

The Indianapolis Times

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Member of the Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance. Client of the United Press and the NEA Service.

Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulations.

Published daily except Sunday by Indianapolis Times Publishing Co., 214-220 W. Maryland St., Indianapolis.

Subscription Rates: Indianapolis—Ten Cents a Week. Elsewhere—Twelve Cents a Week.

PHONE—MA in 3500.

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou last wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!—Ps. 31:19.

The soul is strong that trusts in goodness—Massinger.

The Law and the Manager Movement

THE politicians, in their desperation, have attacked the Indiana city manager law without knowing all the facts. They have admitted that city manager government has been successful in other States, particularly in Ohio, but they have contended that it would not work out in Indiana because the Indiana law was weak. They made these statements apparently without investigating the laws of Ohio and other States.

Now the fact has been disclosed that the Indiana law is in a great many respects superior to that of Ohio and that many more safeguards are thrown around the rights of citizens in Indiana cities governed under the city manager act than are provided for citizens of Ohio cities under city manager government.

So another political bubble has been exploded.

Any one with any knowledge of city government who read the comparison between the Indiana and the Ohio law as printed in The Times Saturday can readily see of what in substantial material the politicians' arguments against the Indiana law were constructed.

NO one has attacked the principle of the city manager plan and the attacks against the law have failed to stand up. To this same statement made recently in The Times, another Indianapolis publication declared that no one had attacked the principle of the present Federal plan of city government.

The whole city manager movement is a protest against the principle of the Federal plan of government for cities. It is not an attack on any individual or group of individuals nor on any particular administration.

The present plan is wrong because it makes the basis of city government political. It recognizes political parties in the conduct of the business of administering the affairs of a city.

In this country there are two great parties. Supposedly they stand for divergent principles. They are essentially national parties and their differences are national. In no way are their differences local and in no way have they a place in the administration of local affairs.

This is the main trouble with the principle of the present system which depends on the party system for its existence.

AS Charles F. Coffin, chairman of the city manager committee of 1,000, said the other day, there is no Democratic way and no Republican way of conducting a police department or of paving a street or of administering a health department. Yet we find the city divided into groups labeled Democratic and Republican and with candidates labeled Democratic and Republican seeking office.

Under the present system, the city election in Indianapolis has a great deal to do with the political complexion of the State. If there should be a political election in Indianapolis this year it would have a very strong influence on the Indiana senatorial election next year. Already strings are being pulled from Washington to influence the Indianapolis city election.

This sort of thing can not work to the

advantage of the citizens of Indianapolis. The city government, whomever should be elected under the political system, would inevitably be conducted with a view to furthering the ambitions of politicians of one party or another. The citizens of Indianapolis could not possibly benefit from such manipulation.

The present plan is wrong also because it discourages office seeking by men of ability and leaves the way open for those who revel in rough-and-tumble political fights, regardless of what means must be used to accomplish the ends desired. The administration of the affairs of the city of Indianapolis is the biggest and most important job in Indianapolis. Yet under the present system this job is left to a man not necessarily skilled in business administration but certainly skilled in political manipulation. Even though the head of the city government should be a good business man, his hands are tied by political affiliations and obligations.

These are some of the things that are wrong with the principle of the present system of city government.

THE city manager system, as many American cities already have demonstrated, does away almost entirely with these difficulties. The best recommendation for the city manager system is the fact that cities which have adopted it would not consider for a moment going back to the old system.

A petition asking for a referendum to determine whether Indianapolis shall adopt the manager system will be filed. After it is filed there will be considerable time to discuss and investigate the plan from every angle.

But no one is going to take the politicians very seriously. Every one knows that they will go to any length to stay in the game.

Men and the Law

DURING the last year or two there have arisen in Indiana one or two men who have attempted to give the people of the State the impression that they are a law unto themselves.

One such is D. C. Stephenson, who built up a powerful personal following. He has influenced legislation to a tremendous extent. He has influenced the election of a State administration. He has given the impression that he was a controlling influence in the State, commanding public officials and directing the trend of public events.

D. C. Stephenson now is under indictment on serious charges. The question of his guilt or innocence is not one that can or should be discussed in a newspaper. That is a question for a jury to decide. Under the law he is entitled to the presumption of innocence until he is proved guilty and he is entitled to all the other privileges of a defendant in a criminal case.

On the other hand, the State is entitled as well to a fair show. It is entitled to the presumption that the law is bigger than any individual or group of individuals.

The Stephenson case is one in which the public is vitally interested, not so much because of the nature of the charges but because of the peculiar position of Stephenson in the community.

He can expect to be treated just as any other defendant would be treated under similar circumstances. He can expect no fewer privileges and no more privileges.

The principle of "I am the law in Indiana" may be applied to legislatures and to executives, but it ceases to exist in courts of law themselves.

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What cause for a sigh! The tiny tot's sleeping, they think. And then comes a voice from the bedroom nearby, "Will someone please bring me a drink?"

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