

PATHS TO CIVIC BETTERMENT

Philosophy of the Movement Embraced in the Improvement Association.

A FACTOR IN MUNICIPAL PROGRESS

Plans and Possibilities Discussed by Professor Oscar L. Triggs of Chicago University in the Chautauquan.

In the world in which we live there is little evidence of the conscious possession by any group of men and women of the full community sense. Business is competitive and individualistic, and conducted to the end of private profit. It is true, a modification in the industrial system was made when the legal fictions of the firm, the corporation, the trust and other forms of combination were devised. But in truth these corporations socialize their business only within the limits of the group, their motive still remaining selfish and egotistic.

The union which has been effected in the labor world is in like manner superficial and partial. There is, of course, a growing class consciousness, and it seems likely that in the next few years the labor world will be quite fully solidified. It is important to note that already the group contract is superseding individual contract, this fact pointing directly to the socialization of labor interests within the labor group.

Politics is based upon a party system, the absurdity of which in matters relating to the general welfare has not escaped the notice of political philosophers. The party system is a device to be regretted, and the trust and the labor union are sought, and no more. The tendency is for politics not to purify, but to degenerate into a means of profit at the hands of scheming politicians—to return, that is, to the ideal of business.

The truth will probably appear that there is no single democratic institution in America, either in politics, or business, or social life. A very positive interest, therefore, must attach to what is called the improvement association, which is in fact a new public institution, taking shape beneath the play of certain communal forces.

The improvement association is different from other voluntary associations in that its purpose is political in the true sense of the word, and is virtually a new institution. It is proposed, indeed, as a substitute plan for one which has failed to work. There is something wanting in the conduct of government—some inherent defect in it. The failure noted is not limited to any one locality, nor can it be said to be due to the size of the city, for the defect is equally obvious in other places and in towns and villages.

A few days ago I listened to a report of the improvement association of Morgan Park, Ill. Reference was made to the apparent inability of the town council to get the most necessary things done, or even to correct abuses where things were left alone. The streets or parks were not properly cared for. The space about the railroad station was an unsightly waste. There was no gas or other means of lighting in the village. The improvement association was formed to do precisely what the original town government was designed to do, but which it was practically unable to do.

Such a limitation may be justified in view of the increasing difficulty of delegating authority in the higher stages of government, but on the popular plane suffrage should be absolutely universal, without limitations of race, sex or age.

It is at this point that the first distinctive feature of the improvement association is noted. Membership in the association goes by right of residence. I am not an information whether or not any "woman suffragist" is at the bottom of this movement. Perhaps, without intending it, the problem of suffrage has been solved in a perfectly natural and spontaneous way. And now that we see the success which attends the efforts of a united community to help itself, it is quite evident that the failure of former institutions was due to their partial nature.

What more natural or more necessary than that women should assist, in housekeeping a city? And not the least good accomplishment of the children is to take in maintaining the good report of their neighborhood. Never before have the children been brought in to co-operate in the maintenance of order. The inculcation of patriotism in the public schools on special days devoted to the celebration of Washington and Lincoln anniversaries is of little importance if the lesson of citizenship is not learned in the community near by.

A second distinctive feature of the improvement association is its principle of voluntary taxation. In the long run voluntary service is the best and most permanent. There has been some talk of securing legislative sanction for these associations, enabling them to lay taxes for public improvements. This modification of the voluntary plan is obviously with disfavor. When a law is established counter currents are liable to be engendered in opposition to the law, such antagonisms rendering the united action of a community impossible. Behind a tax legally laid stand the police and the army. The unity we secure is an outward and formal unity. Said Walt Whitman: "Were you looking to be held together by lawyers? Or by an agreement on a paper? Or by arms? Nay, nor the world, nor any living thing, will so cohere."

It is much better, then, to place the emphasis upon a common need and educate the community to a united action than to risk disruption by compulsory methods. The immediate dependence of the work of the association upon the support of the neighborhood will lead to earnestness and economy and wise expenditure. Only in this way can the association escape the satire of Emerson upon government when he said: "Of all debts men are least willing to pay is the taxes. Everywhere they think that they get their money's worth, except for taxes."

