New York, February 19, 1896.

To the Honorable,
The Board of Education.

Gentlemen:

The undersigned Male Principals of schools in this city heartily endorse the bill known as Senate Bill No. 328, which is now before the State Senate Committee on Cities and which was approved by your Board for presentation to the State Legislature.

We believe that the intimate acquaintanceship with school matters possessed by the undersigned, derived from an average service of over a quarter of a century in the positions we now occupy, and the long experience we have had in all the details of our system of schools, entitle us to express an authoritatively favorable opinion upon such school measures as we deem best adapted to the needs of our city and for the best interests of the children committed to our care.

After a careful study of the provisions of the bill, we feel constrained to give to it our most hearty approval believing that it is the best measure of school reform viewed from the stand point of the welfare of the children, that has thus far been presented.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) Henry P. O'Neill, Principal, G. S. 1

(Signed)	Isaac B. Sprague,	Principal,	G. S.	66
	Edw. H. Boyer,	"	" "	87
	Matthew J. Elgas,	"	" "	69
	Geo. W. Harrison,	"	" "	40
	Michael E. Devlin,	"	" "	97
	Jno. F. Townley,	"	" "	12
	William B. Friedberg,	"	" "	95
	Evander Childs,	"	" "	90
	W. H. J. Sieberg,	"	" "	43
	Wm. A. Owen,	"	" "	86
	Wilbur F. Hudson,	"	" "	6
	Dubois B. Frisbee,	"	" "	4
	H. C. Litchfield,	"	" "	79
	Thomas Moore,	"	" "	93
	H. Wm. Smith,	Acting Principal,	" "	20
	Frank J. Coleman,	Principal	" "	82
	Andrew J. Whiteside,	"	" "	8
	Wm. C. Hess,	"	" "	19
	J. H. Grotecloss, Jr.	"	" "	11
	Ernest R. Birkins,	"	" "	10
	Bayard W. Purcell,	"	" "	96
	T. Dwight Martin,	"	" "	32
	M. A. Birmingham,	"	" "	21

(Signed)	D. E. Gaddis,	Principal,	G. S.	54
	R. H. Pettigrew,	"	" "	25
	John D. Robinson,	"	" "	94
	W. L. Ettinger,	"	" "	2
	Wm. T. Trand,	"	" "	61
	N. P. Beers,	"	" "	15
	Martin H. Ray,	"	" "	51
	Edgar Vanderbilt,	"	" "	55
	Edward A. Page,	"	" "	77
	Hugh Carlisle,	"	" "	26
	John Walsh,	"	" "	74
	La Fayette Olney,	"	" "	14
	James G. Smith,	"	" "	29
	Hugh P. O'Neil,	"	" "	23
	E. F. J. Gutgsell,	"	" "	22
	Geo. White,	"	" "	70
	Abner B. Holley,	"	" "	46
	Joseph Finch,	"	" "	67
	Joseph J. Casey,	"	" "	83
	Elijah D. Clark,	"	" "	60
	Josiah H. Zabriskie,	"	" "	16
	William B. Silber,	"	" "	62

School Principals
address in support
of Board of Education
bill. 906

45

New York City, March 31st, 1896.

Hon. Wm. L. Strong,

Mayor of New York City.

Dear Sir:-

The following argument was made before the Senate Committee on Cities at Albany, at a hearing granted March 18th, 1896, and I desire to put myself on record as heartily endorsing the same.

Respectfully,

Robert Maclay

President, Board of Education.

ARGUMENT:

The question before us, stripped of all matters of detail is simply this:

"Shall the School System of New York City continue to have Trustees as an important factor in the management of the Schools, or shall the School Trustees be abolished and their powers be lodged in some other body or bodies?"

If School Trustees are to be abolished, I ask "WHY?"

There can be but two answers to this question:

First: The Trustees are personally bad men, unfit for their places and the places must be abolished in order to legally get rid of them; or

Second: The Trustee System is a wrong system.

On the first answer to the question, I desire to submit the following:-

Three (3) of the five (5) members of the Board of Education, who are favoring the "Compromise Bill" were in 1895, members of the "Committee on Trustees" and in that capacity not only nominated but voted for at least two-fifths of all the Trustees now in office. In support of this, I refer you to the minutes of the Board of Education, giving reports

of Committee, to which their names are signed.

In addition I would state that two (2) of these gentlemen have actually voted for over three-fifths of the present Trustees. This I submit as a Certificate of good character for Trustees, let it be worth what it may. Of course, these gentlemen of the Board of Education must stand by their reports, and votes, and must certify that the Trustees are good men, for if they nominated bad or incompetent men and voted for them, how can they be trusted to appoint Superintendents and Teachers should the "Compromise Bill" pass?

To the second answer, that the Trustee System is wrong, I assert that the present system, in the main, is an ideal system.

There may be faults in detail; there may be in some instances a conflict of authority, or a condition of affairs by and through which officials may shift or shirk responsibility, but all of these are remedied by the Board of Education or "Strauss" Bill.

We are all in favor of Civil Service Reform. Each political party makes its plank on Civil Service Reform one of its most prominent features in building its political platform.

The ideal Civil Service must be constructed on the following lines:-

1st: The Executive, either President, Governor or Mayor must appoint an "Examining Board" presumably of experts This "Examining Board" must be responsible only to the power which appoints it.

It must be entirely independent of any influence from the power which appoints from their lists. This Board examines and places on the Eligible List.

2nd: Heads of Departments may make appointments from this Eligible List and only from this "List" in the preparation of which the Heads of Departments have no hand.

The appointing power has no control over the examining body and often is not in touch with its work.

The success of Civil Service Reform depends upon an honest Executive who appoints an able, honest and independent Examining Board. Then if the law is complied with, all has been done that human agency can devise to have a satisfactory civil service.

To show how completely the present system corresponds to this statement of an ideal Civil Service, I submit the following facts:

The Schools of New York are to-day managed by

1st: A Board of Education consisting of twenty-one members, appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years, seven to be appointed each year.

The Board of Education in brief, attends to all matters affecting the whole system. The Board does all the business with other City Departments; it provides, through the Board of Estimate, the moneys to run the schools; it makes and changes the "Course of Study" for the whole city; it buys school sites, builds new schools, appoints City Superintendents and School Trustees. The Board of Education serves without pay.

2nd: A Board of Superintendents, appointed by the Board of Education:

These Superintendents are supposed to be pedagogical experts. They are salaried officers. They are responsible to and report only to the Board of Education. It is the duty of the Superintendents to supervise everything in connection with the schools that comes in the line of pedagogics.

They examine all candidates for teachers' licenses. They and they alone prepare and publish the "Eligible List".

In this matter they do not even report to the Board of Education.

I might add that candidates for the "Eligible List" must be recommended by the School Principals after a period of sixty days of actual teaching under the supervision of School Principals

3rd: The Board of School Trustees, appointed by the Board of Education and responsible to the Board of Education:

The Trustees may make appointments of teachers, but only from the "Eligible List" prepared by the City Superintendents. No other appointment is legal, and not a single violation of this law can be shown in New York.

It may be added that very little favoritism can be exercised in the appointments from the "Eligible List" as the vacancies are at times even more numerous than the candidates on the "Eligible List". In January 1896, for instance, the Trustees of the 23rd Ward were not able to get three teachers for the Primary schools of their Ward.

This is the ideal Civil Service of the New York System:

1: The Board of Education, as the executive, appointing an expert Examining Board -- City Superintendents.

2: The City Superintendents, as paid experts, entirely independent of the appointing power (the Trustees) preparing and publishing an "Eligible List"

3: The School Trustees, held to a proper performance of their duties by the Board of Education, and by the public sentiment of the communities in which they act and in which they live.

It may be laid down as a fundamental principle that

if an honest executive appointed an able, honest and independent Examining Board, and if after that the law in regard to appointments were complied with, all had been that could be done to give a satisfactory Civil Service.

Now, we have in our New York School System, that which is lacking in other Civil Service regulations, or is left to the press and the citizen, viz:

4: The School Inspector, appointed by the Mayor, for a term of three years.

It is the duty of the Inspectors to see that the laws are complied with in regard to every detail of school management. It is their sworn duty to see that the law in regard to the "Eligible List" is fully carried out.

No teacher can be dismissed changed in salary or position against the teachers' wish without the Inspectors' written consent.

The New York School System as it stands to-day is a thing of steady growth. It has for over forty years been working ahead, each step being in advance and upward toward an ideal system.

Systems in vogue in other cities have been tried and dropped for something better. Commissioners and Trustees in the past have been elected, but as that brought the political complexion of the candidate into prominence, that plan was dropped and both Commissioners and Trustees are appointed

Mr. Mayor, it seems to me that the present School System is an ideal one and right in line with the Civil Service Reform that all good citizens have been laboring for for years. Now, let us look briefly at the Civil Service of the "Compromise Bill" (which Bill does away with the School Trustees) and provides for:

1: The Board of Education as before.

2: The City Superintendents appointed as before.

The City Superintendents examine candidates as before and prepare an "Eligible List". Then this same Board, which to this point has been performing entirely proper pedagogical duties, resolves itself into a Board for the selection of Teachers.

They nominate teachers for appointment to the Board of Education and the Board appoints. After that the Superintendents promote teachers, regulate salaries, and grade of teachers and remove teachers by a majority vote (See Bill Sec. 26)

What kind of Civil Service is this!!!

A Board of Education, making appointments of teachers from an Eligible List prepared by its own creatures -- the Superintendents.

There is not a political party that would dare advocate the passage of a law embodying such Civil Service rules, the carrying out of which would prove the greatest farce ever presented on the political stage.

N O T E:

(Furthermore under the present system it is imperative that the Inspectors sign each license to teach. This license is but provisionary and liable to be revoked at its expiration if at that time the teacher upon re-examination is found unfitted for the services required of him or her. This provisionary license is continued by the Superintendent until in his opinion the teacher is fully equipped for a permanent position. A permanent license once granted can only be revoked for cause.

No such safeguards are provided for in the "Compromise Bill".)

