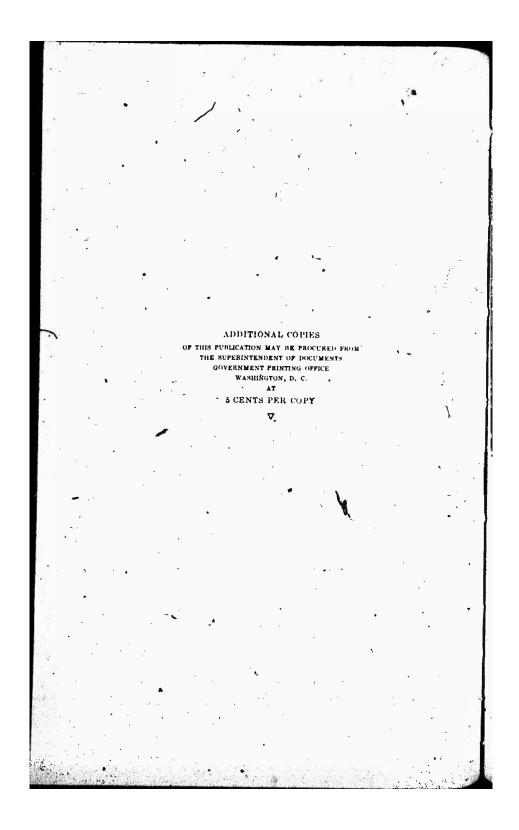
THE SCHOOLHOUSE AS THE POLLING PLACE

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THE SCHOOLHOUSE AS THE POLLING PLACE

PART I .- USE OF SCHOOLHOUSE FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES.

It was a great day—last Tuesday, election. Above the schoolhouse, the American flag was waving as always when school is in session. But it seemed to proclaim new meaning on Tuesday, for under its folds not the children only were gathering as on other days, but the adult citizens were also coming to participate in the great cooperation which makes of every neighborhood, every town, each State, and of all America one equal fellowship.

So wrote Principal and Civic Secretary M. T. Buckley, of Sauk City, Wis., on November 7, 1914, a few days after the first election held in the public schoolhouse, the established civic center of that town.

He continued:

The ballot box was out in the open space at the front of the grammar room. It was not only the convenient but the traly appropriate location, for here, from its stand, ever the image of Lincoln companioned our citizens as—one by one—each cast his vote. The words from Lincoln's first inaugural came to my mind: "Why should there not he a patient confidence in the uitimate justice of the people? Is there any better or equal hope in the world?" And then those words with which his second inaugural closed: "A just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." And as I thought how, unto death, he strove for just this thing—that questions of difference might be settled by peaceful, orderly decision of unjorities, instead of by irrational appeal to force—it seemed to me very strange that voting should ever be done anywhere else than in the public schoolhouse, where Lincoln's picture is, and where most purely and strongly his democratic spirit lives.

BENEFICIAL TO THE SCHOOL

Close school on election day? Citizens coming here to vote might interfere with the regular educational process in this building? I would say that the boys and girls might better stay'away from the schoolhouse on any other day than this, for here is the fundamental and supreme act of government. To witness this primary governmental cooperation gives to the youth a point of living contact for understanding the whole civic process beyond what is given by mere words and theory. It is not too much to say that the continuity of the educational process would be broken if the young people were not to

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come on the day that adult citizens gather here to vote, as it is broken in those communities where one building is used for civic training and another for this supreme civic expression.

The day was what it ought to be everywhere—a day that made America mean something something positive and rational, something not chance-directed, but socially controllable, something tremendously worth working for,

'VOTING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLHOUSES BECOMING GENERAL.

The movement for making the public schoolhouse the polling place, which is a part of the first step in actual community center development, has made rapid progress during the past few years. It was of the growth and spread of this movement and the accompanying one of using the schoolhouses as civic forums that President Wilson



Fig. 2.—The former location of the ballot box at Sauk City—in the building with the fire apparatus and the jall.

said: "It must challenge to cooperation every man and woman who shares the spirit of America and appreciates the importance of visualizing the common interest."

S IT IS ECONOMICAL.

Among the reasons why public-school buildings are coming to be used for voting, perhaps the most obvious is economy. To use existing public buildings obviates the needless expense of renting private places or purchasing, transporting, setting up, retransporting, and storing special booths for this purpose. The amount of this saving tends to increase with the growing frequency of elections.



This plain argument of economy was given impetus in the resolution unanimously adopted by the first national conference on teacher training for rural schools, at Chicago, September 26, 1914: "As a ready and practical means of saving public expense * • • • we favor the use of all public-school buildings as centers for voting."

. IT IS WORTHY.

Hope of orderly progress for the race chiefly centers in the intelligent use of the ballot. The polling place is the primary capitol in a republic. In comparison with it the city hall, the statehouse, the



* Fig. 3.—The present location of the ballot box in Sauk City, Wis. Election scene.

Capitol at Washington are secondary capitols. The polling place should have the most nobly significant housing the community can give. The public-school building affords this housing.

IT IS APPROPRIATE!

Elections, whether for the selection of men or the decision of measures, are primarily examinations of public intelligence. Schools are the logical and natural places for the periodic testings of the common mentality. The voting machine or ballot box should be kept in the schoolhouse as the symbol of efficiency in self-government—the examining instrument of the electorate's judgment and good sense.



