The Socialists
IN THE
New York Board of Aldermen

A RECORD OF SIX MONTHS' ACTIVITY

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New York Board of Aldermen

FOREWORD

When the Socialist Party first won representation in the
government of New York City, by the election of seven of
its candidates to the Board of Aldermen in November, 1917,
no doubt extravagant hopes of achievement were aroused in
some minds; but on the other hand there were many who,
realizing the smallness of our minority, and knowing also
the narrow limitations of the aldermanic powers, were in-
clined to think that, however important the capture of these
seven places might be as a symptom of the growth of So-
cialism, it had little or no practical value, that no material
results could be attained by the activity of our little group
in the City Hall.

A half-year's experience shows that the truth lies between
the two opinions.

At a session early in January, one of the leading Tam-
many Aldermen warned us that we were taking ourselves
too seriously. "These Socialists", he said, "have just got
in and they think it's something great to be an alderman.
We older men know better. Why, Mr. President, a hun-
dred thousand persons pass through City Hall Park here
every day and I want to assure my Socialist friends that
not one per cent. of those people know that such a thing as
the Board of Aldermen is in existence". In response, we
freely conceded that up to date this Board had commanded
very little public attention, and had deserved no more than
it got; we pleaded guilty to taking our task very seriously,
and predicted that before we were through the whole public
would know that such a body existed and would be keeping
close watch on its actions.
There can be no doubt that we have at least begun to redeem that promise, and we feel that this alone, without the passage of a single one of our measures, would be worth the effort. New York City will get home rule, it will get a democratic government, attentive to the needs and responsive to the will of the great mass of its population, only when a large enough number of its citizens take a steady and active interest in municipal affairs. The principal service that our small Socialist minority in the Board of Aldermen can render is to force the consideration there of questions that would otherwise be ignored, to oppose reactionary measures even when we know we cannot defeat them, and to insist on a black-and-white record of every alderman's activity, to be laid before his constituents on every possible occasion.

The spirit in which we have undertaken our task is perhaps best illustrated by the establishment of the Socialist Aldermanic Research Bureau, and I wish at this point to give a very large share of the credit for whatever our delegation has accomplished to the intelligent and devoted assistance of Evans Clark and Charles Solomon, the Research Director of the Bureau and its Executive Secretary. To them we seven Socialist Aldermen owe it that, without neglecting the party work outside the Board which is naturally required of us, we are equipped with concrete and accurate information upon every subject as it arises and are able to command the respect as much as we disturb the repose of our old-party colleagues. And without their aid we could not possibly have brought it about that the doings of the Board of Aldermen have occupied more space in the news and editorial columns of the daily press in six months than in any six years before.

The following pages present an incomplete but, it is hoped, a useful report of what we have thus far attempted and achieved. The nine sections of which it is composed appeared as articles in the New York Call during the month of July. They are here reprinted with but little revision,
so that those who are interested may have the record in a somewhat permanent form. A year hence it may be time to publish a more elaborate and systematic account of the Socialist Party's first participation in the government of the second largest city of the world. Meanwhile, this pamphlet may do its part toward awakening the people to a realization of the power that lies in their hands, whenever they will to use it, to make the municipality an agency for easing and enriching their lives, for solving their ever-pressing problems of food and housing, of health and education, of comfort and of culture.

One closing word. New York City is not governed only from the City Hall, but also from Albany. If the seven Socialist Aldermen are to accomplish more in 1919 than in 1918, the people must not only re-elect the ten Socialist Assemblymen this fall, but must add to their number.

ALGERNON LEE.

August, 1918.
COAL AND ICE

On January 7, when the seven Socialists entered the Board of Aldermen, representing their party there for the first time, the city was in the grip of the worst fuel crisis in its history.

The Socialists had been studying the problem, and they came prepared with a plan for bringing prompt relief to the suffering millions of the city's population. They presented a resolution to the board in which they proposed that the city, which had been empowered by state law to trade in fuel, meet the emergency by purchasing, through the Mayor's Central Purchasing Committee, 75,000 tons of coal to be sold to the people in quantities of one ton or less at a uniform cost price. Further amounts to insure a continuous supply were to be purchased from time to time with the funds realized from the sale of the coal, which moneys were to be used as a revolving fund to continue the purchases.

The Socialists warned the board that "the emergency in respect to fuel is immeasurably more critical at the present time than it was during October and November, and may become even more critical in the latter part of the winter, resulting in continued and widespread suffering and even death among the people."

Their resolution contained a carefully worked out plan for storing, delivering, and selling the coal. The Dock Department was to use its available facilities for storage purposes, and the wagons of the Street Cleaning and Park Departments were to transport it to the police stations, where the consumers could call for it and where it would be sold to them under the general supervision of the Commissioner of Police. The proposal of the Socialists was frankly an emergency measure, intended to relieve in the shortest possible time.

The Democratic and Republican members of the board voted down the carefully worked out and detailed plan of the Socialists, and passed a resolution presented by the Democrats designating the Commissioner of Public Markets
as the agency to purchase, store, and sell food and fuel to the people of the city.

While the Socialists voted for this plan, their own having been rejected, they pointed out that the Department of Public Markets was unprepared to function—that it lacked the organization necessary to enable it to meet the situation.

Their protest and warning went unheeded, but the wisdom of their words has since been amply borne out. As every one knows, no relief whatever came to the suffering people of the city from the Democratic administration through its Department of Public Markets: It has taken no action whatever under the authority which was given to it.

Then the administration, having refused to do the practical thing proposed by the Socialists, proceeded to do the spectacular thing. The Mayor asked the Board of Aldermen to give him power to go out and seize surplus coal that was alleged to be in the possession of certain corporations which were hoarding it. The Socialists used the occasion of the consideration in the Board of Aldermen of the Mayor’s request to again direct attention to their constructive plan, and pointed out that the action contemplated by the Mayor could, at the very best, just skim the topmost surface of the situation. Nevertheless, they were not going to stand in the way of any effort to bring relief to the people, and they, therefore, voted to give the Mayor the power he asked for.

For three weeks the city waited for some word as to what the Mayor had done under the authority vested in him by the board. Socialist Alderman Barnett Wolff introduced a resolution on February 5, urging the Mayor to report to the Board of Aldermen what coal, if any, he had seized, and also the disposition made of it.

The reply of the Mayor was what was intended to be a public rebuke to Alderman Wolff.

The Mayor, however, appointed a committee under whose auspices coal was begged from the householders of the city and doled out scatteringly to suffering persons as charity.

In this way did the Democratic party use the machinery
of government in the city of New York to bring relief to millions of people suffering from the effects of a situation for which they were in no wise responsible.

Charity and grand stand play—in this way did the party in power answer the appeal of the people for relief.

At the same meeting the Socialist aldermen did something that almost bowled their colleagues out of their seats. They asked that the city of New York—in the dead of a cruel winter—take steps to insure for the people an adequate supply of ice at reasonable prices. Borough President Dowling expressed ridicule and surprise. He pointed to his heavy overcoat thrown across the back of his chair and said it was no time to talk about ice.

The Socialists answered that the time to take care of the ice problem was not in the sweltering heat of the summer, but months in advance, when there was still ice to be procured. If the city authorities had taken up the coal question last summer, they pointed out, the people of the city might have been spared the misery they were now passing through.

The Socialists asked for unanimous consent to immediately consider their resolution. It was refused and the resolution was referred to the committee on general welfare.

It was not long after when the Federal Food Administration confirmed the farsightedness of the Socialists by publicly warning the nation that the coming summer would probably witness an ice famine, due to a threatened shortage of ammonia made necessary by the war needs of the government.

On January 22, the Socialists again brought up the ice question in the Board of Aldermen. They introduced a resolution in which they directed attention to the alarm sounded by the federal authorities and to their advice that the surest way to avoid an ice shortage was through a large harvest of natural ice. The Socialists proposed that the Board of Aldermen request the State Food Commission, as provided by law, to declare ice a necessary within the meaning of the state food law, and empower the city “to purchase such ice with municipal funds or on municipal credit, and
to provide storage for and sell the same to its inhabitants."

Again the Socialists urged immediate action, warning that not more than six weeks remained for the harvesting of accessible natural ice upon which the people would have to depend, in the main, the coming summer.

The Democrats and Republicans, with their usual indifference, voted to refer the resolution to the general welfare committee.

But the situation was developing ominously, and at the following meeting of the Board of Aldermen the committee reported out a substitute for the Socialist resolution which embodied the request of the Socialists that ice be declared a necessary, and added that the board go on record as requesting the State Legislature to pass a certain measure sponsored by the Tammany leaders, Wagner and Donohue, there. The vital part of the Socialist resolution—municipal trading in ice—the committee ignored.