To
HON. WILLIAM L. STRONG

Mayor of New York City

-from-

ROBERT MACLAY
President Bd. Of Educa
tion.

48

SPEAKERS AT THE MASS MEETING.

HON. JAS. L. WELLS,

HON. ERNEST HALL,

HON. ALONZO BELL,

HON. JAS. R. ANGELL,

THOS. J. RUSH ESQ.

CHAIRMAN.....HON. JAS. L. WELLS.

SECRETARY.....THOS. J. RUSH ESQ.

VICE PRESIDENTS.

Hon/ Alonzo Bell,
J. Stewart Wilson,
Rev. Dr. D. J. McMahon,
Rev. Jos. Reynolds,
Rev. John G. Oakley,
Dr. Henry Ruhl,
Dr. J. E. Comfort,
Dr. Jas. Geary,
Chas. W. Bogart,
Albert Bell,
Wm. R. Beal, Esq.,
Col Jos. A. Goulden,
Hon. Jas. R. Angell,
Louis O . Van Doren Esq.,
Rev. Geo. W. F. Birch D.D.
Rev. Gibson Wm. Harris,
Rev. W. S. Woolworth,
Dr. A. F. Brugman,
Dr. S. H. Mc Ilroy,
Jules F. Valois,
Julius Haas,
Matthew Reilly,
Peter Nore,
Jas. H. Spellman,
Dr. J. H. Holmes,
Hon. A. S. Van Orden,
Dr. O'Byrne,
Chas. Van Riper,
Jos. Moss,
John Wilson,
Emil Zamora,
Chas. Spellman,
Chas. H. Emery,
D.N.Backer,
B. J. Carr,
Rev. Hasbrouck De Bois,
J. Schuyler Anderson,
Orson Raynor,
H. W. Claassen,
John Karl.

Dr. Wm. McChristie,
Dr. J. D. Patterson,
Frank P. Mott,
John M. Tierney,
J. J. Barry,
Ferdinand Traud,
Julius Heiderman,
Albert J. Pierson,
Smith Williamson Esq.,
John De Hart,
J. Mc Cartney,
Wm. Zeltner,
Chas. Tucker,
Samuel J. Henry Esq.,
Wm. H. Ten Eyck,
A. L. Van Orden,
Chas. M. Hammond Esq.,
Dr. H. H. Tinker,
S. A. Bassford Esq.,
A. J. Demarest,
Adolph J. Peterson,
Jas. Cullen,
Christian Schmidt,
Jacob Young,
Com. Louis Haffen,
Jas. M. La Coste,
Olin J. Stephens,
Peter J. Hunt,
John L. Lee,
Wm. J. Keon,
John Spellman,
Michael Hynes,
John Y. Siems,
Chas. E. Reed,
John Mc Pherson,
Edgar Ketchum,
D. A. Mc Leod,
Wm. J. Hargrave,
Geo. Knauf,

RESOLUTIONS.

WHEREAS,- We citizens , tax-payers and parents of the 23rd. and 24th. Wards, who look to the Public Schools for the education of our children, are keenly sensible of our splendid school accommodations, conscientious, able teachers, and the excellent work that is being done in our Public Schools; and-

WHEREAS,- The credit of these magnificent results is largely due to the unselfish devotion to the interests of our children, on the part of fellow citizens among us, who have given their time, their ability and their best thought to this patriotic "Labor of Love"; and-

WHEREAS,- In the Great North Side of the City of New York, it is considered a high honor, a distinguished mark of public confidence to be named as a School Trustee; and it is a matter of civic pride among us that no one dare aspire to the office of School Trustee in this section of the City of New York, unless a lady or gentleman of character, ability, and proven integrity, such as now compose the Boards of School Trustees of the 23rd. and 24th. Wards; therefore,

BE TI RESOLVED,- That this meeting of citizens, taxpayers and parents most emphatically protest against the action of those ladies and gentlemen who seek to destroy that feature of our Public School System which gives opportunity

for the display of an unselfish, patriotic, and edifying interest on the part of our best citizens, who are associated with our Public Schools from love of them, and whose only reward is the consciousness of the worthy performance of one of the most sacred duties of our State-the care of her children.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,- That this meeting protest against all legislation seeking to abolish the office of School Trustee, and petition our representatives to oppose the enactment of all such measures as inimical to the best interests of our Public Schools.

RESOLVED,-That the Chairman appoint a Committee of Citizens to present these resolutions to the Legislature, to the Governor and to the Mayor.

Public Schools in Danger!!

Efforts are being made to rush through the Legislature "The Compromise Bill." This will revolutionize the public schools of this city by persons not in sympathy with the present system; who do not send their children to the public schools; who hold themselves above and do not represent the people. This bill proposes to abolish the local trustees who perform their work without compensation, and creates in their stead a large corps of paid officials who are to have the power of appointing hundreds of teachers, thus opening our schools to politics and corruption.

You are invited to a

Mass Meeting of Citizens

in the MELROSE LYCEUM, Third Ave. and 150th St. on

THURSDAY EVE'G, APRIL 2d, at 8 o'clock,

to protest against the Abolition of School Trustees and in favor of

HOME RULE GOVERNMENT of our Schools.

Thos. J. Rush, Esq.	Wm. R. Beal, Esq.	J. J. Barry.
Hon. Alonzo Bell,	Col. Jos. A. Goulden,	Ferdinand Traud,
Hon. James L. Wells,	Hon. Jas. R. Angel,	Julius Heiderman,
J. Stewart Wilson,	Louis O. Van Doren, Esq.	Albert J. Pearson,
Rev. Dr. D. J. McMahon,	Rev. Geo. W. F. Birch, D. D.	Smith Williamson, Esq.
Rev. Jos. Reynolds,	Rev. Gibson Wm. Harris,	John DeHart,
Rev. John G. Oakley,	Rev. W. S. Woolworth,	J. McCartney,
Dr. Henry Ruhl,	Dr. A. F. Brugman,	Wm. Zeltner,
Dr. J. E. Comfort,	Dr. Wm. McChristie,	Chas. Tucker,
Dr. James Geary,	Dr. J. D. Patterson,	Samuel J. Henry,
Chas. W. Bogart	Frank P. Mott,	Wm. H. Ten Eyck,
Albert Bell,	John M. Tierney,	A. L. Van Orden.

Prominent speakers will address the Meeting.

49

New York City, April 12th, 1896.

Mayor Strong,

Dear Sir:-

I have been requested by Mrs. Scott, known to you probably as interested in "School Reform" to tell you why I, in opposition to many of my fellow-teachers, regard as necessary some radical changes in our educational system.

But for this request, which was so made as to put it somewhat in the light of a duty that those entertaining convictions like mine should speak out in what seems a crisis in school affairs, I would have remained silent, preferring to leave to those of more influence and greater ability to discuss the question, satisfied to accept whatever decision might be arrived at.

A practical experience, however, of more than thirty years as a teacher in the Public Schools of this City, has afforded me an opportunity, at least, to form a respectable judgment in the matter, though, of course, I am fully sensible of the fact that I may have failed to improve that opportunity. A deep and abiding interest in the welfare of the schools, to which I have given all the years and energies of my manhood, from which I must soon retire broken in bodily health and disappointed in my ideals, and in which I received my own educational training, warrants, I believe, the expression of my views on the subject.

I have no personal grievance to air, no personal wrong to right; no personal object to gain. In looking at the question I have striven to totally eliminate myself as a factor in the matter. Again, I have not done what, it seems to me, though I may err in this, most of those in the profession who have so actively opposed the proposed change, have done. I have not looked at the question mainly or even largely from the standpoint of how such change may affect the personal interest of the teachers. The schools exist, primarily at least, I take it, for the benefit of the scholars; and whatever may assist this purpose I would welcome though it created additional demands upon the energies of the teacher and forced him to substitute real, intelligent, conscientious effort in the place of mechanical, unskilled and merely perfunctory performance. Nor, do I necessarily assail the character of my fellow teachers in intimating that the latter method prevails to a lamentably large extent in our schools. Some of it arises from the cumbrous, unsuitable, inflexible, and, in some cases, impossible requirements of the course of instruction, in its practical application at least, as it has gradually, not grown, but aggregated. It produces, except possibly in a few exceptional localities, perhaps in all, even in the hands of the best teachers, instruction mainly, education hardly at all. Again, human nature is not different in the teacher from human nature in other people. When he finds that a strong personal, political, social, or religious in-

fluence will stand him in much better stead in the matter of appointment, advancement, and general appreciation, than the most faithful and successful performance of duty unaccompanied by these adventitious aids, he will in many, too many, cases "accept the situation" and cultivate "the powers that be". When an active participation in some prominent, political organization, of which the most influential Trustee of his Ward is the ruling spirit, will, as it naturally will, commend him to the good graces and secure to him in his profession the earnest, powerful support, of that Trustee, a man of "common prudence" does not neglect the opportunity. The effect of this I need not describe.

It is my sorrowful but deliberate conviction that our Public Schools do not at all adequately accomplish, either in kind or degree, the work which they should and (I still cherish the fond belief) could. Of course, I know that, among the mass of my fellow workers, such a view is not held; or, if held, by some, is by most of them unacknowledged even to themselves. The public in general are in a state of blissful ignorance on the question, and, with the careless, comfortable optimism that usually accompanies such a condition, find everything as it should be. The proposition that the New York Public Schools are the best in the world (though it excites derision among educators) and the similar proposition that everything is

better in the United States than in any other part of the globe (though it makes the judicious grieve) are unhesitatingly accepted by probably a large majority of the people of our city. To doubt would be unpatriotic, to deny would be treasonable. Equally potent through long centuries and over broad areas, with shouting millions, has been the doctrine of "the divine right of kings" Yet doubts did arise ; denial was made; nay, even open resistance was offered; and (the thought is a consoling one) rebellion did sometimes succeed.

Were I disposed to be merely epigrammatic (which I am not, for epigrams, though born usually of a profound conviction of some truth, often tend to mislead, through exaggeration, which seems a necessary element to their success) I would simply tell you of "A book, in Four Chapters, on our Public Schools, by a Practitioner for many years therein" It was as follows: "Chapter I. The System; Sham: Chapter II. The Method; Cram: Chapter III. The Result: Flam: Chapter IV. The Moral; Damn." but while there is too much reason for the satire, the sacredness of the subject, the necessity for some such provision for the young of the land, the recollection of what in spite of defects, is accomplished, and my deep concern in the matter, restrain me from contenting myself with such comment.