IT IS QONVENIENT.

The public schoolhouses are so distributed as to be easily reached by all the children of each district. The distance children go each day, adults may readily go to vote. A strange disparity has existed between urban and rural communities in the size of voting precincts as compared with school districts. As a rule, in the city there are more voting precincts than school districts. In the country generally the opposite condition exists. In general, the voting population of any community is about the same as the number of children of school age. The building that is large enough to accommodate the children is likely to be adequate for the use of the voters.

IT IS PERMANDNT,

The storing of the voting apparatus in a cellar, loft, or shed, excepting at election times, suggests an intermittent and occasional democracy, as though the people were in authority for only a day or two each year. The continuing presence of the voting instrument, permanently installed in the community capitol, proclaims the continuing authority and responsibility of the citizens.

IT IS EDUCATIVE,

In Milwauke Wiss, the question whether the public schoolhouses should be used as the polling places was referred to the school principals. Their vote was unanimously in favor of it. They recognized that this use of the school buildings would be a positive and practical aid in the most important service of the public schools at the civic training places of youth. This fundamental benefit, which is vividly set forth in the statement of Principal Buckley, was declared as of importance second only to the economy of the plan, in the resolution adopted by the National Conference on Teacher Training: "As a ready and practical means of saving public expense, and at the same time vitalizing the service of the public schools in civic education, we favor the use of all public school buildings for voting."

it is simplifying.

Not infrequently citizens fail to vote at primaries and even at elections because they do not know the location of the polling place. Everyloody knows the location of the public schoolhouse in his district. Moreover, making the voting precinct and the public school district identical does away with the confusion that arises from having two units of neighborhood; a confusion in part responsible for the failure to visualize and appreciate the neighborhood, the group unit in society next in importance to the family.



IT IS UNIFFING.

Not all the citizens in every public school district send their children to the public school. There are parochial or private schools. But there is no parochial or private ballot box, and when this all-uniting instrument is permanently established in the schoolhouse, it makes plain the fact that with the adult civic uses of this public building the distinctions that cause the separate instruction of children have nothing whatever to do.

The general establishment of the public schoolhouse as the polling place not only makes of this neighborhood building a substantial and ever-present reminder of the common responsibility and opportunity,

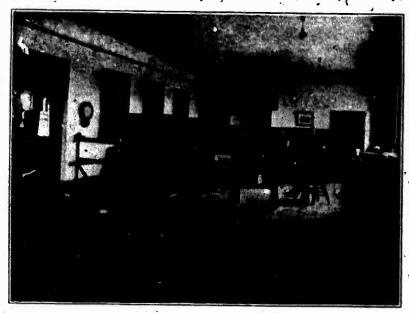


Fig. 4.—Election day scene in a public schoolhouse, Grand Rapids, Mich. The schoolhouses of Grand Rapids have been used for many years as voting centers.

the uniting civic bond that unites in one membership all citizens without respect to difference of religious or other opinion, but it also visualizes and emphasizes the identity of the civic bond within various sorts of communities, whether rich or poor, urban or rural. To make the common schoolhouse the polling place everywhere is to make a monumental declaration of the community of civic interest that transcends all our disunities.

- IT BELONGS WITH THE CIVIC-FORUM USE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLHOUSE.

Where the citizens of any community in Wisconsin organize themselves into a district or neighborhood assembly to use the schoolhouse for the free discussion of public questions, the law directs public





school boards to "provide, free of charge, light, heat, and janitor service, where necessary," and to "make such other provisions as may be necessary for the free and convenient use of such building" for the periodical meetings of this community association. In pursuance of this statute, neighborhood or district assemblies—deliberative organizations which regard every citizen 21 years of age or over residing in the district as a member—have been formed in more than 200 communities in Wisconsin. This movement is spreading rapidly throughout other parts of the country. For the citizens to assemble in the schoolhouse for deliberation and then go to another place to vote is not more absurd than it would be for aldermen to meet for discussion in the city hall and then go to some other building to cast their vote.

THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS COMMUNITY SECRETARY.

Combined with the movement for the adult civic use of the public schoolhouses as polling places and as headquarters of deliberative assembly in many places is the movement to authorize the school principal or some one associated with him to serve not only over the children as supervisor of their instruction but also under the adult citizens as community clerk or secretary. In some communities this movement is taking the form of combining the office of village clerk with that of the school principal; in others it is taking the form of adding responsibility for service as organizing and executive secretary of the citizens' assembly to the present official responsibility of the school principal.

According to information received by the bureau of civic and social center development of the University of Wisconsin, the school principals at Algoma, Alma Center, Oostburg, De Forest, Iron Belt, Lublin, Medford, Muscoda, and Newburg were last year elected or appointed to serve as voting or village clerks. In Milwaukee, Superior, Kenosha, Neillsville, Sauk City, and Osseo the school principal or some one associated with him and responsible to the school board has been made definitely responsible for civic secretarial service.

If the school principal or some one associated with him is to be authorized to serve as clerk of citizenship-expression in voting or as secretary of citizenship-expression in deliberation, or as both, which seems to be the tendency, it is logical that the building in which he is engaged to serve the community on other days should be used when he serves the citizens in their voting.

PART OF THE PROGRAM OF CITIZENSHIP ORGANIZATION.

