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MACHINE POLITICS
AND
MONEY IN ELECTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY

BY

WILLIAM M. IVINS

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Books you may hold readily in your hand are the most useful, after all
DR. JOHNSON

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tions of its application. It has reference only to so much of the machinery of election as refers to the registration, taking and canvassing of the vote; and although it prescribes the form in which tickets are to be printed, the number of tickets, the manner of folding and indorsing, it is entirely silent upon the vital point as to how the tickets are to be distributed.

Now this very point is the pivotal one around which the entire political machinery of this city revolves, whether that machinery be Democratic or Republican. It exists for only one purpose, the securing of the vote on election-day, and it is organized accordingly. In its organization it actually makes the Election Law not only an adjunct to the Machine, but treats the election officers as so many men in the pay of the city, whom it can count upon to cast their ballots as the party desires, and to keep a close scrutiny upon all voters whatever, from a partisan as well as an official point of view.*

* See Appendix II.

CHAPTER III.

THE COST OF ELECTIONS IN NEW YORK CITY.

IN discussing the cost of elections, we must begin with the election machinery itself. In the city of New York there are to-day 812 election districts. The law provides for four inspectors and two poll-clerks to each district, making an aggregate of 4872 election officers paid out of the City Treasury; 2436 of which are Democrats, and 2436 of which are Republicans. The Republican Police Commissioners appoint the Republican election officers; the Democratic Police Commissioners those who are Democratic.

The Democratic party, however, is divided into a number of factions, and the Democratic members of the Board of Police have for years required that the representation of the factions should be in proportion to their recognition as to regularity by the Democratic State Committee.

In this way Tammany Hall Democrats have had two-fifths of one-half, the County Democrats two-fifths of one-half, and Irving Hall one-fifth of one half of the election officers.

This system, sanctioned by the statute and the Supreme Court, consequently enables the Republicans to supply places to three men for each election district in the city for five days each at \$7.50 apiece a day, and the Democrats do the same thing in the ratio of division which has been mentioned. The total appropriation for all election purposes whatever in the city of New York last year (1886), made under the provisions of the Election Law, was \$226,000.

It is customary for the designation of the polling-places also to be treated as patronage, but it is not bestowed directly on the political parties, as in the case of inspectors and poll-clerks. It is police captains' patronage. Under instructions of the chief of the Bureau of Elections—who was for many years, if he is not yet, a party "boss"—the Superintendent of Police each year asks the captains to recommend one place in each election district in their respective precincts to be rented as a polling-place. The owner of a butch-

er's, baker's, barber's, or tobacconist's shop regards the designation of his place as a valuable favor, and the allotment is much sought after in the several election districts. It is not only a good advertisement, but the lessor of the premises is well paid for advertising his business in this way. The eight hundred and twelve places are accordingly selected by the police captains, and the majority being Republicans, the greater part of this patronage is awarded to Republicans of good party standing.

The appropriation to the Police Board by the Board of Estimate and Apportionment for last year was made in detail as follows:

For compensation of inspectors and poll-clerks (section 1854, New York City Consolidation Act of 1882).....	\$145,480	9
For rent of polling-places and fitting up the same, new ballot-boxes, carting ballot-boxes, stationery, maps, and printing, etc.....	40,720	25
For advertising election districts, polling-places, and the official canvass, for advertising election notices by Clerk of Common Council, for advertising election notices by the Sheriff, and for serving supervisors with notices of elections by the Sheriff.....	25,000	
For expenses of special election in Sixth Assembly District on December 29, 1885.....	2,800	

For compensation of clerks to Board of Canvassers.	\$2,000	
		\$216,000
For salary of the chief of the Bureau of Elections.	5,000	
For salary of the Chief Clerk of the Bureau of Elections.	1,500	
		6,500
		\$222,500

By subsequent transfer \$3500 was added, making the total as given at page 40 of \$226,000.

In addition to this patronage growing out of the express provisions of the State law, there is a large volume of patronage of much the same character rising out of the application of the United States law to elections in those years when United States officers are chosen, or say every other year. The national law calls for the appointment of two supervisors of election for each election district, who are to be paid \$5 per day for not over ten days' service. They are appointed by a judge of the United States Court. During the last election the supervisors served from one to seven days each. The Treasury Department has decided, whether rightfully or wrongfully, that none of them can be paid for more than five days' service. Assuming that they be paid for an average of five

days' service only, we have \$25 for each supervisor, two supervisors for each district, or say \$50 per election district for eight hundred and twelve election districts, or \$40,600.

In addition to the supervisors, the United States Marshal is authorized to appoint on the application of two citizens in writing as many deputy marshals as he pleases. During the last election the United States Marshal appointed but two marshals from each district, and limited their term of office to two days each, at \$5 per day. This is the smallest expenditure that has ever been made in this respect since the enactment of the law under which the assistant marshals are appointed, the Republicans having invariably appointed a larger number to serve for a greater length of time.

In addition to this, the United States Marshal appointed a general aid for ten days at \$5 per day, and three Assembly District marshals for each district at \$5 per day for six days each; he also appointed three marshals-at-large for ten days each. He advises me that his printing bill for blanks for applications, appointments, instructions, etc., was \$1500, and his payments to marshals \$22,000, which, with the payment to supervisors of \$40,600,

makes an actual total for last year of \$64,100 for this purpose. These places have heretofore always been treated as party patronage, and the money has been distributed accordingly.

