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## The Dunne school board : reform in Chicago, 1905-1908

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

THE DUNNE SCHOOL BOARD:  
REFORM IN CHICAGO, 1905-1908

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP AND POLICY STUDIES

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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## PREFACE

### EDUCATIONAL ISSUES OF THE PERIOD

Historians call the first decades of the twentieth century the Progressive Era. This was a period dominated by a variety of movements and intellectual debates; as Eric Goldman argues, it was a time when the American people had a "rendezvous with destiny." Many of the reforms introduced during this period have become institutionalized in American life: child labor legislation, pure food and drug laws, the regulation of trusts, the direct election of senators, the Australian ballot, just to name a few. Politically, the progressive movement reached its high water mark in 1912 when the two leading candidates in a four-party contest for U. S. President were Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. "For the first time the two major candidates for the Presidency were progressives and for the first time a major split in reform doctrine was being argued before a national audience."<sup>1</sup> To Arthur Link, this election "marked the culmination of more than 20 years of popular revolt against a state of affairs that seemed to guarantee perpetual political and economic

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<sup>1</sup> Eric F. Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) 168.

control to the privileged few in city, state and nation."<sup>2</sup>

Progressivism made its mark on the political structures of local as well as national government as big cities elected "reform" mayors: Tom Johnson in Cleveland, Hazen Pingree in Detroit, Samuel "Golden Rule" Jones in Toledo. While the national temper shifted from the internationalist, "big stick" perspective of Theodore Roosevelt to the isolationist, anti-interventionist sentiments that sought to keep America removed from European quarrels in 1914, cities struggled to cope with an unprecedented number of new immigrants, most from southern and eastern Europe, who brought with them new languages, new customs, new religions, and who somehow had to be assimilated into urban society. While the nation struggled with the massive problems triggered by the shift from an agrarian to an industrial economy, cities were wracked by labor unrest, strikes and a pervasive fear of socialists or anarchists (for many the two groups were interchangeable), a fear intensified by Chicago's Haymarket riot in 1886. While national leaders tried to develop legislation to control the problems posed by the giant business monopolies in steel, oil and railroads, municipal leaders struggled with parallel problems of regulating mass transit and public utilities. On every front, cities reflected in microcosm the issues faced by the nation as a whole as it entered the twentieth century.

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<sup>2</sup> Arthur S. Link, Woodrow Wilson and the Progressive Era (New York: Harper and Row, 1954) 1.



For some historians, the core of progressivism lay in middle class America. To Richard Hofstadter it was

. . . that broader impulse toward criticism and change that was everywhere so conspicuous after 1900, when the already forceful stream of agrarian discontent was enlarged and redirected by the growing enthusiasm of middle-class people for social and economic reform. . . . Progressivism . . . affected in a striking way all the major and minor parties and the whole tone of American life.<sup>3</sup>

This trend was also apparent in the cities as reformers strove to wrest political control from the urban "bosses" who had become for the middle classes a symbol of all that was corrupt and inefficient in municipal government. The settlement house movement, the efforts to pass initiative, referendum and recall legislation, the drive for woman's suffrage and the rise of civil service reform were all manifestations of this stream of progressive activity on the part of the middle classes.

Another characteristic of the progressive movement, and one which has particular relevance for this paper, was the inter-related nature of the progressive community--what Steven Diner calls an "interlocking directorate"<sup>4</sup> and what might today be termed the "old boy network." Diner argues that Chicago provided more than its share of notable leaders to the progressive cause: a litany of well-known names including Jane

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Hofstadter, The Age of Reform (New York: Vintage Books, 1955) 5.

<sup>4</sup> Steven J. Diner, A City and Its Universities: Public Policy in Chicago, 1892-1919 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980) 56.

Addams, Julia Lathrop, Harold Ickes, Clarence Darrow and the Abbott sisters. He goes on to point out the two characteristics of this leadership group which provided its "interlocking" nature: the fact that many reformers served together in a variety of different settings and organizations and the fact that many of them were related by blood or by marriage.

The most prominent members of the reform community commonly held leadership positions in a dozen or more different reform organizations. A variety of informal ties supplemented formal organizational connections through the interlocking directorates. Not the least of these were ties through blood or marriage. The McCormick family provides a case in point. Anita Blaine was the benefactor of numerous reform projects . . . Her first cousins [Robert and Joseph] . . . were both active in the movement for . . . more efficient city government . . . social worker Raymond Robins and his wife, Margaret Dreier Robins . . . held important positions in local reform associations as did numerous others related by blood or marriage.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, Diner points out that the composition of the reform movement which began in the 1890s was characterized by several groups of individuals who differed from those involved in earlier reform crusades. It included "the first generation of professional women in the United States, the first social workers, and the first academic professionals."<sup>6</sup> The members of the Chicago Board of Education appointed by Mayor Edward Dunne illustrated these trends; they included in their number professional women and social workers, many of them were

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 56-57.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 64.

leaders in reform organizations and in several instances outside of Board activities their reform interests overlapped and interlocked with one another.

Frequently Progressivism was equated with liberal Protestantism and the practice of the Social Gospel. Robert Crunden specifically includes a Protestant heritage as one of his criteria for defining the notable leadership of the early twentieth century Progressives whom he describes as "ministers of reform."<sup>7</sup> This mode of thought frequently led to deep suspicion of Roman Catholics; the regular campaigns to "Americanize" the influx of new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe were in part a reaction to the fact that these newest immigrants were largely either Catholic or Jewish. Crunden illustrates the way this mode of thought frequently ran:

[Woodrow] Wilson and [William Jennings] Bryan were also cultural absolutists, and while they might acknowledge the existence of decency among Roman Catholics, Jews, Muslims, or Buddhists, they always seemed to assume that people or nations would ultimately realize the degraded nature of their allegiance and convert to the American Way. They could not conceive of a people who did not share their moral principles.<sup>8</sup>

The rapid growth of the Catholic school system and the regular disputes which erupted between Catholics and Protestants over

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Crunden. Ministers of Reform: The Progressives' Achievement in American Civilization, 1889-1920 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984). passim.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 235.

such issues as Bible-reading in the public schools also contributed toward a great deal of anti-Catholic, anti-immigrant rhetoric being incorporated into discussions over the proper role and organization of the public school system.

New intellectual currents were also flowing. The writings of Charles Darwin stimulated the debate between the Spencerians, who believed that there should be no interference in the process of natural selection and thus no efforts by government to regulate business, and the Reform Darwinists typified by Henry George, whose Progress and Poverty offered the single tax as the solution to America's social and economic problems. Reform Darwinism had its theological expression in the social gospel approach of Walter Rauschenbusch and other clergy who felt that "too many Christians divided their lives between righteousness on Sunday and rapaciousness during the remainder of the week."<sup>9</sup> Progressive journalists like Ida Tarbell and Lincoln Steffens articulated many of these same problems in yet another way as they used their writings to focus public attention on such problems as abusive labor practices or contaminated food.

These "muckraking" journalists were part of a wider change in American journalism which had been evolving since the Civil War, largely as a result of the urbanization of society, and which also contributed to the rapid spread of progressive reforms. The number of daily newspapers alone had

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<sup>9</sup> Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 40.

increased from 574 in 1870 to 2,600 in 1909; in Chicago alone there were seven major daily newspapers, plus several specialized smaller papers like The Public and a number of foreign language newspapers.<sup>10</sup> Richard Hofstadter argues that this expansion had caused newspaper owners and editors to take a new role.

Experienced in the traditional function of reporting the news, they found themselves undertaking the more ambitious task of creating a mental world for the uprooted farmers and villagers who were coming to live in the city. . . . The newspaper became not only the interpreter of this [new urban] environment but a means of surmounting in some measure its vast human distances, of supplying a sense of intimacy all too rare in the ordinary course of its life.<sup>11</sup>

One manifestation of this shift in journalistic mores was the tendency toward making rather than simply reporting the news, "whether by sending Nelly Bly around the world or by helping to stir up a war with Spain."<sup>12</sup> Yet another manifestation was the tendency of the press to "elevate events, hitherto considered beneath reportorial attention, to the level of news occurrences by clever, emotionally colored reporting."<sup>13</sup> Chicago was not immune to this trend toward emotional

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<sup>10</sup> Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 188. The seven Chicago papers were the Daily News, the Record-Herald, the Tribune and the Inter-Ocean, two papers controlled from out of town by William Randolph Hearst, the American and the Examiner, and an afternoon paper, the Post. Finis Farr, Chicago (New Rochelle, NY: Arlington House, 1973) 308.

<sup>11</sup> Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 188-89.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 189.

reporting and investigative journalism. William Randolph Hearst, who published two of the city's major daily papers, was a pioneer of this "yellow journalism;" according to Richard Hofstadter, "Muckraking . . . was the most successful of the circulation-building devices [he] used."<sup>14</sup> But other Chicago papers depended on the same style of reporting and regularly printed stories of vice, sensationalism or crime which in their turn engendered waves of citizens' committees, investigating commissions and social reform movements.<sup>15</sup>

In education, as in political and social life, the first decade of the twentieth century was one of dramatic changes and of new ideas. Probably the best known educator of the period was John Dewey, "an original thinker and force of his own--perhaps the most important in the history of American education."<sup>16</sup> While Dewey's later years at Columbia University established him as America's foremost philosopher, it was his decade at the Chicago Laboratory School (1894-1904) that stimulated much of his most creative and influential writing on education. Lawrence Cremin<sup>17</sup> sees the greatest of Dewey's

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 192.

<sup>15</sup> Farr, 308.

<sup>16</sup> H. Warren Button and Eugene F. Provenzo, History of Education and Culture in America (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1983) 204.

<sup>17</sup> Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education: The Metropolitan Experience, 1876-1980 (New York: Harper & Row, 1988) 169.

educational writings during this period as School and Society, in which he deals with the issues flowing from the rise of industrialism and the decline of the close-knit rural community. Dewey argued that it was essential that the traditional curriculum be modified to deal with these changes. Dewey also felt that it was essential that teachers encourage learning by taking account of students' natural interests and tendencies. This had the effect of altering the role of the teacher in education, since his/her purpose was no longer simply to impart knowledge, but to "induce a vital, personal experiencing."<sup>18</sup> Dewey of course went on to become known as the father of "progressive education" even though much of what subsequently came to be known as progressive education would probably have been disavowed by him.

A Chicago contemporary of Dewey's, Jane Addams, contributed toward another aspect of educational change in the early twentieth century. The settlement house movement, of which Addams' Hull House is certainly the best known, involved not only social and political but also cultural and educational elements. Addams argued that it was crucial that the new immigrant underclass be educated to understand the role that they played in the newly-emergent industrial system. Thus the Hull House Labor Museum and the lectures and other programs offered there became "an important alternative to the

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<sup>18</sup> Button & Provenzo, History of Education and Culture, 206.

public schools' relatively restricted and narrow version of education."<sup>19</sup> Cremin argues that, far from being simply a "disciple" of Dewey, Addams was a major theoretician of education in her own right.

But whereas Dewey turned to a reconstructed school and a reconstructed university as levers of social change, Addams assigned what was at best a limited role to schools and universities in the cause of social reform and turned instead to settlements and similar institutions as educational forces that would energize the community to become itself the most potent of all educative forces.<sup>20</sup>

Alongside of, and frequently at odds with, this stream of thought which sought to reform education through progressive teaching methods and settlement houses, there was another stream which emphasized reform through improved management techniques and greater efficiency in the schools. These "administrative progressives" urged various mechanisms to make schools more "efficient" in the imparting of learning, much as the scientific managers of the same period sought to improve factory production, and hence profits, by the installation of techniques designed to make workers more efficient and machinery more functional. Many of the mechanisms for reform had effects on the way that public education was structured which are still institutionalized as part of the operation of our schools today.

At the turn of the century, urban schools were strikingly

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>20</sup> Cremin, American Education, 179.



different from the stereotypical one-room country schoolhouses which had dominated America since the rise of the common school movement. As a result of the massive immigration beginning in the 1870's, urban schools were crowded with children who spoke little or no English, whose cultural background was often different from the northern European culture of earlier immigrant groups, and who, according to popular theory, had to be quickly Americanized. Compulsory attendance laws, the establishment of kindergartens, and a curriculum which emphasized the superiority of the Anglo-Protestant culture all operated toward this end. In addition, after the Civil War the number of high schools grew rapidly, gradually creating a new norm for the amount of education necessary for a middle-class child, as well as a whole new social category--the adolescent. At all levels the curriculum expanded rapidly, with an increasing interest in science courses as well as in "practical" courses ranging from business to domestic science.<sup>21</sup> One of the key goals of the reformers was the move toward centralization of schools; a second goal was the move to reduce the size of school boards so that they could "function in ways similar to business boards of directors."<sup>22</sup> This move to reduce the size of

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<sup>21</sup> Gerald L. Gutek, Education in the United States: An Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1986), 180-1. Cremin, 546-9.

<sup>22</sup> Button & Provenzo, History of Education and Culture, 216.

school boards took place in large cities across the country.

Button and Provenzano cite, for example, St. Louis, which went from twenty-eight to twenty-two to twelve members within a few years; Philadelphia, which dropped from forty-two to twenty-one; and New York, which went from forty-six to seven over a twenty-year period.<sup>23</sup> The reduction in size frequently meant a change in behavior on the part of board members.

The ideal board was gentlemanly and businesslike. . . . One of the biggest differences between the behavior of the old large boards and the new small ones, the reformers reported, was that members no longer spoke to the galleries or worked for particular constituents. . . . Repeatedly the theorists who urged the corporate model of school administration presented conflicts of value, debate, and representation of special interest groups as "inefficient" and unnecessary in a properly functioning system of governance.<sup>24</sup>

A typical defense of the move toward small school boards was that of William Burnham in an article in the Atlantic Monthly. Burnham argued that a smaller board was more efficient, with less "argument and wire-pulling." Burnham's article made explicit the underlying middle and upper class orientation that flowed naturally from the trend to smaller boards.

. . . it is easier to find seven honest and capable men with leisure to devote to public affairs than it is to find twenty-five; and it is not only

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 216.

<sup>24</sup> David B. Tyack, The One Best System: A History of American Urban Education (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974) 145.

easier to find competent men . . . but . . . even if composed of bad men . . . it is easier to fix responsibility.<sup>25</sup>

Most educational writers of the period saw the "small is good" argument about school boards as utterly self-evident. Scott Nearing, in a 1909 article in Education, observed that "One method is modern, scientific, efficient and economic. The other is antiquated, crude, ineffective, wasteful." Like Burnham, Nearing felt that a small board promoted quality membership. He quoted President Charles Eliot of Harvard:

To my thinking the perfect number [of board members] is seven. Seven is ideal because seven men [emphasis mine] can sit around a small table and talk business in a conversational manner. They can talk together in a quick, simple direct way with absolutely no oratory and no talking to a gallery of reporters.<sup>26</sup>

Eliot's criticism of a board which "talked . . . to reporters" was to be echoed in many of the subsequent attacks levelled at the Chicago Board of Education appointed by Mayor Edward Dunne. Particularly during the second year of Dunne's administration editorialists and other critics of his Board of Education would charge the Board with being non-businesslike because of its propensity for lengthy discussions of issues, rather than the "open-and-shut" style of decision-making favored by the administrative progressives.

A corollary change that often went hand-in-hand with the

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<sup>25</sup> William Burnham, "Principles of Municipal School Administration," Atlantic Monthly 92 (July 1903), 107.

<sup>26</sup> Scott Nearing, "The Evolution of the Small Board of Education," Education, 29, (June, 1909), 663.

move toward reduction in size was a shift in the composition of those boards. This move paralleled civil service reform, with its emphasis on wiping out all vestiges of "bossism" or of local representation of various groups. Instead of school board members being selected as representatives of specific neighborhoods or interest groups, board members more and more were drawn from the middle and upper classes, particularly from the ranks of businessmen who sought to bring to education the methods of hierarchy, economy, standardization and organization which were presently revolutionizing American industry. These businessmen/board members soon determined that, just as in business decisions should be made by experts, so too in the schools decisions should be made by an expert--in this case the superintendent of schools who was "ideally an expert in all things educational."<sup>27</sup>

David Tyack argues that it was the "at large" election of school board members that marked the change in the character of these members.

One important phase of reform was the restructuring of urban school politics to promote more representation by elites on school boards--that is, to give more power to their people. A small "non-partisan" board elected at large was well calculated, they thought, to accomplish this purpose. As neighborhoods became increasingly segregated by income--and often by race and ethnicity as well--election by wards reduced the percentage of positions on the board available to urban elites. But if members were elected at large . . . leading businessmen and professionals could

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<sup>27</sup> Button and Provenzo, History of Education and Culture, 218.

use the media and their reform associations for publicity to give name-familiarity and hence an edge at the ballot box. In cities where they trusted the mayor, some reformers preferred appointment rather than election.<sup>28</sup>

Thus for most school superintendents, seeking to satisfy the businessmen/reformer members of the board to which they owed their jobs, top priority usually was given to developing an increasingly efficient school system. Button and Provenzano describe the mechanism by which this often happened.

Attacked by Progressive reformers, particularly by the "muckrakers" who were the advocacy journalists of their day, city school superintendents felt threatened and "vulnerable." They needed, for their own defense, to find ways of showing their usefulness and competence. For superintendents, efficiency seemed a way to ward off a terrible threat, the threat of being fired. For them, there was another advantage to efficiency, because administrators who were seen as efficient had additional justification for increasing their power and control. Perhaps, more benignly, school administrators came to favor efficient methods because businessmen and engineers favored efficient methods, and businessmen and engineers had come to be the most admired and respected men in American society.<sup>29</sup>

For many of these educators, superintendents and board members alike, the movement toward centralization and administrative control was not simply a desire for more efficient schools, it was also an expression of the Protestant ethic which has been part of the American tradition since the arrival of the

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<sup>28</sup> Tyack, One Best System, 139.

<sup>29</sup> Button and Provenzo, History of Education and Culture, 220.

pilgrim fathers.

In the Progressive era, school leaders retained much of this earlier moral earnestness and sense of mission, but they lost much of the specifically religious content of millennialism. Instead, they drew on a newer aspiration to control the course of human evolution scientifically through improving education.<sup>30</sup>

#### Other Problems: "Pull" and Desegregation

Particularly in urban areas, the question of "pull" became a thorny problem during this period. "Pull" was a combination of clout and patronage and referred to efforts by someone --board members, superintendents, principals, teachers or simply interested private citizens--to use influence with the board to obtain job appointments, promotions or transfers for teachers, principals or staff. David Tyack describes the contrasting viewpoints of superintendents and some boards.

Whereas schoolmen often denigrated nomination of teachers by school board members as "patronage" and desired to build meritocratic hierarchies controlled by professionals, many laymen saw teaching as a good job for girls in the ward and the power of appointment as the natural prerequisite of office for board members. (Why otherwise would men donate their time?)<sup>31</sup>

Jane Addams, who was to serve on the Chicago Board of Education during the years 1905-08, had another theory about "pull." To Adams, debates over "pull" were a part of the long struggle of municipal reformers against political corruption. Many reformers felt that "The one cure for 'pull' and

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<sup>30</sup> Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Tyack, One Best System, 79.

corruption was the authority of the 'expert.'" Unfortunately, according to Addams, this conviction frequently led to the establishment of a strong superintendent and the enshrinement of business ideals of efficiency, sometimes at the expense of the teachers and pupils.<sup>32</sup>

"Pull" had another definition, according to Tyack--it might be a form of collective graft, usually related to the large textbook companies, or to the contractors supplying everything from coal to chalk. Tyack gave examples of some of the forms this might take.

The opportunities for corruption in public education were enormous, as local or central boards assigned contracts for land, construction of buildings, repairs, or equipment; bought textbooks, supplies, and similar consumables; and appointed the hundreds of thousands of teachers, janitors, administrators, and other salaried officers . . . . textbook scandals rocked the country as huge firms collided in conflict over the vast school market. A teacher claimed that "the majority of superintendents in small cities owe their positions to 'pulls' organized by publishing houses to which they are friendly."<sup>33</sup>

A 1902 article in the Atlantic Monthly made much the same point. The article contended that while "pull" was an insignificant problem with books whose sale was small:

the case is entirely different with books whose sale is large and profitable, such as readers, arithmetics, geographies, grammars, copy-books and spelling books. The rival publishers' agents divide the committee into two or three hostile

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<sup>32</sup> Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990 edition) 192.

<sup>33</sup> Tyack, One Best System, 95.

camps, and arouse an anxiety on the part of many of the school committee for the success of their side only less intense than the agents themselves feel.<sup>34</sup>

The question of segregated schools was another issue with which boards of education had to contend. To educators in the early years of the twentieth century, segregation referred not to race but to sex. Tyack and Hansot's Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools traces the evolution of coeducation in America, demonstrating that, except for certain areas of the northeast and the south, mixing boys and girls in the same classroom was normative as the common school evolved. With the growth of the high school after the Civil War, such coeducation usually continued on into these upper grades. In Chicago in 1856 an ordinance was passed establishing the first high school in the new city. It was coeducational. In this,

Chicago was more even-handed and liberal toward girls than the cities with separate high schools. Chicago, not Boston or Philadelphia, was following the standard pattern of gender practice in high schools. By mid-century coeducation was becoming the norm.<sup>35</sup>

With the coming of the Progressive Era, some questions as to the advisability of coeducation began to be heard. One of the causes of this reappraisal was what came to be called the

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<sup>34</sup> Anonymous, "Confessions of Two School Superintendents," Atlantic Monthly, 84 (Nov. 1902), 646.

<sup>35</sup> David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot, Learning Together: A History of Coeducation in American Schools (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990) 135.



"boy question": boys were dropping out of school in far greater numbers than were girls, and girls frequently did better academic work than did boys. Among the solutions proposed for dealing with these "problems" (not only was the high drop out rate a problem, but to many educators "public schools must be defective if girls did better than boys")<sup>36</sup> were differentiated education--i.e., manual training for boys, domestic science for girls--and segregated schools. In Chicago, which had drop-out problems comparable to most other urban areas, this issue was another which was to trouble the Dunne Board of Education.

#### Women Teachers and Unionization

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the relationship between classroom teacher and superintendent had become a very hierarchical one. Tyack saw this as a reflection of the male chauvinism of society as a whole at this time. "The system required subordination; women were generally subordinate to men; the employment of women as teachers thus augmented the authority of the largely male leadership." He even argued that the bias against married women as teachers resulted from this chauvinism, since married teachers were less likely to be "acquiescent."<sup>37</sup> One of the most serious outcomes of an educational hierarchy which

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>37</sup> Tyack, One Best System, 60.

largely placed men as principals and teachers in secondary schools, with women heavily concentrated in the elementary grades, was the resulting salary differential. According to Tyack, "Men not only had a disproportionate share of the higher-paying and high-status jobs, but they were also commonly paid more than women for doing the same work."<sup>38</sup>

While many educational writers of the period decried the "feminization" of teaching at the elementary school level, the Bulletin of the Chicago Teachers' Federation took the position that the relationship of women to the school was "vital and natural," that the evils of "feminization" lay in the exploitation of women teachers.

. . . the women in our schools are being forced to work under conditions which develop their weaker traits, while the balancing powers are atrophied: that is to say, where women work mechanically, under minute directions, with no opportunity for advancement . . . .

The "feminizing" tendency works in two ways. The woman teacher is "feminized"--I use the word for convenience, but under protest--to a point at which she is no longer a complete human being, and the atmosphere created is such that no man who is not equally underdeveloped finds it congenial.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the differentials between men and women in both the areas of salary and of authority gave impetus to the growing militancy on the part of teachers which led to the stirrings of union organization. By the turn of the century the union

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 62.