However, their own plan failing of adoption, the Socialists voted with the majority, declaring that, while their proposal was the sound and practical one, they would not vote against any effort, be it ever so insignificant, to remedy the situation.

On the 19th of March the Commissioner of Public Markets sent a letter to the Board of Aldermen asking that body to do exactly what the Socialist members had urged it to do on the 22d of January, namely, ask for authority to buy and sell ice, and on April 2, almost two and one-half months after the introduction of the second ice resolution by the Socialists, and with the summer almost at hand, the Board of Aldermen, upon the recommendation of a special committee appointed at the request of the Mayor to investigate the question of coal and ice, recommended the passage of a resolution requesting the State Food Commission to authorize the city of New York to purchase, store, and sell ice—a request identical with that embodied in the Socialist ice resolution of January 22.

The board passed the resolution, the city received the authority, and the Commissioner of Markets went out and bought a quantity of ice that was about 2 per cent. of the
normal city consumption. As it was, the proposals of the Socialists were finally embodied in majority resolutions, but the opportunity to effectively apply them had gone by.

Whatever action was taken by the administration, belated though it was, was forced by the Socialist members of the Board of Aldermen.

When they broached the ice question, on the 7th of January, they were regarded with amazement or met with ridicule. More than three months thereafter—too late to be effective—a Democratic resolution was passed embodying the suggestions of the members of the minor minority.

SCHOOL LUNCHES

The Department of Health is authority for the following figures:

Some 216,000, or 21 per cent., of the children in our public schools are seriously undernourished. Approximately 110,000 of these are in a condition so acute as to require immediate medical care, while 52 per cent. of the whole number are below the normal standard of nutrition.

The undernourished school child—the future victim of tuberculosis and other dread diseases—has been a stumbling block in the educational system of our city for some time. For twelve years at least the problem of the hungry school child has conspicuously concerned educators and scientists in this city.

The gravity of the problem and the need for some sort of action was recognized when school lunch committees—one in New York and one in Brooklyn—were organized a few years back to install in at least some the schools some system of feeding the children. There are more than 500 ele-
mentary schools in the greater city. At no time have school lunches been served in more than about 50 of them.

Long before January 17, when the Socialist delegation, through Aldermen Calman and Braunstein, introduced the ordinance for the establishment of a bureau of school lunches in the Department of Education, it had been generally conceded by the representatives of the school lunch committees, that the need had grown beyond the ability of private philanthropy to meet it.

In connection with the Socialist ordinance, the New York School Lunch Committee said:

"This committee has always taken the position that the city ought to operate school lunches. We have always believed that this is a proper function for the city to perform, as undernourishment among school children is an educational problem. Children who are undernourished are not in the mostceptive condition with regard to the processes of education. We believe that the Board of Education ought to make the school lunch work an integral part of its work.

"In this matter the School Lunch Committee has considered itself an experimental station where the need and feasibility of school feeding could be worked out and demonstrated. We believe that the city ought to assume it entirely."

In his report to the then incoming Board of Education (the present board), dated December 28, 1917, William G. Wilcox, president of the outgoing board, said:

"Not only as a social problem but as an economic problem, this problem demands the serious consideration of the Board of Education, for it is a wasteful process to try to educate an ill-fed child. The school lunch committee has made a good beginning, but the need cannot be adequately met by volunteer service or private philanthropy. I am inclined to believe that the city should undertake to provide a simple, standardized lunch at cost for all pupils who desire, and free of charge for those who cannot afford to pay."

For years William H. Maxwell, City Superintendent of Schools, had advised that the Board of Education assume
the work of feeding the pupils in the elementary schools for obvious reasons.

The Socialist school lunch ordinance provided that "there shall be a bureau of school lunches attached to the Department of Education . . . for the purpose of furnishing lunches and such other meals as may from time to time be deemed necessary or desirable by the Board of Education to those enrolled as pupils in the public schools under its jurisdiction, provided that the food supplied in this manner shall be furnished free of charge, or, in the discretion of said board, at a nominal charge not to exceed 2 cents per portion."

The ordinance promptly met with the hearty approval of educators, physicians, philanthropists, social workers, and labor leaders. The general welfare committee of the Board of Aldermen, to which the ordinance had been referred, was flooded with indorsements of the measure and demands for favorable action. A public hearing was urged by such bodies as the Brooklyn School Lunch committee, the New York School Lunch committee, the People's Institute, the Citizen's Union, the New York Child Welfare Committee, the Federation for Child Study, the Woman Suffrage party, the Henry Street and other settlements, and a host of other organizations.

A number of influential newspapers editorially urged favorable action.

"After all," asked the Evening World (February 15), "what sounder municipal investment is there than healthy bodies for coming citizens?"

"In taking over this work," said the New York Globe (February 13), "the city would only be accepting the experience of numerous cities on the continent, Paris and Munich included, where carefully prepared meals have been provided for the children at a nominal charge for many years. The experience of European nations has been that it was unwise to let their school children deteriorate physically, become underweight and underheight and susceptible to disease. We are informed now that high food prices
SCHOOL LUNCHES

... are threatening this country with physical deterioration of its citizenship."

The conservative New York Sun (February 15) said: "This school lunch business is not a fad; nor is it outside the proper education field. ... The child's progress is directly affected by his health. Careful inspection showed ... that more than a fifth of all our school children were suffering positively from malnutrition and that three-fifths were below the standards which should prevail."

Two public hearings—one on the 14th and the other on the 21st of February—were held on the ordinance. Two hearings were made necessary by the fact that all who desired to speak in favor of the ordinance could not be heard at one. The only voices raised against the ordinance were those of the representatives of certain real estate interests. Against these was the positive favorable judgment of such men as Dr. Abraham Jacobi and Dr. Henry Dwight Chapin of the New York Academy of Medicine, and perhaps the most eminent authority on the ailments of children in the country.

The sentiment in favor of the ordinance was overwhelming. Yet the general welfare committee waited three months before reporting on the measure to the board. When the report finally came—on the 21st of May—the committee had discovered a pretext behind which to hide. The Corporation Counsel—an administration appointee—had rendered an opinion that the Board of Aldermen had no power to enact such legislation. The committee, therefore, while it expressed its "sympathy with the general purpose it (the ordinance) seeks to accomplish," recommended the entire matter be turned over to the Board of Education "to furnish school lunches upon such terms and under such conditions as it deems proper and suitable."

Algernon Lee, the Socialist floor leader, was prepared for just such a move. He urged the board to face the issue squarely—not to dodge. "This board is not bound by the opinion of the Corporation Counsel," he said. "There are other learned lawyers in this city who disagree with him. His opinion is not conclusive. Such an opinion can only
WORKING CONDITIONS

come from the Court of Appeals. Let the members of this board at least show they tried to use their power for the common good instead of sidestepping and trying to play safe. Let us not hide behind a legal doubt."

The argument was unavailing. The majority members had looked three months for a loophole and, having found it, they were determined to "pass the buck."

The ordinance was referred to the Board of Education on May 21. At the same meeting Borough President Dowling stated on the floor of the board he could assure the Socialist aldermen that within two weeks the Department of Education would come to the board for the necessary funds to start municipal operation of the school lunch system.

At this writing (September 10th), no move has yet come from that direction. In the meantime the problem of the underfed school child not only continues, but grows more grave.

But, it may be argued, the Board of Education may yet decide to act.

And the answer is: Even if it does, and the city takes over the school lunch system, this change will have come about through the executive action of the Board of Education, and what the board, of its own initiative, establishes, it may in like manner abolish, and this without consulting any other branch of the municipal government, the Board of Aldermen included.

Had the Socialist ordinance been passed, its provisions would have become binding on the educational authorities. As the situation now stands, the Board of Aldermen has dodged a responsibility of the utmost seriousness, and the people wait for the Board of Education to act. Until it does, increasing numbers of New York school children will continue the tragic farce of getting an "education" while the pangs of hunger gnaw at their stomachs and malnutrition breaks down their bodies.

IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS

The Socialists have made a deliberate drive in the Board of Aldermen for decent working conditions among city employees.
The city service has become notorious for the low wages paid and for its official autocracy.

It has become a tradition in the civil service that unionism is akin to treason. In the strike of the street cleaning department drivers several years ago the city administration and the press treated the strikers as if they were mutineers. Organization among civil servants for mutual self-protection is only the first step towards industrial democracy. But the employees of the city have yet to take it.

Wages in the city service have recently become a scandal, admitted by the highest officials themselves.