The installation in each public schoolhouse of the voting machine or ballot box, the official primary instrument for answering public questions, is the first step in practical physical adjustment toward



"finding the real meaning of democracy," as this program is formulated by President Wilson: "Citizens going to school to one another in the common schoolhouses to understand and answer public questions, as hitherto only representatives of the citizens have gone to school to one another in the buildings provided for them." The use of the public schoolhouses for voting is thus a basic part of the community-center program which the President has declared to mean "the recovery of the constructive and creative genius of the American people." Indorsement of the use of the public schoolhouse for voting is thus given by ex-President Roosevelt, along with his declaration for its use as the community forum for civic assembly: "Every schoolhouse should be the polling place of its district. The schoolhouse ought to be the senate chamber of the people, where men and

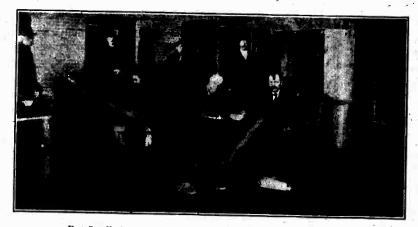


Fig. 5.-Voting scene in a public school building, Milwaukee, Wis.

women come together, not as partisans, but as neighboring citizens to hear the claims of all candidates and choose between them and to discuss and decide public issues." The designation of each public schoolhouse as the voting center of its district is coupled with its use as community headquarters for organized discussion in the program which ex-President Taft characterizes as "not only good civic organization but also good business."

Indorsements of the proposition that the public schoolhouse should be used as the polling place, as a distinct proposition apart from other civic uses of the schoolhouse, might be multiplied; but the most earnest indorsement of this plan comes from those statesmen and students of public welfare who see in it an integral part of the movement for the self-organization of the voting body into one deliberative body, the program which "goes to the heart of the whole American problem."



IT IS BECOMING AN ACCOMPLISHED FACT.

The plan of making the public schoolhouses everywhere the polling places has nothing visionary or impractical in it. It is now in actual operation in many communities. In the following Wisconsin cities and towns public schoolhouses have already begun to be used for voting: Algoma, Berlin, Bloomer, Carter, Fond du Lac, Gilman, Hazel Green, Hudson, Juda, Kenosha, Knapp, La Crosse, Lublin, Madison, Maiden Rock, Manitowoc, Menasha, Milwaukee, Muscoda, Nekoosa, North Prairie, Orfordville, Portage, Port Washington, Prairie Farm, Sauk City, Stanley, Superfor, Waukesha, Wausau.

LOCATION OF THE VOTING INSTRUMENT IN THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

The detail as to the part of any particular schoolhouse which may be used as the permanent voting headquarters of the neighborhood depends, of course, upon the plan and equipment of the building. If there is a first-floor community room, with easy access from the street, this is the suitable and appropriate place. Where such a ground-floor assembly hall or community room does not yet exist, any ground-floor room, or even the corridor, may be used. Whatever difficulty exists in improvising the voting room is temporary, for the tendency to regard no school building as complete which has not a ground-floor community assembly hall is so strong that not only are new schoolhouses being built with such rooms included in their plans, but in a number of places ground-floor community assembly halls have been added to existing schoolhouses.

In selecting the part of the schoolhouse to be used for voting. strange as it may seem, occasionally the fundamental and supreme dignity of the voting machine or ballot box as the primary instrument of the cooperation that we call "government" is forgotten, and the part of the building selected for the exercise of the highest civic function is a basement or other out-of-the-way place. The idea in this is that the gathering of citizens to vote necessarily means the soiling of the voting place. Of course, this idea has arisen from the remarkable fact that while the secondary capitols-city halls, statehouses, Federal headquarters—have been made handsome and dignified, the primary capitol—the polling place—has often been located in a livery stable or a shed that is not supposed to be clean. Obviously the location of the polling place in an undignified part of the schoolhouse tends naturally to perpetuate slovenliness and carelessness in the accompaniments of voting. Whether, as Mr. Buckley suggests, the placing of the voting instrument in a dignified and central part of the schoolhouse will tend to lessen slovenliness and care-

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lessness in the motives and thought expressed in the voting itself, at any rate it is obvious that the worthy location of the polling place in the handsomest part of the schoolhouse will tend to suggest and evoke orderliness and restraint in the process of voting.

When the fasces, as the symbol of delegated authority, are given the position of honor at the front of the House of Representatives at Washington, it certainly would seem inappropriate that the voting instrument, which is not only the symbol but the actual instrument of supreme authority in our Government, should be given less than the most honorable and conspicuous place in the neighborhood building. One of the leading community building architects in this country has declared that—

In the characteristic building of America, of which we have developed the nucleus in the public school, the ballot box of weing instrument will have the same relation to the whole edifice that the altur had to the structure of the mediaval cathedral. It will be the center about which all the rest of the structure will be planned.

Meantime, when the Babcock milk tester is given a place beside the teacher's desk at the front of the rural schoolhouse, because it stands as a symbol of efficient agriculture, and therefore should be kept before the pupils, it would seem strange not to give the instrument in whose use the character of our civilization is determined a place of at least equal honor.

THE SAUK CITY CELEBRATION.