<sup>39</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 5, No. 30, (September 7, 1906), 1.

movement had attained a certain legitimacy, if not popularity, with middle class progressives. According to Richard Hofstadter

To realize the importance of the change in the United States itself, one need only think of the climate of opinion in which the Pullman strike and the Homestead strike were fought out and compare it with the atmosphere in which labor organization has taken place since the Progressive era. There has of course been violence and bloodshed, but in the twentieth century a massive labor movement has been built with far less cost in these respects than it cost the American working class merely to man the machines of American industry in the period from 1865 to 1900.<sup>40</sup>

Eric Goldman put it more simply.

In the more genial atmosphere of the early 1900's, low-status groups and occupations were finding a greater acceptance. When Samuel Gompers turned to labor organizing in the Seventies, his activities brought virtual ostracism to his family; thirty years later, vaudevillians were genially patting their bellies as they referred to "my Sam Gompers."<sup>41</sup>

This moderation of feeling was, of course, only relative. In Chicago, where the Haymarket Riot was still a part of the living memory of most adults, and where bitter strikes on the part of stockyards workers and of teamsters marked the first decade of the twentieth century, there was still a great deal of opposition to the labor movement, much of it fueled by the strong pro-business orientation of the Chicago Tribune and other newspapers. John Beck argues that the Tribune's stance was due in large part to self interest.

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<sup>40</sup> Hofstadter, Age of Reform, 244.

<sup>41</sup> Goldman, Rendezvous with Destiny, 56.

Some variation was manifested in the Tribune's editorial policy toward organized labor during the period under consideration in this study [1890-1920], but the prevailing attitude has been hostile toward any form of unionism, including that of teachers. . . . the Tribune's stand in local politics was said to be almost wholly determined by two things: Chicago's "rugged individualists" of the Commercial Club and its ninety-nine year lease of the Chicago School Board land at the corner of Dearborn and Madison Streets.<sup>42</sup>

The activities of the Teachers' Federation and its affiliation with the Chicago Federation of Labor, and the appropriateness of teachers belonging to a union at all, were to become major points of contention during much of the early decades of the century and the CTF played a key role in the political struggles that were to mark the two years of Edward Dunne's mayoralty. In her 1976 thesis subtitled The Struggle for Power in Urban School Systems, Cherry Collins argues that the conflict between the two newly emergent concepts--the Progressive/ efficiency-minded/business-oriented group with its focus on a strong superintendent and the more militant group coalescing around the demands of the grade school teachers--was exemplified in the Chicago school system. To Collins, school boards and superintendents of the Progressive period demonstrated "the arrogant paternalism of a class accustomed to rule [who] thought that they alone could solve

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<sup>42</sup> John Matthew Beck, "Chicago Newspapers and the Public Schools, 1890-1920," (University of Chicago, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, 1953), 20-21.

the city's problems."<sup>43</sup> Collins ascribes the beginnings of Progressive reform efforts in the Chicago schools to William Rainey Harper. In 1898 Mayor Harrison appointed Harper as chair of a commission of inquiry into the Chicago school system. The commission's report, issued in January of 1899, proposed a reduction in the size of the board from twenty-one to eleven members and a dual administrative structure in which the superintendent and the business manager had equal authority. While warmly endorsed by such educational leaders as Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University, the Harper report was not accepted by the legislature. However, the Civic Federation soon established its own committee to propose changes in the school system, and a new, progressive-minded superintendent, Edwin G. Cooley, was appointed in 1900 and promptly embarked on a program to "press the Board to make, on its own initiative, changes consistent with Progressivism."<sup>44</sup> In Chicago, during the years 1905-1907, these strands of thought and activity--political, educational, cultural, journalistic--converged during the two-year mayoralty of Democrat Edward Dunne. Dunne's role in Chicago history has been overshadowed by other mayors: the Harrisons, father and son, the first of the two political dynasties which

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<sup>43</sup> Collins, Cherry W. "Schoolmen, Schoolma'ams and School Boards: The Struggle for Power in Urban School Systems in the Progressive Era," (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Harvard University, 1976), 73.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 111.

have dominated Chicago politics; "Big Bill" Thompson, one of the more controversial of Chicago's many colorful political personages; Anton Cermak, the ethnic "boss" who was assassinated while sharing a political platform with FDR; and of course, the Richard Daleys. But Dunne was a remarkable individual in his own right, going on to be elected Governor of Illinois less than a decade after being defeated in his bid for re-election as mayor--the only Chicago mayor to have achieved this statewide eminence. In 1905, Dunne was essentially a "one issue" candidate whose campaign focussed on the traction question and whose term of office was largely a crusade for the municipal ownership of public transportation.

But Dunne was also concerned about the problems of the public school system, and in an effort to resolve some of them he put together a Board of Education which included some remarkable personalities who endeavored to make substantial changes in the operation of the schools, particularly in the role of the elementary school teachers. In so doing, the Board became the target for much of the daily press and one of the major issues in the election of 1907 in which Dunne lost his seat to Republican Fred Busse. The membership of the Dunne Board of Education, the issues with which it dealt and the debates in which it engaged reveal a microcosm of Progressive themes: in two short years it dealt with questions of pull and desegregation, of the role of the teacher and of teacher unionization, of the composition of the Board and of

its proper role in relation to the superintendent. The issues were seldom clear cut. While Superintendent Cooley and the faction of Chicago press and public which supported a strong business-oriented board are clearly representative of Tyack's "administrative progressives," the opposition, in the person of many of Dunne's appointees to the Board and in the membership of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, espoused many ideas which are, with the benefit of today's hindsight, clearly the "progressive" ones. It is the story of that Board of Education, and the individuals who comprised it, that is the subject of this paper.

## CHAPTER 1

### SETTING THE STAGE: CHICAGO IN 1905

One of the first acts of Edward Dunne after his 1905 election as Mayor of Chicago was his appointment of seven new members to the Chicago Board of Education. Several of these members, together with additional Dunne appointees in 1906, would for a short time change the nature of that Board. Instead of a Board dominated by businessmen who subscribed wholeheartedly to the principles of administrative progressivism, as expounded by Chicago Superintendent of Schools Edwin Cooley, the Dunne Board was to include women, settlement house workers, socialists and other members ready to challenge many of those assumptions. It would introduce ideas frequently at odds with the progressive beliefs of the day--ideas which, with the benefit of hindsight, mesh closely with a more contemporary definition of progressivism. The Dunne Board was short-lived, and many of its reforms proved temporary, but it provided an exciting and innovative hiatus in the history of Chicago schools and can serve as a case study for one form of progressive school reform.

#### Dunne's Election

Chicago's mayoral election of 1905, in which Democrat



Edward F. Dunne defeated Republican John Harlan, was something of an anomaly in a city which had for decades been dominated by the Harrison family. Democrat Carter H. Harrison was first elected mayor in 1879 and re-elected in 1881, 1883 and 1885. Unseated in 1887 by reform Republican John Roche, who was followed by Dewitt Cregier in 1889 and 1891, Harrison returned to the mayoralty in 1893, the year of the World's Columbian Exposition. He held office for less than a year before he was assassinated by a disappointed office seeker, Patrick Prendergast.<sup>1</sup> Democrat John Hopkins was elected in December to serve the remainder of Harrison's term, followed by former alderman George Swift in 1895, but by 1897 Harrison's son Carter II ("Young Carter") was ready to enter the political arena. While many of the senior Harrison's former supporters welcomed Carter II into the party's councils, some, such as John Hopkins and A. S. Trude, considered him a "meddlesome dilettant."<sup>2</sup> Harrison won easily, and was re-elected for three more terms in 1899, 1901 and 1903.<sup>3</sup> Thus in the quarter century between 1879 and Dunne's election in 1905, the Harrison family had held the Mayor's seat for 17 of 26 years, and Carter II was to return for another (four-year) term in

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<sup>1</sup> Bessie L. Pierce, A History of Chicago Vol, III. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1957), 378 and 539.

<sup>2</sup> Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan, Bosses in Lusty Chicago (Bloomington; Indiana University Press, 1943), 160.

<sup>3</sup> Joan Marie Raymond, "The Evolution of the Chicago Public School Superintendency" unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (Northwestern University, 1967), 79.

1911.

In 1905 Carter Harrison had been under fire for his lack of progress in resolving the city's traction problems, and he decided not to run again for the Mayor's position. After a period of uncertainty, the leadership of the Democratic Party turned to Edward F. Dunne as their candidate. Dunne had been active in state politics since the 1890s, and was, according to his biographer Richard Morton, a firm supporter of Governor John Altgeld, one of the leading Progressives of his time. Altgeld had served as governor from 1893-97 and had incurred the wrath of Chicago's business community when he opposed President Grover Cleveland's use of federal troops to quell the Pullman strike in 1894. He had also made himself unpopular by his pardon in 1893 of the three remaining anarchists who had been sentenced to life imprisonment as a result of the Haymarket Riots.<sup>4</sup>

[Dunne] openly admired Altgeld's sympathy for labor and his antipathy to powerful business combinations. As Governor, Dunne was later to consciously emulate Altgeld. . . . However, Dunne's loyalty to Altgeld did not extend to backing the former governor's independent candidacy for mayor of Chicago in 1899. Edward Dunne was always a firm believer in the virtues of party loyalty.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Emmett Dedmon, Fabulous Chicago: A Great City's History and People (New York: Atheneum, 1981) 242-4. T. H. Watkins, Righteous Pilgrim (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1990) 68.

<sup>5</sup> Richard Allen Morton, Justice and Humanity: The Politics of Edward F. Dunne unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (University of Illinois-Urbana, 1988), 12.

In urban politics, Dunne's position was a pragmatic one.

(His group of reformers) was less concerned with municipal corruption than it was with returning the city government to the people through the elimination, especially in the area of public utilities, of the influence of predatory business interests. On the other hand, this group had little use for crusades against private vice.<sup>6</sup>

The issue which brought Edward Dunne into the 1905 race for mayor was municipal ownership of traction facilities. Municipal ownership (M. O., as it was commonly called) was yet another manifestation of the Progressive spirit in American political life.

Municipal ownership . . . was a rallying cry for the disaffected who hoped to bring about urban utopia by taking over the streetcar lines. . . . To help the people, the Progressives knew, it was necessary to tinker with the system. Reform was especially needed in urban mass transit--traction as it was known at the turn of the century. The traction companies served a public purpose, yet they were in business for private profit. They would not improve service or cut fares unless compelled to--they had demonstrated an inclination to do just the opposite. Therefore, the government must step in, seize the lines, and run them for the public good.

But all Progressives did not agree on Municipal Ownership. Some thought it was too close to socialism. . . . Reform included the eradication of political corruption and the extension of popular democracy, all Progressives acknowledged. Whether it meant taking over private property to promote public welfare, many were unsure.<sup>7</sup>

Traction, however, was the central issue of Dunne's term of office, just as it had been central for his predecessors,

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>7</sup> John R. Schmidt, The Mayor Who Cleaned Up Chicago (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1989), 35.

and an understanding of this question is critical in understanding the dynamics of the controversies underlying the "Dunne Board of Education." The first street railway franchise was granted in 1858, and from that time on a state of perpetual warfare existed between the traction companies and the City Council; the former regularly sought to extend both the geographic area and the length of their franchises while the latter, usually prodded by a citizenry irate at poor service and high charges, sought to limit the power of the traction companies, either by legislation or through the courts.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of traction, of course, lay in money: it represented wealth for shareholders, "boodle" for aldermen, and an irritating day-to-day outlay for most of Chicago's citizens. For many years the key player in traction issues was Charles Tyson Yerkes, the prototypical robber baron whose career served as the model for Theodore Dreiser's The Titan. Yerkes came to Chicago in 1882 and by 1886 had acquired the majority interest in the North Chicago City Railway Company which began his rise to fortune. Other enterprising Chicagoans who found in traction the way to rapidly expand their fortunes included such names as Marshall Field, Cyrus

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<sup>8</sup> Edward R. Kantowicz, Edward R. "Carter Harrison, II," in Paul M. Green and Melvin Holli, The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 25.

McCormick and Samuel Insull.<sup>9</sup> The "Gray Wolves" of Chicago's City Council were still more creative in devising ways to profit from public transit. Lloyd Wendt and Herman Kogan illustrate this process with a description of the activities of 19th Ward alderman Johnny Powers, better known as Johnny de Pow.

It was Powers who kept the boodlers in line and prevented them from selling out to two or more opposing interests simultaneously. He devised various boodling refinements, one of them a system of granting a franchise a street block at a time so that the syndicates desiring such measures should ever be at the aldermen's mercy. He also worked out a plan of selling rights to a street not once but many times. . . Further, a company might obtain surface rights to a street at an exorbitant price only to find that the air rights above had been sold to an elevated line and the earth beneath transferred to a gas, electric, or tunnel firm. Powers [also] saw to it that Yerkes and his other benefactors received many favors.<sup>10</sup>

"Young Carter" Harrison's election as mayor in 1897 brought the city's transit problems to the forefront. The struggle centered first around the Humphrey bills presently before the Illinois legislature, three pieces of legislation initiated by a state senator friendly to Yerkes. The bills restricted Chicago's home rule powers by creating a state commission empowered to grant street franchises in every city in the state, reduced the compensation by one-half of one percent and, most important, set compensation on the basis of gross earnings instead of gross receipts, which would have

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<sup>9</sup> Pierce, History of Chicago, 220.

<sup>10</sup> Wendt and Kogan, Bosses in Lusty Chicago, 39.

reduced the city's revenues by millions of dollars. These bills were opposed by both reformers and boodlers: the former because they saw the manipulation of the franchise as robbery on the part of Yerkes and the other traction magnates, the latter because they saw their opportunities for graft disappearing. The Humphrey bills were defeated, but another legislator friendly to Yerkes, Charles Allen, introduced a bill authorizing city councils to grant fifty-year franchises. (Wendt and Kogan, in discussing Yerkes' ability to find friendly legislators in Springfield, observe that "It has always been a strange anomaly of Illinois politics that a legislator can be bought cheaper than an alderman."<sup>11</sup>) This bill, known as the Allen Law, passed and the Chicago City Council became the next battleground.<sup>12</sup>

In 1898 Yerkes had a fifty-year franchise bill introduced before the Council. Carter Harrison led the opposition, supported by the newspapers (the Tribune estimated that Chicago would lose \$150 million in revenues if the ordinance passed) and by aldermen who saw the long-term franchise as the end of their opportunities. "They decided to avoid Yerkes's big boodle and stick to their protected vice rackets."<sup>13</sup> The bill was defeated by the Council and a year later the Allen

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 172.

<sup>12</sup> For discussion of this issue, see Kantowicz in The Mayors, Pierce, History of Chicago, Wendt and Kogan, Bosses in Lusty Chicago.

<sup>13</sup> Kantowicz, in The Mayors, 26.

Bill was repealed. Harrison had successfully identified himself with the issue of traction reform and further franchise extension was halted until 1903 when the legislature passed the Mueller Law, which authorized municipalities to own and operate street railways.<sup>14</sup>

The Mueller Law was praised by many Chicago leaders as a pragmatic reform measure. Its genesis lay in a 1902 non-binding advisory proposition in favor of municipal ownership, which was overwhelmingly endorsed by the voters; this evidence of voter sentiment led to "an active movement . . . among powerful interests within the city for a municipal ownership law."<sup>15</sup> Walter Fisher, the secretary of the Municipal Voters League, defended the measure to the conservative leadership of the city as a tool for bargaining with the traction companies. He argued that if the city's leadership did not use the Mueller Law to get better terms from the traction companies, frustration over poor service would eventually lead to the "leadership of demagogues."<sup>16</sup> The Mueller Law permitted the city to buy street railways if a majority of voters approved at a special referendum. It was the passage of this law which set the stage for the traction debate which, in 1905,

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<sup>14</sup> For discussion of this issue see Kantowicz, in The Mayors, Wendt and Kogan, Bosses in Lusty Chicago.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Barrett, The Automobile and Urban Transit: The Formation of Public Policy in Chicago, 1900-1930 (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), 31.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

made Edward Dunne the Democratic candidate for Mayor of Chicago. While both Harrison and Dunne were identified with the move toward municipal ownership, Dunne had criticized Harrison for moving too slowly on the issue and had come out strongly for immediate municipal ownership. In large part because of Dunne's criticism of the slow pace of the municipal ownership movement, Harrison decided not to seek re-election in 1905. Supported by the newly formed, reform-based Municipal Ownership League, and encouraged by the warm endorsement of respected Judge Murray Tuley, Dunne ran on a platform which proposed to end all negotiations with the traction companies, defeat a proposed ninety-nine year franchise extension, and turn the operation of public transit over to the city.

Dunne was elected mayor on April 4, 1905, in a four-way race. He received over 24,000 more votes than his principal opponent, Republican John Maynard Harlan, and 671 more votes than the combined total of all three of the other candidates (the other two were a socialist and a prohibitionist). Just as editorial writers of a later date would credit the breakdown of mass transit during a record-setting snowfall as the precipitating factor in the election of Chicago's first woman mayor, most newspapers attributed Dunne's victory to public anger at poor streetcar services.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Dunne's

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<sup>17</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago Record-Herald, Chicago Daily News. April 5, 1905.



platform had promised "municipal ownership before the snow flies"<sup>18</sup> and Dunne's victory speech, which dealt almost entirely with his intention to make municipal ownership the top priority of his administration, reinforced this determination.<sup>19</sup>

Louis Post's The Public, frequently described as the leading single-tax journal in the country, had strongly supported immediate municipal ownership, known to its supporters as I.M.O., and was elated at the election results, pointing out that 152,434 persons had voted in the affirmative on the Mueller Law and only 30,104 in the negative--a plurality of 122,330. Post observed that:

This result enables the city to proceed at any time to arrange for the establishment and operation of its own street-car system, or for their establishment and leasing, as may be preferred. Full power over the matter is now vested in the city; subject, of course, to such obstacles of vested rights and financial difficulties as may be encountered.<sup>20</sup>

Dunne's victory attracted national attention from enthusiasts for traction reform. An editorial in the Economist spoke in glowing terms of Dunne's election, but was less sanguine than Post about the difficulties of implementation. It warned that reform would not be easy.

The ready acquiescence of Chicago in the election

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<sup>18</sup> Barrett, Automobile and Urban Transit, 33.

<sup>19</sup> Chicago Tribune, April 5, 1905, 2.

<sup>20</sup> The Public. Vol. 7, April 7, 1905, 7.

of Judge Dunne as mayor . . . is a remarkable phenomenon in the history of this city . . . Not so remarkable when one remembers the agitation that has been going on here for many years past in favor of municipal ownership of the street railroads. . . almost any change from the present condition is desirable . . . . It is very refreshing to have a man with a purpose in the lead. [Author goes on to say the city should try the experiment but it will not be easy since, unlike European cities, this country has had no successful experience with municipal ownership.] If Judge Dunne and his associates can succeed in spite of all present indications, he will be entitled to more glory than has been achieved by any dozen mayors Chicago has ever had.<sup>21</sup>

Even Chicago's Catholic newspaper, the New World, which typically concentrated on matters of religion and ignored most of the larger political issues of the day, saw Dunne's election as an "overwhelming" endorsement by the voters of Dunne's municipal ownership position.<sup>22</sup> The Economist's prediction turned out to be accurate in one respect: the municipal ownership experiment was not an easy one in Chicago. The problems arising from this issue were to do much toward making Dunne a one-term mayor of Chicago.

#### The Teamsters' Strike

Before he could take any action on transit problems, the early weeks of Dunne's administration were marred by a city-wide teamsters' strike which broke out immediately after the

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<sup>21</sup> "Chicago's New Regime. Editorial. Economist 33, (April 15, 1905), 574.

<sup>22</sup> "Mayor-Elect Dunne," New World. XIII, No. 32, (April 8, 1905), 16.

election. The strike arose after a lockout, by the employers, of teamsters who had participated in an earlier garment workers' strike. It began with the Montgomery Ward store, but soon spread to all the other State Street retailers and then to coal haulers and other teamsters. Dunne's first public response was in support of the teamsters; he noted that they were willing to negotiate while the employers were not. Dunne appointed two citizens' committees to try to resolve the dispute. The first, which included settlement house leader Jane Addams, physician Cornelia De Bey, (both soon to be appointed by Dunne to the Chicago Board of Education) and three religious leaders, proved totally unsuccessful,<sup>23</sup> and on May 5 Dunne tried another blue ribbon panel, this one headed by prominent reformer Graham Taylor. This committee was unsuccessful largely because it had no power to compel testimony but also because attorneys for the Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) refused to offer testimony except in public session.<sup>24</sup>

The strike continued for several weeks. Louis Post's Public posited a conspiracy theory, arguing that the strike

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<sup>23</sup> An interesting example of the sexism implicit in the journalism of the day is found in the newspaper stories of the appointment of this committee. The Chicago Daily Tribune of Monday, May 1, 1905, has a photograph of its five members: Miss Jane Addams, Dr. Cornelia De Bey, Bishop Anderson, Mr. Jenkin Lloyd-Jones and Rabbi Emil C. Hirsch. The headline accompanying the photograph reads "The Strike 'Peace Commission' and the Men (emphasis mine) Who Keep the Peace."

<sup>24</sup> The Public, VIII, (1905-06), 40 and 101.

had been instigated by "outsiders" to discredit Dunne and thus thwart his traction policy.<sup>25</sup> Dunne's own largely autobiographical book, Illinois, the Heart of the Nation, echoed this suspicion, as does Richard Morton, who argues that "if [this] interpretation of the motives behind the strike was correct, the strike goes far in explaining Dunne's difficulty in achieving his traction goals."<sup>26</sup> However, the "mainstream" Chicago newspapers focussed on the strike itself, detailing incidents of violence between strikers and scabs, policemen, and even occasional bystanders. And, in fact, violence did escalate, particularly when the Employers Teaming Company began to import black strike breakers. "This combination of race and working class resentment was the classic pattern for the race riots of the period."<sup>27</sup> As early as April 24 the teamsters announced their readiness to call off the strike if all strikers were rehired, but the Employers Association refused. ". . .the Teamsters called for total war. Now, instead of about 250 strikers, there were 2,600 and the streets of Chicago became a battleground."<sup>28</sup> Dunne was now in an unenviable position.

On one hand, his instinctive sympathies were for labor. Moreover, the type of laboring men now

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>26</sup> Edward F. Dunne, Illinois: the Heart of the Nation. (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1933). Also, Morton, 39.

<sup>27</sup> Morton, Justice and Humanity, 36.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 36.

striking had been largely responsible for his election. On the other hand, Dunne was a man of law and reason, and he could not avoid being appalled by the violence on the streets. Even more compelling was the growing spectre of federal intervention. . . . Neither Mayor Dunne nor Governor Charles Deneen wished to repeat the experience of the Pullman strike.<sup>29</sup>

By June 3 a Cook County grand jury had brought indictments against several labor leaders involved in the strike, including the president of the Teamsters' Union. The indictment criticized Dunne for his failure to secure law and order. Dunne in his turn responded that the police had given the maximum possible protection and that actual violence was far less than might have been expected in the circumstances. He criticized the composition of the grand jury as being made up solely of employers, and reiterated his offer to mediate the strike. In an editorial written on the same day, the Catholic New World supported Dunne's position. Acknowledging that the Chicago press was usually "sane and . . . courteous," the paper contended that in this instance some journals had consistently exaggerated conditions in calling for the intervention of federal troops, "apparently for the purpose of discrediting the city and county officials," arguing that Dunne and Police Chief Shippy were not doing their duty, in spite of the fact that "[delivery] wagons are moving everywhere accompanied by small cohorts of policemen and

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 37.

deputy sheriffs."<sup>30</sup>

One aspect of the strike that caused widespread criticism was a rash of "sympathy strikes" involving public school pupils. Apparently inspired by the example of fathers and older brothers who were involved in the strike, schoolchildren initiated walk-outs against schools which accepted delivery of coal by non-union drivers. While this happened at only a few schools, the newspapers were predictably appalled at the inappropriate behavior of the children, and used both news stories and editorials to draw a connection between the behavior of the children and the fact that many teachers were members of the Teachers' Federation. They argued that if teachers were themselves members of labor unions, they would necessarily permit themselves to be swayed by a pro-union bias and would in turn both pass this bias on to the children and even provide support for the youthful activists.