A survey made in April by the Board of Estimate shows that 27,000 regular adult municipal employees receive an annual salary of less than $1,200. An overwhelming proportion of these get less than $900. Recent estimates of the cost of living prove that a workingman cannot maintain a minimum subsistence for himself and a normal family for less than $1,200 a year.

Prices of the various kinds of goods that workingmen have to buy advanced from 40 per cent. to 100 per cent. or even more in the year 1917 alone. There is no telling how far they will go by the end of 1918. And yet city salaries and wages have in the past few years been increased either not at all or a bare 10 or 20 per cent.

All sides admit that the situation has become intolerable. The Commissioner of Street Cleaning, for instance, has stated before a committee of the Board of Aldermen that the men in his department were paid "starvation wages."

The Socialist aldermen were the first ones in the history of the board to take a stand on both the question of unionism and low wages.

They began their drive on the Department of Street Cleaning. The aldermen chose this department as a test case. Conditions there are notorious. The men are underpaid, overworked, and bullied by their superior officers as in no other branch of the city service.

On January 29 Aldermen Beckerman and Wolff introduced a measure designed to give the employees in that department union conditions. The resolution provided for
an eight-hour day, time and a half for overtime, a six-day week, recognition of the union and the right of collective bargaining. Such a measure was without precedent in the Board of Aldermen, and yet it guaranteed only what innumerable private employers have conceded to labor throughout the world. To pass this bill would have been to take at least a first step towards democracy in this one department.

Needless to say, the street cleaners rallied to its support. Unions throughout the city sent letters of approval. It was admittedly a reasonable and fair proposition. The Democrats and Republicans were faced with a real test of their interest in the working people of the city.

Every Socialist knew the old parties would not meet the test. They could not. They are not organized to serve the workers, but to exploit them. They serve the interests of the taxpayer and business man. Every important vote in the board proves that. Their stand on this measure clinched it.

For four whole months the committee on labor and industries sidestepped the issue. Under the leadership of Alderman Farley the committee refused to take any action one way or the other.

Finally, on May 28, the committee cooked up a legal technicality as the best excuse for inaction, and reported the ordinance unfavorably. They dug up a section in the charter (536) which provides that the Street Cleaning Commissioner has power to employ his subordinates "at such times, during such hours and upon such duties as he shall direct." They claimed that this provision deprived the aldermen of power to legislate in regard to working conditions in the department.

Alderman Beckerman, in debate, quoted another section of the charter (1543) which provides that the actions of heads of the several departments shall be "subject to the ordinances of the Board of Aldermen." This completely demolished the flimsy excuse of the committee. But the committee was a Tammany committee, and it had the votes. Argument was useless. The board rejected the ordinance.
and with it the just demands of the street cleaners by a vote of 48 to 7.

Every Democrat and Republican was recorded against the workers. Every Socialist was recorded in their favor. So it goes every time.

Just a week later Alderman Farley, the chairman of the committee, introduced a resolution using precisely the same phraseology as the Socialist measure, requesting the Board of Estimate to grant the street cleaners an eight-hour day, and overtime.

This is a favorite dodge of the Tammany majority. They smash a Socialist measure and then pass one of their own which looks just like it, but puts the responsibility up to some other department or body. Farley has now passed the buck to the Board of Estimate, and in his opinion, no doubt, cleared the Board of Aldermen of any desire to prevent the street cleaners from getting their rights.

If the Board of Estimate follows this request, however, the credit will go to the Socialist seven for making the street cleaners a political issue. If the board turns it down the blame will be at Farley’s door.

This drive for union conditions in the Department of Street Cleaning has been supplemented by a general Socialist bill providing for a minimum wage of $1,200 a year for all regular adult, full-time city employees who do not receive board and lodging from the city.

This measure was introduced by the Socialist delegation on March 13, and was referred to the committee on salaries and offices. There it still reposes. Chairman Ferguson, one of the most reactionary of the Tammany sublieutenants, refuses to report the measure either unfavorably or otherwise, in spite of the fact that it has been officially indorsed by the central labor bodies of the greater city, by civic organizations of all kinds and interested citizens.

It will eventually be killed. Of that there is already sufficient indication.

Under the whip of Socialist interest in wage increases, a Tammany alderman, Mullen, introduced a resolution which was a mere pious request to the Board of Estimate to in-
crease city employees' wages below $2,000 to or 20 per cent. In the incredibly short space of three weeks the committee to which it had been referred reported it favorably.

Alderman Lee, when the bill came to debate in the board on June 11, tried to amend it by inserting the $1,200 minimum wage provision and another provision making the Mullen increase mandatory in effect. Amid cries of "Gallery play," "Political propaganda," "Legislative insincerity," from the Democrats, the Lee amendment was defeated. The vote stood 58 to 7.

Every Democrat and Republican was recorded against the workers. Every Socialist was recorded in their favor. Again the same old story.

It is a story that will be learned by heart sooner or later by the working masses of this city to the eternal political annihilation of Republicans and Democrats.

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

"Specifically we are in favor of public ownership and operation of all public utilities, including traction, gas, electricity and the telephone."—Democratic city platform, 1917.

It was this plank in their platform in the last campaign that probably had as much to do as any other influence or consideration in electing the Democrats.

The people had a right to expect that the newly-elected administration would not fail to take the fullest advantage of any opportunity to make municipal ownership a fact in the city of New York.

It was not long before it was definitely and unmistakably put to the test and found wanting. The test was applied by the seven Socialist Aldermen. The story follows:

On February 28, the Socialist aldermanic delegation, through Aldermen Vladeck, Held, and Wolff, introduced an ordinance providing for "the operation by the city of New York of passenger and other car service over the Williamsburgh bridge."

The line is now operated by the Bridge Operating Company, a subsidiary of the B. R. T. and the New York Rail-
ways company, under a permit which will expire September 30, 1918. The permit was granted by the Department of Plant and Structures, of which John H. Delaney is commissioner.

When the Socialists introduced their ordinance the company was operating under a permit which was to expire on March 31, 1918—this permit has since been extended six months—when, it was expected, a new contractual arrangement would be entered into between the traction company and the city.

The ordinance of the Socialists was intended to prevent this by municipalizing the line.

Before moving in the Board of Aldermen, the Socialists made a thorough study of the problem and were armed with all the facts. They had, in fact, conferred with the Commissioner of Plant and Structures and received from him the assurance that he was in favor of municipalizing the line in question.

It was pointed out by the Socialists that the company had been realizing a net annual profit of approximately 100 per cent. on an original capitalization in 1904, when it was organized, of $100,000. Its net corporate income for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1917, according to the company's own balance sheet, was $92,742.24.

The Socialists further pointed out that the bridge, the tracks on the bridge, the wiring and the terminals were—and are—the property of the city.

Here was—and still is—an opportunity for the administration elected on a municipal ownership platform to prove its sincerity. Here was an opportunity to establish municipal ownership—on a limited scale, admittedly—but without any danger of loss or embarrassment to the city. Here was—and still is—a private company operating its cars on municipal property and making in proportion more profits than any other traction organization in the city.

The ordinance was referred to the committee on public thoroughfares. It remained there until April 2, when the Socialists, having made repeated efforts to get the committee to act, moved in the Board of Aldermen that it be instructed
to report on the ordinance within a week. It was brought out in the debate on the motion that the committee had not held a single meeting since it was constituted.

The Socialists were voted down, but not before the Democrats had been forced to publicly promise the committee on public thoroughfares would soon hold a meeting.

In commenting on the debate the following day, the Evening Post had this to say:

"The debate served to show the Socialists were much closer students of municipal affairs than any of the Democratic or Republican aldermen, and that they were equipped with facts to meet every argument of the combined opposition. If clarity of expression and logical development of the subject could have won the day, the Socialists would have had their municipal ownership measure passed without much difficulty, but they found themselves faced by a straight line-up, through which they could not penetrate."

The move of the Socialists was productive of some results. The committee began holding meetings. At one of these John F. Delaney, the Commissioner of Plant and Structures, appeared and presented a long memorandum, in which he raised a number of objections against the ordinance of the Socialists. Each and every contention made by the commissioner was promptly and effectively met in an answering memorandum to the committee signed by Alderman Vladeck.

Vladeck charged the commissioner and the administration with belying the Democratic campaign promises. The commissioner attempted to reply, but in a statement which was published in the Brooklyn Daily Eagle on June 12, he admitted: "The local line on the Williamsburgh bridge is a feasible beginning of municipal operation of public utilities."