In practically every community where the polling place has been transferred from some less worthy location to the public schoolhouse, it has been done casually and without fitting celebration of the genuine significance of thus establishing the schoolhouse as the community capitol. In Sauk City, Wis., however, where the sense of community values has been developed and quickened by the use of the schoolhouse as the center of assembly for civic discussion and for social and recreational enjoyment, the essential importance of transferring the polling place from the old town hall to the public schoolhouse was appreciated, and this transference, along with the installation of the school principal as civic secretary, was made the occasion of a memorable community center pageant and processional.

In the course of the celebration at Sauk City addresses were given by Justice R. G. Siebecker, of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, who spoke on the advantage of establishing the schoolhouse as the actual civic center as seen from the viewpoint of efficiency in government; by State Supt. C. P. Cary, who spoke upon the advantages of this installation in promoting efficiency in education; and by Miss Zona Gale, interpreter of community life.



Justice Siebecker said:

The use of the schoolhouse as a community home for the education of its children, the place for rallying around the ballot box, and the gathering place of the all-inclusive citizens' cluh "to go to school to one another." will remove the deadly rivalries born of our failure to cooperate in the processes that make for our common good, and will supplant the feelings of rancor and hatred by sentiments of justice and good will toward others. The program of the civic and social center, which seeks to provide the place, the means, and the occasion for the community to satisfy the social and recreational instincts through creative and enobling expression, and thereby displace the greedy, degrading, private commercial interests that now control the means of supplying these desires, is of the atmost importance in reforming these activities of our national life.

Above all, it should be the home of the ballot box, which is the medium by which the individual participates in the common public life. Placing the ballot box in this community house will give added dignity and power to the act of voting and tend to make the voter an intelligent and conscientious member in the cooperative enterprise of conducting public affairs. It will do much to purge elections of the intrigues and schemes of selfishness and the baneful influences of the partisan spirit which have flourished so abundantly in our political fields. It will imbue the voter with a desire to place this public function on a high plane and to be controlled by an intelligent common sense in the solution of problems affecting the general welfare.

State Supt. Cary said:

With the authorizing of your school principal as civic secretary, and the installation of the bailet box in this building, you have definitely made arrangements for its use by all the citizens of this community. This building is not to be the meeting place merely of that part of the voting body which agrees to any particular opinion. You do not plan to organize a partisan association.

The organization that will assemble in this schoolhouse will not be made up of a section only of the people of this district. The boud that will unite you as you assemble here is the all-inclusive union of common responsibility, common opportunity, common desire to get at the truth, the free deliberative union of citizens with different beliefs and different points of view.

You are putting into practice President Wilson's formula of democracy. "Citizens going to school to one another in the common schoolhouse to understand and answer public questions, as hitherto only representatives of the people have gone to school to one another in the buildings provided for them." You are performing an action as a community which, when it becomes general throughout the country, will give to all processes of civic expression a temper and tone of calamess and mutual understanding and will make real democracy possible.

Miss Gale began her address upon the large significance of the event with these words: "Sauk City has to-day shown the whole State what to do."

PAGEANT TELLS COMMUNITY NEED.

Notable as were the addresses of interpretation, the pageant, witnessed and participated in by some five thousand guests, as well as the town's whole population, was the unforgettable feature of the celebration.



In the early part of the pageant the vital need of the community for a secretary and the appropriateness of the school principal's appointment to this office were vividly set forth, and the mayor asked the principal, "whom we have made the servant of the town in the training of the youth for future citizenship," if he would "accept service under the electorate as secretary of this community." The response of the principal closes with this statement:

But, Mr. Mayor and townsmen, here is a difficulty. My service is not owed to any one or few. My duty is to serve the membership of the town, the civic membership, as a whole. How is this membership realized? Where is it expressed? The uniting instrument of this civic membership is the bailot box. There focuses the responsibility by which you are united into one body. How shall you use me as your secretary; how shall you use the public-school house as the headquarters of citizenship when the voting instrument is not there?

"IN THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL HOUSE THE BALLOT BOX BELONGS."

To this problem the mayor gave the following answer:

Why should we not take the voting instrument to the common building of the community's best cooperation? Here, in this old town hall, the ballot box has been the associate of the jail, the suppression tool of human force, and of the fire engine, the suppression instrument of nature's force. Both are merely negative. They stand for the old prohibitive "Thou shalt not," that Government used to mean. But now we realize that government is a positive, a living, a constructive process of cooperation. For the housing of the supreme instrument of government, the fitting place is not where criminals are jailed and nature's force is merely feared and fought, but where the human spirit is released and nature's friendly powers are evoked. In the public-school house the ballot box belongs. By it is tested every year the intelligence of the citizenship. For the sake of the example to the future citizens, and for its own dignity as the symbol of our unity in one civic fellowship, we will carry the ark of our great covenant to the public-school house, the civic and social center of our community.



PART II.—THE PUBLIC-SCHOOL PRINCIPAL AS THE VOTING CLERK

"As a public-school principal, and officially nothing more, I found myself hampered in doing the work for which I was engaged," writes B. E. Billington, of Arena, Wis., a rural community of notable enterprise and leadership.

"Along with and above 'the three Rs'—that is, formal teaching—I realized that it was my paramount duty to lead the youth into that intelligent and active interest in public affairs which constitutes good citizenship. But, as school principal, I was given no first-hand opportunity to become acquainted with the community's actual problems or the method of their handling. Moreover, while I was looked upon with a kind of respect, there was an element of keep-your-distance suspicion in it, and in practical matters of immediate importance I was more or less frankly regarded as an outsider. It was as though I were engaged to serve as special guide into a region with which I was given no chance to become familiar, and were charged with the duty of inspiring enthusiasm for an association in which I myself was treated as a stranger."

