

MILWAUKEE—VOTERS' LEAGUE.

Organized 1904.

Aim

To furnish information and thereby aid in the election of competent officials to the Common Council, Board of Supervisors and School Board, and their retention in office.

Organization

An independent, non-partisan, voluntary Association of citizens: it is governed by an Executive Committee, who make all the reports and recommendations of the League. This Committee is assisted in its work by various standing committees. A permanent office is maintained, with a secretary and assistant. The League is supported by private subscription. No subscriptions are accepted from officials or candidates for office.

Activities

The League publishes a carefully prepared digest of the work of the Common Council and Board of Supervisors, before each election. This record gives an account of the service of each alderman and supervisor, with the League's judgment as to his qualifications. Its information is derived from official records and observation of those in office; from personal interviews with candidates who have not had public service, and from oral and written statements concerning them from numerous other sources, including persons referred to by the candidates themselves. This information is carefully weighed, and in each case the published estimates are the unanimous conclusions of the committee signing the reports. Where a present official has rendered good service to the city, preference is usually given to him in the recommendations, unless the new candidate shows signs of far better service. In this way the efficient officials have nothing to fear from the publicity in the report, but are often saved from being supplanted by inferior successors.

The Detroit Citizens' League, organized 1912, and The Civic League of Cleveland, organized 1896, are two other outstanding organizations doing similar work.

EFFECTIVE CITIZEN CO-OPERATION

WHAT IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS SHOULD
BE EACH BODY'S BUSINESS

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EFFECTIVE VOTING—Story No. 3.

VOTERS' LEAGUES IN OTHER CITIES

A great many of the replies made in response to "Effective Voting—Story No. 1," expressed dissatisfaction with the present methods of bringing out candidates, the personnel of those elected, and the lack of any organization for keeping closely in touch with those elected.

A number of the larger cities in the United States attempt to cope with similar conditions through citizen organizations. These are usually called Voters' Leagues, but in some cases the name of Good Government League, Citizens' Association or Civic League is applied.

The Bureau presents herewith some information with regard to the work done by this type of organization:

BOSTON—GOOD GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION—Formed 1903.

Aim

To awaken public interest in city affairs and to secure the election of honest and capable men to office.

Membership

The only requirement is a signed statement by the applicant that he believes in the election of honest and capable men to public office, that every citizen should take an active part in civic affairs, and that he intends to vote at the city elections. The Association is entirely supported by voluntary contributions.

Organization

It is governed by an Executive Committee of seven members. There are several permanent sub-committees, and others are appointed as the need arises. Permanent headquarters are maintained, the offices being in charge of a paid secretary and a competent office force.

Activities

- I. Records are kept of all candidates for public office, and a pamphlet is prepared and sent to **every voter** shortly before each municipal election. This gives, for each candidate, his or her residence, age, occupation, education, organizations in which interested, public record, and his or her vote for or against any important matters during previous years (if any) in office. Finally, a recommendation for or against the candidate's election is given.

II. The Association also:

- (a) Issues a monthly publication, "City Affairs," devoted to the discussion of matters of interest in municipal administration and politics;
- (b) Maintains a library and clipping system;
- (c) Supplies speakers on the work of the Association and the affairs of the city to organizations of all kinds;
- (d) Serves as headquarters and clearing-house for those who are interested in the improvement of municipal conditions.

CHICAGO—MUNICIPAL VOTERS' LEAGUE. Organized 1896.

Aim

To elect honest and competent aldermen to the City Council.

Organization

It acts through an Executive Committee. No candidate for office can become or remain a member of the Executive, neither do members receive any remuneration. Permanent headquarters are maintained, with a small force of permanent employees. The League is entirely supported by voluntary contributions.

Activities

- I. The League collects and preserves information as to possible candidates and political conditions. It does not suggest candidates, but investigates and reports on those named by others, and publishes this information broadcast shortly before the aldermanic elections.
- II. Each year the League adopts a platform. This is tendered to each candidate for his approval, disapproval or modification. He is at liberty to make such modifications for himself as will render the platform to which he does subscribe the accurate expression of his own opinions.
- III. Each city ward is being investigated, and its social, economic, political, racial and religious characteristics are being accurately ascertained.