One school official declared that he believed the fact that the school teachers themselves belonged to a labor union did much to foster the strike spirit in the pupils. "I do not believe the unionized teachers did much to prevent the strike, to say the least," he said.<sup>31</sup>

Another trustee argued that "The bare fact that the teachers are members of a labor union is a strong argument that they

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<sup>30</sup> "The Press and the Strike," New World, 13, No. 40, 3.

<sup>31</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago Record-Herald, Chicago Daily News, various dates in May 1905. Quote from unidentified official in "Law to Punish School Strikers," Chicago Tribune, May 16, 1905, 2.

would not take drastic steps to put down a school strike."<sup>32</sup>

One Board member, the Rev. Rufus White, introduced a resolution calling for an investigation of the alleged connection between the Teachers' Federation and the school strikes. The motion was defeated on the grounds that it was inappropriate: if there was grounds for complaint against specific teachers or principals, such charges should be made before the School Management Committee. George Thompson, the Harrison appointee who represented organized labor, criticized White's motion, saying, "if the teachers' union is to be investigated, the principals' union, the engineers' union, and the janitors' union should be investigated as well."<sup>33</sup>

The Board of Education took quick action to end the pupil strikes and send the ringleaders to juvenile court. A special task force of truant officers and policemen was assigned and parents who kept their children out of school were to be arrested and tried.<sup>34</sup> Jane Addams and Cornelia De Bey, members of the first of Dunne's citizens' committees, publicly voiced their support of the Board's action. Said Addams, "It

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<sup>32</sup> "Seeks Origin of School Strikes," Chicago Tribune, May 24, 1905, 6.

<sup>33</sup> "Deny Fear of Teachers," Chicago Tribune, May 26, 1905, 3.

<sup>34</sup> "Law to Punish School Strikers," Chicago Tribune, May 5, 1905, 2.

is going rather far to call the condition of the schools 'strikes,' but they were a reflection of an unfortunate form of the disorder at large in the community." De Bey added that "The greater part of organized labor, I believe, would indorse heartily the position of the board."<sup>35</sup> Catherine Goggin of the Teachers' Federation also expressed her support for the Board and her opposition to the childrens' activities. The Board did, however, agree to halt deliveries of "nonunion" coal to the schools, on the theory that an "ounce of prevention" would help to maintain peace in the schools until the "ardor of the school children" had cooled.<sup>36</sup>

The teamsters' strike was ultimately resolved by the return to work of the strikers, with no concessions granted by the employers. Employers had said that they would not retaliate against workers who had participated in the strike, but even this agreement was violated.

The strike lingered until July 20 when the Teamsters gave up. No concessions were made, few of the strikers were reinstated, and those who were could not wear their union buttons on the job. In all the strike lasted 105 days and cost the city over \$500,000 in extra police protection. More importantly, there were 21 people killed and 415 injured.<sup>37</sup>

John Buenker argues that the political effects of the

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<sup>35</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, May 22, 1905, 14.

<sup>36</sup> "Stop Coal to End Strike," Chicago Tribune, May 17, 1905, 2.

<sup>37</sup> Morton, 38.



strike damaged Dunne in two ways. Because the union was forced to capitulate, and actually wound up in a weaker position than they had previously held, Dunne's base of labor support was eroded. On the other hand, "his handling of the matter gave credence to conservative charges that he was both a prolabor radical and an incompetent chief executive."<sup>38</sup>

### The Teachers' Federation

One of Dunne's strongest allies, both in his election campaign and subsequently in his struggles for Immediate Municipal Ownership, was the Chicago Teachers' Federation (CTF). Dunne first earned the support of the Federation while serving as judge of the circuit court of Cook County, when he ruled in their favor in the "teachers' tax fight." Because the ramifications of this case extended throughout Dunne's term of office, and do much to explain the tensions that existed among the Mayor, the teachers, and the Board of Education, it is important to summarize its background here.

Like the salaries of other teachers across the country, the salaries of Chicago teachers had always been low. In 1898, the Board of Education had voted modest increases in the teachers' pay scale. The first installment had been given in 1898; the second, of fifty dollars, was due in 1899, but because of lack of funds it was never paid. By the end of

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<sup>38</sup> John D. Bunker, "Edward F. Dunne: The Limits of Municipal Reform," in Paul M. Green and Melvin Holli, (eds.) The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987) 42.

1899 the teachers came to realize that not only would the 1899 and 1900 installments not be given, the raise already given in 1898 was going to be rescinded and the schools closed for two weeks, thus reducing the teachers' salaries still further. One of the CTF members, Margaret Haley, was to spearhead the teachers' fight against these reductions. As she describes in her autobiography, Battleground, Miss Haley somewhat accidentally became aware of the fact that the Illinois State Board of Equalization was allowing several Chicago corporations to escape paying taxes on much of their property. Haley's research into the question showed, among other things, that major traction and public utility companies in Chicago did not even appear on the list of those corporations paying taxes. She then went to the president of the Board of Education, Graham Harris, and requested a year's leave of absence for herself and another teacher, Catherine Goggin, to organize a fight to compel these corporations to pay appropriate taxes. Harris agreed to the leave, with the two women to continue to receive their normal teacher's salary--\$800 a year for Goggin, \$825 for Haley.<sup>39</sup>

Haley and the CTF decided to concentrate on extracting taxes from the public utilities and traction companies rather

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<sup>39</sup> Margaret Haley, Battleground: The Autobiography of Margaret A. Haley Robert L. Reid (ed.) (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), Chapter III. For a fuller account of this issue, see also Joan K. Smith, Ella Flagg Young, Portrait of a Leader, and Joan K. Smith, "Progressivism and the Teachers' Union" in Educational Studies, 7, Spring 1976, pp. 44-61.

than from all "tax dodgers" since, unlike manufacturers and other corporations, the former could not simply move out of the state to avoid paying taxes. Haley's researches disclosed that five companies alone (telephone, gas, electric and two street railways), were avoiding taxes in excess of two million dollars annually. A two-pronged campaign consisting of extensive public airing of the facts on the "tax dodgers" before the Board of Education, the City Council, the Mayor and the citizens combined with litigation at various levels finally resulted in the tax suit being decided in favor of the CTF, a decision that was upheld by the Illinois Supreme Court in 1901. The corporations responded by obtaining an injunction, upheld by Judge Peter Grosscup, who agreed that while their first assessment had been too low, the reassessment by the State Board of Equalization was too high. Finally, in 1902, an amount just under \$600,000 in back taxes was paid, going in part to the City and in part to the Board of Education.<sup>40</sup>

But the teachers' struggle was not over yet. While the City used its share of the back taxes to restore pay cuts which had been given to police and firemen, the Board of Education decided that its share of the money would go toward the physical maintenance of school properties; the teachers' pay cuts were not to be restored. Catherine Goggin, on behalf of the CTF, again filed suit, charging that the Board owed a

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<sup>40</sup> Haley, Battleground, Chapter 3.

legitimate debt of back salaries to the teachers and thus was bound to use the \$240,000 which was their share of the back taxes for this purpose. This case was heard on August 22, 1904, by the then-Judge Edward Dunne. An excerpt from Dunne's opinion illustrates why his subsequent mayoral candidacy was so enthusiastically endorsed by the teachers--and opposed by much of the business leadership of the city.

The contention of counsel for the Board of Education is that each year the Board employs thousands of intelligent men and women for ten months at a time, when their salaries were fixed for only four months, and that at the expiration of said four months the employing Board had the right to compel the teachers to work for the remaining six months for any salary that the Board might arbitrarily offer them, and that these thousands of intelligent men and women accepted employment upon these remarkable and one-sided terms. The facts must be unmistakably clear to warrant a court of equity in sustaining such a contention and this court cannot find the facts that would enable it to sustain the contention.<sup>41</sup>

Although the final settlement of this issue did not occur until nearly a year after Dunne's election, the lines had been drawn--with Dunne and the CTF on the same side.

During his two years as Mayor, Dunne had the opportunity to appoint fifteen men and women to the Chicago Board of Education. Several of his appointees were to take positions sympathetic to the aims of the Teachers' Federation and which would frequently run counter to existing theories about progressive, business-like administration of the public school

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<sup>41</sup> Anita McCormick Blaine, Collected Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Folder B1.

system. The public debates generated by some of the actions of the "Dunne Board of Education" would ultimately contribute to his downfall, but some of the positions which they took would, in the long run, not only be adopted but would, in contemporary terms, be considered highly progressive for their time.

## CHAPTER 2

### THE FIRST DUNNE APPOINTEES TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

In 1905, when Edward Dunne was elected Mayor of Chicago, the Chicago Board of Education consisted of twenty-one members, appointed to serve terms of three years, on a staggered schedule which saw seven new members appointed each year. New appointments were normally made at the close of the school year and officially joined the Board at its first meeting in July. Thus the appointment of seven new members was a task which confronted Mayor Dunne very shortly after his April election.

As constituted in the spring of 1905, the Board consisted of twenty men and one woman appointed by former Mayor Harrison. A brief examination of the backgrounds of some of these individuals shows that they typically fell into one of two categories: they were members of the city's business leadership or they represented a particular religious or ethnic constituency. Of these two categories, the business orientation was dominant. The Board's President was Clayton Mark, a vice-president of the National Malleable Castings Company. Mark's biography as summarized in The Book of Chicagoans is typical of many business leaders of the period. Marks was born in the east (Pennsylvania) and came to Chicago

at age 14. He completed high school, entered the offices of the Chicago Malleable Iron Co. (later the National Malleable Castings Co.) and worked up from a subordinate position to become director at age 36 and second vice president by age 44. He was also a director of Interstate Foundry Co. and Mutual Fire Insurance Co. and president of his own company, Mark Manufacturing, which had plants in Chicago and Ohio. A member of the Board of Education from 1896 to 1905, he served three terms as its president. Mark was a Republican, a Mason, and a member of several clubs, including the Union League and the Merchants.<sup>1</sup>

Mark's biography is of interest because it conforms so closely to the prototypical "reform" school board member as described by Tyack and by Button and Provenzano in the Preface to this dissertation. Button and Provenzano talk about board members increasingly being drawn from the ranks of businessmen who sought to bring modern business methods to the operation of the schools; Tyack referred to the tendency toward increasing representation by "elites" on school boards. And like Mark, several of the remaining members of the 1904-05 Board followed the same pattern. There was Daniel Cameron, a "stationer, printer and blank book manufacturer," who grew up in New York, clerked for a general merchant and moved up to a partnership in the company, sold out and came to Chicago where

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<sup>1</sup> John W. Leonard, (ed.) The Book of Chicagoans: A Biographical Dictionary of Leading Living Men of Chicago (Chicago: A. N. Marquis & Company, 1905).

he established Cameron, Amberg & Co. Cameron served 16 years on the Board and two terms as its president. Edward Tilden, also a native New Yorker, was a banker and packing house executive who began as a clerk and became president of Libby, McNeill & Libby, packers, as well as a vice president and/or director of several other packing companies, and served as the executor of the Swift family estate. He was first appointed to the Board in 1890. Other businessmen/board members included Charles Plamondon (president of his family-owned manufacturing company), John Fetzer (traction official, banker, real estate operator and manager of the real estate and financial interests of the Cyrus Hall McCormick estate), George Duddleston (merchant), Charles Sethness (manufacturer, secretary of Sethness Company), Edwin Rowland (manager of Chicago branch of B. F. Goodrich), Thomas Fitzgerald (bank cashier), Michael Shields (candy manufacturer), John J. Hayes (officer of a brass foundry firm) and George Claussenius (banker, steamship agent and officer of H. Claussenius and Sons). The biographical entries of each of these men show a common theme of membership in the leading men's clubs, service as officer or director of several large corporations, membership in a mainline Protestant church. Political affiliation seemed less important; of those who listed it Mark, Rowland and Plamondon were Republicans, Cameron, Duddleston, Hayes and Tilden Democrats. But all showed the same pattern: high school education, a first job (sometimes in



a family-owned firm) and rapid movement up what would now be called the "corporate ladder," and participation in community affairs.

One of the characteristics of society in the early part of the twentieth century was the interlocking nature of the relationships among its business and social leadership. Members of the Board of Education typified this pattern; they belonged to the same clubs (Chicago Athletic, Commercial, Union League, University, Masons) attended the same churches ("mainstream" Protestant denominations), and were involved in various aspects of civic service. In addition to the Chicago Board of Education, some of the members of the 1904-05 (pre-Dunne) Board served on the Cook County Board of Education and the Public Library Board, were active in local politics (Duddleston was alderman of the 11th Ward from 1897-1901 and was later made Bridewell [prison] Commissioner, Shields was a Commissioner of the Lincoln Park District and Hayes was a member of the Democratic Central Committee of Cook County) and served as trustees of local churches.<sup>2</sup>

Other members of the 1904-05 Board were appointed because of ethnic, professional or religious considerations. While this practice was typical of Chicago politics, it was at

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<sup>2</sup> Leonard, except for Rowland, who appears in Clark J. Herringshaw, (ed.) City Blue Book of Current Biography. Chicago, 1913, Hayes, taken from the Chicago Daily News of Friday, June 29, 1906, 14, and some of the information on Shields and O'Ryan taken from the Chicago Tribune of July 14, 1903, 5.

variance with the Progressive notion that the "best people" ought to be appointed or elected to public office, regardless of their ethnic or religious constituency. In practice, of course, this usually translated into a belief that middle-class Progressive Protestants were best equipped to make decisions for the entire community. On the 1904-05 Board, physician James Chvatal was a Roman Catholic and also active in the Bohemian community. Wladyslaw Kuflewski, also a physician, was a leader in the city's Polish community as well as the local medical society. A third physician on the Board, Emilius Dudley, was a professor of gynecology at the Chicago Medical College and C. A. Weil was also a practicing physician. Reverend Rufus White was pastor of one of the city's largest Protestant churches, the People's Liberal Church, as well as a founder of the Chicago Bureau of Charities and of the Illinois Children's Home and Aid Society. Joseph Stolz was rabbi of Temple Isaiah and an officer of the Conference of American Rabbis and of the Congress of Liberal Religions. P. Shelley O'Ryan, born in Ireland, became an attorney after "a brilliant career in journalism." O'Ryan was strongly involved with the Irish Home Rule movement and had, while in Ireland, served a term in prison for land lease agitation. Businessman Charles Sethness was also described as "a representative of the Scandinavian element of the northwestern section of the city." Like their fellow members who were businessmen, all of these men were active in various

clubs and participated in a variety of public service activities. As might be expected, this group had more formal education than the businessman members: in addition to the four with medical degrees White had earned both a D.D. and Ph.D. from Tufts, Stolz had a D.D. from Hebrew Union College and O'Ryan a university education in Ireland.<sup>3</sup>

Women were a rarity on the Chicago Board of Education. The first woman was appointed in 1888. According to Bessie Pierce "in that year, despite the plea that only businessmen would serve effectively, Mrs. Ellen M. Mitchell was named because of pressure from the Chicago Woman's Club."<sup>4</sup> However, there was typically never more than one woman representative at any point. In 1904 this was Mrs. W. C. H. Keough, the wife of a local attorney and herself an attorney. According to the Tribune she was "one of the few woman lawyers in Chicago" and "has assisted her husband in his law office for three years." However, she was not appointed for her professional standing but rather as a representative of the Catholic community. She was a member of several Catholic women's organizations such as the Catholic Order of Foresters, and "the Roman Catholic societies sent several petitions [to

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<sup>3</sup> Biographical information from Leonard, except for that on O'Ryan, which is taken from the Chicago Teacher's Federation Bulletin, Vol. VI, No. 19, April 5, 1907, 3, and quotation about Sethness, taken from the Chicago Daily News of Friday, June 29, 1906, 14.

<sup>4</sup> Pierce, History of Chicago, 382.

Harrison] for her appointment."<sup>5</sup> The woman who preceded her on the Board, Mrs. Isabelle O'Keefe, was also a Catholic, the wife of a journalist who later was admitted to the practice of law and who was "employed in a confidential capacity by Armour & Co., especially with . . . Philip D. Armour."<sup>6</sup>

The twenty-first member of the 1904 Board was George J. Thompson, who was described as its representative of organized labor. Treasurer of the cigarmakers' union, Thompson was appointed in 1902 after Mayor Harrison had asked various labor organizations for their recommendations.<sup>7</sup>

Thus the Board of Education which was in place when Edward Dunne became Mayor in April 1905 was typical of such boards in many American cities during this period. Although its twenty-one members was not the "perfect number" of seven endorsed by Harvard's President Eliot, its committee structure had been simplified from an unwieldy eighteen in 1890 down to three (School Management, Buildings and Grounds and Finance). While the Chicago Board was appointive and thus the trend described by Tyack of "at large" elections creating more membership by "elites" did not apply, the net result was the

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<sup>5</sup> Chicago Tribune, July 15, 1905, 8.

<sup>6</sup> Keough information from Chicago Daily News, Friday, June 29, 1906, 14. O'Keefe information taken from Herringshaw. In neither case are the women themselves listed directly; information is taken from their husbands' listings.

<sup>7</sup> Chicago Tribune, July 8, 1902, 2.

same: a preponderance of members drawn from the class of leading businessmen and professionals of the community. Even those members who had been appointed as representatives of a particular sub-group--Poles, Bohemians, Jews, Catholics--were typically also members of the business or professional community. Many of the members had significant links with the dominant Chicago business families: the Armours, the McCormicks, the Swifts. And while the boards of the 1890s and 1900-04 had had their share of dissent and controversy, it was to prove to be nothing like that which was to swirl around the Board of 1905-07 for the next two years.

#### Dunne's Appointees

When the Board of Education met on July 12, 1905, seven vacancies were to be filled by appointees of Mayor Dunne. The seven out-going Harrison men were Board President Clayton Mark, Daniel Cameron, George Claussenius, Thomas Fitzgerald, Wladyslaw Kuflewski, Rabbi Joseph Stolz and George J. Thompson. One of Dunne's key advisors in the selection process was Margaret Haley of the Chicago Teachers' Federation, who had been an active supporter during Dunne's election campaign. In her autobiography Battleground Haley describes her role in Dunne's first appointment, Miss Jane Addams of Chicago's famed settlement Hull House.

. . .I asked him to consider Jane Addams as a type of citizen for appointment upon the Board. He told me that he viewed very favorably the making of this appointment and asked me if I would talk to her about it.

When I went as Mayor Dunne's emissary, I found Hull House up in arms against the idea of their head resident going on the school board. Miss Addams herself felt that she should not assume this additional responsibility but, with assurance that Mayor Dunne would not appoint anyone on the Board not satisfactory to her, thus making it possible for her to put into effect her policy for the schools, she consented to accept the appointment, provided that Mrs. Emmons Blaine, who was one of the Harvester McCormicks by birth and a daughter-in-law of the Plumed Knight [James G. Blaine, unsuccessful Republican Presidential candidate in 1884], should serve with her.<sup>8</sup>

Following Miss Addams and Mrs. Blaine, Dunne's third selection was Dr. Cornelia DeBey. Haley observes that Addams "made no opposition" to DeBey's appointment "although Dr. DeBey was probably then, as she was afterward, a thorn in the Gentle Jane's side."<sup>9</sup> With Mrs. Keough still a Harrison holdover on the Board, this meant an unprecedented four women members.

Dunne's other new appointments were John C. Harding of the Typographical Union (who took the seat vacated by Thompson of the cigarmakers), Modie J. Spiegel, a Jewish businessman who took the seat vacated by Rabbi Stolz, and Emil Ritter, a former teacher who was particularly identified with the vocational education movement. Wladyslaw Kuflewski was reappointed as representative of the city's Polish community.

The custom in the Chicago Board of Education was that new

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<sup>8</sup> Haley, Battleground, 102.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 103.

members be identified in the official Proceedings as specifically taking the seats of out-going members. Thus the Proceedings for July 12, 1905 show that the seven new members replaced former members as follows: Jane Addams took the seat vacated by George Claussenius, Mrs. Blaine that of Daniel Cameron, and Dr. DeBey that of out-going Board President Clayton Mark. Harding of the Typographers' Union replaced Thompson of the Cigarmakers, Modie Spiegel replaced Rabbi Stolz, and teacher Emil Ritter replaced banker Thomas Fitzgerald, while Kuflewski succeeded himself. Thus there was a certain pattern of continuity as far as the four male appointees were concerned; even the schoolman, Ritter, because of his involvement in the vocational education movement, had extensive experience with business and industry. But Miss Addams, Dr. DeBey and, to a lesser extent, Mrs. Blaine, came to the Board with orientations quite different from the businessmen they replaced. Before examining the activities and controversies surrounding the "Dunne Board of Education" it will therefore be useful to look more closely at the background and the character of these women.

Jane Addams is undoubtedly one of the outstanding women not just in Chicago history but in that of the nation. A prolific writer herself, she has been the subject of numerous biographies, scholarly and popular articles, Ph.D. dissertations, documentary films, and chapters in textbooks and other books on the Progressive Era. A printed

bibliography of writings both by and about her prepared in 1960 runs to some 43 pages. The causes in which she was involved, in addition to the humanitarian settlement house work for which she is best known, include educational reform, women's rights, the peace movement and civil rights. She was a member of the Niagara Movement which created the NAACP, a delegate to national and international peace conferences and was elected the first president of the Women's Peace Party when it was organized in 1915; she was subsequently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1931. Politically, Adams was one of the original members of the Progressive Party and gave one of the speeches seconding the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt for President at the "Bull Moose" Progressive convention of 1916.<sup>10</sup> When Dunne appointed her to the Board of Education in 1905 she was already nationally known and Hull House was the prototype for settlement houses across the nation.

In his collective biography of the leadership of the progressive movement, Ministers of Reform, Robert Crunden devotes much of his first chapter to Jane Addams and in fact cites the founding of Hull House in 1880 (sic) [it was actually founded in 1889] as the appropriate place for beginning the study of progressivism as an important cultural phenomenon. Crunden argues that in pioneering the "new career

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<sup>10</sup> Goldman, 189. Also Encyclopedia of Social Work, (National Association of Social Workers, I, Washington, DC, 1974).



of social settlement work for women" Addams became the "preeminent role model for the next generation." Until this time higher and professional education were closed to most women and even those who managed to earn professional degrees found employment (with the exception of the arduous and poorly paid task of elementary school teaching) difficult to come by. "Women expected either to marry and have children or to become maiden aunts, cultivating beautiful thoughts, neurasthenic diseases, and the children of close relatives."<sup>11</sup> Together with other remarkable women of her generation--Ellen Gates Starr, Grace and Edith Abbott, Florence Kelly and others--Addams was to begin to change this picture.

Jane Addams was born in Rockford, Illinois, the youngest daughter of a Rockford businessman. Her mother died when she was an infant, and Addams grew up idolizing her father, John Addams. Crunden argues that many of Jane Addams' dominant characteristics were modeled on those of her father. "Like him, she, too, would be earnest, ethical, independent, and undogmatic."<sup>12</sup> When her father remarried, Jane disliked her new stepmother, who was an "example of the kind of woman approved in her day: cultivated, accomplished, appealing, and entertaining." For Crunden, Anna Addams provided Jane with a negative role model--she would grow up to be everything her

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<sup>11</sup> Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 18.

stepmother was not.<sup>13</sup>

Addams attended college at the Rockford Seminary, and shortly after her graduation in 1881 her beloved father died. During the next several years Addams tried to adapt herself to the lifestyle favored by her stepmother, but grew increasingly unhappy. During a trip to Europe to round out her education she visited London's Toynbee Hall, the first settlement house, and on her return to the United States she and her friend Ellen Gates Starr determined to try to replicate this experiment in Chicago. They settled at Hull House, once the mansion of a wealthy businessman, now standing in the heart of an impoverished immigrant neighborhood on Chicago's West Side.