METHODS OF SECURING VITAL CONTACT.

"How was I to get into that living touch with the administration of public affairs which would give me the confidence of the community, of my pupils, and of myself as a man not only of civic ideals, but as one practically informed by steadying and correcting contact with the actual processes of citizenship?

"I hesitated, I believe rightly, to thrust myself into active participation in civic affairs in the only way that seemed open to me as a private citizen, by identifying myself as a 'worker' with one or another of the parties or factions which divided the community on lines of opinion. To do that would have brought me into contact with a part of the civic membership, but it would have estranged me from the others, and my interest was not partisan.

SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM.

"A vacancy happened to occur in the office of town clerk immediately after election; and the town board asked me to accept the position.

"I saw upon investigation, as later I found by experience, that there was no conflict in the matter of time required by the duties of the clerk's office with that which my work as principal demanded,





and no possible incompatibility, inconsistency, or incongruity between the two offices. The modest salary attached to the clerk's office, though not the prime consideration, would mean a welcome increase of my income. And, while I did not fully appreciate the very positive value of the combination of these two offices, I did see with quick satisfaction that here was the way to secure the vital contact with adult citizenship expression, of which I had felt the need.

"I accepted the office of town clerk along with my office as school principal.

DEVELOPMENT OF ACQUAINTANCE, RESPECT, AND UNDERSTANDING BY CONTACT,

"My first experience was in administering oaths of office, a ceremony suggestive of the sacredness of public trust in democracy. Then began the meetings of the town board, wherein I met and soon came to know the representative men of the community.

"Each part of my work as clerk furnished its broadening and stimulating acquaintance. Most important of all, primary election and general election brought me face to face with the body of citizens, many of whom I otherwise might not have met, and who, to put it the other way, might otherwise never have met the man responsible for the teaching of their children.

"I grew to have a profound respect for the practical views that the men around me expressed. I found that many of them, though somewhat deficient in book learning, were rich in experience and common sense.

"The old keep-your-distance barrier was gone.

VALUABLE EFFECT ON SCHOOL WORK,

"The work with the adult citizens began at once to react on my work with the youth. Being interested myself, I began to try to develop intelligent interest on the part of my pupils in the actual problems of community life. Many morning exercises were spent in discussing the claims of candidates and the merits of issues in order that voting might be intelligent, and then, at each primary, general, and spring election, there was a duplicate practice election conducted by the students. This sort of work proved so vitalizing and interesting in its various phases that it came to give a content of reality to much of the work within the school.

INCREASE OF EFFICIENCY IN COMBINATION OF OFFICES.

"From what I know of the office of clerk, with its requirements of penmanship, system, and accuracy in the handling of figures,



retentive memory, and nonpartisan desire to be of service to the whole community, I consider that the average school principal is better qualified for this office than the usual candidate who has not the principal's training and viewpoint. But the increase of efficiency in the clerk's office is not the chief advantage of the combination of these two forms of community service. This lies in the steadying and invigorating influence that work as clerk has upon one's service as school principal. This is sufficient, in my estimation, to justify relieving him of some of the routine and detail school work which may be done by subordinates, where this may be necessary, in order to permit the principal's serving as clerk.

"I consider that my training and practice as principal made me a better town clerk. I am very positive that my work and experience as clerk made me a better principal."

OFFICE OF TOWN, VILLAGE, OR CITY CLERK LIKE THAT OF VOTING CLERK.

The reason for citing the experience of a principal appointed to serve his community as town clerk, instead of giving the experience of a principal appointed for service merely in connection with an election, by way of introduction to a discussion of the advantages of combining the office of voting clerk with that of public-school principal, is not that there are not school principals who have been appointed to serve at polling places. According to the latest report received by the community center bureau of the University of Wisconsin, the principals at Algoma, De Forest, Iron Belt, Lublin, Medford, Muscoda, Newburg, and Oostburg, Wis., have rendered this service during the past year. The reason for giving, instead, the experience of a man who has combined the office of town clerk with that of principal is that this office, like that of village or city clerk, is, in its unified and nonpartisan character, analogous to the office of voting clerk as this office is likely to be constituted when its potential character is appreciated.

VOTING CLERKSHIP THE ESTABLISHED NUCLEUS OF COMMUNITY SECRE-TARYSHIP,

The body of qualified voters in any precinct or district is the established primary community organization. The most significant thing about this unit neighborhood association is the fact that, as a rule, its members are not conscious of it as a real and vitally unified society. This is due, of course, to the fact that asually the only activity in which its members participate, as members, is in coming once or twice a year to the polls to vote. However, each neighborhood group of citizens, united by the bonds of responsibility and opportunity that focus at the ballot box, is not only



a real organization, since the voting register at each polling place is an actual membership list, but it is the fundamentally and supremely essential organization of our society, and it is only through membership in it that the individual may officially and directly participate in determining the affairs of the larger associations of city, county. State, and Nation, and through it alone that he may officially share in international control when adequate international organization has been achieved.