A fact or two. Many pages would not suffice to present even a portion of the shortcomings I believe to exist. The ques-

tion of how to remedy them, even in part, is another and a most difficult one. Every year some twelve-hundred boys or more go to the City College to be examined for admission. The papers do not demand much, and are remarkable rather for what they do not contain than for what they do. Only about fifty per cent, however, on the average, pass the examination. Under a right system this could not be. The boys are the flower of our schools. They have been passed (I do not say they have passed) successfully through all the dozen or fourteen grades of the Primary and Grammar Departments. They represent the culmination of all the efforts of our system to produce a reasonably well-trained youth of about fifteen years of age, most of whom have been under our educational care since their sixth year. Surely, this is not a state of affairs to be proud of. I do not say that such a "College" should or should not exist. But, given the "College" and our efforts to prepare the children for it, we might reasonably expect a different outcome.

Once more. I have in my mind a school, probably as good as the average, certainly better than many. There are about one hundred boys in the "First Grade." It can, in my belief (I am tempted to say knowledge) be demonstrated before any competent committee of educators, unconnected with the present system, that barely one-third of these are fairly grounded in the subjects prescribed by the "Course of Instruction" for the grades below the First, es-

pecially in the essential matters of arithmetic and language. And, what is, to my mind, much worse than this, the rest have, of trained, thinking, reasoning power, less, much less, than they have of acutal knowledge of facts. Most of the best third, some of whom will get into the "College" are woefully weak in the power of concentrated logical thought, at least on any intellectual question. Indeed, it is my conviction that what power of consecutive reasoning they do possess on some questions, has been acquired mainly out of school.

It will, no doubt, occur to you to think how it is that I view these matters so differently from many (let us say most) of my fellow laborers? Well, you cannot be surprised that the most earnest defenders of any system, the strongest opponents of any reform therein, are always found in large numbers in the system itself. I need not point out why to you. You are, doubtless, well aware of the fact, both from experience and observation. Whateley, I think it was, said, in substance, that the very worst possible judges of the nature and merit of proposed changes as to vital matters in any system, were those engaged in that system, though they should and might be the best advisers as to matters of mere detail. Did any great system, moral, religious, political, or financial, polygamy with its degradation of womanhood, slavery, with its crucifixion of manhood; puritanism, with its cruel bigotry; catholicism, with its imperial lust of dominion; aristocracy, with its utter disregard of

the rights of the masses, democracy, with its deification of brute force, orthodoxy with its inquisition in Spain and its Quaker hangings in New England; landlordism, with its monopoly of the "unearned increment";"protection" with its selfish greed; or, coming nearer home, the "party machine," with its arrogant ostracism of all but the party boss and party slave, or even Reform (with a capital R.) sacred Reform, with its inhuman persecution of the sinner as well as its hatred of sin; did any of these ever reform itself? Let history answer. Men and systems must be saved in spite of themselves. The savior must expect crucifixion. To-day, the South rejoices in the disappearance of slavery. But the great Rebellion, with hundreds of bloody battle-fields, from Bull Run to Appomatox and its countless treasures worse than wasted, attests the vigor with which it sought to reject the blessing. Habit has much to do with this. The tenacity of vested interests, has still more. The opponents of a change may be usually are, quite as honest as the advocates. There is not much difference, as to this, in men in the mass. "Reformers" often have ulterior motives. Conservatives prevent many a hasty folly. As it is difficult to divine men's motives we should be careful how we assail them.

I assume then that a change is needed. Of course, this is merely my view, but that is what I was asked to give. It is for you

to decide, as far as you are concerned, as to its correctness. The question comes now as to the main, I might as well say the only, practical point of the change proposed. Leave the Trustees their present power and you might make many more radical changes than any that any one has as yet mooted, ~~in that~~ without serious opposition from them, at least, and their strangely interested pedagogical supporters. This is "the milk in cocoanut." The agitation skillfully worked up outside of the profession, well- it has simply been worked up (the innocent children in some cases being made the agents) as it could be in any case where similarly powerful interests were concerned. That is all there is to that business. I said "strangely" interested, because one might suppose that the mere proposition that a body of trained educators should have the controlling voice in the selection, advancement and government of teachers (just as judges pass upon the qualification of lawyers) rather than the butcher, the baker, and the candelstick-maker, eminent men of business though they might be, and highly successful ward politicians, that such a proposition, considered abstractly and by a body of teachers too, would commend itself to many and not lead to a suspicious unanimity of opposition by those from whom sympathy, gratified sympathy, might have been (and was) expected. One would think that a respectable number would favor a trial, at least, of a change, that might relieve the teacher from the pressure

of close local, personal political, religious, or other alien influences, which are, sometimes, created by the ambitious, activity of the Trustee, and sometimes of which the Trustee is himself the unconscious or even unwilling victim from the fancied necessity of preserving his power and place. The vigor of the opposition, on the part of the teachers themselves, (of course the other was ~~exploited~~ expected) certainly was a revelation. Who was it said "Methinks the lady doth protest too much?"

As a somewhat pronounced advocate of "State-Rights" in theories of national government, a persistent opposer of all schemes of "Centralization", an earnest friend of "home rule" striving to bring the governing power as close as possible to the governed body, and a life-long democrat, as I understand democracy, I had my own difficulties and found myself, at the outset of the question, in a sad dilemma. Upon my own principles I seemed constrained to favor the preservation of the power of the Local Bonds. Party affiliation, which has, with all "men of affairs" at least, all not mere theorists some weight, pulled in the same direction. The natural desire not to stand apart from my comrades, helped. The expressed views of many earnest and intelligent fellow workers had their influence. The apparent interests of friends in the system, who had manifested, through many years, much kindness towards me, caused a harder struggle

The feeling that, in making any strictures upon the system, and especially such severe ones as I have expressed, I might seem to reflect upon some of them, in whose hands the care of the schools had partially been, held me back, though I knew that, in many cases, they were the victims of their environment and could not prevent the evils, not themselves the authors of the evils. All this, I say, ~~cannot~~ seemed to forbid me to move. Until the present time, I have made no sign, except negatively (that is, by not taking any part in the active measures of last year and this, to defeat the proposed change) of my feelings in the matter. Nevertheless those feelings existed. My views, however, erroneous they might be, are honestly, deeply held . The situation was embarrassing. I seemed somewhat like the "prictical politician" who cornered on the Maine Liquor Law, ingenuously declared himself to be "in favor of the law but against its enforcement." I was, on principle, in favor of Trustee-ship, but against the retention of the Trustee. Sometimes I fancied myself like a man I once heard of, an ardent "Free Trader" who, after listening to an argument bristling with figures in favor of "Protection", remarked, "well- we, without doubt, have all the principles, but the other fellows seem to have most of the facts," the "other fellows" in my case being our friends, the "school reformers."

It is, therefore, you may well believe, somewhat of a wrench

to me to say plainly what I think on the question. But, in spite of all this, so profound (mistaken or not) is my conviction of the comparative failure of our schools to accomplish their legitimate purpose, so many evils, it seems, to me, (rightly or wrongly) spring, either directly or indirectly, from the control exercised by the Trustees, that I have resolved to speak.

I set up no claim to infallibility or superiority of judgment. I realize fully that there are many sides to a question. I know that "right" after all, is a relative word, and often means merely a wise balancing of "wrongs" Many Trustees have done, are doing noble work. Many more, alas- but of them I will not speak.

I assail no man's motives. I do observe, however, the tenacious vigor of one element of our body politic, to retain the present system. Watch what the enemy <u>does</u>" You need not heed much what he <u>says</u>. If that element be, as many believe, a vicious influence in the government of the city, the almost insanely eager desire it has shown, to defeat any attempt to weaken such control as it has of the schools of the City, points strongly to the belief that it, at least, thinks its share of the control to be of great importance to it.

As to the change proposed, it may well be that it will not accomplish what it professes to seek, in the way of reformation. It

probably will not, at least for a long time, possibly never, in full measure. Some evils may well be anticipated to arise from it. Who can say? It is an experiment. But it seems, on the whole, to promise something for the betterment of what- should be the loving care and pride of all sons of New York, the Public Schools.

Finally, if you will permit it, a word of warning. Should the proposed change go into effect, no more fatal mistake could be made than to transfer to Inspectorships the smart, brainy, active, influential Trustees who have fought so stoutly to prevent its adoption. Specious arguments as to long connection, familiarity with the needs, former interest, valuable knowledge, and personal capacity, as shown in business life, will abound. Do not heed them. It will be suicidal. We do not give the tender infant, to nurses, to those who would strangle it. Let, then, the new system be carried out, in all its parts, by its friends. Give it a chance for its life. Good citizens, capable citizens, by the score, may surely be found in every District- who will gladly give time and energy to the welfare of the schools, with no thought of personal advantage. Avoid the local politician as you would avoid the mortal enemy of the schools. He cannot perform the duties as they should be performed. His thousand petty ties are a thousand snares and entanglements. Veto the bill, if it seem right to you to do so; but do not entrust any part of its execution into the hands of its enemies, or it

will be an "execution" in another sense.

Do not forget the noble women who have striven so hard for the result. Give the mothers of the city more, very much more, to say about the training, physical, mental and moral, of their children.

You have a great responsibility. May you meet it wisely. Many, dumb now, will speak freely enough if once the gag be removed.

In conclusion, I desire to ask you to excuse me, if you have read so far (which might perhaps be doubted) for presenting my views at such length. My interest in the matter must plead for me.

Very Respectfully,

Arthur M. Lee,

Vice ~~President,~~ Principal

Grammar School, 22.

Hon.

Wm. L. Strong,

Mayor etc.

Anx 12

102

Anniversary will be an "exception" in another sense.

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Mayor etc.

96

To HON. WILLIAM L. STRONG,

Mayor of the City of New York.