A genuine Social Force.

I hope you do not think I am treating the subject too seriously. What is an improvement association to call out a discussion involving questions of political philosophy? Perhaps you have thought the object of the association is simply to clean streets and dispose of garbage, and is of passing interest at best. For my own part my interest in the organization is aroused because it promises to become a genuine social institution. Those who administer the various associations are certainly convinced of their permanency. I am a member of a committee of the South Park Improvement association of Chicago, which is just now giving out contracts for the planting of trees, and plans have been made to bring our whole district within a single scheme of landscape gardening. This much of the work at least is done in a permanent way. It has the marks of permanency. It is among the possibilities that this association will some day build a town hall of a new type, not a place for political chicanery, but the center of social culture.

Looking at the subject with a broader view we perceive that there are other causes besides local improvement waiting upon the development of the community spirit. To take a single instance, consider for a moment the program of the Municipal Art League of Chicago.

This league is organized "for the purpose of promoting art in the city, and of abating public nuisances as preliminary to the stimulation of civic pride." Among the public improvements thought worthy of consideration are: "The suppression of the smoke nuisance as a necessity for making all other improvements appreciable."

"The improvement of the whole lake front; not only the Lake Front park, but the boulevard system of the North Side and its connection with the Lake Front park by an outer viaduct and bridge or subway."

"The improvement of the designs in use for gas and electric light poles, patrol boxes and waste paper receptacles, and the introduction of electrically lighted street name signs."

"The proper regulation of billboards."

"The harmonious grouping of business or private houses belonging to different owners, without detriment to the interests of the individual owners."

"Conversion of vacant lots into temporary lawns and playgrounds, by consent of owners and co-operation of neighbors."

"Improvement of the designs for signs on business buildings, and seeking co-operation of the real estate board in the adoption of standard designs for lots for sale and houses for rent."

"Spirit of Co-operation."

Such are some of the objects of this most praiseworthy association. To a reasonable person there is nothing unreasonable in any of the suggestions made for civic betterment. Yet why is improvement so slow? There is no lack of support for other institutions. A Crerar founded a library, a Rockefeller endows a university, a Field builds a museum, a Hutchinson supports an art institute. But there is no Napoleon to rebuild Chicago, and in the nature of things, there can not be. Chicago must be reconstructed by its citizens working in the spirit of co-operation and mutual concession.

The other institutions mentioned are in a sense external to the life of the city. They exist, and flourish because they are external—because they depend for their maintenance upon the accumulation and surplus of money and property in egotistic hands. It is to the interests of these cultural institutions that the individualistic method of business be retained. More than one library has been built out of what from another point of view is a public nuisance. For the sake of additional libraries we will put up with smoke-betouled air; we will sacrifice the general comfort and health; we will harden our hearts to the cries of the oppressed; we will hearken to the childerman who tells us if we do not like Chicago to go elsewhere; for prosperity, forsooth, is created out of smoke. The more libraries, the more the smoke nuisance. But municipal art strikes at the heart of business itself. It insists that selfishness and personal greed shall be driven from the commercial process. It demands that business shall be socialized.

Is a social civilization too much to hope for? Must antagonisms always exist among the individuals of a community? Are we to be forever driven by economic fear to a state of rational being, devise a method of living contentedly together?

It is just possible that in solving our problem of local improvement we are making a contribution to the history of civilization.

Get Ready.

In many cases passenger rates to points in TEXAS, OKLAHOMA and INDIAN TERRITORY for excursion Tuesday, September 15, will be very much less than one fare for the round trip over the Frisco System. Limited limits and stopovers. For detailed information call on or write W. C. Melville, Passenger Agent, 306 & 14th St., Omaha.

Blatz Beer

MILWAUKEE

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine

Non-Intoxicant—Fruiting Purpose.

Blatz Malt-Vivine