Hull House rapidly became the best known of all settlement houses, but it was a part of a large and rapidly growing movement which had begun in 1884 with the opening of Toynbee Hall in London. Addams herself regularly pointed out that the validity of the settlement house movement was demonstrated by the fact that it had developed simultaneously in several different places.<sup>14</sup> Hull House was founded in 1889; by 1891 there were six settlements in the United States and by 1900 there were over a hundred. At Hull House the major emphases included the attempt to inculcate ethnic pride

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Anne Firor Scott, "Saint Jane and the Ward Boss," American Heritage, 12, No. 1, (December 1960), 16.

in the immigrants who came there and to bring educational and cultural advantages to workingclass individuals. Thus Hull House activities included exhibitions, university extension classes, political action in lobbying for libraries, parks and schools, concerts, sewing and cooking classes and opportunities for new immigrants to preserve and demonstrate ethnic traditions in crafts, folk dancing and singing. Its famous Labor Museum was intended both to instill ethnic pride and promote ethnic pluralism by emphasizing the values of the arts and traditions brought from Europe by the new immigrants. Addams' other activities ranged from crusades for better garbage pick-up in her ward to the Hull House Maps and Papers, a pioneering attempt in social science research which attempted to collect and organize data about slum life, in the hopes of stimulating reform efforts in the larger community.<sup>15</sup> Thus, by 1905, when Margaret Haley served as Dunne's emissary in approaching Addams about membership on the Board of Education, she was already one of Chicago's best known citizens.

Lawrence Cremin's massive three-volume history of American education emphasizes a broad definition of American education incorporating the analysis of a variety of institutions and cultural activities, in addition to the study of more traditional and formal institutions of education.

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<sup>15</sup> Cremin, American Education, 76-79.

Addams typified this broad perspective; according to Cremin she saw the settlement house both as a protest against a restricted view of education and as the living embodiment of an alternative view of education.<sup>16</sup> In describing the breadth of Addams' views on education, Cremin contrasted them with the educational ideas of John Dewey.

But whereas Dewey turned to a reconstructed school and a reconstructed university as levers of social change, Addams assigned what was at best a limited role to schools and universities in the cause of social reform and turned instead to settlements and similar institutions as educational forces that would energize the community to become itself the most potent of all educative forces.<sup>17</sup>

Addams' own writings are frequently concerned with educational issues. In her Democracy and Social Ethics, written in 1902, she set forth her position on the nature and composition of boards of education, an argument that might be expected to give some clues as to her own positions once she was appointed to the Board.

It is possible that the business men, whom we in America so tremendously admire, have really been dictating the curriculum of our public schools, in spite of the conventions of educators and the suggestions of university professors. The business man, of course, has not said, "I will have the public schools train office boys and clerks so that I may have them easily and cheaply," but he has sometimes said, "Teach the children to write legibly and to figure accurately and quickly; to acquire habits of punctuality and order; to be prompt to obey; and you will fit them to make their

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<sup>16</sup> Cremin, 175-76.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 179.

way in the world as I have made mine." Has the workingman been silent as to what he desires for his children, and allowed the business man to decide for him there, as he has allowed the politician to manage his municipal affairs, or has the workingman so far shared our universal optimism that he has really believed that his children would never need to go into industrial life at all, but that all of his sons would become bankers and merchants?<sup>18</sup>

At the time of her appointment, Addams had already endeared herself to Chicago schoolteachers and Margaret Haley made no secret of her reasons for wanting Addams on the Board. In her autobiography, Haley says that

For several years, Jane Addams had been peculiarly trusted by the teachers of Chicago. On two momentous occasions, she had proved herself the true friend and wise counsellor of the Teachers' Federation, once when she had advised us to join the Federation of Labor, and again when she had, at a public meeting in February, 1905, assailed the existing and so-called "promotional" scheme which had been established in the schools by Edwin G. Cooley, the Superintendent.<sup>19</sup>

Addams herself addressed the subject of her appointment to the Board in her own autobiographical Twenty Years at Hull House. Much of this portion of her narrative deals with her perceptions of some of the key issues that were to divide the Board during the tumultuous years that Dunne was mayor, including those cited by Haley: the role of organized labor in the schools and Cooley's promotional plan. However, she cites

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<sup>18</sup> Jane Addams, Democracy and Social Ethics (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964), 190-91.

<sup>19</sup> Haley, Battleground, 102.

as her reason for accepting the appointment the hope that she "might be able to forward in the public school system the solution of some of these problems of delinquency so dependent upon truancy and ill-adapted education."<sup>20</sup> Much of Haley's subsequent disillusionment with "Gentle Jane" is, perhaps, simply the result of these differing sets of priorities.

The second Dunne appointment, Mrs. Emmons (Anita McCormick) Blaine was made, according to Haley, directly at Addams' request.<sup>21</sup> Mrs. Blaine was the middle child of Cyrus Hall McCormick, inventor of the reaper, and was raised, according to her biographer, "amidst luxury that was saved from self-indulgence by the constraints of orthodox Presbyterianism."<sup>22</sup> When she was twenty-three, Anita married Emmons Blaine, the son of James G. Blaine, who had had a distinguished career as representative and senator from Maine and who had been the Republican presidential candidate in 1884. Despite initial opposition from her mother (Anita's father had died when she was eighteen), the wedding "uniting one of America's richest families and one of its best known" was an event of national prominence. Emmons Blaine, while not

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<sup>20</sup> Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, 189.

<sup>21</sup> Haley, Battleground, 102.

<sup>22</sup> Gilbert A. Harrison, A Timeless Affair: The Life of Anita McCormick Blaine, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 3.

as wealthy as the McCormick clan, was a prominent clubman and Chicago businessman, president of the Chicago Shipbuilding Company. One son, Emmons, Jr., was born in 1890. In 1892, Emmons Blaine was stricken with a variety of uremic poisoning and died, leaving Anita a widow at only twenty-six years of age. The marriage had apparently been a very happy one and Anita was devastated. After living for a year in New England, near her husband's aging parents, she returned to Chicago in the fall of 1893, and built an elegant home on the Near North Side, close to that of her mother.<sup>23</sup>

From this point on, much of Anita Blaine's life centered around her son. In her concern that Emmons Jr. (usually called "Em") receive the best possible education, Anita soon became acquainted with the writings of Colonel Francis Parker and she rapidly became an enthusiast for his theories of child-centered education. By 1899, she was ready to underwrite a school which would give Parker the opportunity to put these theories into practice--and would give Em the type of education she wanted for him. Not content with simply providing the funds (her contribution is usually estimated at one million dollars) for the "Chicago Institute, Academic and Pedagogic," later to become the Francis Parker School, she was deeply involved in all aspects of the planning, from physical

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<sup>23</sup> Harrison, Timeless Affair, 56-71 ff. Pierce, History of Chicago, 160.

construction to selection and recruitment of faculty.<sup>24</sup>

Anita Blaine was identified with a number of other reform movements in the Chicago community, and through them she made the acquaintance of such leading progressives as Jane Addams, John Dewey and Raymond Robins. Although Anita's youthful attempts at active participation in reform projects were unsuccessful (her biographer concludes that the failure of the girls' club which she tried to organize taught her that "she was not cut out to be a social worker or to run a settlement house"<sup>25</sup>) she was a strong supporter and consistent financial benefactress of Hull House. Her philanthropies, however, were on a large and eclectic scale. The Blaine papers at the Wisconsin Historical Society are filled with countless letters of appeal for contributions to "good causes" and most of them appear to have been met. She was also idiosyncratic in her attitude toward taxation; according to one source she "several times paid more taxes than the assessment or the law required, insisting that she was being assessed too low."<sup>26</sup> This combination of interests in progressive education and in social reform, plus her connections with Chicago's governing

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<sup>24</sup> Harrison, Timeless Affair, 86-95 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 50.

<sup>26</sup> Blaine, Anita McCormick. Collected papers. Wisconsin Historical Society. Also, Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin, Vol. 6, No. 19, (April 5, 1907), 2.



elite families, probably explains Addams' request for Blaine's appointment to the Board of Education.

The third woman appointed by Dunne to the 1905-06 Board was Dr. Cornelia DeBey. Together with Addams, Haley, trades union organizer Mary McDowell and social reformer Julia Lathrop, DeBey was one of the subjects of a 1906 article, "Chicago's Five Maiden Aunts," by journalist William Hard. The article's sub-title, "The Women Who Boss Chicago Very Much to Its Advantage," indicates the perspective from which Hard approached his topic--these five women wielded a great deal of political leverage and accomplished needed reforms by acting as the "maiden aunts" of the mythical Chicago "family." While from a contemporary perspective the article is occasionally patronizing and frequently chauvinistic (Hard quotes La Rochefoucauld: "Women haven't intellect enough to be terrified by the impossible," and the very term "maiden aunt" has a pejorative ring today), the author is genuinely admiring about the accomplishments of his subjects. He describes DeBey in the context of an encounter with Philip Armour, head of one of Chicago's largest packing houses, when DeBey intervened in a 1904 meat-packers strike:

Mr. Armour . . . looked up to see standing beside him a very slight woman, with very delicate features. She might have seemed a candidate for a convent if she hadn't been careful, as usual, to wear a man's collar and tie and a fedora hat.

Armour had refused to meet with the strike leadership, even though the men were willing to capitulate and return to work.

The result of DeBey's meeting with Armour was his agreement to meet with the president of the Butcher Workmen and the ending of the strike, albeit on the employers' terms.<sup>27</sup>

Cornelia DeBey came to prominence in Chicago by a very different route than the archetypal progressive Jane Addams or the patrician reformer Anita McCormick Blaine. DeBey was born in 1865 in the Groningen province of Holland, daughter of Bernardus DeBey, a minister of the Dutch Reform Church who was also affiliated with the University of Groningen. In 1868 Reverend DeBey emigrated to Chicago, bringing with him about half of his Dutch congregation. Amry Vandebosch, historian of the Dutch community in Chicago, says that the impetus for the move was the famine which struck Holland in 1867. Vandebosch adds that for the next twenty-five years, "Rev. DeBey was the leader and counselor of the Dutch in Chicago and a man of great influence on the Dutch through the west." He was a "forward-looking man" who was soon embroiled in a number of the internecine quarrels which appeared to regularly split the Dutch Reform Church. One issue which may have been germane to some of his daughter's later thinking was his insistence on using the English language exclusively in church services, an innovation strenuously resisted by many of his

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<sup>27</sup> Willilam Hard, "Chicago's Five Maiden Aunts," American Magazine 62, (September 1906), 481-82.

compatriots.<sup>28</sup> Rev. DeBey died in 1894. His obituary described him as the "oldest minister of the Reformed Church in Chicago" and attributes to his leadership the growth of the church in Chicago from one that was "very feeble" to an "immense congregation . . . the parent of three other flourishing churches."<sup>29</sup> The DeBey household consisted of the parents, six children and a domestic servant.<sup>30</sup> Interest in the medical profession appeared to run in the family; one of her brothers, William, became a physician and another, Gerrit, a pharmacist, while an uncle, Gerrardus, was also a physician.<sup>31</sup> While little information is available about Cornelia DeBey's childhood, we can get some clues from a children's book, Cornelia, written by Lucy Fitch Perkins. Mrs. Perkins was the author of a highly successful series of children's books written over a period of about thirty years. She was the wife of Dwight Perkins, architect for the Chicago

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<sup>28</sup> George Derby (ed.) National Cyclopedia of American Biography (New York: James T. White & Co., 1906). Amry Vandenbosch, The Dutch Communities of Chicago (Chicago: Knickerbocker Society, 1927), 18 and 23.

<sup>29</sup> Reformed Church in America Archives. Obituary of Rev. Bernardus DeBey. Undated.

<sup>30</sup> Robert P. Swierenga, (compiler). Dutch Households in U.S. Population Censuses, 1850, 1860, 1870 Vol. 1. (Scholarly Resources Inc., Wilmington, DE, 1987).

<sup>31</sup> Lakeside Directory of Chicago, Chicago: William Donnelly & Co., various years.

Board of Education in the early years of the twentieth century, and it was apparently through this connection that she became friendly with Cornelia DeBey, during the latter's term of office on the Board. Perkins used DeBey's reminiscences of her childhood as inspiration for the adventures of the title character in Cornelia, whose subtitle "The Story of a Benevolent Despot" indicates much the same character type as Hard's "maiden aunt." The fictional Cornelia is also the daughter of a Dutch minister. The anecdotes related in the book include her intervention with a poor Irish family (including stealing coal from her own father's church to give to them), organizing her friends to disrupt a political rally, and various other escapades which keep her in continual disfavor with her father's conservative parishioners.<sup>32</sup>

It is interesting to note the roles that their fathers played in the lives of all three of these women, Addams, Blaine and DeBey. Addams clearly patterned her life and character upon her father; as Crunden observes, "She . . . fused her image of her father with this sense of moral

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<sup>32</sup> Lucy Fitch Perkins, Cornelia: The Story of a Benevolent Despot, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1919). Telephone interview with Mr. Lawrence Perkins, son of Lucy Fitch Perkins, September 26, 1989. According to Mr. Perkins, who recalled meeting Dr. DeBey and described her as wearing a gray dress with a lace collar (newspaper stories and photos of the period always describe her as wearing masculine attire), DeBey had told his mother, after the book's publication, that she "really wasn't that much of a terror." Perkins described DeBey as "energetic, bouncy and opinionated," someone who "enjoyed life and lived it vigorously."

righteousness. Like him, she, too, would be earnest, ethical, independent and undogmatic." Her life reflected her father's sturdy, Protestant values. John Addams' remarriage, forcing Jane to share him with a woman that she disliked intensely, set up, according to Crunden, a reaction against the frivolity of the kind of social life that most women of her class led. "When Jane finally came to feel that such a life as her stepmother led was profoundly immoral, she began the process of becoming a progressive."<sup>33</sup> For Anita Blaine, her father's Presbyterianism provided a counterweight to the demands of the social milieu in which the wealthy McCormick family moved. Anita and her siblings were brought up in an atmosphere where family prayers and the strict observance of the Sabbath were central to family life, and where the importance of spreading the word of Christ was evidenced both by their father's endowment of a Presbyterian Seminary "dedicated to strengthening conservative theology in the Midwest" and by the whole family's involvement with the church. "The children could not remember when their home was not a port of call for seminarians, ministers of the gospel, and especially missionaries from far-off lands."<sup>34</sup> And, as we have seen, the Rev. DeBey was progressive in many ways: active in promoting the "Americanization" of his Dutch Reform

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<sup>33</sup> Crunden, Ministers of Reform, 18-19.

<sup>34</sup> Harrison, Timeless Affair, 20-21.

congregation and tolerant, as evidenced by the anecdotes related by Mrs. Perkins, of the activities prompted by his strong-minded daughter's social conscience. Although there is no evidence, it is certainly probable that he supported Cornelia's decision to attend medical school at a time when few women would have made such a choice and his concern for the education of his children is demonstrated by his employment of a tutor for their instruction.<sup>35</sup>

Cornelia DeBey graduated from Cook County Normal School in 1889 and taught briefly in Chicago high schools and at the Normal School. She then returned to school and earned her M.D. from Hahnemann Medical College in Chicago, a school which trained homeopathic physicians, and she began practicing medicine in Chicago in 1895.<sup>36</sup>

During her years on the Board of Education, DeBey was regularly identified by the press as being the spokesperson for the Chicago Teachers' Federation. Certainly the Federation's Bulletin demonstrated its approval of her even before her appointment. A 1904 article wrote glowingly about DeBey after her intervention in the stockyards strike.

Through the mediation of a woman, Dr. Cornelia DeBey, an understanding has been reached between the forces involved in the stock yards strike by which the public is benefitted, the business of the packers is resumed . . . and the distress of the

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<sup>35</sup> Vandenbosch, Dutch Communities of Chicago, 55.

<sup>36</sup> National Cyclopedia of American Biography, p. 456.

unemployed and of their families is relieved. . . .

Dr. DeBey is a psychologist. As a normal student, as a high school teacher, as a normal teacher, as a physician, her profoundest interest has been in the underlying laws of human development, and in application of these has been her strength. . . .

. . . when it became generally known that Dr. Cornelia DeBey was the woman [involved in the settlement of the strike] there has been a desire on the part of the public, to whom her name was not generally familiar, to know more of Dr. DeBey's personality.

To social settlement workers, teachers in the public schools and, beyond all, the very poor in all the most congested districts of the city, Dr. DeBey has needed no introduction for the past eighteen years. . . . Her professional work has been wide and her standing among physicians has not suffered because she has deliberately taken on her own shoulders the alleviation of distress among the very poor. . . .

The lengthy article goes on to celebrate DeBey's accomplishments in various fields. It touches briefly on her relationship to the schools and to education in general.

Her interest in educational matters has always been great. Almost single-handedly she pushed through the state legislature the bill legalizing kindergartens as part of the public school system, and she led the fight that defeated the bill which sought to make married women ineligible as teachers in the public schools. To those who have any interest in the child labor problem it is unnecessary to point out how great a factor in the present improved conditions has been the help given by Dr. DeBey, who has spent every moment of her spare time in fighting this evil.

The article offers a final clue as to the positions DeBey would subsequently take as a member of the Board of Education. It quotes her as discussing the intransigence on the part of the employers which had led to the prolonged strike:

"There is a type of man who becomes nothing but a machine. Business is his god, and it rules him always. He loses his human faculty, he has no sense of justice, and is powerless to analyze a situation. . . . They have no blood worth speaking of in their veins, and no gray matter worth mentioning in their heads. They are the stumbling blocks set in the path of progress to teach us the lessons of sorrow and patience."<sup>37</sup>

DeBey's role in the passage of legislation leading to the establishment of kindergartens in the public schools is regularly referred to by newspapers, by the Cyclopedia of Biography and by other commentators of the period. However, there is no mention of her by name either in the newspapers at the time the legislation was under consideration, or in the legislative record itself. Thus her role was probably of the same nature as that in the stockyards strike, that is, intervention on a personal and unofficial level. In his history of the Dutch community in Chicago, Amry Vandenbosch attributes the enactment of a kindergarten bill to DeBey's friendship with State Representative John Meyers, who had lived with the DeBey family for several years after his emigration from Pastor DeBey's old parish in the Netherlands. According to Vandenbosch:

Her [DeBey's] political career began early in life. Through Representative Meyers, who had been practically a member of her family, she secured the passage of the bill legalizing kindergartens as part of the public schools in 1890. Those interested in the bill had almost given up hope of the passage of the bill that session until Dr.

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<sup>37</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 3, No. 31, (September 16, 1904), 4-5.



DeBey interested herself in its passage, and secured its enactment into law in a very short time through the influence which she had with Rep. Myers.<sup>38</sup>

In addition to these three remarkable women, a fourth of Dunne's appointments, Emil Ritter, also differed from the typical profile of past Board members. Ritter had been a teacher in the Chicago schools, having taught in the evening high schools for more than fifteen years. He was particularly interested in the manual training movement and, in fact, had "the distinction of having taught the first class in manual training in a public school in the United States." This class had been proposed as an experiment, but because the salary appropriation was inadequate, Ritter volunteered his services as teacher. The experiment was successful and, by 1905, the one-room school located in an old repair shop had grown into the Crane Manual Training School.<sup>39</sup> Ritter's identification with reform causes was also demonstrated by his presidency of the Referendum League, a local organization designed to encourage Chicagoans to make effective use of the advisory referendum.<sup>40</sup>

Contemporaries were quick to recognize the significance

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<sup>38</sup> Vandenbosch, Dutch Communities of Chicago, 54-5.

<sup>39</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 6, No. 19, (April 5, 1907), 2.

<sup>40</sup> The Public, 8, No. 377, (June 24, 1905), 177.

of Dunne's appointments. In the preface to her book American Labor: Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation, written in 1905, noted labor reformer Florence Kelley wrote

While the present volume was in press, Mayor Dunne of Chicago appointed to the Board of Education of that city, Miss Jane Addams of Hull House, Mrs. Emmons Blaine and Dr. Cornelia DeBey. It remains to be seen how far these able and public spirited women may disprove the argument advanced in Chapter V.<sup>41</sup>

Dunne's appointments also received considerable comment in the local press. Louis Post's The Public was predictably delighted. In his lead editorial Post wrote that the appointments "mark the end of the rule of the tax dodgers over our public schools and the beginning of a regime of sound educational policies." To Post, the appointments were a "marked and gratifying contrast" to previous boards for two reasons: recognition of the role of women in the governance of schools, and the absence of the "canting" business element, which Post hoped meant a shift in emphasis so that the "interests" would give way to a concern for education.<sup>42</sup>

The Chicago Record-Herald also emphasized the significance of the appointment of three women as a "departure

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<sup>41</sup> Florence Kelley, American Labor: Some Ethical Gains Through Legislation, (New York: Macmillan Co. 1905) viii. Kelley's reference to Chapter V. refers to her discussion of the right of women to the ballot. She argues that the first step in this direction is the appointment of women to public boards and commissions.

<sup>42</sup> The Public 8, No. 377, (June 24, 1905), 177.

from custom" pointing toward a "general shake-up" of the Board. The headline writer emphasizes Mrs. Blaine's appointment; the article begins by referring to her "contributions for the development of pedagogical science" which amounted to over \$1,000,000. Addams and DeBey are described as "well known in educational and sociological work" who were selected to "carry out the mayor's policy for the advancement of the lower grades of the public schools." The Record-Herald notes that having four women on the Board is a response to the appeal of the women teachers for fair representation. "The appointment of three women distinguished in educational, philanthropic and sociological circles will prove a welcome surprise to the women teachers of Chicago."<sup>43</sup>

One other key factor in the mix of issues and personalities which was to shape the debates over school policies in the coming years was the character of the Superintendent of Schools, Edwin G. Cooley. Cooley was in many ways the archetype of David Tyack's administrative progressives. Born in Iowa in 1867, Cooley had, by age 22, received his life diploma as a teacher in Iowa. In 1895 he received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago and went on to hold various positions as a high school principal. In 1900 he was elected principal of the Chicago Normal School, but

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<sup>43</sup> "Post for Mrs. Blaine: Picked by Mayor as School Trustee, as Are Miss Addams and Dr. DeBey," Chicago Record-Herald, June 16, 1905, 1.

before taking the position was elected Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools.<sup>44</sup>

Cooley quickly built his reputation as a strong administrator interested both in consolidating his authority and in putting progressive principles to work in the schools. According to Marjorie Murphy, Cooley "methodically restructured the school system," using an anti-pull crusade to "reprimand teachers, control [their] hiring and dismissal and attract the support of social reformers." In 1902 the Board voted him a five-year contract at a \$10,000 annual salary. Cooley's major efforts were in the direction of securing uniformity in school administration. He regularly published cost-per-student figures by individual schools, so that principals could compare their cost effectiveness with that of other schools. These moves for cost-efficiency won him the support of the businessman members of the Board, notably the then-President Clayton Mark.<sup>45</sup>

Cooley was regularly at odds with the Teachers' Federation; his emphasis on teacher efficiency resulted in the "secret marking" system which was to generate serious controversy during the tenure of the Dunne Board. According

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<sup>44</sup> Leonard, Book of Chicagoans, 136. Also Chicago Record-Herald, July 27, 1907, 4.

<sup>45</sup> Marjorie Murphy. "From Artisan to Semi-Professional: White Collar Unionism Among Chicago Public School Teachers, 1870-1930" unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (University of California-Davis, 1981), 60.

to Marjorie Murphy, he used his reputation as a reformer (he had worked with Charles Dawes to develop the Board's "anti-pull resolution") to help consolidate his authority. Said Murphy:

Any time a Board member objected to Cooley's leadership, Cooley would consult the rules. If he were accused of overstepping the limits of his office, Cooley could always produce his "pull" list, publicly embarrassing a Board member . . . Cooley did not always expose instances of pull when they occurred, but instead waited for the strategic moments to produce the evidence and brand his opponent as a corrupt politician with ulterior motives.<sup>46</sup>

Generally, Cooley had the support of the press and of the business community; he was to be frequently at odds with some of the more "radical" of the Dunne appointees.