The legal machinery of elections thus involves the expenditure of \$290,000 as a minimum, paid out of the public purse and treated as party patronage, which expenditure in Presidential elections of the past has been greater than this by fully \$200,000, incident to the immense number of appointments made by the United States Marshal, and the special work done by the Chief Supervisor of Elections. I have not had the time at my disposal to get the exact figures for any but last year, however, and these latter I give on official authority. This fund of \$290,000 is practically used, if not to purchase, at least to assure and guarantee the vote of at least ten persons for each election district. The election districts will average about 300 voters, so that 3 per cent. of the voters are employed in or about the elections in accordance with the provisions of law as officers of the law, and the election district leader sees that they are the first men to vote, and to vote right.

The inspectors, poll-clerks, supervisors, and marshals are generally selected for the same reasons, and in the same way in which the workers at the polls are chosen. It was customary during the entire time the Republicans had control of the appointment of the supervisors and marshals for them to distribute a certain number of blanks among the district leaders of the Republican party and of Tammany Hall, to be filled up with such names as the Assembly District leader should choose; the men so chosen were appointed if their character was not flagrantly bad, and many times during the earlier administration of the law their character was not looked to at all. As to the inspectors and poll-clerks, it is customary for each organization, knowing exactly how many men it should get, to divide the number up among the Assembly Districts, and permit each Assembly District leader to name his representatives. This is an element of personal strength to the leader, and a guarantee of the political soundness, both as to general faith and fidelity to the organization, of the person appointed.

Now, as has been pointed out, the entire political machinery of New York City is incident to

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the main fact of getting in the votes on election-day. Every part of the Machine is organized with this object in view and no other.

There are three well-organized Machines in New York City. Each of these Machines, it will be remembered, has twenty-four district organizations, corresponding with the Assembly Districts of the city. Each Assembly District organization consists of a committee varying in numbers according to the general plan of organization. Ultimately and essentially, however, all the organizations are alike; each Assembly District is actually controlled by the Assembly District leader, and the caucus of the Assembly District leaders constitutes the main-spring of the party. It is the source of all authority, and determines all questions of policy. Each of the parties asserts that its policy is dictated either by its Conventions or by its County Committee; but, in fact, the delegates to the Conventions or to the County Committee from each Assembly District consist of only such persons as are satisfactory to the district leader. The district leader himself is, as a rule, chosen either by the boss of the party or by a vote of the majority of the other district leaders,

except in those cases where they have compelled their recognition by the strength of their personal following in the district. Committees of the organization have the power of passing upon the validity or invalidity of all primary and committee elections, and, as a rule, decide all contests as the recognized district leader desires. For the purpose of showing the best results in his district, it is customary for each district leader to have a representative to look after the election district, commonly called an election district captain. These men are of the utmost importance to the Machine, and every Assembly District leader strives to quarter his election district captains on the city. This he succeeds in doing sooner or later. If the Republicans are out of power in every other department, and cannot take care of the "boys" in any other way, they at least always have three places to dispose of, which are worth \$7.50 a day for five days in each election district; but they are not reduced to this sore necessity. The Democratic leader either finds a place for the friends of the Republican leader, with whom he is co-operating, or when the Republican leader is in power it is the latter who finds places for his Demo-

cratic friends and coadjutors; for the professional or caste feeling is very strong, and the politicians of all parties recognize their ultimate community of interests at all times. Sooner or later, on the pay-rolls of the city, which contain 9955 names, exclusive of school-rolls, or 13,749 all told, which latter figure includes 25 Aldermen and 83 chief officers, and excludes all Assemblymen, Senators, and national officers, at least four men are taken care of by each party all the year round in each of the eight hundred and twelve districts. The Machine, for the purpose of securing their services in perpetuity, thus has the city pay them as city employes. This is particularly the case with regard to the Assembly District leaders. To be sure, the money paid them out of the city, state, or national Treasury cannot properly be said to be money spent in elections, but it is money spent in maintaining the solidity and perpetuity of the Machine; it keeps it alive the year round, and ready for all emergencies, and especially for the great critical emergency of the election. Without it each election would find the Machine broken and scattered, and consequently it has to be considered.

New York City paid its Assembly District lead-

ers last year \$330,000, or an average of \$4750 for each of the seventy-two leaders. This figure includes the estimated income of the Register's office at \$100,000. That is now, however, a salaried office, yielding only \$12,000 per year to its chief. The amount which is now being actually received by these leaders from the public treasury is \$242,000. Of this amount Tammany Hall gets about \$119,000, divided among eighteen out of twenty-four of its district leaders. The County Democracy gets about \$90,000, divided among seventeen out of twenty-five of its district leaders. The Republican leaders, being in the minority party, both in the city and nation, do not fare so well; but they have hopes, or have heretofore shared the pay of loyalty. Their \$32,000 is divided among eight of their twenty-four leaders. It must be said, however, in order to be just, that many of the men among whom these sums are divided are honest and efficient public servants, and the city gets full value for the salaries paid them.

The aggregate of these sums, say \$242,000, may be regarded as the city's permanent investment in the machines for leadership alone. Certainly not less than \$1,000,000 more is invested in the same

way in political captains and followers, of whom it must be said, also, that the great majority render fair service to the city for the salaries paid them. The Machines thus supported all the year round find themselves in good condition to take up the work of organizing a campaign and conducting an election.

When our County Clerk and Register were respectively feed officers, they were frequently called upon, not only to pay a very high assessment, but to support a certain number of district leaders, thus giving these leaders their liberty throughout the entire year, which they were consequently enabled to devote to the interests of their party and constituencies; \$15,000 to \$50,000 has not been regarded as too large an assessment to pay for these offices. It is an open secret among politicians that for a number of years three or four people had from \$3000 to \$5000 apiece per annum from each of these offices, who rendered no official service whatever, and who, nevertheless, were quartered upon the Sheriff, Register, and the County Clerk, as only a fair distribution of the income from these offices to the Machine which presented them to their holders.