The undersigned, Commissioners of Common Schools of the City of New York, desire to express their objection to and protest against Senate Bill No. 1166, now in Your Honor's hands, upon the grounds:

1st.- That said bill opens the system to politics.

2nd.- That many of the provisions of said bill are opposed to those contained in the bill introduced by the Board of Education- the educational authority of said city- and that it, therefore, violates the theory of home rule.

3rd.- That in the matter of appointment of teachers the provisions of said bill are opposed to all sound principles of civil service.

Dated, New York, April 13th 1896.

Hugh Kelly
Robert Maclay
John L. Hunt
W. Van Antwerp
Chas. A. Strauss
Emile Ottinville
A. P. Kitchum
Chas. L. Hoff
Wm. H. Overbeck
Joseph J. Little
Charles G. Wehrum
Rich. H. Adams
W. C. Andrew
Daniel E. McSweeney M. D.

Protest against

so-called "COMPROMISE" BILL

signed by members of the
Board of Education.

New York, April 17th., 1896.

Hon. William L. Strong,

Mayor of the City of New York,

My dear Sir:-

In compliance with the request of your Honor for an expression of opinion on the part of your staff favorable or unfavorable as to the provisions of the compromise School bill, introduced by the Committee of Affairs of Cities, I have to say that I am unqualifiedly in favor of said bill.

It was my good fortune to be present in the Senate Chamber during the debate on this bill, and I heard Senator Ford throughout his argument. To my mind, it was a clear, concise and comprehensive, and as I regard it, an almost unanswerable argument in favor of the enactment.

Whatever else may be said upon this school question, it must be conceded that the management of the schools during recent years has been deplorable and inexcusably bad. No terms are to strong by which to characterize state, county, city or educational authorities who compel tens of thousnads of poor children to wander the streets subject to all the temptations, and exposed to all the evil associations incidental thereto, through a failure to provide the necessary revenue to maintain a sufficient number of schools; and on the part of the educational boards to provide adequate school accommodations, and to enforce the attendence of children of educable age. I am advised that there stands a law on our statute books to-day compelling children to spend a certain term each year at school; this of

course necessarily contingent upon school house facilities, and the active, earnest cooperation of educational officers.

The duty of a state to provide the "ways and means" for the education of its children is paramount to all others, and the education of the children of the masses is recognized in all civilized communities as the very foundation stone of the social structure. To adopt a policy so diametrically opposite to that which is embodied in the compulsory education law that it keeps thousands of boys and girls, anxious for an education, in enforced illiteracy and ignorance, cries aloud for relief and a remedy. When blind, helpless ignorance raises longing hands and prays for knowledge and light, the duty of the law maker and of those charged with the enforcement of the law is too plain for any argument. The great fault of the present school system is the impossibility of locating responsibility for the deplorable condition into which the public schools of New York have sunk.

The opponents of the compromise school bill have failed to advance a single substantial reason why it should be defeated, or to demonstrate why it is not a decided improvement over the present law. They are also widely divergent in their views as to what features of the present school machinery has been faulty; not one courageous enough to assume that the present law is perfect and not requiring modification. Its inefficiency in any particular is abundant argument in favor of a new law, and in my candid judgement the compromise school bill measures up to the occasion.

The new bill, aside from making the apportionment, places practically all the deliberative and essential power

in a single body--the Board of Education. When it becomes a law, as I trust it may, we shall no longer be obliged to hunt around for the persons responsible for a failure to furnish adequate schooling facilities for the children of the masses; there can be no shifting of the blame upon the Trustees, or by the Trustees upon the Board of Education, or by both upon the Board of Estimate and Apportionment. The opponents of the measure, while striving to throw responsibility for abuses which they could not but admit existed, upon others, strove to shield the Trustees from any responsibility. In the legislative debate it was said that not long ago Mr. Adolph Sanger, who was at the time President of the Board of Education, asserted that the entire blame for the wretched condition of school buildings and the inadequacy of the accommodations rested upon the Boards of Trustees, which, as he asserted, tied the hands of the Board of Education. That charge can never again be made after the compromise bill becomes a law. If we have not schools, or if they become unsanitary or remain unfit for school purposes, as many of them now are, the Board of Education, after adequate revenue for their maintenance is provided, will be responsible and must answer to the Mayor and to the people.

There is utterly no force in the contention that the abolition of the trustee system removes the school from the people who patronize them. No locality can claim the right of managing its own school system after it has been demonstrated and is generally conceded that its management is incompetent. The educational interests of any locality are matters of concern not merely to that locality but to

the State, and even to the Nation, either of which would have the right to insist that local sentiment give way for an efficient school system to properly educate and train up the young. As well might Baxter street claim the right to have and manage their own police force as to insist upon having such schools as they thought best. Senator Ford stated that Prof. J. M. Rice, an educational specialist who some time ago spent two years examining the school system of Europe, was subsequently engaged by the Forum to make a similar investigation of the public schools throughout the United States. He did so, giving the results of his studies in a series of articles which appeared in that periodical. His article upon the public schools of New York city demonstrated that they were far below the standard attained in other cities; that the methods employed in the class-room were nothing short of "dehumanizing"; that the whole system was not merely antiquated but actually pernicious. He is authority for the assertion that the political "pull" to which the schools were subjected was the prime evil. That political pull has always been exerted through the trustees, and because of that pull the bitter antagonism to the compromise school law is accounted for and its source easily ascertained. Teachers have been appointed as a rule through its influence and by it retained even after their inefficiency had been demonstrated. In abolishing the trustees, the proposed bill aims to take the schools out of politics, and that is of far more importance than the alleged objection "that it takes them out of touch with the plain people." Nor is it a good thing in a city like this so largely impregnated with foreign influences, languages and ideas that

the schools should be controlled locally; for in many localities the influences that would control would be unquestionably un-American. In some districts there are vast throngs of foreigners where one scarcely hears a word of English spoken; where the mode of living is repugnant to every American idea. The best interests of the city demand that the children of such a population be brought under American influences and instruction, even if we have to go to the farthest confines of the state to find them.

The objection to the bill has come, for the most part, from the trustees themselves and the teachers, who have consistently argued upon the implied assumption that the schools are run for their special benefit. As a matter of fact, their personal interests should have no weight in the matter. The schools are for the people and for the people's children, and it is their interests alone which can properly be considered in determining whether or not the proposed bill is good or bad. I have the honor to be ,

Very Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servant,

W Plimley

At a public mass-meeting to discuss the Pavey-Page Compromise School Bill, held in the Court-room of the General Term, City Hall, on Saturday, April 18th, 1896, the following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, The Legislature of the State of New York has passed the so-called "Compromise" or "Pink Tea School Bill"; and

WHEREAS, Under the law said Bill must be approved or disapproved by the Mayor of the City of New York; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That we most emphatically disapprove of said Bill as not in the interest of public schools or the public school system; that the system of public instruction and the school system now in vogue has been in force for the past fifty years and has successfully withstood the criticism of all classes as the best system of education;

RESOLVED, That the interference by the wife of the Governor of this State and of other ladies upon the floor of the Senate in using their influence for said Compromise Bill deserves and hereby receives our most emphatic condemnation;

RESOLVED, That we hereby earnestly request his Honor the Mayor to disapprove of said Compromise Bill, thus taking our schools and school system out of politics and leaving that system in the condition in which it now is.

J. A. Goulden
Chairman

Joseph A. Wade,
Secretary

FIRST SECTION.

PRESIDENT MACLAY AND THE SCHOOLS.

The Commissioner Sends a Communication to the Mayor on the Compromise Bill.

FAVORS TRUSTEE SYSTEM.

His Argument Why It Should Be Retained in Conjunction with Reforms.

BOARD'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

Preparations are being made for a great mass meeting in front of the Mayor's office, in City Hall Park, as soon as Mr. Strong shall set a date for a public hearing on the Compromise School bill, which has passed both houses of the Legislature. The demonstration is being organized by citizens in favor of the school trustee system.

President Maclay, of the Board of Education, and his fellow Commissioners, with the exception of five, are in favor of the trustee system in conjunction [illegible] suggest[illegible]. It is not known whether or not the Mayor will approve the Compromise bill. Originally he said he was in favor of the Page or Straus bill. Mr. Maclay has sent the following communication to Mayor Strong, which, he says, contains the argument advanced before the State Senate Committee on Cities:—

"The question before us, stripped of all matters of detail, is simply this:—Shall the school system of New York city continue to have trustees as an important factor in the management of the schools, or shall the School Trustees be abolished and their powers be lodged in some other body or bodies?

"If School Trustees are to be abolished, I ask, Why? There can be but two answers to this question:

First—The trustees are personally bad men, unfit for their places, and the places must be abolished in order to legally get rid of them; or,

"Second—The trustee system is a wrong system.

FAVORERS OF THE COMPROMISE BILL.

"On the first answer to the question I desire to submit the following:—

"Three of the five members of the Board of Education who are favoring the 'Compromise bill' were in 1895 members of the Committee on Trustees, and in that capacity not only nominated but voted for at least two-fifths of all the trustees now in office. In support of this I refer you to the minutes of the Board of Education, giving reports of committees, to which their names are signed.

"In addition I would state that two of these gentlemen have actually voted for more than three-fifths of the present trustees. This I submit as a certificate of good character for trustees, let it be worth what it may. Of course these gentlemen of the Board of Education must stand by their reports and votes, and must certify that the trustees are good men, for if they nominated bad or incompetent men and voted for them how can they be trusted to appoint superintendents and teachers should the Compromise bill pass?

"To the second answer, that the trustee system is wrong, I assert that the present system, in the main, is an ideal system. There may be faults in detail; there may be in some instances a conflict of authority or a condition of affairs by and through which officials may shift or shirk responsibility, but all of these are remedied by the Board of Education or 'Straus' bill.

"We are all in favor of civil service reform. Each political party makes its plank on civil service reform one of its most prominent features in building its political platform.

"The ideal civil service must be constructed on the following lines:—

"First—The Executive, either President, Governor or Mayor, must appoint an 'examining board,' presumably of experts. This 'examining board' must be responsible only to the power which appoints it. It must be entirely independent of any infl[illegible] from the power which appoints from [illegible]ir lists. This board examines and places on the eligible list.