Thus, when the new Board of Education took its seats in July of 1905, the stage was set for conflict. There were some new appointees whose backgrounds, interests and frames of reference were sharply different from those of many of the sitting members, appointed by a Mayor whose election was at least partly owed to the role of the Teachers' Federation. There were lingering issues of friction between teachers and Board--most notably salaries and promotion mechanisms. There were overcrowded schools with not enough desks to accommodate all of the city's school-age children. There were the on-going debates about "pull," about which companies would receive lucrative contracts for coal, supplies or textbooks.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 61.

There were the city's newspapers, many of them disinclined to approve any action that Dunne might take because of their hostility towards his "radical" position on immediate municipal ownership. There was a strong superintendent, Edwin Cooley, an archetypal "administrative progressive" who had clear ideas about the appropriate roles of superintendent, of teachers and of Board members. During the next two years all of these ingredients would interact to create a period of turmoil in the Chicago schools which was unmatched until the time of Superintendent Benjamin Willis, more than half a century later.

## CHAPTER 3

### EARLY CONTROVERSIES

When the Dunne appointees attended their first meeting of the Board of Education on July 12, 1905, there were a number of serious issues on the horizon. These included overcrowding in the schools and corresponding debates over the costs of new school construction, funding priorities, debates over "pull," the role of the Teachers' Federation, animosities generated by the "teachers' salary suit," and conflicts over the process by which teachers were promoted. Before examining the specific actions of the "First Dunne Board"<sup>1</sup>, it will be useful to look briefly at these questions.

With the rapid growth of Chicago's population the need for more classroom space had been an on-going problem for Chicago's Boards of Education for years. The Annual Reports of the Board showed that in 1903 7,500 new seats were added, another 2,652 were under construction and 19,912 had been ordered though not contracted for officially. In 1904 the Board authorized the construction of 14 new schools plus 26

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<sup>1</sup> For purposes of clarity I will use the term "First Dunne Board" to refer to the Board which served from July 1905-July 1906. In reality, as has been noted above, the majority of the Board members were still Harrison appointees: fourteen "holdovers" plus Kuflewski who was a reappointment.

portable buildings, adding 12,576 seats to the inventory, with an additional 20,112 seats planned but not under contract. The average number of pupils per teacher during the same period was 46.8.<sup>2</sup> The Board and Superintendent acknowledged the seriousness of the problem; in the Annual Report for 1902-03 the Superintendent stated that "The heavy membership of the rooms continues to be the most serious obstacle to progress in the public schools."<sup>3</sup> But controversy regularly erupted in the newspapers about the allocation of any new construction. P. Shelley O'Ryan, a Harrison appointee who would be continuing on as a member of the first Dunne Board, regularly argued that funds were disproportionately allocated, favoring the high schools and manual training programs at the expense of elementary school students. A newspaper story for May 26, 1905 (before the decision on who the Dunne appointees would be) quoted O'Ryan on the need for elementary school education and emphasis on the "three R's."<sup>4</sup> Superintendent Cooley defended expenditures for high school education and argued that while "It is true that the elementary and high schools are overcrowded . . . the fault does not lie with the

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<sup>2</sup> Board of Education, City of Chicago. Annual Report. 1903-04, 1904-05.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 67.

<sup>4</sup> "Change in City Schools Urged," Chicago Tribune, May 26, 1905, 2.



educational department; it is because of lack of money."<sup>5</sup> The Tribune predicted that O'Ryan and Mrs. Keough would lead a fight against educational "fads" (foreign languages, music, manual training, drawing, domestic science) during the coming years.<sup>6</sup> The Chicago Record-Herald viewed the appointments of Addams, DeBey and Blaine as a move in the direction of emphasizing the primary grades.

The three women who are to be honored by trusteeships are advocates of the new policy which, in brief, is that the children in the lower grades must be cared for before further appropriations are granted for the extension of the high schools, the manual training and special departments.<sup>7</sup>

"Pull" had been another thorny issue in the Chicago schools for many years. In 1900, the Board had passed the "Dawes Rule," under which the superintendent, whenever he made recommendations for appointment, transfer or promotion of teachers, was required to submit to the School Management Committee any correspondence received by him or by any of the district superintendents relating to that recommendation. The Dawes Rule was generally perceived as successful; in the Annual Report for 1902-03 the Board's President commented

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> "Post for Mrs. Blaine," Chicago Record-Herald, June 16, 1905, 1.

that:

The result [of the Dawes Rule] has demonstrated that no matter how much politicians and men of influence may desire to secure special favor for their friends or constituents, they do not court publicity of the fact that they are interfering with the best interests of the schools and seeking to control the appointment of teachers for political ends. . . Then, too, the members of the Board, in being saved these importunities, are spared much annoyance and loss of time. . . .<sup>8</sup>

Debates over the Dawes Rule were to erupt regularly during both years of the "Dunne Board of Education."

Chapter Two of this dissertation has already referred to the fact that Dunne's nomination of three women, at least two of whom had already publicly been identified as being in sympathy with the position of the women teachers, was seen both by the Chicago press and by the Teachers' Federation members themselves as implying a shift in the relationship between Board and teachers. This relationship between the Teachers' Federation and the Board was another point of constant friction both prior to the Dunne Board and during its tenure (and one for which a solution has yet to be found nearly a century later). In suing for the back salary due them (see Chapter One) the teachers had, of course, antagonized most of the Board members. In the 1904-05 Annual Report, out-going Board President Clayton Mark argued against then-Judge Dunne's decision to award the teachers \$45 each in

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<sup>8</sup> Board of Education, City of Chicago. Annual Report, 1902-03, 18.

back pay and against the action of the Chicago City Council in voting that the Board should use the tax monies generated from the back taxes received from the utility and transit companies to pay the back salaries rather than for new construction. While contending that Dunne's decision was erroneous and would be reversed on appeal, Mark took the position that none of this would have happened if the teachers had not acted inappropriately and exerted pressure on the Council.

It is proper to say, however, that the action of the City Council referred to above was due to the agitation conducted by the Chicago Teachers' Federation and I was informed by the Chairman of the Finance Committee of the City Council at the time the action was taken, that he and other members believed that it would have no force or effect, but that it would relieve them of further annoyance and importuning.<sup>9</sup>

Clearly Mark believed that the City Council had responded purely as a response to political pressure and not from any genuine conviction that the teachers were entitled to their back pay.

Finally, the question of the process by which teachers were promoted had long been an area of contention, and the press predicted that the new board would address the issue promptly.

The promotional examination system, which has made teachers red-eyed and nervous from midnight studies, will be one of the first subjects of attack by the new board. . . . The promotional examinations . . . were adopted in 1902 to save

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<sup>9</sup> Board of Education, City of Chicago. Annual Report, 1904-05, p. 59.

expenses. As a business scheme it was excellent, and proved a saving, but it is said to have demoralized the teaching force.<sup>10</sup>

But although the press recognized that the promotional system made teachers "red-eyed and nervous," most newspaper stories argued for the value of examinations and/or continued coursework for teachers rather than promotion or salary increases based on length of service. Superintendent Cooley defended the system, commenting that "it is only by continuing to be a student that she [the teacher] can avoid the depressing effect of constant association with immature minds."<sup>11</sup>

All of these issues, and many others, were waiting to be addressed when the new Board members were officially sworn in, but the first order of business on July 12 was the election of a new Board President, a decision that observers generally agreed would have a significant impact on the Board's activities for the coming year. Prior to the election, newspaper speculation had centered on the views of several candidates in relation to the Teachers Federation.

George Duddleston was generally described as the candidate of the Teachers' Federation and of the "reform" wing of the Board. One of his supporters, P. Shelley O'Ryan,

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<sup>10</sup> "Pick Teachers Today," Chicago Record-Herald, June 21, 1905, 5.

<sup>11</sup> "The Policy of the New School Board," Editorial, Chicago Record-Herald, June 22, 1905, 8.

characterized the position of the Duddleston faction not as revolutionary but as incorporating [unspecified] "views and ideas [which] do not conform to present methods." Duddleston's opponents argued that he would be "putty in the hands of ex-Mayor Harrison and the skilled politicians of the Teachers' Federation" and that his election would mean an "educational upheaval such as Chicago has not seen." Duddleston's opponents also stressed his record while serving as a Democratic alderman in Chicago, quoting a 1901 Municipal Voters League report: "He has through two terms been noisy, incoherent and uncertain; his record worse than weak."<sup>12</sup>

John Fetzter, Charles Plamondon and Edward Tilden, the other leading candidates, were all described by the press as "anti-federationists." Fetzter was generally identified as Mayor Dunne's choice, but pre-election newspaper stories did not differentiate much between the positions of these men (or "dark horse" Emil Dudley), simply speculating on the possible line-up of supporters of each of the candidates. The Tribune described Tilden and Plamondon as "pronounced anti-federationists" and Fetzter as "stand(ing) on neutral ground

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<sup>12</sup> "For School Control: Labor Pact and Teachers Federation Joined with Harrison Forces", Chicago Daily News' July 8, 1905, 3. Also Chicago Record-Herald, July 11, 1905, 5.

. . . fairly acceptable to both factions."<sup>13</sup>

The Proceedings of the Board of Education for July 12, 1905, after recording the swearing-in of the new members, summarizes the balloting for officers--Edward Tilden was elected President on the forty-first ballot; John Fetzer was then elected Vice President on the first ballot. For newspaper readers, the next morning's press described the long-drawn-out election process in more colorful detail.

The election was the most stubborn in the history of board-room frequenters. Four candidates were in the field, each with a following that voted to stick to the last ditch. Trustee Duddleston, representing the Teachers' Federation element, had a solid phalanx of nine trustees that stood with him. . . Trustee Fetzer, who was announced as Mayor Dunne's choice . . . swung his strength to Trustee Plamondon . . . After three hours of maneuvering, in which futile attempts were made alternately to swell the votes of Fetzer and Plamondon, the lines were overthrown and by a switch of one vote, said to have been either that of Trustee Fetzer or Trustee Shields, Tilden obtained the necessary eleven votes. . . Those back of the Tilden movement from the start were: Jane Addams, Dr. Cornelia DeBey, Mrs. Emmons Blaine, E. C. Dudley, Edward Tilden and Rev. R. A. White.

. . .The election drew large crowds of school teachers to the board rooms [who] followed the varying fortunes of their champion [Duddleston] eagerly, and broke into cheers whenever he manifested a sudden increase in strength.<sup>14</sup>

The intensity of feeling on the part of Board members was

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<sup>13</sup> "Tilden Is Chief of School Board," Chicago Tribune, July 13, 1905, 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Edward Tilden Wins School Board Fight," Chicago Record-Herald, July 13, 1905, 5.

referred to by Louis Post in his post-election story in The Public.

The strenuous character of this contest is indicated by the fact that the entire membership of the board, twenty-one, was in attendance, though some members broke into their vacations and came long distances, while one came from a sick bed. [Mrs. Blaine came from her vacation home in the Adirondacks; Mrs. Keough direct from Mercy Hospital where she was recovering from an appendectomy.]<sup>15</sup>

The press' interpretation of the implications of Tilden's election was mixed. To the Tribune, "The outcome was regarded as a victory of Supt. Cooley and his methods."<sup>16</sup> However, the Record-Herald observed that "The fact that Mr. Tilden eventually won out is not considered a blow at the federation, from the fact that at least three of his strongest supporters are sympathetically inclined toward the federation. . ."<sup>17</sup> To Louis Post, the results were ambiguous:

[Tilden] is regarded as representing the faction which has hitherto controlled the board. [But] Although this contest is supposed to have established the organization of the new board on the same fiscal and pedagogic lines as the old one, and to indicate the hostility of the new board, like the old one, to the Teachers' Federation, certain confusing factors entered in, which leave the sympathy of the new board in doubt, however firmly the result may have fixed its policy for the

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<sup>15</sup> The Public 8, 1905-06, p. 122. Chicago Tribune, July 13, 1905.

<sup>16</sup> Chicago Tribune, July 13, 1905.

<sup>17</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, July 13, 1905.

year.<sup>18</sup>

The ambiguity is reflected in the votes of the three new women trustees. Although the press regularly described them as supporters of the Teachers' Federation, and predicted that they would support Duddleston<sup>19</sup>, Addams, DeBey and Blaine all voted for Tilden. According to the Daily News, DeBey's support of Tilden was based on the fact that she had been a schoolmate of Mrs. Tilden and that, at the time of the stockyards strike, Mrs. Tilden had been instrumental in persuading her husband to take the side of the strikers. The Daily News, most emphatic of all the papers in claiming Tilden's victory as a defeat for the Teachers' Federation, ("It [the Federation] lost and [will not] cut the slightest figure in the future"), quoted an unnamed trustee as saying that the election proved that the woman members could "think and act for themselves. . . . We all rejoice at this expression of independence, for it means that now we can do something for the schools without the bugaboo of union labor or the threats of the Federation of Teachers."<sup>20</sup> Tilden

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<sup>18</sup> The Public 8, 1905-06.

<sup>19</sup> "Aim At Control of School Board," Chicago Tribune, July 9, 1905, 8.

<sup>20</sup> "What Elected Tilden: How the Packer Was Chosen President of the Board of Education: Much Satisfaction Expressed at the Defeat of the Teachers Federation." Chicago Daily News, July 18, 1905, 5.



himself stated that his first priority would be to patch up matters between quarreling factions on the Board, and also articulated his strong support for the policies of Supt. Cooley.<sup>21</sup>

Once Tilden had been elected, the next step was for him to appoint the members of the three standing committees of the Board: School Management, Buildings and Grounds, and Finance. Most of the interest centered on the appointments to the School Management Committee. The Daily News attributed a great deal of maneuvering for the position of Chair of this committee to two members of the "Duddleston faction," P. Shelley O'Ryan and George Duddleston himself. According to the News, both men argued that if Tilden wished to recognize the Duddleston supporters, "for harmony's sake or otherwise," then they were the logical candidates for the chairmanship: O'Ryan by virtue of his role as Duddleston's first lieutenant, Duddleston using the obvious argument that there would have been no "Duddleston faction" at all if he had not run.<sup>22</sup>

Tilden found a neat solution to the political dilemma by appointing Jane Addams as Chair. Throughout her tenure on the Board, Addams was generally treated as above criticism; public

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<sup>21</sup> "Promises a Seat for Every Child," Chicago Tribune, July 16, 1905, 1. "School Methods to be Unchanged," Chicago Tribune, July 14, 1905, 3.

<sup>22</sup> "School Plums Excite: Duddleston Faction in Board of Education is Embroiled," Chicago Daily News, July 26, 1905, 4.

respect for Chicago's most notable woman was already such that neither fellow board members, Teachers' Federationists nor newspaper editorial writers were willing to risk offending her or her supporters. The other appointments to the School Management Committee were Dr. E. C. Dudley, P. Shelley O'Ryan, Mrs. Emmons Blaine, Mr. John Hayes, Mr. C. A. Plamondon, Mr. Charles Sethness, Dr. Cornelia DeBey, Mr. Edwin Rowland and Dr. James Chvatal. As President, Tilden served ex officio as a member of all three committees. John Fetzer was appointed Chair of Buildings and Grounds, to which the remaining Board members were appointed, and Charles Plamondon was made Chair of the Finance Committee, whose members included Modie Spiegel and the Chairs of the other two Committees.<sup>23</sup>

The Tribune saw at least one Committee appointment as a straw in the wind favoring the Teachers' Federation. The Rev. R. A. White, described as the "leader of the anti-teachers' federation forces in the school board," was transferred from the School Management to the Buildings and Grounds Committee "where he will be helpless to wage his fight against the measures of the pro-federationists."<sup>24</sup> Louis Post shared this perception:

By transferring the Rev. R. A. White from the

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<sup>23</sup> Proceedings, Board of Education, City of Chicago, July 12, 1905-June 20, 1906. Chicago: Barnard and Miller Press, 1906, 96.

<sup>24</sup> Chicago Tribune, August 23, 1905.

school management committee, where his ill-advised and absurd hostility to the Teachers' Federation was perpetually irritating, to the buildings and grounds committee where . . . his sterling honesty can be made effective, President Tilden has done much, not only to produce harmony . . . but . . . to further sound educational policies.<sup>25</sup>

Normally school boards did not meet during the later part of July and the month of August, but the newly-constituted "Dunne Board" was to be an exception. The first crisis which came to their attention was the death, on August 14th, of Dr. Arnold Tompkins, principal of the Chicago Normal School, which necessitated the appointment of a successor. This selection was of particular interest to the teachers and to those Board members who had been critical of some of the School's policies. The Tribune quoted one [unnamed] Board member as saying

Now is the time for the reorganization of the normal school. . . . As long as Dr. Tompkins was at the head of the school no steps in that direction could have been taken without danger of the charge that everything we do is aimed at Dr. Tompkins. The doctor's death is regrettable. He was a splendid type of manhood. And now that he is gone our motives cannot be questioned.<sup>26</sup>

Criticism of Tompkins had centered about lack of communication between the Normal School and the "rank and file" Chicago teachers. The School's emphasis on the ideal "pedagogic

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<sup>25</sup> "Public School Reform in Chicago," The Public 9, September 2, 1905, 339.

<sup>26</sup> "Stirs the Normal School: Death of Dr. Tompkins Opens Way for Changes," Chicago Tribune, August 16, 1905, 4.

child" did little to prepare teacher candidates for the realities of teaching in Chicago's many immigrant and poverty-stricken neighborhoods nor did the School provide appropriate in-service training for Chicago's teachers. Under pressure from Superintendent Cooley, the School began to modify its approach and to offer extension classes for teachers, but at the time of Tompkins' death his critics, as typified by the Board member quoted above, were eager for change.<sup>27</sup>

As usual, Chicago's newspapers were rife with speculation about the identity of Tompkins' successor, raising the names of several possibilities. The School Management Committee acted promptly and on August 23 named Ella Flagg Young as the first woman principal of the School. One of Young's supporters was Dr. DeBey, characterized by the Tribune as the member expected to "assume leadership" of the movement to "reorganize completely the normal school faculty and make radical changes in the educational methods."<sup>28</sup> De Bey did, in fact, write to vacationing Mrs. Blaine urging the latter's support for Mrs. Young.

Of course it is a pity that so important a matter as the selection of a head for the Normal School should have come upon us so suddenly. . . . There seems to be but one really able person and her rare ability is off set (sic) by a serious failure in generousness (sic) of character. Of course I refer

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<sup>27</sup> Joan K. Smith, Ella Flagg Young: Portrait of a Leader (Ames, Iowa: Educational Studies Press, 1979), 104.

<sup>28</sup> Chicago Tribune, August 16, 1905, 3.

to Mrs. Young. . . . The other people mentioned seem to be unequal to the requirement involved in the position. Mr. Cooley looks with apprehension at the appointment of Mrs. Young. This however may, I think be overcome.<sup>29</sup>

Despite DeBey's contention that Cooley was "apprehensive" about Young's appointment, and Louis Post's claims of "covert opposition from the old regime,"<sup>30</sup> the Tribune indicated that the Committee had made the nomination at Cooley's recommendation. Although the Proceedings of the Board indicate receipt of a letter from the Rev. White, out of the city attending the funeral of a friend, and asking that the selection be delayed two weeks until his return ("the Board should seek for this position a real educational leader. The situation does not demand such dangerous haste"),<sup>31</sup> the final recommendation of Mrs. Young was unanimous on the part of the Committee and the Board. Tilden himself stated that he did not feel competent to name a principal for the School, "That's what a superintendent is for."<sup>32</sup>

The Board's rapid agreement on Mrs. Young's nomination

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<sup>29</sup> Anita McCormick Blaine, Collected Papers, (Wisconsin Historical Society), Box 213.

<sup>30</sup> The Public 9, September 2, 1905.

<sup>31</sup> Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, August 30, 1905.

<sup>32</sup> "Woman Gets School Post: Mrs. Ella Flagg Young Named for Normal Head," Chicago Tribune, August 23, 1905, 2.

was the beginning of a brief "honeymoon" period between the press and Board members. Newspaper writers confined themselves to brief stories about such Board activities as a proposal that the Board save money by building its own schools rather than using a contractor, the formation of a committee to investigate the Parental School and a proposed bureau of health, including medical inspections of the schools.<sup>33</sup> By October, however, criticism of the Board began to surface in the newspapers. An editorial in the Record-Herald defended Supt. Cooley's policies in the matter of promotional examinations for teachers. The editorial favorably cited Cooley's arguments that length of service was not related to teacher "efficiency," arguing that although the promotional examination system had its flaws, on balance it would "encourage that industry and energy without which the system would degenerate into lifeless routine." It went on to warn Board members that they would have to answer to public opinion if they went against Cooley's recommendations on this issue.<sup>34</sup> The thorny issue of promotional examinations was to occupy the energies of Board members, Superintendent and newspaper writers alike in the months to follow.

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<sup>33</sup> "Health Bureau in Schools," Chicago Tribune, August 28, 1905, 10; August 29, 1905, "Plans to Build Its Own Schools," August 29, 1905, 4.

<sup>34</sup> "Efficiency in the Schools," Chicago Record Herald, October 14, 1905, 6.

### The DeBey Plan

It was Cornelia DeBey who precipitated the first of the many battles that were to wrack the Board for the next two years. The issue was her proposal for a restructuring of the governance system of the schools and the response by the Chicago press was immediate, vehement and hostile. Using a familiar political tactic, DeBey first released her plan to the public, before presenting it to the School Management Committee. The "DeBey Plan," as it was immediately identified by the newspapers, called for an expansion of the role of the teachers in the management of the schools. Key provisions of the plan included the abolition of the present board of district superintendents and the redivision of the city into smaller school districts, each of which would have a "supervising committee," the membership of which would consist of elected representatives of the teachers and principals. Principals would be nominated by these bodies, subject to approval by Board and Superintendent. An elected body of twelve teachers would serve as "critics" who would substitute for the six district superintendents and would receive the salary normally paid to them. The promotional system would be abolished and a new merit system put in place. Finally, "red tape and bureaucracy" would be eliminated from the system.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> "Ask New System in the Schools," Chicago Tribune, November 17, 1905, 1-2; "School Board Row On," Chicago Daily News, November 17, 1905, 1-2.

These characteristics led to the plan's sometimes being called the "democratization plan"; however the context generally made it clear that in this case the press viewed "democratization" as an undesirable sort of "leveling," rather than as an extension of the traditional American enthusiasm for the democratic process.

DeBey defended her proposal as "nothing more than what is now in use to some extent in the Normal Schools" and argued that it was "neither sensational nor revolutionary." She praised Cooley for having done "superb" work in putting order into a previously chaotic school system and contended that her plan would "enlarge [the previous system] to give self activity not only to localities but to individuals." She argued against written examinations for promotion and instead proposed cultivating the talents of teachers with the opportunity to exchange ideas through teacher institutes and what would now be called "peer counseling."<sup>36</sup>

Reaction to the proposal was immediate and antagonistic. Articles in the major newspapers regularly characterized DeBey's ideas as "socialistic and anarchistic" and raised the spectre of influence on the part of the Teachers' Federation. The Daily News, with the Tribune consistently the most vituperative of Chicago newspapers in criticizing the Board, attacked DeBey's notion that school management should come

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<sup>36</sup> Chicago Tribune, November 17, 1905.



from the "bottom upward" and contended that, rather than eliminating politics from the schools, the plan would

cause the schools to seethe with politics--schoolteacher politics. One of the triumphs of Superintendent Cooley's administration of school affairs in this city is the establishment of the merit test as the only test of fitness of teachers. To say that unrestricted logrolling by ambitious teachers all over the city would produce better results for the pupils . . . than have been produced by the present system is to make a very extraordinary statement. . . . the plan is quite in keeping with the view of that organization [the Teachers' Federation] that the way for the taxpayers to manage the Chicago schools is to let the teachers manage themselves by a show of hands in a debating society.<sup>37</sup>

Board President Tilden, while acknowledging that he had not yet read details of the proposal, declared himself in opposition "simply on the theory which formed its basis." A typical comment was that of the unnamed trustee who said:

It is plain where Dr. DeBey gathered her ideas, It is a phase of Miss Margaret Haley's doctrine, as expressed in her attempts to secure the control of the school system for the Teachers' Federation.<sup>38</sup>

The press also quoted opposition members of the Board as connecting DeBey's proposal with what they termed Mayor Dunne's "I.M.O. propaganda." One trustee sarcastically compared the concept of a district organization of teachers to the idea of such an organization for traction workers:

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<sup>37</sup> "The Role of the Teacher," Editorial, Chicago Daily News, November 18, 1905, 8.