Prior to election-day each party formally, through the action of its leaders in caucus, determines upon how much money shall be allotted by the party, as such, for expenditure in each election district, to employ workers at the polls, as it is called. These workers at the polls are paid an average of five dollars a day each. The ballots are printed by each Machine for itself, although frequently they all employ the same printer, which has sometimes in the past produced strange results. It is usual to select a committee on printing, which takes charge of the entire matter of getting up the ballot, seeing that it conforms with the requirements of the law, and that it is folded, bunched, and distributed throughout the organization.

The manner of distribution is as follows: The printer bunches the tickets into complete sets. He then puts, we will say, from two thousand five hundred to five thousand sets in an election district bag, and then puts one of these bags for each election district into a larger bag, which is marked with the number of the Assembly District to which it is to go. In Tammany Hall and the County Democracy, on the night before the election, the distribution of these bags is supervised by the

Committee of the organization, the Assembly District bag being given to the Assembly District leader; he in his turn calls together the election district leaders, and places in the hands of each of them the election district bag. In the Republican party, however, all tickets are delivered flat, as printed, to the district leaders, who supervise the folding and bunching, which is done by the leaders, each for his own district. This is a right the Republican leaders have never been willing to surrender, as it would materially depreciate the value of their franchise as leaders. As leaders of the minority party, and often holding the balance of power, this is of great political or cash value to them, and cannot be given up to the control of the central organization any more than any other valuable proprietary right.

The Assembly District leaders thus come into possession of the whole of the vital part of the election machinery. They could meet on the night before election and destroy the tickets, and no election could take place. It is the possession of this power which makes them valuable from the point of view of purchase and sale. Many of the Assembly District leaders in the three organizations

have exploited this power so successfully and profitably that they have been able to live throughout the entire year on their income derived from the handling of the tickets. They can destroy, rebunch, fail to distribute, and what not, as they please, and thus give rise to such controversies as that between Mr. Thorndike Rice and Mr. Michael Cregan, in which the whole community was lately interested. They rarely, if ever, take money nominally for dealing with the tickets. It is taken, or alleged to be taken, for the purpose of securing the distribution or peddling of the tickets at the polls, or, as it is called, for the "employment of workers."

The result of this system of machinery is that, in order to compete with the professional politicians, it is necessary for any independent body of citizens to have a very complex Machine, and frequently a very expensive one. In the first place, the regular Machine is always equipped and prepared to print as well as to distribute a ticket. These are expensive matters, and the fact of the expense in this regard alone is a practical deterrent to independent movements for reform. The Machines are always enabled to print the tickets

and distribute them by means of assessments levied on candidates and office-holders.

First as to assessments—and these assessments, be it understood, are something entirely distinct and apart from the amount of moneys paid voluntarily by candidates in the prosecution of their canvass independent of or accessory to the work of the Machine. In good years, such as that after the sale by the Board of Aldermen of the Broadway franchise, the Aldermanic office was much sought after. There were many districts in the city, consequently, in which the Republicans, Tammany Hall, and the County Democracy alike assessed Aldermanic candidates from \$15 to \$25 per election district. Membership in the Assembly is not regarded as so valuable as the Aldermanic office, because the former body is larger, the pay less, the members have to live away from home. It is usual to assess the Assembly candidate from \$5 to \$15 an election district. The office of State Senator, because it is one of greater influence, and the term is for two years, is much sought for, and the assessments vary from \$20 to \$30 per election district. In some years the expenditure of Senatorial candidates has been enormous. Thus,

when Bradley and O'Brien were running, it is understood that each spent \$50,000 in the election. When Morrissey and Schell were running, Morrissey paid an assessment of \$10 per election district, while Schell paid one of \$50 per election district, and on the night before election paid \$2500 to each of the Assembly District leaders in his Senatorial district, to "guarantee the result." We all know how well he succeeded in guaranteeing Morrissey's election. In the last election at which Senators were elected, the Democratic candidates paid \$15 for each election district to Tammany Hall, and \$15 for each election district to the County Democracy, and \$10 for each election district to Irving Hall. Their average assessment was \$500 apiece per Assembly District for the County Democracy and Tammany Hall, and \$10 per election district for Irving Hall. The Democratic candidates for the Senate alone paid at least \$30,000 in assessments.

Candidates for Congress are called upon to pay from \$15 to \$20 per election district, and when they are nominated by two or all of the organizations, are required to make the same contribution to each organization. When there is no union of

the Democratic factions for election of members of Congress, each faction taxes its candidate from \$25 to \$30 in an election district. Candidates for judicial offices have paid as high as \$20,000. From \$10,000 to \$15,000 is the average assessment for the Superior and Common Pleas bench, while the assessment for the Supreme Court bench has frequently been higher than this. The assessment demanded of the Comptroller at his last election was \$10,000. Mayor Hewitt paid \$12,000 apiece to the County Democracy and to Tammany Hall, or \$24,000. Mr. Edson paid, or there was paid for his account, \$10,000 apiece to the County Democracy and Tammany Hall, and \$5000 to Irving Hall, or \$25,000. Mayor Grace paid \$10,000 to the County Democracy when he last ran, and the Citizens' Committee of that year expended about \$10,000 of voluntary contributions. In 1880 Mayor Grace paid \$12,500 to Irving Hall and \$7500 to Tammany Hall. In 1878 Mayor Cooper practically created a party, at what cost to himself he only knows. In 1876 Mayor Ely is reported not to have paid over \$5000. John Reilly is said, upon good authority, to have paid Tammany an assessment of \$50,000 for the nomination of Register in 1883.