"Second—Heads of departments may make appointments from this eligible list, and only from this 'list,' in the preparation of which the heads of departments have no hand. The appointing power has no control over the examining body, and often is not in touch with its work. The success of civil service reform depends upon an honest executive, who appoints an able, honest and independent examining Board. Then, if the law is complied with, all has been done that human agency can devise to have a satisfactory civil service.

"To show how completely the present system corresponds to this statement of an ideal civil service, I submit the following facts:—

"The schools of New York are to-day managed by—First, a Board of Education, consiting of twenty-one members, appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years, seven to be appointed each year. The Board of Education, in brief, attends to all matters affecting the whole system. The Board does all the business with other city departments; it provides, through the Board of Estimate, the moneys to run the schools; it makes and changes the 'Course of Study' for the whole city; it buys school sites, builds new schools, appoints city superintendents and school trustees. The Board of Education serves without pay.

AS TO SUPERINTENDENTS.

"Second—A Board of Superintendents, appointed by the Board of Education. These superintendents are supposed to be pedagogical experts. They are salaried officers. They are responsible to and report only to the Board of Education. It is the duty of the superintendents to supervise everything in connection with the schools that comes in the line of pedagogics. They examine all candidates for teachers' licenses. They, and they alone, prepare and publish the 'eligible list.' In this matter they do not even report to the Board of Education. I might add that candidates for the 'eligible list' must be recommended by the school principals after a period of sixty days of actual teaching under the supervision of school principals.

"Third—The Board of School Trustees, appointed by the Board of Education and responsible to the Board of Education. The trustees may make appointments of teachers, but only from the 'eligible list' prepared by the city superintendents. No other appointment is legal, and not a single violation of this law can be shown in New York. It may be added that very little favoritism can be exercised in the appointments from the 'eligible list,' as the vacancies are at times even more numerous than the candidates on the 'eligible list.' In January, 1896, for instance, the trustees of the Twenty-third ward were not able to get three teachers for the primary schools of their ward.

"This is the ideal civil service of the New York system:—

"1. The Board of Education, as the executive, appointing an expert board of examiners—city superintendents.

"2. The city superintendents, as paid ex-

tried and dropped for something better. Commissioners and trustees in the past have been elected, but as that brought the political complexion of the candidate into prominence that plan was dropped, and both commissioners and trustees are appointed.

"Mr. Mayor, it seems to me that the present school system is an ideal one and right in line with the civil service reform that all good citizens have been laboring for for years. Now, let us look briefly at the civil service of the Compromise bill (which bill does away with the School Trustees) and provides for

"1. The Board of Education as before.

"2. The City Superintendent appointed as before.

"The city superintendents examine candidates as before, and prepare an 'eligible list.' Then this same Board, which to this point has been performing entirely proper pedagogical duties, resolves itself into a Board for the selection of teachers. They nominate teachers for appointment to the Board of Education, and the Board appoints. After that the superintendents promot[illegible] teachers, regulate salaries and grade [illegible] teachers and remove teachers by a major[illegible] vote.

"What kind of civil service is this?

"A Board of Education making appo[illegible]tments of teachers from an eligible list [illegible]pared by its own creatures—the superin[illegible]ndents!

"There is not a political party that would dare advocate the passage of a law embodying such civil service rules, the carrying out of which would prove the greatest farce ever presented on the political stage.

"Furthermore, under the present system it is imperative that the inspectors sign each license to teach. The license is but provisionary and liable to be revoked at its expiration if at that time the teacher, upon re-examination, is found unfitted for the services required of him or her. This provisionary license is continued by the Superintendent until, in his opinion, the teacher is fully equipped for a permanent position. A permanent license once granted can only be revoked for cause.

"No such safeguards are provided for in the Compromise bill."

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"To the second answer, that the trustee system is wrong, I assert that the present system, in the main, is an ideal system. There may be faults in detail; there may be in some instances a conflict of authority or a condition of affairs by and through which officials may shift or shirk responsibility, but all of these are remedied by the Board of Education or 'Straus' bill.

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"This is the ideal civil service of the New York system:—

"1. The Board of Education, as the executive, appointing an expert board of examiners—city superintendents.

"2. The city superintendents, as paid experts, entirely independent of the appointing power (the trustees) preparing and publishing an 'eligible list.'

"3. The school trustees, held to a proper performance of their duties by the Board of Education and by the public sentiment of the communities in which they act and in which they live.

"It may be laid down as a fundamental principle that if an honest executive appointed an able, honest and independent examining board, and if after that the law in regard to appointments were complied with, all had been done that could be done to give a satisfactory civil service.

AS TO INSPECTORS.

"Now, we have in our New York school system that which is lacking in other civil service regulations or is left to the press and the citizen, viz.:—

"4. The school inspector, appointed by the Mayor for a term of three years.

"It is the duty of the inspectors to see that the laws are complied with in regard to every detail of school management. It is their sworn duty to see that the law in regard to the 'eligible list' is fully carried out.

"No teacher can be dismissed, changed in salary or position against the teacher's wish without the inspectors' written consent.

"The New York school system as it stands to-day is a thing of steady growth. It has for over forty years been working ahead, each step being in advance and upward, toward an ideal system.

"Systems in vogue in other cities have been

To the Honorable William L. Strong,

Mayor of the City of New York.

The undersigned, a minority of the Commissioners of Common Schools of the City of New York, in reply to the objection and protest, dated April 13th, 1896, against Senate Bill No. 1166 presented to your Honor by a majority of said Commissioners, respectfully submit,

First: That so far from opening the school system to politics the said bill will, in our judgment, operate toward excluding politics from the system, for the following reasons:

That the appointment and transfer of teachers and the placing of contracts for repairs &c. will be taken away from the one hundred and twenty Trustees distributed through the various wards of the City and placed in the hands of a small body of Superintendents who, by reason of their long term of office and sufficient salaries, are removed from the temptation to yield to political influence and furthermore are answerable directly to the Board of Education.

Second: It cannot be seriously claimed that the compromise bill which leaves the appointment of all Commissioners with the Mayor and in addition thereto vests in him the power to appoint all inspectors (who under the new law would take the place of the Trustees) thus vesting the appointment of all unsalaried school officials in the Mayor of the City, in any sense "violates the theory of Home Rule": unless indeed it be claimed, as implied in the second clause of said protest, that any bill containing provisions not approved of by a majority of the Board of Education is a violation of that theory, or in otherw words that Home Rule in this matter

means passage of such bill and no other as shall be approved by such majority.

Third: In regard to the appointment of teachers the compromise bill provides that they shall be appointed from an eligible list by Superintendents, who, it is confidently expected, will be, as now, men trained in educational matters, instead of being appointed from such eligible lists by Trustees, a large majority of whom will probably continue to be men without special training in that respect. It is difficult to see nor does said protest specify any "sound principles of Civil Service" which would be opposed to such proposed new method of appointment.

Fourth: We further respectfully submit that the statements so frequently heard in opposition to the compromise bill that the present system is an "ideal" one, or is the best in existence in this country, can hardly be seriously made by those who favored the so called Strauss Bill, which itself proposed to do away with the old system of Ward Trustees as inadequate to meet the present educational demands of the City.

Dated New York, April 18th, 1896.

Isaac Strauss
Edw. M. Peaslee
Chas. Buckley Hubbell
Jacob W. Mack
P. H. Cogan
Philip Meirowitz

Memorial from a minority of the Board of Education
In favor of (and against) the Compromise School Bill"

Hon. Wm. L. Strong
Mayor City of New York

N.

Argument

against

"The Compromise School Bill,"

— Senate Bill #1166 —

by

Dr. Matthew J. Elgas,
President of
"The N.Y. City Teachers' Association,"

before

His Honor, Wm. L. Strong, Mayor.

April 18th 1896

William L. Strong,

Mayor,

Your Honor,

After so able a presentation of the side of the opposition to this bill, as was made on Wednesday last, by President Maclay, Commissioners Strauss and Holt, and the other speakers, it seems almost an act of supererogation on our part, to add anything to what has already been said; but as your Honor has expressed a desire that the teachers should be heard to-day, we are here in response to the invitation so courteously extended to us. We represent the various associations of teachers, for whom we speak, associations which in point of education, intelligence and general usefulness, compare favorably with any similar organizations in the City.

During all this discussion, which has covered a period of many weeks, it has been frequently stated by the advocates of this bill and by the newspapers that have shown themselves so willing to publish and re-publish these statements, that it is "little short of impudence" and "most unbecoming business" in us teachers, to express any objections, and that we are guilty of most "pernicious activity" and great "foolishness" in daring to have any opinion on a subject, in which we are

so deeply and so vitally interested. We are constantly told that we are incompetent judges of the system of public education, to which many of us have devoted all the working years of our lives; so that we appreciate in the highest degree this opportunity afforded us by your Honor, thereby declaring to the people of the City of New York, that it is perfectly proper for the teachers as such, to say what they think of this "Compromise bill."

For several years the question of bettering the school system of New York has occupied the attention of the Board of Education, to a greater or less extent. The large increase in population resulting in corresponding increase in the number of children to be educated, necessitated extended facilities in the matter of school buildings and improved methods of instruction. Appreciating the importance of the situation, Mayor Gilroy in 1893, appointed a Commission, consisting of five reputable gentlemen, whose duty it was to inquire into all known methods appertaining to school requirement; to listen to plans, schemes, suggestions and experiences, and to frame a bill embodying the best ideas obtainable for the government of the schools.

After numerous public hearings and many months of deliberation, the Commission presented a bill, which was introduced in the

Legislature of 1894 and ~~never~~ not again heard of that year. Last year, the same bill in a somewhat modified form was again introduced by Assemblyman, now Senator, Pavey, passed in the Assembly by an overwhelming majority and two weeks later, after a public hearing given to the teachers by the Senate Committee on Cities, it was defeated by a vote of 26 to 6.

