

What is the Matter with Los Angeles?

And Will the Women, Who Hold the Balance of Voting Power, Be Able to Discover and Remedy It?

ON DECEMBER 5 the city of Los Angeles will hold its biennial municipal election. At the primaries on October 31 a plurality of several thousand votes was received by the Socialist candidate for Mayor.

Why? The Socialist, Job Harriman, has been identified with radical movements, if memory does not lie, since the days of Populism. Moreover, he is an ardent labor unionist, and sits among the counsel for the defense at the trial of the McNamara's, who are charged with the blowing up of the Los Angeles Times Building and the murder of the twenty-one persons who lost their lives in that disaster.

Does a plurality vote for him at the primaries, and its optimistic promise at the December polls, mean an endorsement of pronounced radicalism on the part of a majority of the people of Los Angeles? Does it mean an endorsement of labor unionism in a city where a singularly potent alliance of commercial powers has made the most desperate battle against the incoming or upgrowing of labor organizations that any American city has ever witnessed?

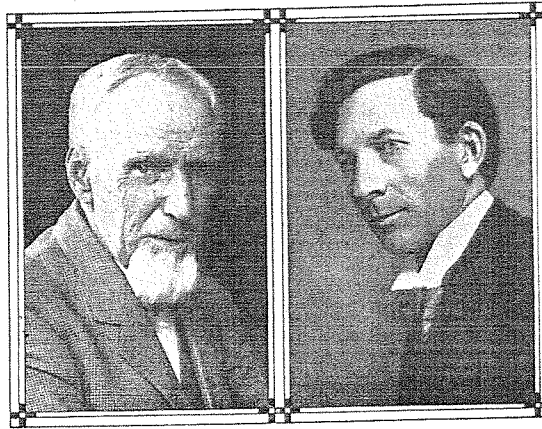
Does it mean that the fight is lost? That the famous anti-picketing ordinance will be repealed, and that the unions are to be victorious as against the Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, which golfpatrons the employers' side of all strikes in Los Angeles, affecting its members or their interests, through sheer weight of suffrages? Does it mean that the electors of Los Angeles, by endorsing an attorney for the McNamara defense, have thereby endorsed the McNamara defense? And will the issue of that trial in any wise be affected thereby, since juries, like supreme courts, are sometimes influenced by election returns?

The situation fairly bristles with interrogatories. Mayor Alexander, the principal opponent of the Socialist, has been a conspicuously good mayor. Is this majority for his opponent a tweak, then, at the nose of goodness? Or has Los Angeles turned Socialist overnight? What would Socialism spell in a city like Los Angeles—militant, thoroughgoing Socialism—for that is what they are talking about out there? It makes one pause to think. First, there is the city itself to consider, one of the most enterprising and prosperous in America, which in two decades has multiplied itself six times, and to-day numbers more than three hundred thousand inhabitants. Its citizenship averages high. Its charter is modern, equipped with recall clauses and the right of direct legislation. The city appears to be on the eve of still greater material progress. What can it mean, then, when through its streets from ten to twenty thousand men—ten to twenty, according to whose figures one takes—parade the streets, burning red fire, waving red flags, cheering to the echo the sentiments of Socialist speakers, and when thereafter at the primary polls the plurality vote goes to the Socialist candidate?

A review of the situation becomes intensely interesting. It is only two or three years since the good citizens of Los Angeles were holding their noses over an administration that fairly reeked. They bethought themselves of the recall clause in their charter. It worked beautifully. The head of the administration resigned in the face of the rising tide of condemnation, and George Alexander, a farmer and orchardist, became the recall mayor. At the ensuing regular election a non-partisan body, calling itself the Good Government Organization, triumphantly re-elected Mayor Alexander and put in with him nine councilmen of their choosing, or the entire legislative body. Seldom if ever has the legislative branch of any city government in America of the same size dealt with larger projects. To the outside eye it has dealt wisely. To be sure, there have been dissatisfactions, and criticisms of one kind or another have been made, but, judged by contemporary standards, it has been a good government, this of Los Angeles—one of the best. Conscious of this good record, the Good Government Organization entered the present campaign behind Mayor Alexander with every confidence of electing him definitely at the primaries by giving him an actual majority of the votes cast, which may be done according to the primary law of California.

But the candidacy of Job Harriman, Socialist, began to loom dangerously. The newspaper headlines grew black with warnings of the evils that would come from the election of a Socialist.