For the expression of membership by voting, community secretarial service has been required only intermittently and only by the services of tellers. But this secretarial service—voting clerkship—through which each citizen's partnership in the government is directly expressed, is the nucleus of community secretaryship, so far as this office has been generally established.

DISTRUST AND MUTUAL SUSPICION IN OFFICE AS HERETOFORE CONSTITUTED.

In the character of the office of voting clerk and the way that it has heretofore been filled, there seems to be perpetuated the immature, savage, and degrading conception, which we have outgrown in practically all our thinking and feeling, of the basic relationship of human beings as negative and antagonistic-a matter of rivalry and suspicion rather than of mutual good faith and desire to cooperate. The method of filling this office has been the appointment not of one reasonably trustworthy and responsible community official, but of several-in Wisconsin seven-persons, avowedly and supposedly representative, not of the community as a whole, but of the various extraconstitutional partisan factions into which the community happens to be divided. It is as though the theory were that the actual attitude of neighboring citizens is one of savage and shortsighted desire on the part of some of the members of the community to overcome, dominate, and prey upon the rest, or (which amounts to the same thing) of dumb and passive willingness to be led as sheeplike "rank and file" to the polls, to be counted in favor of this or that person or few whose ambition is to "win," to "rule," to "get the

The "check-and-balance" idea of mutual offsetting and division is embodied in the present constitution of the office of voting clerk—quite obviously in the wrong place. Whatever we may say of the value of this idea in its application to the secondary machinery of government—the municipal, State, and National subcommittees of the citizenship—there can be no possible justification for its application to the primary machinery of government—the committee-of-the-whole electorate, in whose interest its application to these subcommittees is supposedly perpetuated.



If the present constitution of the office of voting clerk were a consciously chosen arrangement (which it is not; it is rather a derangement permitted to exist because the feasibility of a rational adjustment has not been appreciated), it would indicate, as between individual neighbors, an attitude of fear and hate essentially the same as that which in international relations is expressed by armaments and war. To the attitude of individual citizens toward each other, which seems to be reflected in the present constitution of the office of voting clerk, the description of the present international attitude given by Nietzsche would apply-"reserving morality for ourselves and immorality for our neighbor; we proclaim him a hypocrite and cunning criminal." And here, as internationally, the effect is demoralizing. Nietzsche's notable declaration fits in this primary sphere no less than in the sphere of world adjustment: "Better to perish than to hate and fear, and twice as far better to perish than to make oneself hated and feared!"

The attempt to secure efficiency and fairness in elections through the embodiment of mutual suspicion in the office of voting clerk is to be rejected, not merely on ethical grounds, but also as a result of practical experience. It fails to secure honesty and fair dealing in precisely the same way that mutual armament fails to secure peace.

It is because this most potential office in our society has embodied, in the way that it has been constituted, the essentially corrosive and debasing idea of mutual suspicion, that its true character and supreme importance as the nucleus of community secretaryship—which is the prime ministry in a democracy—has not been recognized. As heretofore filled, this office has embodied, and to some extent evoked, in our "political" relations, an utterly brutal attitude of human beings toward each other. In this character it belonged with the idea of civic expression in voting as a contest, with which intelligence had nothing to do. It belonged with the use of the livery stable as the polling place.

CLERKSHIP FOR CITIZENS' VOTING.

For the voting of every representative association, every subcommittee of the citizenship, whether it be the village, town, or city council or commission, the State assembly, or the National Senate, teller service is rendered, not by five or seven or nine mutually suspicious and technically irresponsible faction representatives, but by one responsible clerk. It is only for the voting of the committee-of-the-whole citizenship that there is this strange disintegration of the clerical office into a derangement essentially embodying mutual antagonism and distrust.



Unless it is assumed that the primary association of citizens is morally and mentally lower than the secondary associations of representatives which are produced by it—that the creator is inferior to the creature—it would seem that the normal character of the office of voting clerk, for citizens as for representatives, is that in which the service is rendered by one responsible official, with others paid to be present only if their assistance is required by the volume of actual work to be-done.

The infrequency of the citizens' voting is such that voting clerk-ship is not by itself a full-time occupation. Each member of the group which in every precinct or district has hitherto rendered this service has had some private business, trade, profession, or employment as his chief vocation. The possibility that this office may be redeemed from its present demoralization and made a position of fixed responsibility and reasonable trust depends upon finding in each neighborhood an established public office to which the responsibility for service as voting clerk may properly be added. The practical and ready answer to this problem is that which belongs with the use of the public schoolhouse as the polling place.

BELATION BETWEEN REASONS FOR PRINCIPAL'S SERVING AS VOTING CLERK AND REASONS FOR USING SCHOOLHOUSE AS POLLING PLACE.