Then, as Mr. Strauss told you on Wednesday, the Board of Education took up the matter, and from May until December 1895, wrestled with the all-important question. The result was the bill, endorsed by the Board of Education by a vote of 15 to 5. Senator Page introduced it. In the mean time, Senator Pavey had boiled down his bill of over 30 pages to about as many lines, and had also introduced that. Suddenly the announcement is made, that the two bills had been constructed into <u>one</u>, the great difference of "trustees or no trustees" having been adjusted, and again we are favored with a bill - the "Compromise bill," which provides for the abolition of the Trustees. These gentlemen, who have faithfully served the schools, without compensation, and who are the appointees of the Board of Education, were discovered to be unprincipled, incompetent, and really the <u>only</u> <u>barriers</u> to the progress of the school system.

Mr. Mayor, there never was a more unjust charge advanced. Errors have been made, no doubt, many a time, but men are human, and Trustees are no exception, & I venture to assert that as few blunders have been committed by the Trustees, as by the Inspectors & Commissioners. Few, if any, flagrant evils, demanding judicial action, have existed under the present system and the last two decades present, I think, an almost absolutely clean record.

With the abolition of the Trustees, it is proposed to centre the duties associated with that office, in the hands of a Board of Superintendents, who in addition to the duties now imposed upon them, shall have full charge of all appointments, promotions & transfers of teachers, to say nothing of payrolls & Janitors and many other minor matters that will necessarily claim their attention.

With 4500 teachers, scattered in 102 Grammar Schools, 48 Primary Schools, 4 Evening High Schools, 10 Senior Evening Schools, & 18 Junior Evening Schools, in all 182 Schools, divided into 287 Departments, accommodating more than 200.000 children, necessitating at least 500 appointments and perhaps three times that number of promotions & transfers every year,

not to mention the duty of selecting Principals, it is simply <u>impossible</u> to contemplate how this work can be done by 20 or 25 Superintendents. Each man would have to be a Sir Galahad, possessing the "strength of ten" and endowed, too, like Sir Galahad, with the purity of heart that was the secret of the strength.

Outsiders, not conversant with our schools and their needs, theorize most beautifully on the subject, but they seem to forget that what has proved a success with a few scores or hundreds, will work falteringly, or fail utterly, where thousands are involved. I am not so uncharitable as to join in the "hue and cry" raised by some alarmists in regard to corruption and political machine-ism. That is about equivalent to condemning all religion, because some church-member is discovered to be a defaulter. The system of Trustees is a good system. There is plenty of work for the Trustee to do — good, honest, faithful work; separated entirely from the purely pedagogical, which should be amply cared for by the Board of Superintendents, — and if honorable men are appointed, men selected for their integrity, intelligence and independence, no reformer, however zealous, could fail to be satisfied.

I am in favor of the Trustees, on

the ground of expediency. It is unfair and dangerous to concentrate so much labor, power and responsibility in the person and office of the Superintendents and thereby make them a kind of educational Pooh-Bah.

The power vested in the Trustee is not sufficiently great to turn his head. If he abuse his trust, or is faithless or inefficient, he should be removed at once, and the Board of Education should accept the responsibility. On the other hand it is fair to assume, also, that the prospective Board of Superintendents will be composed of fallible men, and as the appointing power is still to be in the hands of the Board of Education, - also fallible men - we may look for mistakes even under the new régime.

In enumerating the many defects of the present system, Ex-Mayor Hewitt found great fault because his scheme of "The Penny Provident Fund" had not been adopted. For this the Trustees are not to blame, having no power in the matter. But even if the Trustees had had the power, it would have been to their credit to refuse. Though the scheme is a most commendable one, it were wiser not to impose upon the faithful teacher any more work; the ex-Mayor acknowledges that

the regular Curriculum was already too heavy and that there was consequently a system of "cramming" or a development of the memory, at the expense of the education of the intellect or the heart", but with all this the Trustees have nothing whatever to do. It seems to me that almost the whole of Mr. Hewitt's argument was an arraignment of the Board of Education and not of the Trustees.

In another part of his address, the Ex-Mayor said that this bill, which he was defending or which we oppose, was "defective in several places in that it, perhaps, gave too much power to the Board of Education," or that this could be changed by further statute." In this we are agreed. It is against this centralization of power, which in the earlier part of his argument he upheld so strongly, that we teachers object. We believe in the centralization of power in the different localities, each of which can be compared to a city of ordinary size; we would urge that the Trustees instead of being almost completely shorn of their prerogatives, as Trustee Eustis of the 24th Ward Board complained to your Honor on Thursday last, - being made "mere clerks to the Board of Education" as he put it, - that they be strengthened in their positions or their powers increased, if anything or let the Board of Education [illegible] it that the best men shall be appointed

7a

That the system with which we are associated is not perfect, we very well know. Commissioner Strauss did not mean that it was without fault, when he called it an ideal system. He meant that, in the main it is the best that could be devised and I agree with him. Nevertheless there are weak places to be strengthened, waste places to be cultivated, rough places to be made smooth and crooked places, straight; in a word, evolution to be depended upon and not revolution. With all these things, however, the Trustees have nothing to do. —

Your Honor, I trust that your action in the matter of this Compromise bill may be attended by no undue haste, and I urge with all earnestness, that as our schools are in no danger of

collapse, you obtain the sentiment of the whole people upon the bill, before committing yourself to an irrevocable act, that may prove the beginning of disaster to our beloved schools.

In the name, therefore, of the Association, which I represent and in the name of the children entrusted to our care, I most respectfully ask you <u>not</u> to approve this bill.

Matthew J. Colgan.

(1)

81.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

PRESIDENT'S ROOM April 20th, 1896.

My dear Mr. Mayor:

I have not been able to follow very closely the discussions on the School Bill that have taken place at the hearings which you have held upon that measure. Nothing has come to my notice, however, to change my own belief that in the interest of the schools the pending bill ought to be approved. The schools of Brooklyn are as close to the people and as dear to them as the schools of New York, but in Brooklyn there are no school trustees. In other words, that argument, in my judgment, is completely delusive. The people in New York, never having known any other system, find it hard to realize that the schools can be conducted in any other way. I credit those that oppose the bill with sincerity in their opposition, but their arguments do not affect my judgment. As I said at Albany, the present school system of New York, in my opinion, has been outgrown as completely as the volunteer fire department had been outgrown when it became necessary to substitute a paid fire department for it. You will remember that there were precisely the same sort of objections raised against that step forward. The best hope for the schools of the city of New York, in my judgment, is that they should be more and more administered on their educational side by professional educators. The trustee system is the most important obstacle in that development. For this reason I am entirely in favor of doing away with it as is now proposed.

I hope also that this will be the conclusion which you yourself will reach.

I am, my dear Mr. Mayor,

Yours faithfully,

Pete Law.

Hon. William L. Strong,

Mayor of New York.

The so-called Compromise School Bill has been returned to the Legislature with the acceptance of the Mayor for the following, among other reasons,- viz:-

(1) It is the outgrowth, although a compromise of a bill that originated with the ~~Committee Seventy~~, and has been endorsed by a majority of that Committee, ~~and~~ which Committee originated and largely contributed to the discussion of reform in our school system.

(2) It divides the City into school districts, and while it provides that the number of districts shall not be less than fifteen (15), permits an increase in the number of such districts, according as the Board of Education shall determine that ~~the~~ conditions demand such increase. The bill requires the Mayor to appoint five (5) Inspectors in each school district, and it may prove wise to make some of these selections from among the present ~~Boards of~~ Trustees.

(3) The bill creates in substance a plan of Civil Service preferment, enabling the Superintendent of Schools to thoroughly examine condidates for promotion, which work will thus be done by trained educators more likely to select competent teachers, and yet in no way interfere with the present principals and teachers, and should insure none but thoroughly qualified persons being selected to instruct our school children. The Superintendent of Instruction recommends the names of teachers and principals for appointment, and they are then actually appointed by a majority vote of the Board of Education.

(4) The responsibility and increase of power thus conferred upon the Board of Education will, in my judgment, insure additional discipline in the general management of our schools, and accomplish more prompt action in the correction of abuses that may have gradually crept into the management of our schools through the Boards of Trustees.

(5) The concentration of authority makes it possible to locate at once the responsibility for any mismanagement in the school system, and to make it impossible to shirk such responsibility, and thus enable the public sentiment to make itself felt directly in case of any dereliction in the school management.

(6) Any added expense that may be incurred through a change in the law remains where it should, with the Board of Estimate & Apportionment, responsible in the first instance for the expenditure of the City's money.

104.

Almost the last move in this campaign has been made, a campaign of wrong against right , of ignorance of existing conditions and of inexperience; hence mis-information, mis-representation and a lack of truth on the part of the reformers against knowledge of existing conditions, experience and honesty and integrity of purpose on the part of the central body - the Board of Education.

Who are the reformers? A few men and women with more zeal than knowledge, led by the wife of the Governor himself, of the State of New York and backed by a special message by the Governor, who by so doing "sets the pace" for future Governors in violation of Home rule.

In this agitation the reformers have held meetings behind locked doors, have never allowed public debate, have controlled the Press and by so doing have prevented the people from fairly understanding the issue involved. But far worse, the Trustees are branded as ignorant Tammany heelers, as Catholics mainly and saloon and bar-keepers. Why? Because the reformers numbering three or four men, two members of the Board od Education, one Trustee who has been a resident of the State two years and a Trustee one year, two women Trustees, one who has served two years and the other less than one, a woman School Inspector, and a few society women, say we are such people.

One of the members of the Board of Education, who stands with the reformers, has been Chairman of the Committee on Trustees the past three years and has selected and voted for more than three of every five Trustees in the City and if they are what he says, he is responsible for them and he has violated

his oath of office most shamefully.

If the Board of Education "has made such a mess of it" in selecting the I20 Trustees, can it be trusted to appoint Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents of Schools and of buildings, Principals, and Teachers who will be any nearer ideal than are those blots on the face of the City called Trustees?

Former Mayors appointed women Commissioners of Schools and with us today is one ex-Commissioner who was an honor to the Board of Education, yet a sample production of our City Schools, Mrs. Clara M. Williams.