On June 18, after waiting another two and one-half months for word from the committee on public thoroughfares, the Socialists again brought the matter up in the Board of Aldermen by moving that the committee be discharged from further consideration of the measure. They pointed out it had been in committee close to four months, that all the facts were either in the possession of the committee or
readily available, and that the committee, unable to success-
fully dispute the facts, was avoiding taking action by hiding
behind the pretext afforded by the Commissioner of Plant
and Structures.

The move of the Socialists took the majority members
of the board by surprise. The Republicans joined the So-
cialists in demanding the discharge of the committee, al-
though they unequivocally declared they were opposed to
municipal ownership.

After one of the most interesting debates of the session,
the Democrats voted the Socialists down.

As the situation now stands, when the permit under which
the company is now operating expires, the city will either
issue a new one, enter into contractual relations with the
traction interests, or take over the line.

The interests of the people demand that the line be taken
over. To leave it where it is is to continue in private hands
what has proved the most profitable piece of railroad prop-
erty in the city.

The opportunity is offered to the Democratic administra-
tion—pledged to municipal ownership—to take over for the
city a line which will yield immediate returns over and above
operating costs on an investment small when compared with
other investments by the city in transportation facilities.

The course proposed by the Socialists is the only logical
one from the point of view of the people. Any other is
betraying the people for the traction interests.

MUNICIPAL TRADING

The platform of the Socialist party in the last campaign
declared unequivocally for a comprehensive system of muni-
cipal trading as a means of reducing the cost of living, and
pledged its elected officials to work, among other things,
for the following:

"The city should follow the practice of many European
cities and establish and conduct stores for the direct sale
of fuel, ice, bread, milk, and other necessaries at prices cov-
ering only the cost of production and distribution, thereby eliminating all private profits.”

In accord with this plank, the seven Socialist aldermen, as the representatives of their party in the city government, introduced a resolution on February 13, in which they demanded that the administration inaugurate a clear-cut policy on the cost of living, “to the end that the people may escape the grave evils which result from profiteering in the necessaries of life and from wasteful methods of handling and trading in the same.”

The Socialist aldermen proposed, as an effective means of reducing the cost of living to millions of consumers, that the city should:

Make purchases, as far as practicable, directly from producers, and in such large and regular quantities as to eliminate middlemen’s costs and profits and bring purchase prices to the lowest possible level;

Sell directly to the consumers in all parts of the city through a chain of municipal selling stations; and

Fix selling prices, as nearly as possible, so that income will cover the expense, and apply any surplus to further reduce the cost of commodities traded in.

The Socialist measure was based frankly on the principle of service to the consumer by the city without profit. This principle the Socialists have never failed to urge in the Board of Aldermen. The Republicans have declared themselves as unqualifiedly against any “interference” with business as it is at present conducted. The Democrats have tried to find tenable ground somewhere between both.

There is no doubt as to where the Socialists and the Republicans stand. The Democrats have tried to straddle an issue which cannot be straddled, by undertaking at the same time the role of champion of the interests of the ultimate consumer and protector of the interests of those whose profits must come out of his pocket.

The Socialists struck directly at the source of the evil, the profits of those who deal in the necessaries of life. There was no mistaking their purpose to reduce the cost of living by eliminating profits wherever possible. They pointed out
that, if the consumer is to get his necessaries at the end of a long chain of intermediaries, he will have to pay for every link in the chain. They proposed to remove every unnecessary link from that chain.

Against this the Republicans stand adamant. Their first concern is business as it is. The Democrats have failed utterly to take a definite position. The result is that the Department of Public Markets of the city of New York has failed to cause even a ripple on the surface of the biggest problem before the people: the increasing cost of living.

The Department of Public Markets has the authority to trade in food and fuel. As an integral part of the administration it has the power to do everything proposed in the resolution of the Socialist aldermen. What has been done? The department has bought eggs, butter, and herrings in comparatively insignificant quantities which, in the main, have been sold to retailers. The benefits, if any, which have accrued to the ultimate consumer have yet to be demonstrated.

The Socialist aldermen have supported every move in the Board of Aldermen to back up the Department of Public Markets. They have voted for appropriations for the department. But never once have they been deceived as to where its policy led. Time and again they pointed out in the Board of Aldermen that ridiculously small purchases of one or several necessaries, to be sold here and there to isolated consumers, and in the main to retailers, were not meeting the situation, and that the sooner the principle of thoroughgoing municipal trading were accepted and fearlessly applied, the sooner would genuine relief be brought to the people.

This, it seems, is too much to expect from political parties that represent business interests. The Democrats have contented themselves with skirting around the edge of the situation, while at the same time seeking to reassure the business men. They have attempted what is plainly impossible, to reconcile the interests of those who buy as consumers and those who must make their profits out of them.

To declaim against the profiteer while purporting to stand
for what are called legitimate profits is rank camouflage. No one has yet succeeded in drawing a satisfactory line between profits and profiteering.

“We will go after the profiteer first and the profits next,” the Socialist aldermen told their colleagues.

“You can never bring relief to the people of this city without interfering with business men,” said Alderman Wolff.

But the administration refuses to “interfere.” Controlling every department of the municipal government and elected on a municipal ownership platform, the Democratic administration, as far as substantial achievement is concerned, stands forth as a fiasco in the food situation.

On April 23, Alderman Held introduced a resolution to establish a Food and Markets Commission for the city of New York. It was intended to compel the administration to adopt a comprehensive plan of food distribution and to coordinate all city agencies in any way concerned with the food problem.

Half a dozen exhaustive official studies of food distribution problems have been made in the past five years. All deal with the situation in New York City. Each report terms the present situation as wasteful in the extreme.

Much data is already available. What is needed is the formulation of a definite policy and its application. This the Socialist measure seeks to accomplish. The proposed commission is to consist of the Mayor, the Commissioner of Public Markets, the President of the Board of Aldermen, and three members of the board to be chosen by him, and the Commissioner of Health. Provision is made for the cooperation of the proposed commission with the state food authorities.

The object of the commission is “to bring about the establishment of public wholesale terminal and retail public markets . . . and to facilitate the improvement of the methods of food distribution and prevention of food waste within the city limits.”

The measure has already received wide attention. It has been officially indorsed by the Federal Food Council of this city, as well as by labor and civic organizations.
Once again the Socialists point the way. It is up to the administration to act.

The Socialists introduced still another measure dealing with the food problem. On February 21, Alderman Vladeck directed the attention of the Board of Aldermen to a report issued by the Health Department to the effect that during January, 1918, in the boroughs of Brooklyn and Manhattan alone, 2,000,000 pounds of foodstuffs had been condemned by it. The value of these foodstuffs was estimated by the department at $576,000.

Vladeck presented a resolution the object of which was to prevent such flagrant waste in the future. He asked the board to request the Department of Health to “conduct a thorough investigation into the nature and causes of said food wastage” and report back to the board as soon as possible with recommendations for remedial legislation.

The resolution was referred to a committee, and there it lies, while the wastage continues.

DENTAL CLINICS

The amount of ill health caused by diseased and defective teeth is almost incalculable. The medical profession has in the last ten years made discoveries along these lines that startle the layman and show the imperative necessity of preserving the teeth. Most dental decay begins in childhood. The effects last a lifetime.

The Socialist aldermen had been in office but a short time before they realized that the children in the public schools had utterly inadequate protection against what literally, amounts to a scourge. They directed their bureau of research to investigate the whole subject and make a report that would form the basis for legislative action in the board.

The report of the bureau showed the following facts:

Anywhere from 75 per cent. to 97 per cent. of American school children need dental treatment. A Cleveland survey in 1911 showed 97 per cent.; an investigation in Providence, R. I., in 1912, showed 93 per cent., and Dr. Hoag, a promi-
nent school hygienist, estimates "that 80 per cent. of the children in our schools have seriously defective teeth."

These facts are borne out by the figures given by the New York Health Department. Out of 276,963 children who received a general medical examination in 1917, no less than 191,343 were found to have dental disease sufficiently marked to be obvious to the doctors making the routine inspection.

Physicians and dentists unite in emphasizing the disastrous effects of dental decay.

Dr. Osler, writing in the Lancet, the foremost medical journal of England, says: "If I were asked to say whether more physical deterioration was produced by alcohol or by defective teeth I should unhesitatingly say defective teeth."

The following is a list of the direct and indirect effects ascribed by doctors to dental troubles: Pain, inflamed mouth, extension of decay to sound teeth, infection of the jaw bone, earache and deafness, headache, eye trouble, indigestion, poor nutrition and lessened resistance to all kinds of disease, nervous debility, anaemia and rheumatism, tuberculosis and an increased susceptibility to germ diseases such as pneumonia, diphtheria and scarlet fever.