<sup>38</sup> "Plan to Reorganize Starts School War," Chicago Record-Herald, November 18, 1905, 8.

The city could be divided into districts for the benefit of the conductors, motormen and other employees. These districts could have a board, that board to elect a directory and the directory in its turn pick out the various district superintendents. . . . Of course, the plan is impossible, equally for the teachers and for the traction people.<sup>39</sup>

Another trustee called DeBey's plan "municipal ownership gone to seed" and "socialism to the limit."<sup>40</sup> Regularly for the next two years the press was to use criticism of individual Dunne appointees to attack Dunne and his policies, even those which had no relation to school affairs.

O'Ryan and Kuflewski were the only two members of the Board who expressed enthusiasm for DeBey's proposal. Sethness, Weil and Shields openly opposed it, but most declined to express their opinions for the record. Addams, while she agreed "with some points" in it, refused to make a statement until the proposal had been officially presented to the Board. According to the Record-Herald,

. . . certain trustees ordinarily supposed to be allied with the Teachers' Federation came out "flat-footed" and characterized it as a "federation move." Dr. DeBey has received little support thus far, and even with the addition of those who have refused to discuss the matter publicly she can gather around her standard but a small minority.<sup>41</sup>

One popular interpretation was that, although the "DeBey Plan"

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<sup>39</sup> Chicago Daily News, November 17, 1905, 1.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, November 18, 1905.

had little hope of passage at the present time, the Teachers' Federation hoped to hold the proposal in abeyance until June of 1906 when Mayor Dunne would have the opportunity to appoint new trustees in place of some of the most vociferous opponents of the plan.

After the initial round of vigorous criticism of DeBey's plan on the part of the press, there was little further commentary for several weeks. The Bulletin of the Teachers' Federation devoted most of its February 6, 1906, issue to a defense of DeBey's ideas, describing them as embodying "a new principle in school management and administration." The Bulletin commented on the earlier press reaction to the proposal:

There was a great howl; nothing more intelligent, nothing more indicative of calm inquiry or of a disposition toward careful consideration --- just a nine-days howl, for which, of course, the board as a whole must not be held responsible since the propositions were not placed officially before it.<sup>42</sup>

The Bulletin argued that citizens frequently express the wish for a "hard-headed business administration" for the schools and that the DeBey plan was actually in accordance with such good business principles. It used the analogy that successful firms are those which adopt the suggestions of their employees for improved business practices and that such

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<sup>42</sup> "New Principle in School Management," Chicago Teachers' Federation Bulletin 5, No. 9, (February 2, 1906), 1-5.

policies insure in the employees both interest in and loyalty to the firm. In the case of the schools, however, it contended that teachers had become frightened of attracting the unfavorable notice of the board by making suggestions for improvement; they feared being "snubbed" or even transferred should they do so. Thus, the Bulletin claimed, teachers not only had their lips "hermetically sealed," but worse, "their minds gradually close up and cease to work upon educational problems in their broad aspects and they develop . . . into sycophants, cowards and 'stupids'." The Bulletin argued that the chief merit of the plan was that everyone "from the superintendent and the members of the Board of Education to the humblest teacher" would have their influence and worth measured only by "his ability to put brains into his work"--that all would have the "opportunity and the privilege of cooperating and contributing to the common good up to the limits of their power."<sup>43</sup>

#### Other Issues

The DeBey Plan did, in fact, disappear from public discussion within a few weeks; it would, as had been predicted, return to the forefront of public discussion in the fall of 1906, after the appointment by Dunne of seven more Board members. But the Board continued to make headlines. Several particularly thorny issues were addressed in the

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

spring of 1906; they included segregated schooling, the problem of textbook selection, and the process used for promotion of teachers.

In the early twentieth century, segregation in the schools referred not to race but to sex. The issue arose from what Tyack and Hansot call the "boy problem . . . boys did not do as well in school as girls"<sup>44</sup> as most notably evidenced by the fact that drop-out rates for boys were consistently higher than those for girls. This problem led to a feeling during the Progressive period at the beginning of the century that schooling should be differentiated rather than identical for boys and girls. Tyack and Hansot argue that, in contrast with the common school ideal of a standardized curriculum for children of all classes, ethnic groups, religions and sexes, the Progressives objected to a "one-size-fits all" education and began to rely on a new "'science' of education that justified differential treatment on apparently objective grounds" such as intelligence and vocational aptitude tests. The Progressives did not base their arguments for differential treatment on any presumed cognitive differences between the sexes, but rather on the assumption that boys and girls needed to be prepared for different futures. The Progressives argued that the root cause of male academic failings lay "not in male genes but in

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<sup>44</sup> David Tyack and Elizabeth Hansot. Learning Together. (New Haven: Yale University, Press, 1990), 166.

a defective school system."<sup>45</sup> Thus they argued that segregation was a form of "compensatory education for boys," although they contended that separate classes would benefit girls as well. While most reformers did not argue for separate schools, they did seek segregated sections in such classes as English and mathematics, as well as some electives which would appeal to one or the other sex.<sup>46</sup>

In Chicago, the issue came to a head in the spring of 1906 over an experiment in limited segregation which had begun in 1904 at the Englewood High School on Chicago's South Side. J. E. Armstrong, Englewood's principal, had been alarmed over finding that boys not only constituted less than one-third of the school's graduates, they consistently had lower grade point averages. Thus he proposed segregated classes in certain subjects during the first two years of high school.<sup>47</sup> In an address to the Seventh Annual Congress of Mothers, State of Illinois, Armstrong summarized his rationale for segregated education: girls were by nature designed to look at life through a microscope, boys through a telescope; nature designed girls to prepare to take their mothers' places, boys needed to think more seriously of life and of what they were

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 170.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid. p. 179.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. 179-80.

going to make of themselves. Thus education should "train each to specialize, so that there shall be one distinct type for the noblest manhood and another for the most superior womanhood."<sup>48</sup>

The Englewood experiment had been under way for nearly two years when it was raised as an issue before the Dunne Board. At its meeting on February 5, 1906, the Board agreed to test the efficacy of the plan. The next entering class would be divided into three test groups: one all male, one all female and one mixed. However, at the next meeting of the School Management Committee, Jane Addams and Cornelia DeBey argued for revocation of the Board's permission for Armstrong to continue his experiment in segregation. Although the Committee refused to revoke the permission, they did accede to Addams' request for a study of the upper elementary grades and the high schools to try to determine why boys left school early. Both Addams and DeBey spoke out publicly against segregation by sex. The Record-Herald quoted Addams as saying that "I do not in the least favor segregation but believe in coeducation, even in the universities," while DeBey added that "Segregation is retrogressive in everything that is fundamental in education."<sup>49</sup> The Teachers' Federation

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<sup>48</sup> J. E. Armstrong. "Limited Segregation," an address before the Seventh Annual Congress of Mothers, State of Illinois, May 23, 1903.

<sup>49</sup> Chicago Record-Herald. February 7, 1906, 9.

Bulletin quoted DeBey on the subject at length. DeBey denounced segregation as being produced by the "demands of the superficial thinker of the Stanley Hall educational plan,<sup>50</sup> whose theories are false, also the methods that illustrate such theories." DeBey argued that it was not segregation that would solve the schools' problems; what was needed were radical changes in the system: "fewer students to the room, better equipment, . . . greater freedom of opportunity for teachers, and more initiative permitted to the entire teaching staff." Her conclusion: "if we are spared the frantic efforts of morbid reformers, we shall work our own salvation under the existing plan."<sup>51</sup>

Following Addams' suggestion, in April Superintendent Cooley appointed a special committee to investigate why the drop-out rate was so high for boys. In addition to Board members Addams, DeBey, Plamondon and O'Ryan, the committee included Cooley himself, Ella Flagg Young, and representatives of the principals' and teachers' associations, as well as a

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<sup>50</sup> G. Stanley Hall, President of Clarke University and a practitioner of the new science of psychology, argued that there were such fundamental biological differences between adolescent girls and boys that they ought to be taught separately. Although Hall agreed that girls were capable of mastering the same subject matter as boys, he argued that academic competition with boys would put such stress on girls as to interfere with the development of their reproductive organs, to the ultimate detriment of the race. Tyack and Hansot, 146-7.

<sup>51</sup> "Segregation is Bogey," Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin, February 23, 1906, 2.



parent. The results of the investigation, as published in the Record-Herald, were surprising. "When the inquiry [on why pupils quit school] was commenced, it was supposed that more boys than girls quit school, but the contrary was shown." Out of a total of 1,013 drop-outs surveyed, 456 were boys and 557 girls. Nearly half the boys (44.5%) but only 12.2% of the girls left to seek employment and 14.5% of the boys and 13.5% of the girls to attend business college or other schools. The inconclusive nature of the survey is demonstrated by the fact that 41% of the boys' and a whopping 74.3% of the girls' reasons for leaving were simply listed as "Miscellaneous." These results also ran contrary to trends in the rest of the country. Tyack and Hansot demonstrate, for example, that in 1907 girls constituted 61 percent of students in the twelfth grade nationwide.<sup>52</sup>

The final vote on whether to continue the Englewood experiment was taken in September 1906, where it was approved by a vote of 15-6. Addams, DeBey and Ritter, plus three new members appointed by Dunne in July 1906, were the only opponents. One of the most vocal opponents of the Teachers' Federation and of "radical" educational reforms, the Rev. R. A. White, used DeBey's own rhetoric against the proposal.

"What is this cry I have heard for democracy in the schools?" demanded Dr. White. . . . "I have been

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<sup>52</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, May 15, 1906, 16. Tyack and Hansot, 171.

told that the people [have a right] to have a hand in public school administration. Now the opportunity has presented itself to bow to the wishes of the parents of the Englewood High School. . . . Our democrats are up against simon pure democracy and I call upon them to make good or take to the woods."<sup>53</sup>

The Englewood experiment continued until 1910 when Ella Flaggy Young, who had opposed it, became superintendent of the Chicago schools and Englewood became coeducational once again.<sup>54</sup>

#### Cornelia DeBey and the "School Book War"

By the spring of 1906, the relatively placid period enjoyed by the Dunne Board was coming quickly to an end, and the press was becoming increasingly hostile to what it called the Board's "radicalism." The question of textbook selection, involving as it did allegations of "pull," led to a full-scale debate. The first mention of the issue in the press came in early May when the Record Herald ran a story about Trustee Duddleston and some others beginning to collect data about the prices Chicago was paying for schoolbooks in comparison with other cities.<sup>55</sup> But it was in June that Cornelia DeBey precipitated a public debate that was to go on for several

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<sup>53</sup> "Keep Up Trial on Segregation," Chicago Tribune, September 27, 1906, 8.

<sup>54</sup> Tyack and Hansot, Learning Together, 180.

<sup>55</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, May 1, 1906, 9.

months. At the June 6 meeting of the Committee on School Management DeBey introduced a resolution that the Board should not consider any bid to furnish textbooks unless accompanied by an affidavit that the bidder was in no way a party to any form of syndicate, compact or agreement which would deny the benefits of competitive bidding to the City. At the suggestion of Trustee Plamondon, this resolution was referred to the Board's legal counsel for review. At a special Board meeting on June 11, a revised version of DeBey's proposal was presented and it was this revision that created most of the furor.<sup>56</sup>

The text of the amended resolution required that whenever the Superintendent recommended any textbook for adoption he should give, in writing, both his reasons for recommending the book and his method of selection. It also provided that at the request of any Board member, the Superintendent must give, in writing, his reasons for dropping any book, and finally, that the Superintendent maintain a file of all recommendations made to him about adopting specific books.<sup>57</sup>

The newspaper stories elaborated on the debates over the DeBey resolution in great detail. They quoted DeBey as saying that her resolution was aimed at the American Book Company,

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<sup>56</sup> Anita McCormick Blaine papers, Wisconsin Historical Society.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

claiming that the company dictated the selection of teachers, principals and superintendents all over the country. When pushed as to whether she was directly charging impropriety in the awarding of textbook contracts in Chicago, DeBey denied it, saying she was speaking of the "country at large."<sup>58</sup> The press immediately linked DeBey's charges to the Teachers' Federation and a "plot" against Superintendent Cooley. The Tribune, for example, raised the spectre of the new Board appointees to be made by Mayor Dunne in a few weeks. Because Trustee Plamondon had announced his intention of retiring, Dunne would be appointing eight new members, enough to create a majority on the Board.

The . . . charge was made that the federationists would appoint anti-Cooley members to fill the eight vacancies which will occur at the end of the present school year. In addition to the dismissal of Supt. Cooley, a number of radical changes . . . were said to be contemplated. Among these were: Abolition of the board of district superintendents; Retirement on a pension of all the present district superintendents, with the exception of Miss Ella C. Sullivan; Abolition of secret marking system as established by Supt. Cooley; Abolition of Supt. Cooley's new promotional merit system.

The federationists are said to be relying on Mayor Dunne to appoint eight anti-Cooleyites when the eight vacancies occur next month. With these eight voices and the votes of Trustees DeBey, Kuflewski, Ritter and Harding, the federation would have twelve votes--a safe majority.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> "Calls the Trust School Dictator," Chicago Tribune, June 9, 1906, 4.

<sup>59</sup> "Charges a Plot Against Cooley," Chicago Tribune, June 11, 1906, 3.

It will be seen that the Tribune was correct in some of its predictions--secret marking and the promotional system were in fact to generate major controversies in the coming years.

The "school book wars" continued over the next several weeks and the press continued to treat the issue as being fomented by the Teachers' Federation. DeBey continued to make charges--usually unsubstantiated--about the role of the textbook companies, while George Duddleston fueled the fire by offering a resolution creating a permanent Board subcommittee on textbook selection--an indirect criticism of the Superintendent who had always been "intrusted [sic] with the power of initiative in the selection of textbooks."<sup>60</sup> Margaret Haley denied any anti-Cooley conspiracy. She took the position that the newspaper agitation was designed to prejudice Mayor Dunne against the Federation so that Dunne's next appointees would be individuals who would oppose the teachers' position on the tax fight.<sup>61</sup>

In spite of the fact that at its June 29 meeting the Board approved the textbooks recommended by Cooley, the issue did not go away. George Duddleston re-opened the question with the press, announcing that he intended to "compel" the Board to take textbook selection out of the hands of the

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<sup>60</sup> "Crisis in School Book Fight Near," Chicago Tribune, June 28, 1906, 3.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

Superintendent. Duddleston and other trustees introduced yet another point of controversy when they pointed out that the Cooley-endorsed textbooks were not printed by union labor, while the Wheeler readers recommended by their "faction" were done in union shops. Trustees O'Ryan and Ritter then entered the fray with charges that Chicago was paying more than other cities for identical textbooks. At its July 5th meeting the Board appointed a special committee to select textbooks; Jane Addams served as its chair and other members included Mrs. Blaine, Dr. DeBey, Mr. Ritter and Mr. Weil.<sup>62</sup>

The textbook problem would continue for several months, following Dunne's appointment of eight new Board members in mid-July. Chapter 5 will return to the subject but before then it is important to look at one other issue which was to become increasingly prominent--the means by which teachers were promoted.

#### The Cooley Promotional Plan

One of the most divisive issues to confront the Dunne School Board during its two years was that of the method for promotion of teachers. While this came to a head under the "Second Dunne Board" (that including the new appointments of July 1906) and thus will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5, some preliminary skirmishing took place as early as the spring

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<sup>62</sup> "Says Dear Books Are Extra Good," Chicago Tribune, July 6, 1906, 6.

of 1906. The point at issue was the plan for teacher promotion which was currently in place. At the beginning of the controversy the provision which caused the greatest complaints among teachers was the method by which a teacher's "competency" (critical in terms of decisions about promotion or retention) was to be determined. According to the system developed by Superintendent Cooley and approved by an earlier Board:

The competency records of teachers are kept by means of secret percentage marks made semi-annually by their respective principals and equalized by the Board of District Superintendents, the teacher being informed only as to whether they are above or below the mark of 80 and of 70, and of the fact that she is reduced below her marking of the previous year.<sup>63</sup>

To the teachers, the secrecy surrounding this process had grown to be a major grievance. To much of the press, the teachers' objections were trivial. Typical was the Tribune editorial writer who argued:

These marks are not secret. They are known to the principal, to the superintendent and his assistants and to the board. They are not told to the teacher . . . . No useful purpose would be served.<sup>64</sup>

At a special meeting of the School Management Committee on April 18, 1906, Cornelia DeBey and P. Shelley O'Ryan raised the issue of the marking of teachers. As usual, press

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<sup>63</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 5, No. 36, (October 19, 1906), 2.

<sup>64</sup> "Marking Schoolteachers," editorial, Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1906, 8.

reaction was to look for the hidden hand of the Teachers' Federation.

The Chicago Teachers' Federation will begin today its active fight in the board of education to abolish the system of marking teachers established by Supt. Cooley. A special meeting of the committee on school management has been called for this afternoon, in which the so-called [sic] "secret marking system" will be investigated. Catherine Goggin . . . will attend the meeting to report progress to the federation and to Margaret Haley, its leader.

. . . "To abolish the secret marking system would be to put the Teachers' federation in the saddle," declared a member of the school board yesterday.<sup>65</sup>

In an apparent attempt to defuse the criticism of the marking system, Supt. Cooley took the initiative by proposing to the Board changes in the promotional system. Teachers seeking promotion could, as in the past, take a special promotional examination, or, under Cooley's new proposal, they could take courses at the Normal School or some other institution of higher education. This proposal was passed at the regular meeting of the School Management Committee on May 11 by a vote of 5-4 (Dudley, Chvatal, Plamondon, Hayes and Sethness for; Addams, DeBey, Blaine and O'Ryan against). Cooley and his supporters argued that the new system would eliminate "fossils" in the school system--i.e., teachers who obtained teaching jobs and then "let the clock work," advancing in pay by virtue of seniority rather than merit.

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<sup>65</sup> "To Hear Teachers' Woes," Chicago Tribune, April 18, 1906, 9.



Addams' position in opposing the Cooley proposal was consistent with the views expressed in her autobiography, in which she expressed her apprehension about the practice of creating a strong superintendency with almost unlimited authority.

These business men [on earlier Chicago boards of education] established an able superintendent with a large salary. . . . They instituted impersonal examinations for the teachers ... and then proceeded "to hold the superintendent responsible" for smooth-running schools. All this however dangerously approximated the commercialistic ideal of high salaries only for the management. . . .<sup>66</sup>

In a draft of her autobiography, Margaret Haley gives her version of the controversy. Having been invited by Jane Addams, in her capacity as Chairman of the School Management Committee, to meet at Hull House with Addams and DeBey to discuss Cooley's proposal, Haley took the position that an issue of this importance should be presented to the teachers as a body for their input.

I insisted that the teaching body of Chicago not only could be trusted to discuss such a scheme, but that any assumption that they were not both competent to discuss it and honest and fair minded and willing to do the right thing was an insult to the core. I said the only fair thing to do is to devise means by which this scheme could be presented to groups of teachers sufficiently small and under such conditions as to warrant free opportunity for each teacher to inform herself and to express herself with freedom.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Jane Addams. Twenty Years at Hull House, 192.

<sup>67</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation papers, Chicago Historical Society, "Fifteenth installment" draft of Haley autobiography, Box 32, Folder 3.

According to Haley, Addams and DeBey agreed with her about the need for teacher input, and Addams agreed to use her position as Chairman of the Committee to take this up with Cooley. Cooley, however, was less than enthusiastic, as Haley's account continues:

Mr. Cooley called Miss Adams [sic] up and then went over to Hull House to see her and told her that he had consulted with his friends the editors of the Chicago papers and they had told him that he did not need to yield to the teachers, that Carter Harrison was going to be nominated again, Mayor Dunn [sic] would be down and out and that he [Cooley] would not need to do it, to hold on.<sup>68</sup>

When the Cooley promotional plan was taken to the Board as a whole, the result was a stormy session, at the end of which the plan was approved. Backers of the plan treated it as a vote of confidence for Cooley himself; criticism of the plan was interpreted as criticism of Cooley and various speakers, including Ella Flagg Young, herself often a critic of the superintendent, spoke out in his "defense." Young argued that the Cooley plan was a move toward further professionalization of the teachers and expressed her surprise that teachers might oppose it. The final version of the plan provided that, to be eligible for promotion, teachers must receive an "efficiency mark" of 80 or more from her principal (still under the "secret marking" system). The teacher could then either take an examination or a series of courses to

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

demonstrate her eligibility for promotion.<sup>69</sup> For the moment, at least, the issue appeared to be settled, as Chicagoans, Board, press, and teachers awaited Dunne's next round of appointments.

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<sup>69</sup> "E. G. Cooley Routs Teachers Union: Superintendent's Merit Plan for Promotions is Upheld by the Board of Education," Chicago Tribune, May 24, 1906, 1.

## CHAPTER 4

### THE DUNNE MAJORITY: SECOND DUNNE APPOINTMENTS

As the time approached for Dunne to name the next eight members of the Board<sup>1</sup> the Chicago newspapers, in both news stories and editorial pages, began to get more and more shrill in their cries for new members who would support Cooley, oppose the Teachers' Federation and eschew "radical" ideas. Although Cooley had been re-elected as superintendent at the June 20 meeting of the board, his margin was narrow--only eleven votes were cast for him and seven blank ballots were cast. Typical was the Record-Herald editorial of June 22 which accused Board members who opposed Cooley as "cloak[ing] ulterior objects with a superficial mask of educational interest." The editorial went on to say:

If Superintendent Cooley were beaten now it would be a triumph of evil. . . . If he is refused district superintendents who will cooperate with him sympathetically, if instead persons hostile to him are made his lieutenants, the foundations of more "anarchy" will be deliberately laid. Dunne's new appointees will either promote or suppress

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<sup>1</sup> There were six Board members whose terms were due to expire in June: Board President Tilden, Edwin Rowland, Emilius Dudley, John Fetzer, P. Shelley O'Ryan and Rev. R. A. White. The death of Michael Shields and the resignation of Charles Plamondon created the remaining two vacancies.

anarchy.<sup>2</sup>

The Daily News took a less hysterical tack, arguing that Cooley had been a superintendent who did "all in his power to render the course of training [in the schools] as good as possible, keeping in view the interests of the children and shunning political and personal influences of every sort." Thus public opinion ought to make itself known in support of Cooley. "If the people approve of the superintendent's course they ought to say so and thus endeavor to put a stop to the plottings of individuals who wish to use the schools for their own purposes."<sup>3</sup>

#### The New Appointments

On July 10, Dunne submitted the names of eight School Board nominees to the Chicago City Council for confirmation. There was little dissent, although Alderman William Pringle of the Third Ward introduced what was to become a common theme among newspaper editorialists over the coming year when he commented that among the eight nominees "some are agitators and some are radicals" and that most had no financial ability or experience. Pringle, a former school principal, tried to have the nominations submitted to the Council's committee on

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<sup>2</sup> "Cooley and the School Board," Editorial, Chicago Record-Herald, June 22, 1906, 8.