You honored Sir, Mayor of our City, put women into every district in the City as Inspectors of Schools and they are an ornament to the system. The Board of Education, following your lead, appointed women as Trustees in six Wards in the City and an increase in the number, to the extent of two in each Board, would be the surest means of keeping politics and sectarianism far removed from the Schools of the City. But let us answer the charges of the reformers and look at the men and women who are working directly in the interests of the children of the City.

Of the II8 Trustees (There are two vacancies)

76 are Protestants,

34 are Catholics,

8 are Hebrews.

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49 are Republicans,

39 are Democrats,

23 are Reform Democrats,

I is Good Government,

6 are women whose politics do not count.

20 are Lawyers,

18 are Doctors,

I Judge,

I ex-Judge

6 are Bank Presidents,

2 are Bank Tellers,

7 are Retired Merchants,

57 are Merchants, Real estate dealers, Contractors, Clothiers, Grocers etc. etc., but no manufacturer or dealer in Malt or Spirituous liquors.

Dr Abbie Hamlin Mac Door
Clara M. Williams
Jessie H. Smith Inspector
Fidelia L. Smart "
Anna H. L. Brown "
Mary J. Amory - Inspector
Matilda Martin Inspector
Phyllis Leveridge, Insp.
H Dorothy Beach

Petition against the Compromise Bill signed by Dr A. H. MacDoor & the Inspectors

6.

Hon. William L. Strong,

Mayor of the City of New York.

My dear Sir:-

I desire with your permission to say one word with regard to the so-called Compromise Bill, which is intended to change in various particulars our present system of education in the City of New York. The importance of the proposed amendment and its capacity for good or mischief is such, that I need not apologize for taking your time by a brief expression of my views.

The so-called Compromise Bill is chiefly distinguished by that feature that does away with the Trustees. But for this it would have no advocates; but for this it would have few enemies. The real question is, shall the System be amended (or changed) by the elimination of the Board of Trustees.

That the proposed change is one of great importance no intelligent person disputes. That it must produce much good, or much mischief is certain. Indeed the fact that it savors of revolution is its chief attraction. Many excellent citizens have been fed morning and evening for a year or two past with fervid declamation of the abuses alleged to exist in every Department of our City administration. These worthy persons have been thoroughly convinced

that the school system must be bad because it exists, and that it requires ventilation, amputation and carbolic acid, because Tweed once robbed the City, and because the Police Department on recent investigation was shown to be corrupt. How could our school system escape the contagion, and resist the blighting influence of Tammany. Manifestly the thing must be bad somewhere, ergo, let us knock the Trustees in the head. Amen.

There is force and logic in this of course. And yet a word may be said in a shrinking and modest way on the other side.

Our school system is conceded to be the best in the country: I should be disposed to say, if I dared, the best lat system in the world. When it has had an opportunity to show itself in juxtoposition with others, it has readily and easily borne away the palm. We have for the past forty years bosted of it's excellence. It was the palladium of our liberties, the rock, the shield, the hope, the pride, and many other things in the eyes of our people. What has happened of a sudden to change all this? Why are so many good men made unhappy and sad when they contemplate these harmless Trustees, and why will nothing but their immolation satisfy the citizen who now clamors for their extinction?

1. As a general rule the less the public spirited citizen knows about the subject, the fiercer his denunciations. His earn-

estness for a change is generally in the inverse ratio to his knowledge. This happens often enough and will occasion no surprise.

2. E con the more the citizen knows about it, the less disposed he is to join in the hue and cry. There are exceptions of course. Notably, Mr.E.Ellery Anderson, who has after much apparent hesitation, modified his educational plans, so far as to include the sacrifice of the Trustees. But Mr.Anderson was himself for fifteen years one of the most efficient of our Trustees. He has never said that his associates were banditti or idiots. From the fact that he associated so long with them, and with them did much excellant work, I am disposed to think that the plan which secures the services of such men, for nothing, is not wholly without merit.

4. The change is purely experimental. We know that we have the best system in the land with the Trustees, we can only conjecture what the amputated trunk will be. Better is often the enemy of good said simple minded Lafontain Leave well enough alone says Common sense.

5. That the change must produce serious results is certain. The abolition of Trustees cannot be effected without the risk of much harm. It is an important and vital factor. You cannot play with its existance and feel quite confident that you are amusing yourself harmlessly. If you leave the system as it is, you know

that you have a scheme in operation that has produced good fruit, and you do not know what the status will be after an experiment has been made.

6. No wrong doing, no scandal, no abuse has been shown which cries for a remedy. The only wonder is that we have had so many worthy and capable men willing without pay to devote so much time to the cause of education. It is a pity that this one conspicuous example pf public spirit, should be extinguished. Surely the opponents of the system as it exists at present should point to something tangible and obvious, something materially bad, to support their demand fo so radical a change. The mere fact that some remunerative offices will be created is not enough to justify approval, except in the case of those who hope to get those offices.

7. The great, crying, palpable danger of such a change is the introduction of politics, and religious differences in the system . That there may now be exceptional instances where these vexatious factors may be felt, is probable. No one denies that Trustees are human. But to their credit be it said that such instances are exceptional and rare.

The writer once served a term in the Board of Education. He never knew of any case where religious or political predilections controlled or visibly influenced the conduct of the Board of Education, or of the trustees. One case did occur where he thought

that religious prejudice had been shown. A young Protestant teacher had been superseded by a Catholic, and appealed to the Board of Education. He thought after hearing the statement of both sides that religious discrimination had operated in favor of the Catholic against the Protestant. He supported the Protestant as earnestly and vigorously as he was able. Both were taken care of in the end, but he has since become satisfied that he had done the Trustees a wrong. He apologizes now; he should in justice have done it before.

8. There is one feature in the trustee element to which sufficient importance is not attached, i.e., the advantage of local officers, especially interested in their own negighborhood, knowing the teachers and oftentimes the teachers' parents, familiar with the record of the families living about them, animated by a just and natural pride in the success of ~~xxx~~ schools peculiarly their own, striving to excel their rivals in friendly competition because of this very local pride which makes success personal to themselves; the value of this condition can hardly be over-estimated.

9. The effort has heretofore been to increase the efficiency of teachers by assuring them a permanent tenure of office. Under the new bill the superintendents promote teachers, regulate their salaries and remove teachers by a majority vote. As the President of the Board, Mr. Maclay asks, what kind of Civil Service is this? Much more might be said upon the contemplated change, but the

main arguments have already been stated most forcibly by Mr Maclay and others who understand the subject. Let me conclude by asking who cares for this radical change? Not the teachers, they object that the security of their position, i.e., their daily bread, will be imperilled: not the Board of Education, the men, of all men, most familiar with the subject. On the contrary, a large majority of these unpaid, intelligent and public-spirited officials protest most earnestly against this pseudo-reform. Not the parents, who are satisfied with a system which has grown up, the envy and admiration of the nation. Who wants the change then? A small number of excellent persons whose restless activity and earnest anxiety for the public good lead them to forget that the great law of the natural, or of the moral world is that growth must be slow to be sure and gradual to be effective. Their motives are, it goes without saying, of the best, but a small pellet of actual experiment is worth a pound of theory. Experience is worth something, and should be consulted, before a rude, if well-meaning hand, is laid upon the house wherein 200,000 children find their home, and lay the basis of their fortunes.

Yours very truly

(Signed) F. R. COUDERT.

47.

The Centralization of Power in the Superintendent's Office.

The whole professional life of the teacher, from the time of her examination for license, is - according to this bill, determined by the verdict of the Superintendent.

His judgment pronounces upon her qualifications; - his approval places her name upon the eligible list; - his recommendation secures her appointment.

Whereas, under the present law, the Principal, as pedagogic head of the department, is required to report as to the fitness of candidates under her supervision, notice that the Compromise Bill places this entire responsibility in the power of the Superintendent, whose decision entirely determines her recommendation.

Furthermore, every step of her advancement depends upon his approval.

He, who has any knowledge of the professional fads of different Superintendents will readily comprehend the sacrifice of individuality, the absolute submission, even the servility necessary in a teacher to avoid the possibility of failure, and through that of loss of promotion, and, perhaps, final removal from position.

HON. WILLIAM L. STRONG,

Mayor of the City of New York.

Mr. Mayor, I do not purpose taking up much of your time, as I see there are a large number of people who want to be heard on this subject. I do not feel that I can add much to the brief I have already presented to your Honor and I merely wish to present this protest, on behalf of your Honor's Board of Education, to the so-called "Compromise" Bill.

We object to this Bill on the ground:

1st: THAT SAID BILL OPENS THE SYSTEM TO POLITICS:

It does so by lodging all appointments in the twenty-one Commissioners and it would enable the Mayor, by the power of the Removal Bill, to manipulate the schools for political purposes. We see the result ~~es~~ of that to-day in Chicago, where there is an upheaval in the schools. In Chicago they spend one million and a half more on their schools than we do with the result of thirty-five thousand less pupils.

The framers of said Bill contend that nominations of Principals should be made by a body of experts, whose pedagogical knowledge and experience are indispensable in the selection of suitable persons to occupy principalships. But, by the very terms of the said Bill, it is provided that such nominations made after full and careful examination by the Board of Superintendents, may be set aside, for no assigned reason by the Board of Education, none of whose members may be a specialist in school supervision or in estimating the standing of candidates for principalships. Why should nominations by experts be, perhaps, capricious-

ly, set aside? What influences are going tooperate in the arbitrary rejection of an expert opinion?

(b) Would there be danger that the Superintendents themselves would be approached and tempted to violate their oath? One of the gentlemen now exercising the functions of a School Trustee, and advocating the Bill in question has openly charged that a School Trustee may exert, and has exerted, corrupt pressure on a City Superintendent's Department. If a mere creature of the Board of Education can, as alleged, poison the judgment of the experts, how much greater the danger of official pressure from higher quarters, when our City, at some future period, may be under the control of aggressivle political partisanship?