In other words, an overwhelming proportion of our school children are in a condition that literally invites disease.

In the face of this intolerable situation there are but eight dental clinics in the more than 500 public schools of New York city. There are about 800,000 children in the elementary grades. Of these there are at least 550,000 who need immediate treatment by competent dentists and nurses. The records of the Health Department show that only 8,069 children received such care in the eight clinics operated by the department in 1917.

The figures speak for themselves. For years prominent dentists, physicians, and social workers have fought in vain for increased dental facilities in New York schools. Four years ago they launched a concerted movement for the immediate establishment of nine new clinics. The Fusion city administration was besieged in behalf of this minimum demand. No result was forthcoming.
Last year Health Commissioner Emerson made the paltry addition of seven dental nurses to assist in the clinical work. Mayor Hylan’s first commissioner, Dr. Amster, had hardly been in office three months when he dropped all seven of the new nurses on the plea of “economy.”

Such criminal shortsightedness by both Tammany and Fusion administrations incensed beyond measure every one interested in public health.

The Socialist aldermen had hardly taken their seats before appeals began to come in to them. Alderman Calman, himself a dentist, immediately took the matter up, and on the basis of the facts brought to light by the research bureau introduced his oral hygiene ordinance on May 21.

The Calman bill provides for the establishment of a separate division in the Department of Health the sole function of which will be to give adequate dental treatment to public school children.

“The purpose of such division,” the ordinance reads, “shall be to establish and maintain such clinics and other agencies as may be necessary to secure for the children of the public schools adequate prevention and protection from dental deterioration and disease.”

The bill further provides for the immediate establishment of “at least nine additional dental clinics in those public schools where the greatest need is found to exist,” and for the extension of the service as fast as circumstances permit. An appropriation of $10,800 is included, to carry the new clinics until the 1919 appropriations are made.

The purpose of the bill goes beyond a mere statement of its provisions. It is designed to substitute for the present makeshift dental clinic organization a permanent policy and a constructive program in oral hygiene guaranteed by city law. The few clinics now operated by the Health Department were established by executive decree as a minor part of the work of the division of medical inspection. They might be abolished or limited or reorganized at any time by the mere fiat of any new Commissioner of Health. The Calman bill aimed at the assurance of a far-sighted and constructive policy written into the municipal statute book.
Immediately upon its introduction the ordinance was referred to the committee on general welfare. The whole medical and dental profession in the city was aroused over the measure. Every alderman in the board was swamped with letters from dentists in every borough urging its passage and emphasizing the need for immediate action.

The leading dental magazines took up the cudgels in its behalf. The July issue of the Dental Cosmos printed the ordinance in full and stated that it “should be of special interest to the profession because of the educational value which the clinics will no doubt be to the public.”

The Dental Outlook for July also published a text of the bill, and in a leading editorial urged the dental profession to support it. The editor expressed the hope the ordinance would be “the thin edge of a wedge that will penetrate deeper and deeper into the minds of our city fathers until it will split all prejudice and opposition in twain and make for the socialization of the entire medical and dental profession.”

Leading organizations of dentists adopted resolutions urging public hearings on the bill so that, as one of them stated, “the great need for these clinics shall be intelligently determined.”

On the 16th of July, there was a hearing on the ordinance before the general welfare committee. Leaders in the dental and medical professions appeared and emphatically endorsed the measure.

Dr. Josephine Baker, chief of the Bureau of Child Hygiene of the Department of Health, told the committee that Health Commissioner Copeland favored the ordinance. She explained that a division of oral hygiene, created by ordinance, was necessary as otherwise the existing dental clinics might be abolished by an hostile commissioner. Such was the intention, Dr. Baker stated, of the preceding Health Commissioner, Dr. Amster.

Dr. M. I. Schamberg, professor of oral surgery in the Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital, vigorously...
championed the ordinance, as did Dr. Maurice William, of the Allied Dental Council, and Dr. Leon Harris, editor of the Dental Outlook.

The need for action was driven home to the members of the committee and at the meeting of the Board of Aldermen the following day, the committee reported out a substitute for the Socialist measure, which was unanimously passed. The substitute was in the form of a resolution requesting the Health Commissioner to continue the work of oral hygiene and to include in his departmental estimate for 1919 a requisition for money sufficient for the establishment of a permanent division of oral hygiene. At the same time the committee declared itself "in thorough accord with the purpose of the proposed ordinance," giving as its reason for not reporting it out favorably "that a small amount of revenue bonds are available for the balance of the year."

The Socialist ordinance was not adopted but the Board of Aldermen was compelled to take official notice of the existence of the need which the Socialists proposed should be met in the manner provided in their measure.

As the situation now stands and until the ordinance proposed by the Socialists or a similar one is passed any Health Commissioner may discontinue such dental clinics as may exist.

The Socialists proposed that the city take the first real step in the direction of caring for the teeth of the hundreds of thousands of children in our public schools.

**MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES**

The big legislative drives of the Socialist aldermen have not been by any means the sum total of their activities. The Socialist seven have introduced in the Board of Aldermen a dozen or so other measures of importance. Every one of them was designed first and foremost to benefit the working people of the city.

**HOSPITAL CARE FOR CITY WORKERS**

The right of certain city employees to receive free hospital care if injured in the course of the performance of
their duties, as provided for by ordinance, was extended, as a result of the effort of the Socialists, to thousands of additional city workers.

On June 18th, Alderman Vladeck proposed an amendment to the then existing ordinance, which extended this right to members of the uniformed force of the police, fire, and street cleaning departments, so as to bring all city employees within the provisions of the law.

While the ordinance, as finally amended at the meeting of the Board of Aldermen on July 16th, does not affect each and every city employee, as was the purpose of the Socialists, employees of the following additional city departments were brought within its provisions: Parks, Water Supply, Gas and Electricity, Docks and Ferries, and Plant and Structures. In a word, approximately 9,000 additional city workers were enabled to avail themselves of the right to free hospital care, in the event of being injured in the discharge of duty.

RENT PROFITEERING

The Socialists introduced the only measure aimed at profiteering in rents. It was presented by Alderman Braunstein on July 16th, and read:

"Whereas, a large proportion of the landlords of the city of New York have increased the rent charge upon their tenants in excess of and just and reasonable amount, and

"Whereas, in time of great national crisis it is of special importance to protect the masses of the people from every burden which is without warrant of actual necessity; and

"Whereas, profiteering in rent is not confined to any single locality, but has become general throughout the country, therefore be it

"Resolved, by the Board of Aldermen of the City of New York:

"1. That the said Board hereby petition the Congress of the United States to speedily enact legislation which will effectually prohibit profiteering in rent; and

"2. That a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives."
The resolution was unanimously passed.

B. R. T. FARE INCREASE

At the same meeting, the Socialists asked the members of the Board of Aldermen, as elected representatives of the people of the city, to record themselves as “opposed to the sanction by any city or state authority of any fare increase by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Railroad Company at this time”, the company having filed a petition with the Board of Estimate and Apportionment for permission to charge a seven cent fare on all its lines, as well as two additional cents for each transfer.

It was the very least the members of the Board could do.

The resolution was read and promptly referred to the general welfare committee. It being the last meeting of the board before adjournment for the summer, the Socialists determined to employ every parliamentary means to get a vote on the measure, moved through Alderman Vladeck, its introducer, that the board adjourn for twenty minutes to enable the Committee to meet and report. The move took the Democrats and Republicans completely by surprise. They were further embarrassed when the Socialists demanded a roll call on the Vladeck motion as a means of recording each and every member of the board present. The roll call was taken, three Republicans voting with the Socialists.

In this manner did the other members of the board avoid declaring themselves as opposed to the attempt of the traction companies of the city to impose additional burdens on the people by charging them ever larger fares for notoriously bad “service”.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

One Socialist measure which passed was the Calman community garden resolution. This bill was in the nature of a request to the Sinking Fund Commission to give jurisdiction over vacant city property to the Department of Parks, to be used as gardens by the people.

Alderman Calman introduced his bill on May 28. It was referred to the committee on finance, with the hint that “there seems to be no objection to this resolution.” The
committee took the hint and on June 4 it was favorably re-
ported and passed. The Socialists and Democrats all voted
in the affirmative, but there were five negative votes—Alder-
men Falconer, Gaynor, Moore, Quinn, and Squiers, all Re-
publicans.

The reason why the Republicans were opposed was
voiced by Squiers in debate. “I don’t see why we should
be used as a sword in Socialist hands,” he declared. On the
merits of the bill there was no serious question.