<sup>3</sup> "The Superintendent of Schools," Editorial, Chicago Daily News, June 21, 1906, 8.

schools, but Alderman Cullerton, a Dunne ally, moved immediate ratification of the slate and this was done by a vote of 59 to 1, Pringle remaining the sole opposition.<sup>4</sup> There were, this time, no women among the new appointments who were:

Wiley W. Mills (to replace Edwin Rowland)  
 Raymond Robins (to replace Edward Tilden)  
 Louis F. Post (to replace Emilius Dudley)  
 Philip Angsten (to replace Charles Plamondon)  
 John J. Sonstebly (to replace John Fetzer)  
 Dr. John Guerin (to replace Michael Shields)  
 P. Shelley O'Ryan (to succeed himself)  
 Rev. R. A. White (to succeed himself).

According to Margaret Haley, the agreement which Mayor Dunne had made with Jane Addams the previous year as to her giving approval to new Board members extended to these new appointments:

In passing I wish to say that Mayor Dunne kept his word [to Addams] and when the time came to appoint the second group of Board members Miss Adams [sic], Mr. Post, Mr. Ritter, Dr. Debay [sic] Mr. Harding and myself had a conference with Mayor Dunn [sic] at his home and we went over the list of appointments.

. . . Mr. Post [made the same stipulations as Addams had made] . . . Namely, that the Mayor should appoint a sufficient number of others to make it possible to put into effect the educational policy and the fiscal policy in which Miss Adams and Mr. Post believed. There [sic] were entirely agreed on this question in regard to the finances

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<sup>4</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, July 10, 1906, p. 1. "Radicals Put in School Control," Chicago Tribune, July 10, 1906, 1.

and the establishment of the educational system on a democratic basis as against an autocracy.<sup>5</sup>

The Tribune speculated on the possible voting alliances on the new Board. They complained that with the new members "the city's school affairs, including the disbursement of millions of dollars in the school fund, will now pass into the control of the Teachers' federation." In what they termed the Teachers' Federation "camp" they placed holdover members Kuflewski, DeBey, Harding and Ritter plus six new or reappointed members: O'Ryan, Post, Robins, Mills, Sonstebly and Guerin. If this group were to vote as a bloc, it would be just one short of a simple majority of all Board members. Members Addams, Spiegel and Angsten were listed as "Independent" while Weil, Duddleston, and Chvatal were characterized as "Independent but anti-Cooley." Finally, Blaine, Hayes, Sethness, Keough and White were listed as "Independent for Cooley." Summarizing this alignment, the Tribune speculated that there would be ten trustees "certain to vote with the Federation next year," with the possibility of securing the crucial eleventh vote either from one of the three "independents" or the three "avowedly anti-Cooley" holdover members.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Margaret Haley. Unpublished early draft of her autobiography Battleground. Chicago Teachers' Federation papers, Chicago Historical Society, Box 32, Folder 2, pp. 184-5.

<sup>6</sup> Chicago Tribune, July 10, 1906, 1.

The eight new members were a diverse group. For example, the two holdovers, White and O'Ryan, represented opposite ends of the ideological spectrum: O'Ryan was an Irish Catholic, strongly identified with issues of Irish independence and with the land league, while White, a personal friend of Mayor Dunne's, was the pastor of the Stewart Avenue People's Liberal Church and a leading representative of the City's liberal Protestant "establishment." Although White was never identified as being involved in such Progressive causes as the settlement house movement, he was the founder of the Children's Home and Aid Society of Illinois and was interested in child welfare questions. While O'Ryan had always been supportive of the Teachers' Federation cause, White had been one of their most vocal opponents. However, at least at the beginning of the new term, White was willing to give his new colleagues the benefit of the doubt, and he objected vigorously to the newspapers' penchant for categorizing Board members solely according to their positions on issues relating to the Federation. The Tribune quoted White as issuing a "veritable trumpet blast" in which he characterized the board as "twenty-one men and women, honest in their convictions, appointed to serve to the best of their ability."<sup>7</sup>

Dr. John Guerin was appointed to fill the seat of deceased Michael Shields as a representative of Chicago's

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<sup>7</sup> "O'Ryan Steps Out in Ritter's Favor," Chicago Tribune, July 11, 1907, 2.



Roman Catholic population. Described (at age 67) as one of the "oldest" physicians in Chicago, Guerin also had solid political connections, having been City Physician during the 1870s and later a member of the state legislature. Guerin apparently suffered from the same problems that have regularly plagued Catholics involved in public education; he occasionally felt the need to issue statements defending himself from charges of opposition to a public school system and disassociating himself from the parochial schools.<sup>8</sup>

John Sonsteby came from the ranks of the labor movement. An organizer and former president of the Garment Workers' Union, Sonsteby had served as an officer of the city-wide Federation of Labor for several years. The Tribune described him as a "radical" union man who had already publicly expressed his dissatisfaction with Superintendent Cooley's administration of the schools. With John Harding, who had been appointed in 1905, this now meant that the Board had two members formally affiliated with organized labor (and, therefore, presumably sympathetic to the position of the Teachers' Federation). Only 27 years old at the time of his appointment in 1906, Sonsteby also began to practice law during this year. He was to continue in public life for many years; his career was climaxed, in 1930, by his election as

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

the Chief Justice of the Municipal Court of Chicago.<sup>9</sup>

At first glance, Philip Angsten came closest to the traditional image of businessman as trustee. He was senior member of the family-owned cooperage firm of Angsten and Son and also involved in the building contracting business, from which he had "acquired a fortune." Politically, however, he was less typical--the Record Herald described him as "an independent Democrat, with strong leanings toward Socialism." Angsten was an enthusiastic supporter of Dunne's ideas on municipal ownership. While Sonsteby and Guerin were categorized by the Tribune as falling into the group of trustees who would be dominated by the Teachers' Federation, Angsten, together with holdover members Addams and Spiegel, was considered an Independent, neither pro- nor anti-Cooley.<sup>10</sup>

Wiley W. Mills had made his reputation as a politician. In April of 1906 he had run as candidate for alderman of the 35th Ward, on Chicago's West Side, on an "I.M.O." (Immediate Municipal Ownership) platform, but was defeated. Like Guerin and Sonsteby, he was classified by the Tribune as a supporter of the Teachers' Federation.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Edward F. Dunne, Illinois, Heart of the Nation, Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 191.

<sup>10</sup> "Radicals Put in School Control," Chicago Tribune, July 10, 1906, 1. "Board of Education Nominees Confirmed," Chicago Record-Herald, July 10, 1906, 1.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

Perhaps the most colorful of the new appointees was sociologist Raymond Robins. Robins, although to a lesser extent than his new colleague on the Board, Jane Addams, was to achieve national stature as one of the group of progressive reformers involved in the settlement house movement, labor reform and a variety of other civic reform activities.<sup>12</sup> Robins had been active in the 1905 mayoral election--but as a supporter of John Harlan, Dunne's opponent. However, within a few days of the election, Robins sent Dunne a letter in which he disclaimed belonging to the group of "unconscious anarchists" who sought to discredit the new Dunne administration, and he offered his services to Dunne in any capacity. Dunne responded appreciatively, and thus began a friendship and collaboration in public affairs which was to last for many years.<sup>13</sup> Like Dunne, Robins was deeply committed to the movement for municipal ownership and, in fact, served as a member of the Executive Committee of the Municipal Ownership League of Chicago.

Robins was born in 1873 in New York, where his family had migrated at the end of the Civil War. According to one source, Robins' father, who had been deeply committed to the

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<sup>12</sup> The friendship between Addams and Robins was to continue for the rest of their lives. When, in 1931, Robins developed amnesia and disappeared for several months, Addams' nephew and biographer James Linn described the months before he was found as "full of anguish" for her.

<sup>13</sup> Raymond Robins papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Box 2.

Confederacy, was so depressed and disillusioned at its defeat that he moved to Staten Island rather than remain in the South which would have "too painful a reminder of all that he felt was lost."<sup>14</sup> Robins' early life was as unusual and adventuresome as any story in the popular fiction of the day, combining elements of Jack London and Horatio Alger. As a young man Robins was attracted to the study of the law, but he was also active in various business ventures and before he was 21 years old he had made a small fortune with the discovery of a rich lode of feldspar. However, he "began to find it increasingly difficult to devote his life to getting rich under circumstances in which the getting of much money by some is so likely to mean loss to others" and returned to the study of law, being admitted to the Florida bar shortly after his 21st birthday. His reading of Henry George's Progress and Poverty made him an enthusiast of the single tax and he quickly learned to combine the practice of law with the practice of politics in support of this and other progressive causes.<sup>15</sup> Robins' restless spirit soon tired of the practice of law and in 1897 he joined hundreds of other adventurers in the Klondyke gold rush. While in Alaska he was involved in

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<sup>14</sup> Hugh Camitta. " Raymond Robins: Study of a Progressive, 1901-1917," Unpublished Masters Thesis, (Williams College, May, 1965).

<sup>15</sup> Louis F. Post. Raymond Robins: A Biographical Sketch. Raymond Robins Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society, Box 2.

some remarkable adventures but, most important for this narrative, he also experienced a religious conversion which led to his becoming a minister and also to his committing his life to social welfare activities.

Before he left Alaska he made a vow to dedicate his money and his time for the rest of his life to bettering the economic conditions of the laboring man, to improving the character of government, and to developing and strengthening the moral sanctions in society.<sup>16</sup>

Like many other leaders of the Progressive movement, Robins saw the settlement house movement as an appropriate and practical place to concentrate his efforts for reform. He subsequently moved to Chicago where he went to Graham Taylor's new Chicago Commons settlement and offered to work there at his own expense. He subsequently became superintendent of the Municipal Lodging House and also began what was to become a lifelong career of public lecturing on various social issues. He was apparently a remarkable speaker; the Robins papers are filled with testimonials from people who had heard him speak and who found him both fascinating and inspirational. According to Allen Davis, he "was considered by many second only to William Jennings Bryan as an orator."<sup>17</sup>

In 1905 Robins met and married Margaret Dreier, the

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<sup>16</sup> Allen F. Davis, "Raymond Robins: The Settlement Worker as Municipal Reformer," Social Service Review 33, No. 2, June 1959, 133.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 135.

daughter of a wealthy Brooklyn family who was herself an activist in progressive causes, most notably those dealing with women in the labor movement. (She was serving as President of the New York Women's Trade Union League at the time she met Robins.) Although Robins had amassed a comfortable fortune from his various ventures and his wife's family was also wealthy, they lived in a small cold-water tenement flat, an attempt to identify with the poor and needy they were trying to aid.<sup>18</sup> After their marriage, Margaret was to continue to be an activist in various causes, usually related to the woman's trade union movement, serving as president both of the National Women's Trade Union League and of its Chicago branch, which she had founded, until her retirement in 1922.<sup>19</sup>

Robins' enthusiastic support for municipal ownership was to prove hazardous. In February 1906, prior to his appointment to the Board of Education, the Chicago newspapers told the dramatic story of an attack on him; he was severely beaten by three men with brass knuckles. Although the assailants were never identified, the widely accepted theory on the part of the press was that the beating occurred because of Robins' work on an advisory committee to the Municipal

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<sup>18</sup> Camitta, Raymond Robins, 47-48.

<sup>19</sup> Watkins, T.H. Righteous Pilgrim: The Life and Times of Harold L. Ickes, 1874-1952, New York: Henry Holt, 1990, 92.

Ownership League which was investigating men who wanted to be aldermanic candidates on the M.O. ticket--one news story cited an unnamed informant as saying that if he "persisted in exposing the crookedness of certain men who desired to become candidates . . . he would suffer bodily harm."<sup>20</sup> Robins was also active in the movement for charter reform which was occurring in Chicago at this time and which was to interact with the fortunes of Mayor Dunne and his appointed Board of Education during the coming year.

The new appointee who was ultimately to generate the most controversy was newspaperman Louis Post, editor of the liberal, single-tax journal The Public. Together with Cornelia DeBey, Post was to take the leadership role in many of the more "radical" proposals of the Board and these two were to become the particular targets of newspaper editorialists and cartoonists critical of the "Dunne School Board."

Post's background was an unlikely one for a man who was regularly characterized by his opponents as a crank and a radical. One of his ancestors had come to Massachusetts as early as 1633 and fifth generation Posts fought in the American Revolution. Post himself was born in New York where he attended a one-room school and enjoyed a Tom Sawyer-type boyhood. As a young man he trained as a typesetter and

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<sup>20</sup> Chicago Daily News, February 17, 1906, 6.

printer but like many other young men of his day he also studied law and was admitted to the New York bar in 1870, at the age of 21.<sup>21</sup> While studying for the bar, Post also mastered the then-new skill of taking shorthand, and it was as a law clerk and stenographer that Post then went to South Carolina. Unlike the family of Raymond Robins, Post's family had been strong supporters of the Union and for Post the move to the South was an opportunity to visit places made romantic in his mind by childhood tales of Civil War valor. Part of Post's job during this period involved taking testimony about activities of the Ku Klux Klan and this appears to have stimulated his interest in racial problems.<sup>22</sup> Like his fellow School Board members Jane Addams and Raymond Robins, Post was to remain interested in the issue of civil rights, not only for black citizens but for all citizens, for the rest of his life. In a book written in 1923, Post described his on-going association with Addams over the issue of the deportations of suspected "radicals" or "Reds" during the early 1920s. He writes that although Addams had been denounced as a "dangerous radical" by the "supervisors of American thought who sprang up at that time," in reality the word radical was an

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<sup>21</sup> Stuart Portner. "Louis Freeland Post: His Life and Times." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, (University of Michigan, 1940), 6-8.

<sup>22</sup> Louis Post. Living a Long Life Over Again. Unpublished manuscript, hand-numbered page 75.



"unintentional tribute" linking Addams with the Republican Party of the 1860s which had also been stigmatized as "radical."<sup>23</sup> Certainly Post himself was to frequently seem to revel in being called a radical during his stormy tenure on the Board of Education.

By 1872 Post had married and returned to the practice of law in New York, but by 1873, as he wryly observed, "my law practice had given me notice, quietly but impressively, that I could not depend upon it for support." As a result of his activities on behalf of the Republican party he obtained an appointment in the office of the U.S. Attorney. He was rapidly disillusioned--the New York Republicans (which he believed to be the only truly democratic party) soon seemed to him to fall into a "Tammany type of political degeneration."<sup>24</sup> For most of his life Post was to call himself a political Independent, although he was to serve as an Assistant Secretary of Labor for eight years under the administration of Democratic President Woodrow Wilson.

Post reserved his greatest enthusiasm for social causes. In the early 1880s, while writing for the penny newspaper Truth, Post published a hasty criticism of Henry George's Progress and Poverty. This led to a meeting with

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<sup>23</sup> Louis F. Post. The Deportations Delirium of Nineteen-Twenty. (Chicago: Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1923), 322.

<sup>24</sup> Post, Living a Long Life, 149-150.

George; the two men became fast friends and Post an ardent lifelong supporter of George's single-tax position. In the 1890s Post moved to Chicago with his second wife, Alice Thacher, and in 1898 the two established the journal The Public, which was devoted to promulgating George's ideas and was sympathetic to various other liberal causes of the day. Post was also active in such causes as the Municipal Voters League and Dunne's crusade for municipal ownership of traction.<sup>25</sup> Post proposed Dunne's candidacy for mayor in the pages of The Public, and had been a member of the Committee of 100 which was formed to aid Dunne's candidacy in 1905.<sup>26</sup>

When Dunne first approached Post in 1906 to become a member of the Board of Education, Post declined on the grounds that he could neither spare the time nor afford the expenses of this non-salaried position. In his memoirs Post castigates the no-salary feature of School Board service, arguing that while its advocates claimed this permitted "men of leisure to serve the public without financially burdening it with salaries," in reality this practice permitted "'men of leisure' to make something 'on the side' out of school site purchases and school-land rentals." When Margaret Haley learned that Post had declined the position, she went, on her

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<sup>25</sup> Dumas Malone, ed. Dictionary of American Biography. Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1935, 118-119.

<sup>26</sup> Portner, Louis Freeland Post, 231.

own initiative, to Post's friend Tom Johnson, Mayor of Cleveland and noted municipal reformer. Johnson agreed to underwrite Post's expenses as a Board member and also to pay the salary of a staff person for The Public to compensate for the time Post would have to take from his professional duties. Post then accepted the nomination.<sup>27</sup> In the years to follow, Post would regularly be accused by Chicago newspapers of being Johnson's "tool" on the Board. Certainly Johnson was one of Post's heroes; he dedicated to Johnson his biography of Henry George, written in 1930. The biography again underscores Post's lifelong enthusiasm for "radical," anti-establishment positions. Post had served as one of George's honorary pallbearers, and he approvingly quotes from the eulogy which praised George most for his attacks on "established institutions," again using the analogy of the attacks on Lincoln, Sumner, Garrison and other early Republicans who threatened such institutions and were attacked by press and pulpit.<sup>28</sup> This perspective does much to explain Post's own determination when he and his fellow "radical" Board members would in their turn be assailed in newspaper stories and

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<sup>27</sup> Louis Post. Living a Long Life Over Again. Unpublished manuscript. Post adds that the total amount paid by Johnson, which included "office room and equipment, clerk hire, legal expenses and miscellaneous expenses for assistance in my editorial work" came to \$2,303.60 and that he "received no more from him, and nothing from anybody else."

<sup>28</sup> Louis F. Post, The Prophet of San Francisco (New York: Vanguard Press, 1930), 186.

sermons alike.

Post and Robins, together with previous appointee Cornelia DeBey, were undoubtedly the most colorful members of the 1906-07 Chicago School Board, and Post and DeBey were to prove the most controversial, regularly sponsoring proposals which brought cries of outrage from press and pulpit alike.

#### Early Rumblings from the Press

In his memoirs, Post cites two of Chicago's major newspapers, the Tribune and the Daily News, as being particularly "deliberate and vicious" in their policies of attacking the actions of the Dunne Board of Education, policies which he attributes to the Tribune's vested interest due to their rental of Board-owned property and to the influence of News owner Victor Lawson, "also a beneficiary of those frauds."<sup>29</sup> There was some basis for Post's apparent paranoia; even before Dunne's 1906 appointments were made the Daily News was bemoaning the fact that the school system was "in imminent danger of overthrow at the hands of a curious combination of radicals, dreamers and others who have supplanted many of the capable board members of former years," adding that "The mayor is expected to carry re-enforcements to this restless minority within the next few days, thus transforming it into a majority." The editorialist writes admiringly of the successful businessmen who had comprised

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<sup>29</sup> Louis F. Post, Living a Long Life, 305.

earlier boards and speculates upon the probable deterioration of the quality of Board membership following Dunne's anticipated nominations. While acknowledging that "two or three" of Dunne's 1905 appointees had been "excellent," (Jane Addams, for example, always remained "untouchable" and immune from criticism even at the peak of opposition to various Board proposals) the writer makes the assumption that any new appointees would be "demagogues" and servants of "class interests" (i.e., the Teachers' Federation).<sup>30</sup> Dunne's actual appointments did nothing to mollify or reassure the press; less than a week after expressing the above sentiments, the Daily News editorial pages characterized the new members as showing Dunne to be a "catspaw of a few inflamed enemies of the best system of school administration Chicago has ever had" who would open the doors of the Chicago schools to the "half-baked ideas" of the Teachers' Federation.<sup>31</sup> These and similar sentiments in the other major Chicago newspapers turned out to be only the opening salvos in a year-long press campaign of opposition to the activities of the Dunne School Board.

Richard Morton argues that although the Tribune may have been accurate in charging the new Board with "radical" ideas, it "grossly overrated the unity of purpose among Dunne's

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<sup>30</sup> "Deterioration of the School Board," Editorial, Chicago Daily News, July 6, 1906, 6.

<sup>31</sup> Chicago Daily News. Editorial, July 11, 1906, 6.

appointees." Morton divides Dunne's appointees into two groups: those like Addams, Robins, and Post who were community leaders with their own social agendas and philosophies, and relative unknowns like Sonstebly and Angsten who represented groups loyal to the Mayor (labor and municipal ownership). He sees the diversity of the Board as a potentially fatal flaw.

Adding to the potential chaos on the "Dunne board" was the fact that no one with the exception of Cornelia De Bey, who advocated the CTF line, seems to have had a clear plan of action.<sup>32</sup>

The first meeting of the new Board, however, was devoid of major controversy. Emil Ritter was elected President on the first ballot, in dramatic contrast to the forty-one ballots which had finally resulted in Tilden's election to the same post a year earlier. According to Richard Morton, Ritter "was a colorless, often-ignored figurehead whose election offended no one."<sup>33</sup> Jane Addams remained as Chair of the powerful School Management Committee.

Before looking at the specific activities of the Board during the 1906-07 year, it will be useful to briefly examine two other events occurring in Chicago about this time, both of which were to have implications for Mayor Dunne and his School Board. One of these was the final settlement of the teachers' back salary dispute, which had been mired in the courts for

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<sup>32</sup> Morton, Justice and Humanity, 92.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 92.

several years. The other was the growing movement for municipal reform, which led to the rise of the charter reform movement in Chicago in 1906 and 1907. Both of these events were to interact with the actions of the Board: the former because the press used the settlement of the salary case as an example of the "pernicious" relationship between Board and Teachers' Federation, the latter because several Board members were also active in the movement for charter reform and because the ultimate failure of this movement interacted in many ways with the downfall of the Dunne Board of Education. Thus it is necessary to briefly digress from the activities of the Board in order to summarize the backgrounds of these two events.

#### The Salary Dispute

As discussed in Chapter 1, the Teachers' Federation, led by Maggie Haley, had filed suit against the Board of Education for the application of part of the nearly \$600,000 in back taxes, which had been collected largely due to Haley's efforts, toward the repayment of the teachers' salaries which had been cut by an earlier Board. Dunne's decision, while serving as the judge hearing this case, that the teachers were entitled to the back salaries, had already made him unpopular with much of the business community. In 1906, the Board had voted not to continue the case in court and the way was opened for the payment of the back salaries--a munificent \$45 each--to those teachers who had been party to the suit. The press

took advantage of this "payout" to continue their attacks on the Federation and, by indirection, on Dunne.

The press coverage attacked the teachers in two somewhat contradictory ways. First, newspapers typically ridiculed the payout process and portrayed the teachers as greedy and unfeminine. One newspaper, for example, spoke of the "hurried, jostling scramble to divide the spoils"--a scramble in which only three men participated. On the other hand, the same story criticized the teachers for not sharing these "spoils" with those teachers who had not been party to the original suit--"their sisters who were too timid to sue the school board, but who insisted on sharing the proceeds of the teachers' legal victory."<sup>34</sup> None of the newspaper critics made mention of the fact that the latter action was taken at the behest of the Federation's legal counsel, who had informed them that the entire settlement would be jeopardized if the monies were shared with those teachers who had not been a party to the original suit.

#### Charter Reform

The movement for charter reform had begun in the late 1890s, part of the general movement toward urban reform which attracted many men and women in the early Progressive period.

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<sup>34</sup> "800 Teachers Rush to Get Back Salary -- Only Three Men in First Day's Scramble to Divide the \$73,980 Spoils -- Bar 100 Who Did Not Sue." Chicago Daily News, July 19, 1906, 1.



Enthusiasm for charter reform was led by members of the Civic Federation, which had concluded that the only solution for many of Chicago's problems was home rule and the consequent freedom from dependence on legislation or constitutional amendment to effect change in the city. After several years of lobbying and political activity, the Illinois legislature had finally passed an enabling amendment allowing a new charter for the City of Chicago. Since the amendment did not specify the process for selecting the men to draft the new charter, the ultimate solution was a charter convention. Much of the impetus for the charter movement came from the traction issue--municipal ownership was to be one of the major issues addressed by the new charter, along with such other thorny questions as home rule, taxation and control of the schools.

Although the convention was to be nominally non-partisan, both Chicago Republicans and Democrats had submitted plans for the composition of convention membership. In 1905, when the delegates were actually appointed, the Republicans were in control of the city council; thus their proposed plan was adopted and the charter convention was dominated by business-oriented Republicans. Mayor Dunne was able to appoint only fifteen of the seventy-four members of the convention, while all of the other appointing agents were controlled by the Republicans.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Maureen A. Flanagan, Charter Reform in Chicago (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 76-79.