If the public schoolhouse is used as the polling place, it is obvious that division of responsibility is likely to produce lack of coordination, if not friction, in matters of physical adjustment, janitor service supervision, etc., unless arrangements for the several uses of the one building are administered in one office. Indeed, the fact that accommodation has been made and friction avoided where school buildings have begun to be used for voting without this concentration of responsibility is indication of a fine spirit on the part of the principal, a willingness to suffer inconvenience and slight for the sake of community advantage. But to expect that school principals will continue indefinitely and universally to make this accommodation is to demand a self-effacement and good nature that would not be expected of any other officials:

A case in point occurs in one Wisconsin town. Two years ago, when it was decided to use the public schoolhouses for voting, the large basement room near the entrance of each building was designated for the purpose, since this room was at that time unoccupied. After the first-election manual training was added to the school curriculum, and the equipment therefor was installed in this room that had been used for voting. When the time came to arrange for the next election it was seen that to use this room for voting would necessitate moving the heavy manual-training equipment, and at



the suggestion of the principals the superintendent proposed that the large room on the first floor, which served as kindergarten room during ordinary school days, be made the polling place. It was pointed out that this space was free from heavy equipment, was equally accessible from the street, or more so, and was a more handsome and worthy part of the building, and that if this were made the permanent voting place there would be a greater educational benefit to the school through the conduct of the election there. The recommendation of the superintendent was simply ignored by the election officials, and the demand was made that the basement room be cleared for registration, primary, and election. The school officials suffered both the affront and the inconvenience without one suggesting or agreeing to the suggestion that the voting should be done elsewhere than in the schoolhouse, the superintendent declaring that the economy, propriety, and educational benefit of having the schoolhouse used as the polling place were so great that even arbitrarily determined and unnecessary inconvenience ought to be and would be borne rather than have the voting process carried on elsewhere.

The argument for adding the office of voting clerk to that of public school principal does not rest on these merely negative considerations. There are positive and vital reasons for this combination. Indeed, in practically all particulars the advantages of making the public schoolhouse the voting headquarters are paralleled by as great or greater advantages in the appointment of the principal as the voting clerk.

ECONOMY IN APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL AS VOTING CLERK.

Precisely as the most obvious reason for using the public school-houses instead of rented quarters or especially constructed booths as the polling places is the economy of this use, so the most patent advantage of the appointment of the principal as voting clerk is the radical reduction in the cost of elections which this measure accomplishes.

Hitherto in Wisconsin, and generally throughout the country, the number of persons employed to conduct elections has just about equaled the number of persons employed in the common schools as principals and teachers. The pay of each of the seven persons—three inspectors, two ballot clerks, and two voting clerks—employed at every polling place (where a voting machine is used-the two ballot clerks are dispensed with, but a custodian of the machine is added) ranges from \$2 to \$12 a day, and three officials are employed on registration days and all on primary and election days. The



total pay roll of these officials in the State of Wisconsin, for example, is about \$140,000.

As voting-clerk service comes to be a regular and ex officio duty of the public-school principal, compensation for this work will come to be included as a part of the regular salary of the principal's office, and this whole expense as a separate account will be eliminated. Meanwhile, the appointment of one official in each precinct, with one or two assistants where these may be necessary, and with the payment on the present per diem basis, would mean a saving of more than half the present cost of elections, a net saving of more than \$100,000 in each two-election year in States of the size of Wisconsin.

FITNESS OF PRINCIPAL FOR THIS OFFICE.

As the public-school building is the most nobly significant edifice in the primary community and so is worthy to be used as the headquarters or capitol for the primary cooperation of government, so the person in charge of the training of youth for citizenship is presumably and, as a rule, actually the person best qualified to serve as voting clerk.

Of course there are weak and corruptible principals, as there are weak and dishonest persons in every sort of office, and the voting machine may well be used not only as a labor-saving device but for its value in reducing temptation, precisely as the cash register in a store or the fare box in a street car. Moreover, there is no reason why checkers, watchers, or challengers may not be authorized to serve as at present. The fact that human beings are not infallible, however, does not prevent the appointment of one man instead of seven to serve as clerk in the voting of representative assemblies; and certainly it may be said with fairness that the person who is not worthy to occupy this office under the adult citizens is not fit to be intrusted with the training of their children.

APPROPRIATENESS OF APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL AS VOTING CLERK.

The only genuine community office now established in the average neighborhood is that of the public-school principal; and where there are any other public servants, policemen, or firemen their primary employment is not of such a character as to be compatible with the administration of the office of voting clerk. The breaking out of a fire or the committal of a crime of violence in the neighborhood would necessitate the withdrawal of the official from the polling place, if service as voting clerk were added to the office of fireman or policeman.



On the other hand, service as voting clerk is not only compatible with the present and established work of the public-school principal but is an appropriate addition to it. The fundamental appropriateness of the use of the education building as the voting headquarters is in the fact that the essence of citizenship in a democracy is a fellow studentship, in which the elections are examinations of the citizens' capacity for answering questions regarding the public welfare. For clerical service under the citizens in this essentially educational expression, the logical, natural, appropriate officer is the community administrator of education.

The fact that the principal of the public school is frequently a woman does not invalidate this statement. The question whether women are to be regarded as qualified voters is not the main question here. Voting clerkship is not an expression of citizenship, but a service to the citizenship. Moreover, women now serve as voting officials in many of the States. If a woman is not qualified because she is a woman for this service under the adult citizens, then certainly she is not qualified to train the youth for citizenship.

CONVENIENCE IN THE APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL.

The public schoolhouses are conveniently distributed for use as polling places; so, for the principal, and for the voters in the use of his services, this work can be done by no one more conveniently than by the school principal. This is particularly and obviously true if the schoolhouse be used as the voting center. But this is true even where the schoolhouse is not the voting place. The heart of the aim of the school in its service to the children and youth is their civic training. On election day, in many communities, the children are taken from the schoolhouse to the polling place that they may see the voting operation. Where this supreme civic expression is, whether it be in the schoolhouse or elsewhere, there those who are in civic apprenticeship should find their school.