Alderman Calman pointed out in debate that the Sinking
Fund Commission had scores of pieces of property under its
jurisdiction which were not used for any purpose, and that
these could perfectly well be utilized by people living near-
by to reduce their food bills. He spoke of the success of
such a garden which he had initiated in his own district,
and saw no reason why the plan should not be put into
operation elsewhere.

**DAY NURSERIES**

The Socialist party platform contains a plank in favor of
the establishment of municipal day nurseries.

In accordance therewith, Aldermen Braunstein and Cal-
man introduced on February 28, an ordinance providing for
the establishment of a division of day nurseries in the De-
partment of Health and for the immediate organization un-
der its jurisdiction of at least three model day nurseries.
The measure further provided that the division should open
as many further nurseries in the city “as the needs of its in-
habitants demand and circumstances permit.”

The bill went to the committee on salaries and offices.
On March 7, the committee received a letter from Dr. Lewis
J. Amster, then Commissioner of Health, opposing the open-
ing of any municipal day nurseries.

The reasons he gave for his opposition were—some of
them—grotesque. For instance, he favored the establish-
ment in big factories of rest rooms, “where babies might be
kept and where the mothers are relieved at regular periods
to go and nurse them.” Again, he claimed there was no
need for more nurseries than were already established by
private charitable agencies.
Resting on the Commissioner's dictum the committee reported the bill adversely on March 21, on the ground that it was "unnecessary." The very day after its defeat a delegation of women from Queens besieged the aldermanic office for at least one nursery in their borough. Not one has ever been opened there by private charity or otherwise.

The vote on the roll call showed an almost solid front of Democrats and Republicans against the bill. Two Tammany aldermen, however, bolted the machine and voted with the Socialist seven. Any one familiar with the machine-made majority alderman knows that only a piece of the rankest injustice will stir him to revolt.

Again the Tammany administration killed a measure of fundamental human need.

STREET PEDDLERS

During the months of March and April many complaints reached the Socialist aldermen from street peddlers. The peddlers came as individuals or in groups and committees and asked aid of the delegation in protecting them from persecution by the police.

There are certain restrictions placed upon them by city ordinance. They must obtain a license to ply their trade. They may not stand their carts on certain specified streets or within 25 feet of any corner, and so on.

These restrictions have often been used as weapons by the police in petty persecution. There is often talk of graft and extortion.

Matters reached a crisis this year when the Commissioner of Licenses refused to renew peddlers permits by the wholesale. At least 4,000 men who had no other means of livelihood were thrown out of employment or forced to violate the law by peddling without a license. There was great dissatisfaction on all sides.

To remedy these temporary evils and at the same time to force the city to adopt some permanent solution of the whole problem of the street peddler, one that has never been settled to any one's satisfaction, Aldermen Beckerman and Held introduced a resolution in the board on April 23.

The bill provided that the committee on general welfare
make a thorough study of the question, hold public hearings and recommend amendments to the city law that "will em-
body a comprehensive and permanent settlement of the prob-
lem and will clearly define and safeguard the rights of all con-
cerned."

As a result, the committee held a public hearing in the aldermanic chamber on June 14. The peddlers were repre-
sented in large numbers. Borough Inspector O'Brien of the police department gave assurances that a temporary agreement had been reached concerning treatment of the peddlers pending a solution of their problems. Represen-
tatives from civic and other organizations also appeared.

All those who testified were in agreement with the object of the Socialist resolution and as a result of this one hearing the peddlers are receiving less persecution from the police and the Department of Licenses. The committee will be forced in the long run to take final and constructive action.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT SCANDAL

The Socialist seven took an active part in the campaign that finally forced Mayor Hylan to abandon his scandalous plans to reorganize the Department of Health for political purposes.

Under the direction of the Mayor, the Civil Service Com-
mission early in April began a secret examination of the Health Department with a view to abolishing its most im-
portant bureaus. The Bureau of Child Hygiene and the Bu-
reau of Preventable Diseases, which have done monumental work in protecting the health of the workers of the city; were openly threatened. Day after day bureau heads were called to the inquisition of the Civil Service Commission, the Mayor issued threats of abolishing the bureaus, and the whole staff of the department was thrown into a panic of uncertainty.

The Socialist delegation immediately introduced a resolu-
tion (on April 16) providing for a public investigation of the department by a special committee of the Board of Aldermen, which would have access to all the records of the Civil Service Commission's star chamber proceedings.

The measure was widely heralded in all the newspapers
and lined up Socialist and Labor opinion squarely in opposition to the plans of the mayor and his associates. Everyone in the city who followed the controversy knew just where the Socialist aldermen stood.

The resolution went to the committee on rules, which resisted every attempt by the Socialists and Republicans combined to bring it to a vote. The bill still lies in committee, but it had its effect, nevertheless.

The combined attacks of Socialists and civic organizations on the Mayor resulted first in throwing the Civil Service Commission’s hearing open to the public and finally forced the administration to abandon its whole campaign of “reorganization.” The Health Commissioner finally resigned and the department is once more performing its normal functions. The only result of the Mayor’s raid was to make a “goat” of the director of food and drugs, who was suspended because of alleged irregularities in office.

“It is not alone the big, spectacular moves, however, that have held the attention of the Socialist delegation. Week in and week out the seven of the minority have followed with greatest care the mass of dry, routine matters that take up most of the time of the board.

Nor have they been mere passive observers. Time and again they have fought against Tammany inefficiency, against the petty political tricks that undermine the present city administration.

For instance, the charter provides that all purchases made by the city in excess of $1,000 shall be by open advertisement and public bidding. Exceptions to this rule can, however, be made by a three-fourths vote of the Board of Aldermen.

The Tammany administration has a passion for making these exceptions, especially when it comes to granting an automobile to this or that commissioner or deputy.

Socialist Alderman Held has taken the lead in opposing this sort of action. He has maintained time and again that automobiles, as much as anything else, should be bought by public letting. More than once, with the aid of the Repub-
lican votes, these Tammany exceptions have been made im-
possible.
Alderman Wolff has led the opposition to the creation of
useless positions in the civil service which can be used by
Tammany as political plums, and Alderman Lee introduced
a bill on June 18, designed to make the board a real force
in the passage of the annual budget, instead of a rubber
stamp for the Board of Estimate.
In their every act the seven Socialist aldermen have been
champions of the great masses of the city's inhabitants,
against the political camouflage of the Democrats and the
frank bourbonism of the reactionary Republicans. But, in
their desire for big things, they have in no way slighted the
routine matters upon which they have been called to pass
judgment. In purpose and in performance their record is
sound to the core.

ALDERMANIC LIMITATIONS

No correct estimate can be made of the work of the
Socialist aldermen without a perspective which includes the
whole machinery of city government. The limitations and
restrictions under which the Socialists have labored are such
as to throw their accomplishments into even sharper outline.
Judged by the narrowness of their opportunity the results
they have achieved are infinitely more significant.
The Board of Aldermen is in theory the sovereign legis-
lature of the largest city in the world. In practice it has
been of late a rubber stamp for the real powers in city
affairs, the Board of Estimate and Apportionment and the
State Legislature.
The actual authority of the aldermanic body is best de-
scribed in negatives.
In the first place the Board of Aldermen and every other
division and department of the city government can do noth-
ing, can exercise no authority whatever, without a grant of
power from the Legislature at Albany. New York, through-
out the world, has come to stand for the opposite of all that
is indicated by the phrase "home rule." There is no home
rule in this city. New York is ruled first and foremost by the senators and assemblymen from the cities, towns, villages, and open country upstate who make up the majority of the Legislature.

The relation of the city and the state belies the most fundamental American rights of democracy and representative government. New York is not a self-governing community.

Judging from results, a large part of the time and strength of the State Legislature must have been taken up in prescribing what New York city can or cannot do. All the prescriptions now in force make up what is called the city charter. It contains 1,620 sections, and covers no less than 1,200 pages.

The Board of Aldermen cannot take a single action for which there is not authorization in the charter.

Again, real aldermanic political power can best be tested by negatives.

The aldermen cannot, like the usual legislative body, control the city's purse strings. The annual budget, or appropriation bill, is prepared and passed by the Board of Estimate. The aldermen cannot make any increases. They have only the power to reduce specific items and these reductions are subject to the Mayor's veto which can only be overridden by a three-fourths vote.

In the raising of money for additional appropriations by the issuance of bonds, to be redeemed out of the next year's tax levy, the aldermen are limited to a total sum of $2,000,000 a year and only a three-fourths vote can make any such appropriation effective.