An average year would show the following assessments on the basis of two candidates only running in each district, and on the basis of the minimum assessment:

Two Aldermanic candidates at \$15 per district for 812 districts.....	\$24,360
Two Assembly candidates at \$10 per district for 812 districts.....	16,240
Two candidates for Senate or Congress at \$25 per election district	40,600
Four candidates for Judgeships at \$10,000 each.....	40,000
Two candidates for Mayor at \$20,000 each.....	40,000
Two candidates for a county office such as Sheriff, County Clerk, or Register, at \$10,000.....	20,000
Two candidates for Comptroller at \$10,000	20,000
Two candidates for District Attorney at \$5000	10,000
Or, say a total of.....	\$211,200

It is a fair estimate, year in and year out, that there is distributed at each polling-place in the 812 districts of the city \$75 to \$100 by the County Democracy, \$75 to \$100 by Tammany Hall, \$40 to \$50 by the Republicans, except in Presidential years, when the distribution has been much larger, \$15 by Irving Hall, and \$15 by the representatives of the different independent candidates, making a minimum of \$220 and a maximum of \$280

per election district, which for 812 election districts would give a mean total of \$203,000. It is usually calculated that the assessment of candidates will cover this item. At the last election, for example, the County Democracy actually put in the hands of workers at the polls in the Fifteenth Assembly District from \$80 to \$100 in each election district, and \$85 each in the Tenth Assembly District.

As we have seen, the legal election machinery paid ten men for each district at the last election. The minimum, \$220 per district, distributed by the party machinery, calculating that \$5 was the average paid to each man, although on the total figure this average is too high, and the money is really divided among more people, would provide for 44 men, which, with 10 men paid by law, is 54 men to each of 812 districts, or say 43,848 persons. At the last election 219,992 votes were polled for Mayor, so that over 20 per cent. of all the voters actually received money in one form or another for their election-day services—in a word, were under pay.

In addition to the amount of expenditure at the polls, there is to be calculated the cost of printing,

which in different years has ranged in the County Democracy from \$12,000 to \$19,000 for printing the tickets. To this item there has to be added an expenditure of from \$6000 to \$8000 for folding, addressing the envelopes, and mailing a set of tickets to each voter in the city. The entire printing bill of each of the three organizations for all purposes whatever is not less than \$25,000, or say \$75,000 in all, and it certainly costs not less than \$25,000 for meetings and miscellaneous expenses for all three parties.

In the campaign of 1882, in which Allan Campbell ran against Franklin Edson, Mr. Campbell's canvass was made in a period of ten days. For the purpose of making that canvas, \$63,000 was subscribed, for which Mr. Campbell subscribed \$1000, no assessment having been levied; for manning the polls and supplying booths, about \$25,000 was expended; for printing the tickets, \$10,000; for their distribution by mail, \$8000; for advertising, \$15,000; for meetings, music, central and local headquarters, and other expenses throughout the city, about \$4500. Mr. Butler, the candidate for County Clerk, told me that he personally spent \$25,000 in this fight. These figures I give only

approximately from memory, but they will serve to show how much money was raised in a canvass in which not one penny, to the knowledge of any member of the Committee, of which I was one, was improperly spent. The Republican party indorsed Mr. Campbell's candidacy, and the Committee was waited upon by a committee from the Republicans, which demanded \$15,000 in order to pay the Republican workers at the polls, the same to be distributed among the Republican district leaders. This was objected to. I was subsequently told by two of these leaders that this accounted for Mr. Campbell's defeat. One of them said that he was predisposed to knife Mr. Campbell anyhow, but when he found that we were not willing to contribute, he determined to put the knife in up to the hilt. Another told me that he called his "boys" together, and said they had only \$15 per election district in the treasury, that they had made a call on the Independents for more money and had been refused, and asked what had better be done; whereupon they decided unanimously to run Mr. Edson's tickets out of their booths as proper punishment for our niggardliness, although Mr. Campbell was the regular can-

didate of their party. They might have done as was done by an Assembly District leader of the County Democracy in 1884. He took the money of the County Democracy, and subsequently, for a higher price paid by Tammany Hall, destroyed certain of the tickets for the distribution of which he had been paid by the party.

The expenditures that I have tried to describe in detail have no reference whatever to Presidential or Gubernatorial years. In Presidential years, when we have uniformed parades, fireworks, torch-light processions, great mass-meetings, and a two months' campaign, the amount is increased beyond all believing. In 1884 it cost the County Democracy of the Tenth District \$1300 for a single parade in which 1500 men turned out, and only 600 were uniformed. This corresponding item in the Blaine canvass must have been something incredible. The nomination of Cleveland alone cost the County Democracy leaders, who were anxious to play the rôle of Warwicks, over \$100,000, as I have been told by some of those leaders with the knowledge that I intended to publish the fact. That sum was made up as follows:

Taking twenty-five men from each Assembly District, with leaders and delegates, to Chicago and back, say six hundred and fifty men, at \$22 each.....	\$14,300
Board allowed for six hundred and fifty men, at \$10 per day each, for seven days.....	45,500
So-called parlor expenses, including wine in the committee-room	10,000
Or say.....	<u>\$69,800</u>

the rest having been spent by the six hundred and fifty men for items other than those referred to. Tammany Hall is estimated to have spent about \$50,000 on the same pilgrimage.

Neither do the details I have given include expenses in and about bar-rooms, loss of time, and the demoralization of the community. As indicative of how great this latter can be, I would say that I am credibly informed that on the evening of the last great Democratic parade in the late Presidential campaign they took in \$2200 for liquors over the Hoffman House bar.