However, the chief convenience of the school principal's service as voting clerk is not in his work on election day, but in the fact that, with his appointment, there is the possibility of indefinitely increasing the number of registration days to suit the convenience of voters, and this with practically no increase of expense,

PERMANENCY OF OFFICE IN APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL

As the use of the schoolhouse for voting makes possible the permanent installation of the voting apparatus in the community capitol instead of having this symbol and instrument of civic expression



stored in an out-of-the-way place through most of the year, so the appointment of the school principal as voting clerk gives a permanency to this office that is in harmony with the continuance of the citizens' responsibility. It makes possible, as suggested above, increasing the opportunities for registration without increase of expense, for the principal is on duty almost every day. It makes more readily possible the holding of special elections and referenda, and it does away with the necessity of instructing election officers each time that the poll is to be taken.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE OF APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL.

The statement of Supt. Greeson, of Grand Rapids, Mich., that, were it a matter of increased expenses instead of substantial economy to have the schoolhouses used for voting, it would still be the wise and right thing to do on account of its educational value to the school, might also be made regarding the appointment of the school principal as the voting clerk. As was said at the beginning of this section, the office of town, village, or city clerk, in its unified character, is analogous to the office of voting clerk, as this will be when given the character of single appointment which normally belongs to clerkship. The experience of a principal in serving also as town clerk is given there. In this connection it may be well to give the statements from experience of a principal who received appointment as village clerk and of another principal who for a number of years has served as city clerk.

After speaking of the feasibility of the principal serving as clerk and the value of his school training in rendering efficient service, Mr. Ellis N. Calef, who, as principal of the high school at Alma Center, Wis., was last year appointed to serve as village clerk, writes:

But the more important advantage, as I found it, from the combination of these two offices is the benefit that the community may derive from the practical aid to better work as a principal that comes from service as clerk. In the first place, it is a very real satisfaction to the principal to have the expression of the community's confidence which is given in this appointment. One's natural response to such an expression of confidence is an increased feeling of devotion to the community. The principal is thus vitalized in his power to inspire loyalty and interest in their own town on the part of the youth for whose training he is responsible. Moreover, his service as cierk affords him opportunity for acquaintance with the adults, whom he should know if he is understandingly to administer their children's instruction; and this work gives him an insight into the actual civic life of the community which no amount of book study could supply. Judging from my experience, it is my belief that the combination of the office of clerk under the adult citizens with that of principal over the children in their training is beneficial both to the school and to the community as a whole.



Mr. Bernard M. Mulvaney writes, from six years' experience as at once school principal and city clerk at Oconto, Wis.:

The wide experience gained through this clerical work was of assistance in handling my school work. I am and was associated with men of standing in business and the professions, and can say that the knowledge and experience gained here were as invaluable to me as if I had spent a year or two at the university.

Mr. Mulvaney speaks of the technical work of his office as clerk, closing with this statement:

I have been taught that there are other walks in life than those connected with teaching, and I have had contact with people that I could not have gotten as simply a teacher. I have been able to approach people better by my knowledge of both occupations. I have been a better clerk for being a principal, and I have been a better principal for being clerk.

P. S.—As I am writing, the editor of the local paper enters. I have just told him what I have written. He says that if more principals could work in like manner it would broaden and make more effective their school work.

SIMPLIFICATION OF ADMINISTRATION OF ELECTIONS BY APPOINTMENT OF PRINCIPAL AS VOTING CLERK.

As long as'service as voting clerk is not made an ex officio duty of one established community officer the election provisions regarding this service will continue to be, as they are to-day, complex, difficult to understand, and susceptible of abuse. Precisely as there are citizens who fail to vote because they do not know the location of the polling place—where the schoolhouse has not yet come to be designated for this use—so it may safely be said that the average citizen does not know the regulations regarding voting-clerk service or the personnel of the election officials in his own precinct. The appointment in each district of the public official who is now responsible over the children to serve as voting clerk under the adult citizens would mean an immediate and most desirable simplification, obviously conducive to civic efficiency. Moreover, this appointment, generalized, implies the possibility of doing away with separate boards of election, the work of which then becomes a duty of the school officialslocal, county, and State. These officials are usually as impartial and free from dishonesty or bias as any public officials are, and as competent. Thus the appointment of the principal to serve as voting clerk points a practical way to such "consolidation and elimination of unnecessary boards and commissions" as is being recognized as desirable in Wisconsin and throughout the country. It means the simplification of the whole machinery and administration of elections.



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1906,

- t No. 1. Education bill of 1906 for England and Wales as it passed the House of Commons. A. T. Smith.
- †No. 2. German views of American education, with particular reference to industrial development. William N. Hailmann.
- No. 3: State school systems: Legislation and judicial decisions relating to public education, Oct. 1, 1904 to Oct. 1, 1906. Edward C. Elliott. 15 cts.

1907.

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- t No. 3. The auxiliary schools of Germany. Six lectures by B. Maennel.
- †No. 4. The elimination of pupils from school. Edward L. Thorndike.

- †No. 1. On the training of persons to teach agriculture in the public schools. Liberty H. Bailey.
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- tNo. 3. Bibliography of education for 1907. James Ingersoll Wyer, jr., and Martha L. Phelps.
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