The aldermen cannot, like a regular legislature, establish new positions in the civil service nor fix the salaries of city employees. Initiative in these matters lies with the Board of Estimate. The aldermen can only concur or refuse their assent.

The power of granting franchises was taken away from the aldermen some years ago and given to the Board of Estimate.

Public improvements of all kinds originate either in the
so-called local improvement boards or the Board of Estimate, and can be carried through without any action whatsoever by the Board of Aldermen. The establishment of parks and playgrounds, new streets, waterfront improvements, subway construction and the like, rests entirely in the hands of the Board of Estimate.

The power to pass laws affecting the health of the community has been largely taken from the Board of Aldermen and given to the Board of Health.

Control over the height of buildings and their restriction by zones is now entirely in the hands of the Board of Estimate.

As a matter of fact, the representatives of the people have little to do but say o. k. to the Board of Estimate and to regulate traffic.

The City of New York is a bureaucracy, and the sooner the people realize it the better.

What powers have been delegated to the city by the state are largely in the hands of the Mayor and the Board of Estimate. The Mayor appoints a majority of the Board of Health and all but one of the heads of departments. He is chairman of the Board of Estimate, with three votes, and is almost invariably the leader of the dominant party in the board.

The other members of the board are the Comptroller and the President of the Board of Aldermen with three votes apiece, the Borough Presidents of Manhattan and Brooklyn with two votes, and of Bronx, Queens and Richmond with one vote each. It is true, these are elected officials; but they represent either the whole city or such large areas as the boroughs and they are primarily administrative officers.

No wonder the Socialist state platform calls for home rule and the city program demands a single legislative and executive body.

Out of 73, the Socialists are seven. They have to buck a Tammany machine that dominates as one man the 51 Democratic votes, and a Republican aggregation of 15.

In six months, however, this Socialist handful smashed through and put the Board of Aldermen on the map.
The Socialists have made the most of every shred of power given to the board by the charter. A great many of the powers granted to the Board of Aldermen are vague and warrant more than one interpretation. There is what might be called a "twilight zone," where aldermanic authority has never been determined. In the past there has been little incentive to determine it. The old party aldermen have been content to let well enough alone. The less work for them the better.

But the Socialists have on every occasion tested every grant of power to the utmost. The school lunch ordinance, the minimum wage resolution, the dental clinics bill and several other measures serve as instances.

In its proper perspective the record of the Socialist aldermen takes on a significance which has yet to be fully understood.

The record shows the seven fighting a two-fold battle: first, to bring the majority parties face to face with the real needs of the masses; and second, to force by every means available an increase in the authority and dignity of the Board of Aldermen.

If popular government is to be a reality in this city the aldermen must be the people's representative with power to govern, not the impotent puppets of a corrupt political machine.

**GRAPHIC SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES**

The following is a summary of the concrete accomplishment of the Socialist aldermen. The first column shows the important activities of the Socialist seven, the second column shows the record of the Democratic majority acting under Socialist pressure.

**SOCIALISTS**

Jan. 7.—Resolution introduced providing for the purchase, storage and sale by the city of coal, which, if adopted, would have solved the coal crisis in

**DEMOCRATS**

Jan. 7.—Resolution passed designating the Commissioner of Public Markets as the agency for the purchase, storage and sale of food and fuel.
48 hours. (Defeated.) Used to defeat Socialist measure but no action taken by the Commissioner as a result.

Jan. 15.—Resolution passed giving the Mayor power to seize, condemn and distribute coal held by owners in excess of their own time. The Mayor has refused to give a report as to use of this power. No action recorded.

Feb. 5.—Resolution passed creating committee to investigate and to recommend legislation to remove existing evils. The Committee has not yet made its report.

Net result: No action by the administration, but a forced acceptance by the Democrats of coal distribution as a practical political issue.

ICE

Jan. 7.—Resolution introduced requesting State Food Commission to declare ice a necessity and to insure adequate supply. (Defeated.)

Jan. 22.—Resolution introduced requesting State Food Commission to grant power to the city to buy and sell ice. (Defeated.)

Jan. 29.—Resolution requesting State Food Commission to declare ice a necessity, passed. Practically the same as the Socialist resolution of three weeks previous.

April 2.—Resolution requesting State Food Commission to grant power to the city to buy and sell ice—passed. Identical with Socialist measure of two months previous. The Markets Commissioner purchased a relatively insignificant quantity under the authority granted the city by the State Food Commission.

Net result: Complete capitulation by the administration majority to the demands of the Socialist delegation, after continued opposition. Recognition of ice distribution as a practical political issue, but the merest beginning of a concrete solution of the problem by the administration.
SUMMARY

SCHOOL LUNCHES

Jan. 17.—Ordinance introduced to acquire the present school lunch plant and to provide for its future operation and extension by the city through a bureau of school lunches in the department of education. (Defeated.)

Feb. 14 and 21.—Public hearings granted by the committee on general welfare at which an overwhelming public sentiment was disclosed in favor of municipal school feeding. (The committee delayed action for several weeks without sufficient cause, and apparently for political reasons.)

March 20, and before.—Investigation and public hearing by Board of Education on the subject. First official recognition by the board of this issue.

May 21.—Aldermen passed unanimously substitute for Socialist ordinance—a “request resolution” asking the Board of Education for favorable action. No response whatever made by the board to date.

Net result: Crystallization of an overwhelming public demand for city school feeding and the organization of this demand into a concrete and practical political issue. Forcing of Board of Aldermen to go on record as in favor of school feeding principle and consequent pressure on Board of Education.

IMPROVED WORKING CONDITIONS

Jan. 29.—Ordinance introduced, governing conditions of labor in the Department of Street Cleaning, and providing for (1) eight-hour day, (2) time and one-half for overtime, (3) sixday week, (4) recognition of union and collective bargaining.

Jan. 29.—Referred to committee on labor and industry, where it still reposes. Action delayed without explanation, and, apparently, for political reasons.

May 28.—Defeated.

June 5.—Resolution introduced requesting Board of Estimate to grant street cleaners 8-hour day and overtime.

Net result: Labor union conditions and democratic principles in a city department, for the first time in the history of New York, made a concrete political issue. Action by majority forced along these lines.
March 12.—Resolution introduced, providing for a minimum wage of $1,200 for all adult, full-time, regular employees of the city. (Pending.)

March 12.—Referred to committee on salaries and offices. No action taken on it to date.

March 24.—Commissioner of Street Cleaning announced that employees in his department are wretchedly underpaid, and that he is going to request the Board of Estimate to raise their salaries. He deplored the fact that his men went to the Socialist delegation for assistance, and charged the Socialists with 'stirring up discontent.'

June 11.—Resolution requesting Board of Estimate to increase city employees salaries below $2,000 per annum 10 or 20 per cent.—passed.

Aug.—Board of Estimate grants minimum salary of $1,200 for police and firemen.

Net result: Municipal minimum wage question made concrete and immediate political issue: action stimulated in more than one department.

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

Jan. 15.—Resolution introduced, directing the corporation counsel to report to the board methods and procedure by which the city could immediately take over and operate the B. R. T. system. (Pending.)

Jan. 16.—Corporation counsel began investigation at request of the committee on finance, to which the measure was referred. Later he secured the assistance of the Bureau of Franchises of the Board of Estimate in an exhaustive survey of the terms of all existing B. R. T. franchises. (Report not yet made.)

Net result: The first concrete action ever taken by the city of New York looking toward the municipal ownership and operation of existing privately owned rapid transit lines. The report will be a first essential step in this direction.
Feb. 26.—Ordinance introduced, providing for the city operation of the Williamsburg bridge local cars. (Pending.)

March 25.—It was learned that a new contract perpetuating the present private operation after March 31, would not be signed by the city, but a temporary permit for six months issued instead, pending a thorough investigation by the Board of Estimate of private vs. public operation.

Net result: Municipalization of the Williamsburg bridge local service made an immediately practical issue, continued private profiteering of a scandalous nature, at least, postponed, and Democratic municipal ownership pledges brought to a definite test.

MUNICIPAL TRADING

Feb. 13.—Resolution introduced, instructing Commissioner of Markets to distribute food and fuel according to the following principles: (1) Purchase direct from producer in large quantities, (2) direct sales to consumers, (3) sales made to all classes of people, (4) sales at cost, and (5) wide extension of municipal trading.

April 23.—Resolution providing for a City Commission to bring about establishment of wholesale terminal markets, to facilitate food distribution, and to prevent food waste. (Pending.)

Feb. 13.—Referred to the committee on general welfare. The commissioner appeared before the committee, and, in answer to questions put to him by the Socialist member, went on record as intending to carry out these principles.