Any one familiar with politics can fix the expenditures in round figures at \$100,000 to \$125,000 apiece for Tammany Hall and the County Democracy in the average year; \$10,000 to \$20,000 for Irving Hall; and \$50,000 to \$75,000 to the Republican party — say a minimum of \$265,000, or an

average of \$307,500; while my calculation of \$203,000 distributed in districts, \$75,000 for printing and \$25,000 for meetings, &c., would give a total of \$303,000. In addition to this \$307,500 there is to be calculated all of the expenditures of candidates and their friends apart from these contributions to the Machine, a fair estimate of which for the city at large is \$100,000; and I believe it to be a minimum estimate, after asking the opinion of a number of district leaders. This will give an item, consequently, of \$407,500, to which let us add the \$290,000 expended by the city and by the United States, and we will have a grand total in round figures of \$700,000 for an average year, and not a Presidential year. The item of \$307,500 disbursed by the organizations independent of the personal expenditures of candidates is in excess of the aggregate assessments of candidates, which I estimated at \$211,000, and the difference is made good by the assessments on office-holders, levies on public contractors, and contributions from the rich men of the party. The difference of \$95,500 to be thus accounted for in all three parties is a most moderate estimate. The Commissionership of Public Works and the Comp-

trollership are great engines for facilitating this work of subscription and collection, and have been so used to great advantage in the past.

The entire machinery of politics thus pivots on the manner of election, the legal recognition of parties, the ability of parties to levy assessments on office-seekers and office-holders, the practical exclusion, because of the expensiveness of elections, of independent nominations and work, the resulting control of the ballots by Assembly District leaders, and the distribution of ballots to voters on election-day by their subordinates and followers—which, in a word, amounts to a monopoly in the hands of the leaders of the Machines, not only of the power of nomination, but of the elective franchise itself.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EVIL AND THE REMEDY.

THE system of heavy political assessments, and of the employment of large numbers of paid workers at the polls, is of comparatively recent growth. It was between 1860 and 1872 that our municipal politics developed those phases of corruption which have since been a hinderance to the extension of democratic institutions the world over. The characteristic features of the political evils of this period were three: gigantic frauds upon the public treasury, the open use of immense sums of money at the polls, and the almost equally open frauds in polling and canvassing the votes. When the Tweed Ring came into possession of both the political and official machinery of the city, their method was an exceedingly simple one. They distributed the nominations and the offices among themselves, and tapped the public till to pay the expenses of the election. There was no necessity for imposing

heavy assessments on candidates, for the organization, as such, did not assume the burden of responsibility for their election in the same way in which it now does. Each candidate looked out for his own election, employed his own men, and he and they spent his or the city's money to carry the day. The sums of money spent were quite as large, if not larger than those spent to-day, but they were not raised by means of assessments, and were not disbursed through the agents of the party machine as such.* Thus, when John McCool ran for Register, in 1864, he paid the highest assessment ever known up to that time, viz., \$5000. The successful candidate for Surrogate in 1862 and 1863 paid an assessment of \$100 each time, and in 1866, when he was elected for the third time, the fight being exceptionally severe, he was assessed but \$2000. It was customary to tax the candidate for the Street Commissionership, in whose office were performed most of the duties now falling upon the Commissioner of Public Works, only \$500. When Connolly ran for County Clerk, his assessment was \$2500; and when

* See Appendix III.

John Kelly last ran for Sheriff he was assessed only \$2000 by the party. He subsequently assessed W. R. Roberts \$25,000 for the same office, although it is understood that the latter refused to pay so exorbitant a tax. The aggregate of Tammany's assessments on candidates in 1875, I am told by a member of its Finance Committee of that year, was \$162,000, that being the first election after the wages of laborers on the city pay-rolls had been reduced by Tammany officials to \$1.60 per day, and a large fund being needed to make good the defection.

The era of high assessments was ushered in by Mr. Kelly, whose name belongs to history, and whose deeds must be treated by history the same as those of every other man who has filled a large place in public life. He was a great leader and a thorough organizer. No one knew better than he the value of organization, and he centred everything in the organization. He saw the evil of the expenditure of money by candidates, and sought to reduce it by adopting a new system. He induced his party to levy, and its candidates to pay, large assessments, and the organization then assumed the entire responsibility for the result.

This was at the time a decided improvement over the pre-existing state of affairs; ultimately the candidates spent less money and corruption was less rife. This continued to be the case until the factional dissensions in the Democratic party grew to be such as to threaten the permanency of Tammany's power. By this time, as the result of several causes, of which the assessment system was one of the chief, the tendency of the "organization" was to absorb both party feeling and patriotism. The organization came to be everything, and it decided who of its leaders, and in what order, were to be compensated for their service and fealty. Thus it was the custom for years for Tammany to require all who had received office at its hands to practically delegate to it all subordinate appointments. For instance, when vacancies for commissionerships occurred, if Tammany had succeeded in electing its Mayor, the organization would select the man for the vacancy and present his name to the Mayor, who was expected to appoint the nominee. This is the reason why Tammany has fallen out with every Mayor and every Governor since 1872, the last ones always temporarily excepted. Sometimes the organization was

sufficiently gracious to submit a small list, and thus afford a narrow margin for selection. In this way each district leader knew that he would be reached in order if he were loyal and energetic. The *esprit de corps* of the machine thus became almost as perfect as that of Napoleon's army. The same tendency was developed in the Republican machine; and when the County Democracy came into existence in 1881, being required to fight a machine so organized, it soon adopted the plan of "fighting the devil with fire." The assessment principle, as well as the principle of the usurpation by the organization of the right to decide which of its members was to be honored by appointment to office, were both adopted to their fullest extent. This was from no motive of fraud or corruption, but because it was the dominant idea of the day, and seemed to be the only plan by which an organization could be created successfully to combat Tammany Hall. The contest between Tammany and the County Democracy resulted naturally enough in both organizations carrying these principles to an extreme. Each needed more money because of the conditions of the conflict, and each increased the assessments. Each

