsory co-operation, or socialization. To this co-operation there are no set limits. But for many years to come the city will continue to increase its activities and enlarge its services. This is the lesson of the past; it is the promise of the future.

Further than this, I have dissented from the opinion that the trouble with the American city is with the American people, with the idea that we are neglectful of politics, are too partisan, too tolerant of evil. It is assumed that we have willingly abdicated our responsibilities and turned the city over to the professional politician as an easy escape from the burdens involved. This is the personal interpretation of politics. It is somewhat on a par with the assumption that the slave is responsible for his chains, the serf for his servitude, the sweatshop worker for his poverty.

The conditions described are results, not causes. Neglect, partisanship, tolerance of evil are traceable back to legal institutions, to constitutional and political limitations, under which we have been compelled to work.

Finally, this book is written from the inside of the city. It is a study of the city at work; of the problem as seen by the official animated by a desire to promote the city's achievements and realize on its possibilities. This study is the result of many years of service, in the city council of Cleveland, on the city finance commission, as a member of the tax commission, and in the State senate. It is the result, too, of intimate knowledge of many American

cities, of contact with reformers and politicians, of studies of municipal conditions in Germany, England, Austria-Hungary, and Switzerland, and of personal acquaintance with the officials of these countries. It reflects the view-point of the men who are doing things, and striving for things, rather than of those who analyze the city from the outside. It accepts the new note in city politics, which is democratic, constructive, and social.

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