By PETER CLARK MACFARLANE



Mayor George Alexander Job Harriman
The present Good Government Mayor of Los Angeles, and his Socialist opponent who outran him at the primaries; they are contenders now for election

Upon this much the papers were agreed. Beyond this they differed. Since the newspapers have much to answer for in connection with the present situation it is necessary to take them into account now. The "Express," an evening paper owned by E. T. Earl, had been a consistent supporter of Alexander from the days of his first election by the recall. The "Tribune," started a few months ago by Mr. Earl as a morning daily at one cent,

ments to the State Constitution embodying various kinds of advanced legislation in the amendment campaign just closed in that State. The "Times" had opposed all these things. Also it had opposed Alexander with its characteristic fashion from the beginning of his first or recall campaign. However, when it saw the on-march of militant Socialism, it promptly and publicly offered its support to Mayor Alexander. The Mayor, perhaps in resentful mood, or perhaps remembering that candidates indorsed by the "Times" had of late been unfortunate at the polls, just as promptly and just as publicly declined the offer. In the meantime, the "Examiner" was in an extremely critical attitude toward Mayor Alexander and gave large news space to the candidacy of W. C. Mushet.

What made the vitality of the Socialist campaign a matter of such grave moment was its probable effect on the bond-selling transactions in which the city was engaging. Bond selling just now is of vital importance to the city of Los Angeles, which has on hand that series of great projects previously hinted at. The first of these is the Owens River enterprise, a plan to replenish the city's water supply from the Owens River by bringing the precious fluid two hundred miles across deserts and under mountain ranges. To do this bonds have been authorized to the extent of twenty-three million dollars, only seventeen millions of which have been sold. This water from the Owens River is to be brought into the city with force enough to generate a vast supply of electrical power. Three and one-half million dollars' worth of bonds were authorized for the erection of a power plant, all of which are unsold. And that is not all. Los Angeles has reached southward twenty miles to the ocean and annexed the towns of Wilmington and San Pedro and a site for an inner deep-sea harbor, which she proposes to develop at an expenditure of ten millions of dollars. Bonds for three millions of these ten have been authorized, but remain unsold. To get from this inner harbor to the spur tracks of her merchants the freight which will come by the Panama route from the marts of the world, Los Angeles is preparing to build an eight-track municipal railway. Here, again, bonds—and again unsold. Moreover, the traction problem within the city is a distressingly serious one. Bion J. Arnold is "experting" the situation for them and the projected plans call for subways and "L" ways, and more municipal building and more municipal bonds.

These are not merely pet projects of Los Angeles. They are vital to her life, and to the embracing of her commercial opportunities; for, be it known, to overlook the main chance is a phrase not found in the bright lexicon of the City of the Angels.

"Can Los Angeles sell seventeen million dollars' worth of her bonds in the next year if Harriman is elected?" asked the "Express" pertinently, and the other papers rang the changes with varying and accelerated force.

But there is an aggravating feature on the other side of the situation, and that is the labor war. The beginning dates back two decades, and the end is not in sight. Twenty-one years ago the compositors on the

Los Angeles papers struck for an increase in wages. The "Times" filed the places of the strikers. The other papers settled. The typographical union continued to fight the "Times" and enlisted other unions in a boycott which drove away the advertising merchants from its columns. The "Times" retaliated with a campaign against all unionism, which has gained in bitterness and ferocity of spirit with the years. The Merchants and Manufacturers' Association, which from the employers' side is the greatest closed-shop organization this country knows anything about, has raised the slogan: "Los Angeles an Open-Shop Town." The merchants and manufacturers believe that a large portion of the city's prosperity is due to the fact that Los Angeles is an open-shop town. In close proximity they have always San Francisco, conceded to be the most thoroughly unionized city in America, and pointing to that as from their standpoint a horrible example, they fight the unions relentlessly.

On the other hand, practically all international organizations of labor regard Los Angeles as missionary territory. The International Typographical Union for years appropriated money with which to "fight the 'Times'" in Los Angeles, and may be doing so yet.

(Continued on page 30)

THE WOMEN WILL DECIDE	
Old registration (all men)	80,000
New registration for election of Dec. 5:	
Women	82,905
Men	107,726
Total	190,631
Proportionate power of the women	About 43 %
Socialist vote at primary, October 31	20,157
Good Government vote for Mayor	
Alexander	16,790
Scattered votes	8,554
Total primary vote	45,501