required a more marked party loyalty, a more compact organization, and each viewed with greater jealousy all official acts which they required to be done as recognitions of the organization. A Mayor, a Comptroller, a Commissioner of Public Works, or a Police Commissioner could only prove his fidelity to the organization by making his appointments from among those whom the organization and not he had selected. The system thus reached its acme, and it so exists to-day. There is a controversy now pending which perfectly illustrates this state of affairs. By section 1850 of the Consolidation Act, as previously pointed out, the Republican inspectors of elections and poll-clerks are named by the Republican Police Commissioners solely, and the Democratic inspectors and poll-clerks by the Democratic Commissioners. Now, John Simpson is the leader of the Republican district organization of the Sixth Assembly District. Prior to the last election he prepared a list of men whom he desired to be appointed as inspectors and poll-clerks, and presented it to the Republican President of the Board of Police, Mr. S. B. French. There was, however, an opposition to Simpson in his district committee, and the op-

position also prepared a list which it presented to Commissioner French. The latter divided the appointments between the two factions. This so incensed Simpson's sense of political and legal fairness that he, claiming that as district leader he had an absolute right to name the men to be appointed by the Republican Commissioners, has now preferred charges against the Republican President of the Board of Police to the Republican County Committee, of which both the accuser and accused are members. Mr. French quite naturally and properly answers the charges by saying that the organization has no jurisdiction to try him for his official acts as Police Commissioner. But such a pretension as that of the district leader is the necessary and proper fruit of the political system by which this city is now governed. It has been a gradual growth; but now, having reached its climax, the principles upon which it is founded have become so firmly fixed that even when the organizations merge their differences and act in concert, assessments are levied and workers are employed just as though the Machines were at war, and after the election each organization strives to secure places for itself, and to say who shall fill them,

adapting their principles to their claims on the half loaf as they would have done if it were the whole.

All this, however, does not necessarily imply individual corruption on the part of the leaders. It makes corruption easy, but it does not necessitate it. The condition of the law presupposed some machinery or other, not provided for by law, but the Machines have grown stronger than the law. The ultimate result is that one-fifth of our electors are under pay of parties or candidates on election-day; that offices are not unfrequently practically put up at auction to the highest bidder; that public spirit is rendered both hopeless and helpless; and that the members of the Machines alone, and not the people, truly enjoy the benefits of the electoral franchise.

It is not even regarded as an open question in this country whether the State should take any part in so much of the machinery of elections as applies to the manner in which candidates shall be placed in nomination, or the expense of printing and distributing the ballots to the electors shall be borne. Up to the present time all the States of our Union have uniformly decided this question,

so far as it has come up for decision, in favor of the non-interference of the State in these particular matters, with the exception of some legislation concerning Primary Elections. Down to about 1870 our own State occupied this same ground, even as to the matter of registration of voters; and even to-day, throughout the rural districts, it is not deemed necessary that the State should interfere to the extent of compelling a registration. It was only the peculiar history of the elections in our own city and in Brooklyn, between the years 1860 and 1870, which compelled the State to depart from this principle of non-interference, to the extent of enacting the general principles of the election laws now in force.

The law thus refuses to take any part in the action of individuals or parties looking to the nomination or election of candidates, other than to see that no person, and he an elector, votes more than once, and that each vote is counted for one and no more. It is apparent, therefore, on its face that if any election is to take place at all in great cities, extra-legal machinery must be brought into existence. Party government is a natural and, I believe, a necessary outgrowth of our constitutional

system, and party government can only exist coupled with party machinery, but not necessarily the particular party machinery which we know. The law presumes that the machinery of parties will be sufficient to do, and do in the best possible way, all those things incident to an election, concerning which the law itself is silent. It is unjust and improper, therefore, to condemn our Machines simply because they are Machines. They are blameworthy only in so far *directly* as they are engines of corruption, and *indirectly* as militating against the true spirit of republican institutions. If the law does not compel the public treasury to bear the burden of printing the tickets for an election, which is quite as essential an expenditure as that of supplying the ballot-boxes and the registry of voters, the burden for the payment of which is a public burden, it is because it is assumed that this work will be done voluntarily by individuals. The individuals who do it cannot work singly and alone, but have to work in concert, and the very minute this concert of action is organized you have at least the beginnings of a Machine. It is natural that those who have the greatest stake in the election—that is, the office-holders themselves—should

wish to continue in the employment of the Government and to perpetuate their influence. We will assume that every one of them is honestly, earnestly, and patriotically performing the duties of his office, notwithstanding the fact that they act together to make the necessary provision for an essential part of the machinery of elections. The community of their interests welds them into an organized body; the permanency of their interest keeps them practically in the field at all times. They are thus really only devoting themselves to their own business when they are doing what the law expects some citizens, if not all, to do. The merchant, the banker, and the lawyer are no more attending to their business when occupied in their offices than the politician is in attending his club or his committee meetings; and no man can be blamed for attending to his own business, if his business be recognized by law as honest and reputable. One man makes the public business so far his own that the two are treated as practically identical, while the other man's affairs are entirely private in their character and disassociated altogether from those of the public. The great majority of those who, being public servants, are also practi-

cally interested in the organization and management of political Machines, are painstaking and careful officers who are actually doing at all times what the law expects all men to do, and what the newspaper press and the general public sentiment is continually asserting all men should do. The Machine really exists as incident to the assumptions of the law which have been spoken of, and it is not necessarily corrupt. The remedy for the evils incident to the existence of the Machines is not by indiscriminately attacking the "practical politicians" and office-holders. This has been done to such an extent that many self-respecting men no longer dare accept office or devote their abilities to the service of the public, either officially or in active politics. That the Machines give birth to corruption and degenerate into engines of evil, there is no room for doubt; but no Machine, as a Machine, is radically blameworthy so long as our law remains as it is. From time to time, Machines organized for temporary purposes spring into existence, conduct campaigns on virtually the same principles as those pursued by the regular Machines, achieve victory or undergo defeat, and then go out of existence. Such Machines are frequently

applauded for the good they do, and are rarely condemned, for the reason that they are not permanent, and have not lived long enough to degenerate into corruption or to be a menace to political equality.