July 16.—Resolution passed establishing a “War Board of Food and Fuel Control” to act as agency for purchase and sale of food and fuel by the city, to supercede the Commissioner of Markets, the previous agency. This was passed at the Commissioner’s request to give him time to perfect plans for “a system of terminal markets” and for a “better and more economical distribution of the foodstuffs arriving in the city.”

Net result: A far-sighted and constructive plan for municipal trading in food and fuel brought officially to the attention of the administration, action in accordance with it promised and initial activity stimulated in the solution of the problem of food distribution by the establishment of terminal markets.
DENTAL CLINICS

May 21.—Resolution introduced providing for division of oral hygiene in the Department of Health. (Defeated.)

July 16.—Hearing before General Welfare Committee: the Health Commissioner, and leading dentists recorded in favor of the Socialist bill.

July 16.—Substitute measure passed requesting Commissioner of Health to request sufficient funds in 1919 Budget to provide for such a division of oral hygiene.

Net result: Administration pledged to maintain and extend the work of dental clinics in the public schools.

MISCELLANEOUS MEASURES

Feb. 13.—Resolution introduced requesting the President of the Borough of Brooklyn to appear before the board and give information regarding proposed dismissals in his department. (Defeated.)

Feb. 15.—Newspapers announced that a series of dismissals for purely political reasons, contemplated by Borough President Riegelman, would not be made.

Net result: Protest of masses of voters against a threatened flagrant abuse of all principles of efficient public service made a matter of official record.

Feb. 21.—Resolution introduced to authorize the Board of Health to conduct an investigation of enormous food wastage reported in the press, and to recommend remedial legislation. (Pending.)

Feb. 21.—This measure was referred to the committee on General Welfare.

March 21.—Commissioner of Health transmitted to the board a full report on the subject, and recommended the passage of an ordinance to prevent such food wastage.

March 28.—Committee reported this ordinance favorably, but took no action on Socialist measure.

Net result: The favorite political subterfuge of the majority party is evidently in progress here. No action on Socialist measure, but action of their own along precisely similar lines.
Feb. 26.—Ordinance introduced, providing for the operation by the Department of Health of at least three model day nurseries. (Defeated.)

March 12.—Health Commissioner Amster, in a letter to the board, opposed this ordinance. The committee to which the measure was referred granted a public hearing, but a few days later, apparently under pressure, reversed their decision and reported unfavorably. It was defeated, under protests from both Republican and Democratic sides.

Net result: Administration placed on record as opposed to meeting the well-organized need for more day nurseries caused by insufficient Catholic and other private charitable agencies.

April 23.—Resolution introduced providing for investigation by Committee on General Welfare of interference with street peddlers and their rights and for recommendation by the Committee of remedial legislation. (Pending.)

June 14.—Public hearing in Aldermanic Chamber on peddlers' problem. Assurances by Police Department that peddlers' rights would be protected according to temporary agreement with them.

The General Welfare Committee is continuing its investigation.

Net result: Petty persecution of street peddlers ended in agreement with Police officials and a permanent solution of the peddler problem guaranteed.

May 28.—Resolution introduced providing for setting aside of vacant city property for use as community gardens.

June 4.—Socialist resolution passed by the Board as introduced.

Net result: Gardening opportunities opened to city dwellers as means to reduce cost of living.

June 18.—Ordinance introduced providing for free hospital care of all city employees injured in the course of duty.

July 16.—Ordinance passed extending free hospital care to injured employees in Departments of Parks, Water Supply, Docks and Plant and Structures.

Net result: Nine thousand additional city employees guaranteed hospital care at city's expense if injured in course of duty.
LIST OF MEASURES INTRODUCED

The following is a complete list of all measures introduced in the Board of Aldermen by the Socialist Delegation. Those marked with an asterisk (*) were introduced on the basis of a thorough investigation and a published report by the Aldermanic Research Bureau, which contains a summary of all the information available on the subject. The full text of the measures appear in the “Proceedings of the Board of Aldermen” published by the city for the date on which each measure was introduced or disposed of.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduced</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
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<tr>
<td>2. Resolution urging State Food Commission, to take steps to assure, at reasonable prices, adequate supply of ice for people of City and State.</td>
<td>Jan. 7, 1918</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Resolution calling upon Corporation Counsel for report to the Board of Method and Procedure by which city could immediately take over the properties owned and operated by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Company.</td>
<td>Jan. 15, 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Resolution requesting President of the United States to modify order closing industrial plants east of the Mississippi River.</td>
<td>Jan. 17, 1918</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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7. Resolution authorizing City to purchase, provide storage for and sell ice to its inhabitants. Jan. 22, 1918 Substitute resolution passed (1/29/18).

8. Resolution requesting Mayor to make report at each meeting of Board of any and all actions taken by him in the matter of the discovery, purchase, condemnation, storage, distribution or sale of surplus coal by the city. Feb. 5, 1918 Lost.

9. Resolution requesting Mayor to see that newspapers' licenses are not revoked because of their refusal to buy and sell certain newspapers. Feb. 5, 1918 Defeated.

10. Resolution requesting President of the Borough of Brooklyn to give the Board full and detailed information on the subject of dismissals from his department. Feb. 13, 1918 Defeated.


12. Resolution empowering Board of Health to investigate and report upon alleged food wastage in the Boroughs of Manhattan and Brooklyn during January, 1918. Feb. 21, 1918 Referred to Gen. Welfare Com.
13. Resolution instructing Com. on General Welfare to prepare suitable legislation to regulate the business of speculating in theatre tickets.

Feb. 28, 1918
Referred to Gen. Welfare Com.

*14 An ordinance to provide for the operation by the City of New York of passenger and other car service over the Williamsburg Bridge.

Feb. 28, 1918
Referred to Com. on Public Thoroughfares.

*15. An ordinance establishing a division of day nurseries in the Department of Health.

Feb. 28, 1918
Declared out of order.

16. Amendment to report of Committee on Rules, in re: stenographers' report of Board's proceedings.

March 5, 1918
Defeated (3/21/18).

17. Resolution providing for complete transcript of proceedings and for publication thereof.

March 5, 1918
Defeated.

18. Resolution requesting the Board of Estimate and Apportionment to abolish certain grades of positions.

March 5, 1918
Referred to Com. on Salaries and Offices.

*19. Resolution concerning a minimum compensation for city employees.

March 12, 1918
Referred to Com. on Salaries and Offices.

20. Resolution in regard to complaint of Department of Street Cleaning Employees' Ass'n that said employees are not receiving increased compensation due them from and after January 1, 1918.

March 21, 1918
Referred to Com. on Salaries and Offices.
LIST OF MEASURES

*21. Ordinance to amend Chapter 16, Art. I, of the Code of Ordinances by inserting therein a new section in relation to conditions of labor among certain employees of the Department of Street Cleaning.

March 26, 1918 Defeated (5/28/18).

22. Resolution providing for the appointment of a Special Committee to investigate the organization and activities of the Department of Health.

April 16, 1918 Referred to Com. on Rules.

*23. Resolution providing for establishment of a Food and Markets Commission of the City of New York.

April 23, 1918 Referred to Com. on Rules.

24. Resolution instructing Committee on General Welfare to take up question of regulation of street peddlers.

April 23, 1918 Referred to Com. on Genl. Welfare.

25. Resolution requesting Commissioner of Public Markets to appear before the Board and report on measures taken by his department in the matter of coal and ice.

May 7, 1918 Referred to Com. on Rules.

26. Resolution requesting Court House Board to place the Court House Site at the disposal of the Park Department for use as Community Gardens.

May 14, 1918 Defeated (5/21/18).

*27. An ordinance establishing a Division of Oral Hygiene in the Bureau of Child Hygiene of the Department of Health.

May 21, 1918 Substitute adopted (7/16/18).
28. Resolution requesting appearance of Commissioner of Street Cleaning before Board and answer questions relative to working hours of his Department.

May 28, 1918

29. Resolution requesting Commissioners of Sinking Fund to set aside certain property for use as community gardens.

May 28, 1918

30. Resolution requesting appearance of the Commissioner of Public Charities before the Board in the matter of the Children's Home Bureau.

June 11, 1918

31. An ordinance to amend Article I of Chapter 13, of the Code of Ordinances, relating to Hospitals.

June 18, 1918

32. Resolution prescribing the procedure of the Board of Aldermen in relation to the annual budget.

June 18, 1918

33. Resolution opposing sanction by any city or state authority of fare increases by the Brooklyn Rapid Transit Co.

July 16, 1918

34. Resolution petitioning Congress to enact legislation to prohibit profiteering in rent.

July 16, 1918
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