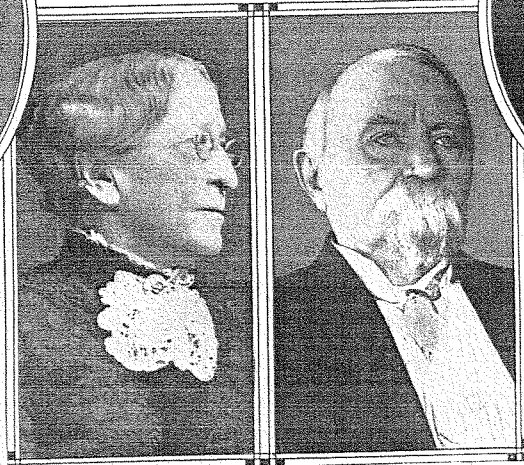
competing with the "Times" and "Examiner" at five cents, also espoused the cause of Mayor Alexander. Incidentally, too, Mr. Earl and his publication interests had been allied with all progressive movements for some years; had supported the great prosecution in San Francisco, that great divider of sheep from goats; had supported the campaign of Hiram Johnson for Governor, and latterly the recall, woman suffrage, and other amend-



E. T. Earl



Meyer Lissner



Mrs. Caroline Severance

Harrison Grey Otis

Two newspaper proprietors whose feud injured the cause of Mayor Alexander; a counselor of the woman suffragists, and a citizen leader of the Good Government forces, who also is Progressive Republican

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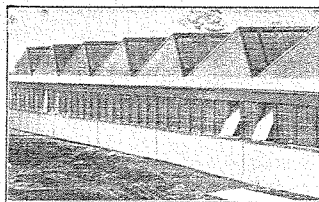
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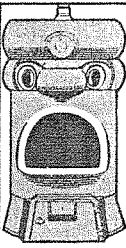


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it was reported that 82,905 women were on the rolls, together with 107,726 men, or an increase in men of 27,000 voters in round numbers, while the entirely absolutely new vote had reached the amazing total of 110,000 as against a previous registration of approximately 80,000, of whom but 40,000 expressed a preference at the primaries. With a line on but 40,000 voters out of 190,000, how difficult is a forecast!

There is no denying the fact that the immense registration has brought great comfort to the Alexandrians. But in the meantime Harriman, promising a clean Socialist rule, a single telephone system, a graduated system of taxation which will "take the burden of the home" and put it on the land, municipal ownership of all public utilities, including ice and laundries; the completion of the deep water harbor, the municipal railways, and the Owens River canal, wages his campaign with the active cooperation of one small daily newspaper against the heavy journalistic battalions of the conservatives, but enjoying the active participation of hordes of personal workers, who are almost fanatical so far as their enthusiasm and devotion are concerned.

Alexander's Claims

AGAINST the platform of promises advanced by Harriman, Mayor Alexander stands on his record as the reason for his reelection, and points to a long list of achievements claimed for his administration.

In the meantime the anti-Socialist papers—"Times," "Examiner," "Herald," "Tribune," and "Express"—are picturing day after day in scareheads, boxed editorials, in the news, in published interviews, letters from "Pro Bono Publico," and reports from cities now under Socialist rule their most crushing arguments against Socialist rule. Here is a sample from the "Times":

"The election of Harriman would result in an orgy of evil, in a season of stagnation in business, in the legalizing of picketing and boycott, in the curtailment of building, in the withdrawal of capital, in looting in the homes and rioting in the highways."

A certain block of one million dollars in bonds, which, having been offered, has found no takers, is made the text for more thunders. To this the "Record," the Socialist evening paper referred to above, replies with a list of interviews with New York brokers, including those who are handling the Los Angeles bonds, saying in effect that they don't care who is elected, that it will have no effect on the bond market.

A Bombardment

THE great coast defense guns of journalism boom out their charge that business will be hurt; and the little monitor of Socialism barks back that the only kind of business that will be hurt is the business of taking too much from the wage-earner's share. The "Times" publishes a story of Socialist failures in Milwaukee, and the "Record" retorts that it is a lie. In the meantime the scareheads grow thicker. "Vote for your homes," "Save Los Angeles," are a hint of their character. The "Times" even points an editorial straight at union laborers without a single disrespectful connotation therein, and caps it with "Vote for Your Jobs."

Mighty is the power of the printing press, and with words of ominous warning thundered through three hundred thousand daily papers—a warning based on an appeal to the dinner bucket, to the property interest, to the commercial destiny of Los Angeles, an argument that has always had great weight with the Los Angeles mind—it must be apparent that if Socialism wins this battle, there are in its appeal and the soil in which it has fallen elements of growth more powerful than any observation at this distance can discover.

However, there is no prognosticating the result.

An Unknown Quantity

THE women will decide. Those eighty thousand feminine votes constitute the unknown and the unknowable quantity. There is a conviction among publicists that woman is naturally conservative in things political. She is supposed to be timid about money matters, and one would anticipate that all this talk of impending calamity would influence the minds of female voters very quickly; but who among us knows the mind of one woman, the nearest and dearest, even as little ahead as the 5th of December? What man, therefore, would be bold enough to forecast the minds of 80,000 women upon that date when four thousand miles away from the scene of decision?



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