We are shocked to think that twenty per cent. of our voters are under pay on election-day; but if the law makes no provision for the payment of men to distribute the ballots, and the Machine finds that it is impossible to get the ballots distributed except by their employment at a fair day's wages, no one can complain. The price paid these men is less, on an average, than that at which the law actually employs its own election officers. Of course, while it is every man's affirmative duty to vote, it is no man's affirmative duty to stand at the polls all day and supply other voters with tickets. In like manner, while it is every man's duty to vote, it is no man's duty to make voluntarily a very heavy expenditure in order to supply the tickets with which other men shall vote. The party organizations, acting as such, whether from patriotic or other motives, volunteer to do the duty which the law assumes will be done somehow or other. The funds for the payment of the

expense absolutely and necessarily incident to legal election must be found in some way, and they are naturally found by the men most interested in the result—party leaders, office-holders, and candidates for office. It is natural, therefore, that they should, as “practical” men, come to regard themselves and not the public as the true beneficiaries of our political system.

Although it is certain that in this city much of the money raised by organizations has from time to time been misappropriated by the men who have collected and have been relied upon to disburse it, it is nevertheless true that far the greater part of this money has been disposed of for the purposes for which it was raised, and which the law does not condemn.

The real and justifiable objections to the Machines are that they exist in perpetuity, and that their leaders come to possess a monopoly of the means for supplying the necessary extra-legal machinery of the election. Possessing these means, they have to be sought by any one desiring a nomination; and as a condition precedent to acting in any one's behalf, they can insist upon contributions to their exchequer such as they see fit

to impose. These are the *positive* evils of the Machine, which tend naturally to corruption, because they put a premium on it. The *negative* evils are, that to conduct an election in opposition to the Machines a machinery of much the same kind has to be adopted, involving almost equally large expense, and calling upon its leaders and subordinates for an amount of attention and care, loss of time and contributions of money, that ultimately amount to an absolute deterrent from political activity, except upon rare and unusual occasions. The Machines are thus left in practical sole occupancy of the field, and so far hold a monopoly of the elective franchise that in this city any two of the three can, by uniting, make the election of their candidates a foregone conclusion. So true is this that they can, by combination, guarantee the election of candidates chosen at hazard from a hat, or defeat almost any law that can be conceived providing for the representation of minorities.

In 1873, when the present charter of this city was enacted, the design was to provide for minority representation in electing the Board of Aldermen, where it was believed to be peculiarly needed. The law, however, was completely nullified

by the possibility of co-operation among parties. Thus it was only necessary at any time for any two of the three Machines to agree as to which candidates they would vote for, dividing them among themselves, and having their tickets printed accordingly, to make the election absolutely certain. Consequently, instead of providing minority representation, the law afforded the opportunity for guaranteeing the result of combinations between parties, thus making them, because of the assurance of success, almost completely irresponsible for their nominations. This is only one of the many ways in which it is possible for the election machinery existing in virtue of the theory of the law that elections will be voluntarily conducted, to defeat the whole purpose of popular elections.

The remedies for the tyranny and irresponsibility of the Machines have been under discussion ever since the evils first became evident. It is asserted continually that the only remedy is an enlivened and enlightened public spirit. For many years the pulpit and the press have been calling upon the people to awake to a realization of their political duties. Once in a great

while public spirit is sufficiently aroused to accomplish something of good, and then dies out again. From time to time new organizations spring into existence with the view of becoming permanent. At first, as new Machines free from corruption, they declare war against the older and corrupter ones and do good work; but if they live long enough, they invariably fall into the habits and methods of all Machines whatsoever, because those habits and methods are absolutely incident to the life of political organizations under existing conditions. Some would have us believe that sporadic movements and temporary Machines, having so frequently proved a failure, are not to be relied on, but that the Machine should be supplemented by a sort of organization within the organization, which shall watch the manner in which the party subordinates perform their duties. This may be illustrated by the suggestion which I have frequently heard, that while it is necessary for both the Republican and Democratic parties to fully man the polls on election-day with paid workers, there should be another set of volunteer patriots who should devote themselves to seeing that the paid workers do their duty and faithfully

earn their pay. But this raises the old, old question, *Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?*

For the purpose of meeting the corruption which has prevailed in the matter of nominations and preventing frauds at Primary Elections, the law has departed from its principle of non-interference, and has recognized and sanctioned the extra-legal machinery incident to placing candidates in nomination by primary meetings. This is a radical departure from the general theory of the law, and has so far almost wholly failed in securing any real improvement in the condition of affairs, because the most honestly conducted primary is, after all, only a primary of the enrolled or recognized members of a party availing themselves of the machinery supplied by the party. In the long-run the majority at a primary meeting represents the party, and under the existing systems of organization the party is for the purposes of the Machine, as the Machine is for the purposes of the party, nothing more than a number of autocratic leaders. Reform by the legal recognition of the Machines is, consequently, not only a failure, but directly perpetuates the evil by the sanction implied in its recognition.

