

The Decline of Decency in Public Affairs.

ARTICLES III.

Antedating our entry to the war by four full years there was a time when the Wilson administration at Washington was putting through congress more progressive legislation than four preceding presidents had proposed; when Harrison sat in the Chicago city hall and the horn was unheard of as a symbol for Chicago; when Fred Lundin sat in the rear of Righeimer's and built up "Big Bill" on Jim Pugh's pledge cards; when Deneen was the dominant element in republican politics and the issues of race, religion and the prejudices of one people against another were unknown to emanate from holders of high office; when there was a school board composed of civic leaders who needed no introduction to the public; when taxes were one-third of the present high-water mark and Criminal court records were just beginning an eight-year climb to the peak-point of two years ago.

That was Chicago in the year 1914, before eight years of municipal misgovernment malfeasance in office, misuse of public funds, criminal assaults upon civil service, demoralization of the police and fire departments, destruction of the moral fiber of the city council, prostitution of the public schools, terrorization of legitimate business and toleration of illegitimate industries, incubation of crime in brothels that paid millions for protection; complete control of the Criminal court by the malodorous machine in selecting the head of the prosecuting agencies of Cook county.

Downfall Started Over Courts.

That was Chicago in the dark age of demagoguery that drew to its close only after the most powerful machine that ever sprung from spoils politics anywhere in the United States attempted to storm the citadel of the Circuit court judiciary in June, 1921. Fortunate for Chicago and Cook county that the ring of rottenness which Lundin and his followers tried to close by "packing" the judiciary with politicians, broke when it sought to banish from the bench sixteen tried and true sitting judges.

Lundinism came its first cropper locally through the effort of its leader to make absolute his dictatorship in all departments of state, city and county government by capturing control of

the courts. By packing the Circuit court with his political henchmen he would have gained control of the south park system, the only Chicago park district whose trustees are not appointees of the governor of Illinois.

Covetous eyes had long been cast on \$50,000,000 worth of south park system bonds, authorized for years but unexpended. The crew had its governor at Springfield and its public prosecutor in the Criminal court as a result of the 1920 election, as well as control of the sanitary district board with its powerful patronage and enormous revenue from the sale of light and power. It had the mayor of Chicago, his board of education controlling the disbursement of \$40,000,000 annually and the clerks in both Circuit and Superior court as well as other county offices.

The municipal corporation with its expensive board of local improvements and its five "million dollar experts" was at the end of its tether so far as bonding power went under the provisions of the Juul law. An army of payroll patriots presented a problem in too many mouths to feed, while contractors who "had to be taken care of" had swarmed upon public improvements such as the boulevard link extension and other big street widening projects, and carried off the respective funds and special assessments long before the completion of the respective "jobs."

New Funds Needed for Monster.

The cancerous growth on the body politic had eaten into the city's treasury to such an extent that new funds on which to feed the political monster were an urgent necessity.

"To hell with the public—we're at the feed box now," was the slogan, quoted in sworn testimony by one of the erstwhile school trustees, Hart Hanson, as having been the guiding principle laid down to him by the "boss."

More motives than one appear to have actuated this crew as they set out to capture the Circuit court and the south park system in the spring of 1921. Complete control of the republican county committee in which was vested nominating power for the judicial convention had fallen to the lieutenants of Lundin at the 1920 election of ward committeemen as a result of the rout of a divided opposition in thirty-four out of the city's thirty-five wards.

That malice and revenge would play a prominent part in the campaign to capture the Circuit court became evident early, for Lundin in lordly fashion delivered to Judge Kichham Scanlan the dictum: "Go and rent a law office; we're going to drive you off the bench!" This in reprisal for the action of Judge Scanlan in sentencing six members of the Lundin school board to jail for violating his famous injunction against the removal of Superintendent of Schools Chadsey. It will be recalled that the sentences were sustained and the school trustees served them in spite of Gov. Len Small's attempt to nullify the court's power to punish for contempt by abuse of the pardon power of the executive.

Every Coalition Judge Elected.

The result of the remarkable "coalition" campaign conducted by the Chicago Bar association behind the democratic judicial ticket on which Judge Scanlan and the seven other "refugees" from the republican ticket had been given places is too well known to call forth comment from me at this time. The public—half a million strong—arose to repudiate "the ring" and triumphantly elected every coalition judge.

The immediate result of the crushing defeat of this raid on the judiciary by a "ring" of spoils politicians was the desertion of Lundin and Thompson within a few months by their principal prop—the state's attorney.

Then—and only after a new alliance had been made between the state's attorney and the political machine headed by the attorney-general of Illinois—was it revealed through the grand-jury investigation—forced by a newspaper expose of school-board scandals—to what depths had conditions in public office and affairs declined.

Rule of the "ring"—the vast, vicious spoils system that was the Thompson-Lundin "organization"—has left an indelible impress on civic affairs in Chicago. It will not be eradicated if a fair-minded but uninformed public opin-

ion is to be fooled by freebooters who betray their trust and brazenly begin the fight to restore "the ring" under cover of the cry of "political persecution."

"Thompson of To-Day a Tragedy."

Until now I have purposely refrained throughout twelve months of my term as chief justice of the Criminal court from mentioning the man who shares responsibility for the decline of decency in public affairs in Chicago—ex-Mayor William Hale Thompson. To those who knew the boyish "big Bill" of yachting fame before he fell under the sinister spell of the Svengali of Chicago politics, the Thompson of to-day is a tragedy.

Bewildered by the fall of his house of cards, he fled from the fool's paradise in which as mayor of the second city of the nation he had sat for seven years of his two terms in office, unsuspecting the things that were being done in his name, parroting the pet phrases which he proudly put forth as "my platform," lending a name once honored in Chicago to the most shameless set of spoilers the city has ever known.

And now he is back sounding the same old shopworn claptrap of his former companions: "Five-cent fares," "the trust press," "political persecution," "the plain people," ad infinitum. His discredited machine—which was never really his—has been broken up and all the elements of discontent, the racial groups on whose hatreds and prejudices Lundin depended to win elections, have lost their faith in his leadership.

Does the fatuous friendship of the few followers who remain unassimilated by the other factions of his party suffice to convince him that he can "come back" despite the disgrace his administration brought upon him and his public record?

It is to aid in averting any such calamity that I have undertaken to tell the truth to the public about these things.

The Partnership Between Politics and Crime.

ARTICLE IV.

There is nothing of the nonpartisan in my nature. The name implies an

indifference to positive principles either in politics or in some one of the other actualities of life.