We object to this Bill

SECONDLY: THAT MANY OF THE PROVISIONS OF SAID BILL ARE OPPOSED TO THOSE CONTAINED IN THE BILL INTRODUCED BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION -- THE EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITY OF SAID CITY -- AND THAT IT, THEREFORE, VIOLATES THE THEORY OF HOME RULE:

We claim that

It violates the principle of Home Rule in that the Bill is passed by the Legislature to be applied only to the City of New York, and Not to any other part of the State.

When we ask for a referendum clause, so that the people can vote and decide whether they want a system abrogated that has prevailed for over fifty years, that is denied us.

It violates the principle of Home Rule when the Governor of the State sends a message to the Legislature and directs them in advance

how they should vote upon this Bill before the same has been submitted to your Honor, who is entitled to pass upon it before it reaches the Governor's hands. This, I think I have shown conclusively in the brief which I have already submitted to your Honor.

The present Board of Education is a recognized educational authority in this city and from its experience as the governing body is in a position to know most thoroughly the needs of the syste, and the demands of public opinion in this city, whose representatives they are, in all that concerns the education of the children. This Board has given to these needs and to the desires of the people, long and serious consideration. It has left nothing undone to ascertain what measures are needed for the improvement of the system. Through its Committee on School System, it has prepared a bill designed to effect suggested improvements in the present management of the Schools. During the preparation of this measure every interest concerned was invited to present its views. Public sessions were held at the Hall of the Board of Education and were largely attended. Every opportunity was given to present and discuss any views or plans for the improvement of the School System. Many distinguished educators presented their views.

This Committee after considering all the arguments and views from these various sources submitted their Bill which was adopted after discussion and revision in the Board, and has the approval of fifteen out of the twenty-one commissioners. It will tus bee seen that the "Board Bill" is a complete embodiment of the mature and deliberate expression of the most enlightened educational opinion of this metropolis; and any attempt to override such an opinion is a violation of the principle of Home Rule; most especially is this the case when such an at-

tempt originates in distant parts of the State. The so-called "Compromise" Bill contains provisions antagonistic to those of the Bill proposed by the representative educational body of this city.

My attention has been called, Sir, to some remarks made by a Senator in advocacy of this Bill, of which the following is an extract:

> "That is the reform we look for, a School System that "will take THOSE POOR CHILDREN FROM THE SLUMS, and teach them "what life us and put them under the influence of educated, "refined, intelligent men and women, so they will be elevated "and lifted out of the swamp in which they were born and "brought up".

The Senator was probably not aware when he made this remark that we have in the City of New York what are called the "corporate schools", whose duty it is to attend to this very department of education, for which they receive an appropriation from the State.

The corporate schools have nearly fifty thousand pupils. The Public School System of New York is in no sense a public charity. The children of the rich and of the poor share its benefits equally and alike. Nothing can be more injurious to the Systen than this attempt to make of it a charity.

We object to this Bill

Thirdly: THAT IN THE MATTER OF APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS THE PROVISIONS OF SAID BILL ARE OPPOSED TO ALL SOUND PRINCIPLES OF <u>CIVIL SERVICE:</u>

According to well-established principles and practices "Civil Service" rules separate the power of appointment and promotion

from the duty of examining into qualifications of candidates, yet the measure under consideration calls upon the Board of School Superintendents (1) to examine applicants for a teacher's license; (2) to nominate for original appointment; and (3) to make all promotions below the grade of Vice-Principal. Thus, no person, even after obtaining by examination a certificate of qualification could be placed by the Board of Education in any position, unless the Board of Superintendents should have selected such person to hold that particular place; and, further, the latter Board not only would decide which teachers are qualified for promotion, but would actually make each individual promotion.

The natural effect of thus vesting the appointing power in the superintendents would be to cause the teachers to do all in their power to conceal defects in school work which they now reveal in confident expectation of helpful suggestions; to them it would appear as if the very fact of asking advice from the"Promoter" were a confession of partial incompetency.

Mr. Mayor, I am not here to-day to defend the Public School System of New York City; I believe it to be the best that has yet been devised, although improvement is always desirable and should be eagerly sought for.

For over half a century, during which the present system has been in existence, there has never been a case of misappropriation of public funds on the part of a School Commissioner, Trustee, or Inspector. Now, Sir, it does not follow from this statement that these men were all virtuous, but it stands to reason that the system of checks must be an admirable one, and you, Sir, as a business man, know the importance of it.

Mr. Mayor, I do not wish to elaborate upon what has been done by the present Board of Education, but I point with some pride to what has been accomplished in the last nine months by the "Reform" Board appointed by your Honor. We stand upon our record.

It must be considered a high compliment we are paid, when we are to be clothed with such complete power as the "Compromise" Bill provides for. No such power ever before, in this city, was conferred on any public department.

Address to

Mayor Strong

on "Compromise" Bill.

(Copy)

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(RESULT IN CHICAGO: Costs one million and a half more with the result of 35,000. less scholars.)

The framers of said Bill contend that nominations of Principals should be made by a body of experts whose pedagogical knowledge and experience are indispensable in the selection of suitable persons to occupy principalships. But, by the very terms of the said Bill, it is provided that such nominations made after full and careful examination by the Board of Superintendents, may be set aside, for no assigned reason by the Board of Education, none of whose members may be a specialist in

school supervision or in estimating the standing of candidates for principalships. Why should nominations by experts be, perhaps, capriciously, set aside? What influences are going to operate in the arbitrary rejection of an expert opinion.

(b) Would there be danger that the Superintendents themselves would be approached and tempted to violate their oath? One of the gentlemen now exercising the functions of a School Trustee, and advocating the Bill in question has openly charged that a School Trustee may exert, and has exerted, corrupt pressure on a City Superintendent's Department. If a mere creature of the Board of Education can, as alleged, poison the judgment of the experts, how much greater the danger of official pressure from higher quarters, when our City, at some future period, may be under the control of aggressive political partisanship?

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We claim that

It violates the principle of Home Rule in that the Bill is passed by the Legislature to be applied only to the City of New York, and NOT to ANY OTHER PART of the State.

When we ask for a referendum clause, so that the people can vote and decide whether they want a system abrogated that has prevailed for over fifty years, that is denied us.

It violates the principle of Home Rule when the Governor of the State sends a message to the Legislature and directs them in advance how they should vote upon this Bill before the same has been submitted to your Honor, who is entitled to pass upon it before it reaches the Governor's hands. This, I think, I have shown conclusively in the brief which I have already submitted to your Honor.

The present Board of Education is a recognized educational authority in this city and from its experience as the governing body

is in a position to know most thoroughly the needs of the system and the demands of public opinion in this city, whose representatives they are, in all that concerns the education of the children. This Board has given to these needs and to the desires of the people, long and serious consideration. It has left nothing undone to ascertain what measures are needed for the improvement of the system. Through its Committee on School System, it has prepared a bill designed to effect suggested improvements in the present management of the Schools. During the preparation of this measure every interest concerned was invited to present its views. Public sessions were held at the Hall of the Board of Education and were largely attended. Every opportunity was given to present and discuss any views or plans for the improvement of the school.System. Many distinguished educators presented their views.

This Committee after considering all the arguments and views from these various sources submitted their Bill which was adopted after discussion and revision in the Board and has the approval of fifteen of the twenty-one commissioners. It will thus be seen that the "Board Bill is a complete embodiment of the mature and deliberate expression of the most enlightened educational opinion of this metropolis;

and any attempt to override such an opinion is a violation of the principle of home rule; most especially is this the case when such an attempt originates in distant parts of the State. The so-called "Compromise" Bill contains provisions antagonistic to those of the Bill proposed by the representative educational body of this city.

My attention has been called, Sir, to some remarks made by a Senator in advocacy of this Bill, of which the following is an extract: "That is the reform we look for, a School System that "will take THOSE POOR CHILDREN FROM THE SLUMS, and teach them what "life is and put them under the influence of educated, refined, in- "telligent men and women, so they will be elevated and lifted out "OUT OF THE SWAMP in which they were born and brought up".

The Senator was probably not aware when he made this remark that we have in the City of New York what are called the "corporate Schools", whose duty it is to attend to this very department of education, for which they receive an appropriation from the State.

The corporate schools have nearly fifty thousand pupils. The Public School System of New York is in no sense a public charity.

The children of the rich and of the poor share its benefits equally and alike. Nothing can be more injurious to the system than this attempt to make of it a charity.

We object to this Bill

Thirdly: THAT IN THE MATTER OF APPOINTMENT OF TEACHERS THE PROVISIONS OF SAID BILL ARE OPPOSED TO ALL SOUND PRINCIPLES OF CIVIL SERVICE:

According to well-established principles and practices "Civil Service" rules separate the power of appointment and promotion from the duty of examining into qualifications of candidates, yet the measure under consideration calls upon the Board of School Superintendents (1) to examine applicants for a teacher's license; (2) to nominate for original appointment; and (3) to make all promotions below the grade of Vice-Principal. Thus, no person, even after obtaining by examination a certificate of qualification could be placed by the Board of Education in any position, unless the Board of Superintendents should have selected such person to hold that particular place; and, further, the latter Board not only would decide which teachers are qualified for promotion but would actually make each individual promotion.

The natural effect of thus vesting the appointing power in the superintendents would be to cause the teachers to do all in their

power to conceal defects in school work which they now reveal in confident expectation of helpful suggestions; to them it would appear as if the very fact of asking advice from the "Promoter" were a confession of partial incompetency.

Mr. Mayor, I am not here to-day to defend the Public School System of New York City; I believe it to be the best that has yet been devised, although improvement is always desirable and should be eagerly sought for.

For over half a century, during which the present system has been in existence, there has never been a case of misappropriation of public funds on the part of a School Commissioner, Trustee, or Inspector.

Now, Sir, it does not follow from this statement that these men were all virtuous, but it stands to reason that the system of checks must be an admirable one, and you, Sir, as a business man, know the importance of it.

Mr. Mayor, I do not wish to elaborate upon what has been done by the present Board of Education, but I point with some pride to

what has been accomplished in the last nine months by the "Reform" Board appointed by your Honor. We stand upon our record.

It must be considered a high compliment we are paid, when we are to be clothed with such complete power as the "Compromise" Bill provides for. No such power ever before, in this city, was conferred on any public department.

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