The last noteworthy fight by an independent organization that has recently been made in this city against the dominant Machines was in 1882, when the Independent party had the nominal aid and backing of the Republican organization, and it nevertheless cost \$63,000 to conduct the election. So long as the law remains unchanged, I do not believe that it would be possible to have an independent municipal canvass in this city at an expenditure of less than that amount, unless the movement were to be conducted in concert with some already thoroughly organized and well-distributed body of citizens, such, for instance, as the labor organizations which used their machinery in the late canvass, in which Mr. George polled so phenomenal a vote. Even then the expense is very large—so large as for a long time to have been a very serious deterrent to the attempt on the part of the labor organizations to act in concert in any municipal movement.

Besides vesting the power of nomination in fee-simple in those persons who practically own the machinery for printing and distributing the ballots, the existing system amounts to an almost complete exclusion from official public life of all

men who are not enabled to pay, if not a sum equal to the entire salary of the office they seek, at least a very large percentage of it. The poor man or the moderately well-to-do man is thus at once cut off from all political ambition, because the only key to success is wealth or machine power. The ablest lawyer at our bar could not secure a nomination for a judgeship unless he were able to pay an assessment of from \$10,000 to \$20,000, while a mere political lawyer, if he have the means of paying his assessment and stands well with the party leaders, can without great difficulty secure a nomination and even an election to an office for which he has no peculiar qualifications.

When, under the old system, the evil became unbearable, our present election and registration laws were enacted. There is to-day another evil equally unbearable, due, as the old evil was due, to the insufficiency of the election laws, and those laws will again have to be changed, not by undoing anything that has been done, but by extending their application, and by having the State or city take into its own hands all the machinery of elections whatever. All other suggested remedies will prove futile, or at best only temporary. The

result of this will be that Machines will no longer have to be fought by Machines, or by an aroused public spirit, or by appointing watchers to watch the watchers. Public spirit will have so fair a chance that it will be awake at all times. If a method can be found by which all men and all Machines can be given political equality before the law, actually as well as theoretically, the evil will die a natural death. If the city were to print and distribute the ballots, the result would be that the organizations, no longer having control of the machinery required for these purposes, would, as a consequence, no longer have control of the power of nomination and levying assessments. The main-spring of the Machine would be shattered. Enlightened public spirit would be no less necessary than now. It would be strengthened and confirmed by the opportunity offered it by the law to really and at all times count for something. A poor man would have as good an opportunity as a rich man, and the independent as fair a chance as the partisan.

While, as a rule, social evils are more difficult of treatment than any others, because of the complexity of the facts and the difficulty in locating

their causes, it is true that if the causes be once clearly defined, the evil is already in a fair way to cure itself. It suggests its own remedy. Let us therefore try to summarize distinctly the causes of the evil, and note the remedies which they naturally suggest.

THE EVIL.

1. The necessity for voluntarily printing and distributing the ballot justifies organization for this purpose.

2. It practically vests the Machines with the monopoly of the election machinery.

3. And, as a consequence, with the monopoly of nomination.

4. It involves the necessity of defraying the expenses of both printing and distribution by means of assessments on or contributions by candidates, officeholders, or party leaders.

THE REMEDY.

1. The *printing and distribution* of all ballots at public expense does away with the necessity of organization for this purpose.

2. And will deprive the political Machines of the monopoly of an essential part of the election machinery.

3. It will enable any body of citizens of the number prescribed by law to have the name of their candidate printed on the same ballot with the names of all other candidates for the same office, so that before the law and before the voters all candidates and all party organizations will stand on a perfectly even footing.

4. This will dispense altogether with the necessity of and excuse for levying political assessments.

THE EVIL.

5. Which facilitates bribery and corruption by affording them convenient covers.

6. And debauches the electors by leading them to become partisans for pay instead of honestly and from conviction performing their duty as citizens.

THE REMEDY.

5. And leave no legal cover for bribery. The law can describe and limit all permissible expenditure, and compel the candidate or his agent to make a sworn return with vouchers to a proper public officer for all disbursements. It may punish all violations with sufficiently severe penalties.

6. And prescribe that no elector under pay of a party or candidate shall be permitted to vote, thus making it more the interest of candidates and parties not to pay than to pay for election services, and thus deterring all honest electors from accepting pay.

These are the remedies naturally suggested by the evil, whereas all other suggested remedies are either the nostrums of political quacks, the dreams of inexperienced enthusiasts, or measures of partial relief attacking the symptoms only and not the causes of the evil. Almost all of the remedies which are suggested from time to time are wholly experimental, the results of which for good or ill can only be guessed and not known. If the same could be said of the remedies, the necessity for which is disclosed by an intimate and thorough

knowledge of the wrongs to be cured, we should all feel towards them as we do towards the others, that is, we should doubt and mistrust them to the point of letting them go untried, rather than run the risk of intensifying or changing the character of the evils of which we complain. As matter of fact, however, these suggested remedies are not untried or experimental. They have been tried, and have already accomplished exactly the result to be expected of them.

A careful study of the English law of elections, the Ballot Acts and the Prevention of Corrupt Practices Acts, will not only suggest how our own law can be modified, but will in many respects, *mutatis mutandis*, afford a good guide in drafting the legislation needed to embody and apply the remedy. In addition to this it will show how completely impossible it is, under such a law as that which prevails in Great Britain, for the evils from which we suffer to be perpetuated a single day. After we have studied these laws in operation elsewhere, and considered the changes necessary to conform them to our own system, we shall be prepared not only to solve the great and difficult problem of excluding fraud and corruption

from municipal politics, but how to supply a means of actually divorcing municipal from state and national politics, and of opening the way to the best attainable administration of our municipal business, which, while it bears no natural relation to party politics, is to-day almost entirely sacrificed to it, and made a mere counter in the game of personal or political ambition.