By occupation, there were twenty-six lawyers, thirty-two businessmen, two social workers, one professor, and one minister. . . . Even the few ethnic delegates were mostly well-to-do businessmen; only two delegates were members of the CFL and one delegate was a black businessman. Mayor Dunne had appointed these last three members.<sup>36</sup>

Dunne's appointees included Louis Post and Raymond Robins; the appointments to the charter convention were made prior to their appointment to the School Board in June of 1906.

One of the key elements of any proposal for charter reform was to be the structure of the Chicago Board of Education. The Chicago Federation of Labor had gone on record as favoring an elected, salaried Board in which full control of the schools would be vested, rather than in a superintendent. In contrast, the City Club wanted policies which would secure a "more effective business administration and an education . . . more in accordance with the demands of modern society and business conditions." Thus from the beginning the stage was set for conflict on this issue. Press coverage of the activities of the Board and of the charter convention regularly criticized the "radical" (i.e., non-business-oriented) elements of both and linked this with their political attacks on Mayor Dunne.

Maureen Flanagan's Charter Reform in Chicago provides the comprehensive story of all aspects of the 1906 charter convention. Flanagan contends that the disputes over the

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 60-61.

nature of the public school system became the major public forum for the expression of conflicting viewpoints over the nature of urban government. The debate framed itself around the question of an elective versus an appointive Board. On the one side, business leaders and newspapers such as the Tribune urged an appointive board of "thorough-going, educated businessmen" who "should be able to speak the English language correctly. . . The Board of Education is no place for nobodies." The Chicago Federation of Labor, alarmed at the possibility that the Board would become a "preserve of businessmen," made the counterproposal that the new charter should provide for an elected, salaried board, and that control of the schools should lie in that board rather than with the superintendent.<sup>37</sup> A typical Tribune editorial responded in horror to the CFL's proposal.

One great danger to which the schools are exposed if the board is either elective or too large is that the principle of representation may creep in. . . . To have any regard for race, place of birth, or place of residence in picking out the best men to consider the needs of the children is absurd.<sup>38</sup>

Post and Robins took the lead in supporting the CFL recommendations before the convention. One of Post's proposals was a direct response to the controversies over "democratization" which continued to occupy the attention of

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 78.

<sup>38</sup> "The New Charter School Board," editorial, Chicago Tribune, December 24, 1906, 6.

the Board; he proposed that the charter guarantee the teachers direct access to the board for their suggestions on educational matters. Post defended this proposal in the editorial pages of The Public, addressing the chronic Progressive fear of "bossism" and saying that some people felt giving teachers a voice in school decisions would in fact make "the teaching body a public-school boss." In reality, he argued, his plan would eliminate any boss and "all will have the opportunity and the privilege of co-operating and contributing to the common good."<sup>39</sup> Post's idea was promptly rejected by the convention, as were several other proposals aimed at broadening the control of the schools.

Flanagan argues that, although in the rhetoric of the day the supporters of a business-dominated approach to questions of school reform called themselves "progressives," the ideas espoused by opponents of the progressives, such as Post, Robins, the CFL and the CTF, can certainly not be considered conservative. Their proposals would have made the board more democratic, providing for a voice in school decision-making from such groups as labor, new immigrants, the teaching force themselves, and the women of the city. Post articulated this aspect of the debate when he charged his fellow delegates with rejecting the proposal for an elective board because women would be able to vote for school board members as the result

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<sup>39</sup> The Public 10, May 5, 1906, 103.

of a state law passed in 1891.<sup>40</sup>

As finally drafted, the charter provided for the continuation of the system of an appointive school board, reduced in size to fifteen members. Many of the issues raised in the charter convention were to play a part in Dunne's defeat in his campaign for re-election in the spring of 1907. But the satisfaction of the reformers, the businessmen and the Republicans who supported the charter movement would be short-lived. In September 1907, Chicago voters overwhelmingly rejected its adoption. The election results were gleefully reported in The Public:

After the most exciting referendum campaign that Chicago has ever known in which the Busse city administration, the Deneen State organization, the Republican organizations of the city, the county and the State; all the newspapers except the Socialist and the Journal; and all the great business interests and social clubs of the "Loop" had united to secure its adoption, the proposed charter was overwhelmingly defeated at the special election on the 17th.<sup>41</sup>

The final vote was 121,523 against the charter, only 59,555 for it. To Maureen Flanagan, the defeat of the charter was indicative of the ambiguity of men of good will on both sides of the major issues of the day, including the problem of the public schools. Concluded Flanagan:

Neither in 1907 during the charter campaign nor now

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<sup>40</sup> Flanagan, Charter Reform in Chicago, 82-83.

<sup>41</sup> "Charter Referendum in Chicago," The Public X, September, 21, 1907, 585.

are disagreements over the school system primarily a question of personalities or party politics. Chicagoans hold different ideas about public schools. They also disagree about the nature of the urban environment and about good municipal government. On the basis of their ideas, people in Chicago adopted their positions on charter reform in 1907 and they have continued to do so on municipal issues since that time.<sup>42</sup>

Even before the first meeting of the reconstituted school board, the newspapers speculated as to its priority agenda items. The general consensus was that priority would be given to increasing school funds by going after the "tax dodgers," building more schools and reducing class sizes, providing more kindergartens, eliminating the "book trust," giving priority to the lower grades rather than to high schools and trade schools, abolishing the system of "secret marking" of teachers by their principals, eliminating promotional examinations, and "democratizing" the management of school affairs. Although all of these did, in fact, come before the Board, it was the last three--those most directly related to the relationship between board, superintendent and teachers -- which were to dominate the attention of board, press and citizenry in the year ahead.<sup>43</sup> The fireworks were to begin, however, with a controversy over the ordering of textbooks for the opening of the 1906-07 school year.

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<sup>42</sup> Flanagan, Charter Reform in Chicago, 160.

<sup>43</sup> Chicago Tribune, July 10, 1906.

## CHAPTER 5

### MORE REFORM EFFORTS AND GROWING CONTROVERSIES

In the past, Chicago Boards of Education had seldom met during the summer months, but this had not been true in 1905, nor was it again in 1906, when they met regularly during July and part of August. This time the issue which precipitated the rash of activity was the granting of contracts for textbook sales for the coming year.

#### The "Book Trust" and the Battles Over Textbooks

Cornelia DeBey had fired the opening guns in the battle over textbook selection even before Dunne had made his nominations for new members of the Board in July 1906. Chapter 3 described DeBey's resolution aimed at eliminating "pull" or undue influence in the selection of textbooks by requiring that, whenever the Superintendent recommended either adopting a new textbook or dropping any book presently used, he give, in writing, his reasons for such recommendations. In addition the resolution called for the Superintendent to give in writing his reasons for rejecting any book recommended for adoption. This resolution was referred to the School Management Committee and was adopted, in a modified version, at the Board's June 20 meeting. The modified resolution

required the Superintendent to give in writing his reasons for adopting or dropping a book. However, recognizing the enormity of the task if he were to be required to do this for every book recommended for adoption, the Board simply mandated that all such recommendations be made in writing and that they be kept on file should the Board wish to review them.<sup>1</sup>

While the DeBey resolution specifically addressed the issue of "pull" and of the Superintendent's accountability to the Board in terms of the public disclosure of any influences on the selection of textbooks, it also led to a debate on where the decision-making for such choices should lie. The practice in Chicago, as in most large districts with a strong superintendent, had been for the superintendent to make such selections, with the Board simply reviewing, concurring and authorizing expenditures. In the debates over the DeBey resolution, other decision-making models emerged: the Board itself might become directly involved in the review and selection of proposed textbooks or--a yet more radical idea--members of the teaching force might participate in the process. Louis Post took the latter position in an editorial in The Public. Referring to a Tribune editorial in which the writer urged the Board to "accept the verdict of the superintendent, reached by him after full discussion with the

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<sup>1</sup> "Text of Resolution of Dr. Cornelia B. DeBey in Regard to the Adoption or Rejection of Text Books." Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin, June 22, 1906, 4.



more capable members of the teaching force," Post turned the Tribune's position on its head, arguing that not only is the teacher more qualified to decide on textbooks (because these books are the "tools" of the teacher's trade) than are members of the school board, but that the teacher is "better qualified than anybody else." Contending that Cooley had, in fact, not had the "full discussion" with teachers implied by the Tribune, Post argued for "advisory assistance in some open and public manner from the whole teaching body properly organized for the purpose."<sup>2</sup> This concept of some form of democratic participation in decision-making on the part of the teachers was to recur throughout the coming year and was to be at the heart of much of the opposition generated towards the Board.

At the June 6, 1906, meeting of the Board, DeBey had also directly attacked several textbook companies, including Rand McNally and the American Book Company, the nation's largest textbook distributor. Like Theodore Roosevelt and other Progressive "trust-busters," DeBey focussed on the evils of monopoly. She charged that the American Book Company subsidized the editors of educational publications, dictated the selection of university professors and influenced the selection of teachers, principals and superintendents all over the country. When Superintendent Cooley challenged DeBey as to whether she was accusing the Chicago school administration

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<sup>2</sup> "The Chicago School Board." The Public 9, July 28, 1906, 387.

of being controlled by the company DeBey backed down, saying she was only talking of the "book trust" problem in general terms, adding that when she was ready to make specific charges, she would "be ready to submit the proof."<sup>3</sup> Anita Blaine pressed DeBey, saying that "this suggestion of yours-- I don't like to call it an insinuation--that any book company could dictate to the superintendent or his advisors, is a serious one."<sup>4</sup> In a handwritten note to Mrs. Blaine written the day after the Board meeting, DeBey defended her claims against the two large companies by providing her calculations concerning the costs of textbooks currently being used by the Chicago schools. Annual costs for required textbooks came to about \$460,000; "optional" books added another \$50,000. Nearly \$300,000 of this amount went to Rand McNally for the purchase of readers; another \$63,000 went to the American Book Company for books on physiology, spelling, grammar and history.<sup>5</sup> Although the press treated DeBey's charges as being part of a plot against Superintendent Cooley and made much of her refusal to be more specific in her allegations, a news

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<sup>3</sup> "School Book Storm; Influence Charged," Chicago Record-Herald, June 9, 1906, 3.

<sup>4</sup> "Calls the 'Trust' School Dictator," Chicago Tribune, June 9, 1906, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Anita McCormick Blaine papers. Wisconsin Historical Society. Box 213. Letter has been hand-dated by the archivist as June 7, 1905 but context of the letter shows that it was written in 1906.

story in the Chicago Tribune lends credibility to DeBey's suggestion that Rand McNally had indeed acted unethically in attempting to influence book sales.

The Rand McNally readers were adopted during the administration of Mayor Harrison. It is said Rand McNally & Co. contributed to Harrison's campaign fund, and it is supposed that Dr. DeBey meant that the former mayor had influenced the adoption of the books because he was under obligation to the publishing firm.<sup>6</sup>

### The Choice of Textbooks

Even before the new Board members had been appointed and seated, it became obvious that DeBey's resolution had opened the door to a more active participation by the Board in selecting books. The Tribune decried this tendency. Responding to a suggestion by Trustee Duddleston that a subcommittee of the Board be formed to examine all textbooks and make recommendations to the School Management Committee about which to accept, a June 18 editorial, while acknowledging that one of the duties of the Board was to choose textbooks, pointed out that in the past Board members had been content to delegate this task to the superior competence and experience of the superintendent. In language which implicitly reinforced the model that Tyack and others have termed administrative Progressivism, the editorial argued that:

Persons whose standing in the community is high

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<sup>6</sup> "School Trustees Resent a Charge; Dr. DeBey Alleges That Board Selected Text Books by Command," Chicago Tribune, June 12, 1906, 3.

enough to warrant their appointment as members of the board of education have generally been employing their time in building up a commercial or professional reputation, and are, or should be, more fitted to decide the financial questions which concern the schools than to determine details of the course of instruction.<sup>7</sup>

Within a few weeks, yet another complication was added to the debate when Trustee Duddleston introduced the question of whether or not selection should be made from among firms which employed union labor. Duddleston endorsed a series of readers put out by the Wheeler Company and asked that the Board approve them, despite Superintendent Cooley's rejection, on the grounds that they were the only such series printed by union labor. The Chicago press immediately linked this support of labor unions to the Teachers' Federation; news stories consistently identified supporters of Duddleston's position as "federationists."<sup>8</sup> The Board was also attacked for pro-union sentiments by A. R. Barnes, president of the Chicago Typothetae, an organization of large employing printers of Chicago whose members had for nearly a year been engaged in a struggle with the typographers' union. Barnes accused Mayor Dunne of having been influenced by pro-labor sympathizers in his latest appointments to the Board,

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<sup>7</sup> "The Choice of Text Books," Editorial, Chicago Tribune, June 6, 1906, 8.

<sup>8</sup> "Begin New Fight on Supt. Cooley," Chicago Tribune, July 3, 1906, 1, and "Want Union Label on School Books," July 5, 1906, 6.

specifically in the appointment of John Harding, a leader in the typographers' union. Harding denied that his union sympathies would influence his vote on the textbook question, saying that the quality of the books was the critical factor, and that, other things (i.e., quality) being equal, price should be a factor in the decision.<sup>9</sup>

On July 5 a sub-committee was appointed to select textbooks for the coming year. It was chaired by Jane Addams with trustees Blaine, DeBey, Ritter and Weil as members.<sup>10</sup> The Board's intention, however, was that such a sub-committee be a temporary expedient. The School Management Committee recommended that in the future the teachers should be involved in the selection process through the creation of committees of grade school teachers who would pass upon the merits of the books to be used in their classes. The superintendent would then pass on the teachers' recommendations, together with his own, to the Board which would make the final decision.<sup>11</sup> But even before the sub-committee had a chance to begin its work Trustee Kuflewski added yet another element to the dispute with a proposal that the Chicago teachers should create their

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<sup>9</sup> "Charges Union Rule in Textbook Fight," Chicago Daily News, July 24, 1906, 1.

<sup>10</sup> "Says Dear Books Are Extra Good," Chicago Tribune, July 6, 1906, 6.

<sup>11</sup> "Dispute on Texts Up to New Board," Chicago Tribune, July 14, 1906, 5.

own set of readers and other textbooks using their own classroom knowledge and experience and that the Board should publish and use these books, thus totally bypassing the "book trust." Although the Tribune excitedly proclaimed that such an experiment would put the new school board "in the lead of 'progressive' school boards all over the country," Kuflewski's idea was soon buried in the press of publicity arising from the debates over books to be purchased for use in the coming fall.<sup>12</sup>

It was during the debates over textbooks that a pattern began to emerge in the press of criticizing the board for what was frequently termed its "talkfests." As the year went on, this kind of criticism was to escalate into ridicule and hostility; the clear message being sent to readers of the daily newspapers was the superiority of the efficient, business-like boards of the past, whose meetings had seldom degenerated into the undignified debates and lengthy discussions of the present board.

By the beginning of August the Board was still mired in debate about the merits of the various book publishing companies and lobbying of the members had intensified, although it was mild by today's standards. (One board member complained of having received 11 personal visits and twice as many phone calls on the subject, so that he was "compelled to

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<sup>12</sup> "Suggests a New Text Book Plan," Chicago Tribune, July 18, 1906, 8.

leave my office and escape to my club. One book agent followed me to the club."<sup>13</sup>) The August 1 meeting lasted for four and a half hours, but at its close no conclusions had been reached. Supporters of each of the leading contenders (the Macmillan Child Life series, the Jones Readers and the Wheeler readers) accused supporters of the others of lobbying, intimidation, wire-pulling etc. while claiming for themselves a dispassionate weighing of the pedagogic merits of their preferred text. Trustee O'Ryan introduced the issue of anti-Catholicism, contending that some of the stories in the Macmillan books were "an insult to every Roman Catholic in Chicago." O'Ryan adopted the form of oratory which was to be perfected in the 1920s by Chicago Mayor William Thompson. A regular feature of every Thompson election campaign was his raucous demand that any textbook containing what he called "pro-British propaganda" be eliminated from the schools and that the King of England should "keep his nose out of our schools."<sup>14</sup> O'Ryan used the same theme two decades earlier, claiming that the Macmillan books were not American but "English from the first page to the last. They teach snobbery, slavishness, and toadyism. They are fit only for

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<sup>13</sup> "Book Fight Is On Again," Chicago Tribune, August 1, 1906, 9.

<sup>14</sup> Wendt and Kogan, Bosses in Lusty Chicago, 286.

Anglo-maniacs."<sup>15</sup> Since, after repeated balloting, none of the proposed books were able to win a majority of votes, the board finally adjourned for four weeks without having adopted a reader with which to open the schools in the fall.

Finally, on August 29, with only six days remaining before the start of classes, the Board reconvened and the Jones and Wheeler companies were awarded the major book contracts for the coming year. The decision was a controversial one, both because only 14 members were actually present and voting (the final vote on the Wheeler primers was 11-3, a bare majority of the 21-member board) and because the books chosen were more expensive than the series presently in use. Since parents had to pay for their children's books, this was clearly an explosive issue. Another week passed before contracts were signed with the book companies. During this week Board President Ritter contended that the new readers would cost Chicago parents \$100,000 more than the former series and there were rumblings about injunctions and threats of legal action from disgruntled parents and taxpayers.<sup>16</sup> Ultimately the publishers came down in price, the final contracts were signed and the books were delivered just a few days after the opening day of school.

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<sup>15</sup> "School Trustees Use Hard Words." Chicago Tribune, August 2, 1906, 1.

<sup>16</sup> Chicago Record-Herald. August 31, 1906, 1. "School Book War Costs \$100,000." Chicago Tribune, August 31, 1906, 7.



### The Debate over the Teachers' Promotional Plan

Although the newspapers used the debate over textbook selection to set the public perception of the second Dunne Board of Education as it was to appear for the coming year--talkative, cantankerous, radical, crankish and unbusinesslike--it was the debate over the system of promoting teachers that was to be pivotal to the ultimate downfall of both Dunne and his Board of Education. The debate was to expand rapidly to encompass the larger questions of the role of the teacher within the school system and the proper relationships between superintendent, board and teachers. It would incorporate in microcosm the classic American dilemma between Federalists and Jacksonians, between Republicans and Populists, between Progressive elites and urban political machines--just how much "democracy" is appropriate and workable in a democratic society? This issue would be articulated in the language of the debate as it progressed, as both sides regularly referred to the "democratization" of the teaching force--a reference to the appropriate amount of input that teachers ought to have in the decision-making processes of school administration.

Again it was to be Cornelia DeBey who was to precipitate the discussion, with her introduction of a resolution concerning the marking of teachers as part of the promotion process. A July 19, 1906, letter from Superintendent Cooley to Anita Blaine, who was vacationing in Ontario, emphasizes DeBey's role.

My dear Mrs. Blaine . . . Enclosed find clipping from this morning's Record-Herald which will show you the kind of meeting we had last evening. In addition to the school book trouble, Dr. DeBey has begun an attack on the markings and promotions of teachers. I suspect that the Board will continue in session throughout the summer and that we shall have some very warm discussions over the school policy.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Blaine's support was also actively courted by DeBey. A letter to Mrs. Blaine from L. E. Larson, the secretary to the Board, dated the same day as Cooley's note, says that at Dr. DeBey's request he was sending Mrs. Blaine a copy of her (DeBey's) resolution which was introduced at the July 18th meeting of the Board.<sup>18</sup>

The text of the DeBey resolution began with the statement that the education of children is the prime object of the school system and the efficiency of the teacher the greatest factor in providing such education, and goes on to state that it has been the theory of the Board that the best incentives for such efficiency were certainty of tenure and graduated compensation. The existing system of secret marking was designed to test such efficiency but the resolution asks whether it actually did so. The answer: a random investigation of 25 schools showed that, using the principals' efficiency markings as the norm, many of the least efficient

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<sup>17</sup> Anita Blaine papers. Wisconsin Historical Society, Box 213.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

teachers were receiving the highest salaries. The resolution therefore asks that, either through the School Management Committee or a sub-committee thereof, the whole system of marking the efficiency of teachers be investigated and that a report and recommendations be submitted to the Board.<sup>19</sup>

DeBey's resolution quickly passed the School Management Committee, the only opposition coming from Dr. John Chvatal, who wanted more time to think it over. A committee was formed, to be chaired by Louis Post, whose members included Wiley Mills, John Sethness, John Hayes, Cornelia DeBey and, ex officio, Jane Addams. DeBey disclaimed any notion that her resolution was directed at Cooley, saying that her intention was to eliminate the "discord and unrest" among teachers. "My whole purpose in bringing this up is to have the board, with Supt. Cooley's assistance, devise some plan that will bring this about."<sup>20</sup> Cooley himself indicated some support for the investigation, turning over to the committee the results of a similar inquiry which he had conducted on alleged abuses of the promotional system and which did, in fact, show that some discrepancies did exist between efficiency ratings and actual salaries.

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<sup>19</sup> Resolution concerning the Marking of Teachers, Proceedings of the Chicago Board of Education. July 18, 1906.

<sup>20</sup> "Embarks on New School Inquiry. Board Committee Votes to Investigate Workings of Promotion System," Chicago Tribune, July 21, 1906, 7.

The committee set to work immediately, devising a plan for collecting the marks given to all teachers in the past two years and comparing them with actual salaries received. In reporting on the process, the newspapers quickly interjected fears that the agenda of the Teachers' Federation would be served by the inquiry, specifically that length of service rather than teaching quality would become the only criterion for salary increases and promotions. Headlines such as "Doom School Merit Rule" and "Teachers Want a Cinch" introduced stories whose dominant theme was that the new school board now had enough votes to "overturn Supt. Cooley's 'promotion of merit' system and substitute for it a scheme of advancing all teachers to the maximum salary against whom a charge of inefficiency had not been proven."<sup>21</sup>

The Board adjourned for most of the month of August and its first meetings in September were largely taken up with the textbook issue, but by mid-September Cornelia DeBey was again in the forefront of controversy. On Friday, September 14, she re-opened the thorny question of the "democratization" of the teaching force when she presented to the School Management Committee a resolution designed to give teachers a greater voice in school affairs. DeBey's resolution was directed toward organizing the teaching force for advisory purposes, to make policy recommendations either on its own initiative or at

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<sup>21</sup> "Doom School Merit Rule," Chicago Tribune, July 24, 1906, 9, "Teachers Want a Cinch," July 25, 1906, 7.

the request of Superintendent or Board. From this point on the two issues--the "secret marking" of teachers relative to promotion and tenure and the "democratization" of the teaching force to permit greater teacher input into administrative decision-making--were to become increasingly intertwined.

Speaking as the Chair of the sub-committee of DeBey, Post and Sonstebly which had been appointed in February to look at the issue of an advisory process for teachers concerning Board decisions, DeBey argued in her report that at the present time Board and teachers are so separated that the Board is often in ignorance on matters in which the teachers might be its best advisors. The report argued that teachers are not "soulless machines to be despotically manipulated by master hands," a process demoralizing to teachers and detrimental to student learning. Instead, teachers should be "sympathetically considered and trusted," and consulted about educational policies. The report emphasized that this should be done within the context of the Board's ultimate legal responsibility for decision-making.

The important thing is not that the recommendations of the teachers shall be adopted by the Board regardless of their merits, but that they shall be considered in good faith upon their merits.<sup>22</sup>

The report attempted to place the concept of an official

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<sup>22</sup> Resolution and accompanying report presented to the School Management Committee, September 14, 1906, by sub-committee on the question of advisory organization. Anita Blaine Papers, Wisconsin Historical Society.

advisory organization of teachers into the mainstream of progressive educational thought. It cited support for the idea not only from the Teachers' Federation but also from such respected groups as the Civic Federation and the Charter Convention. In addition, the report cited the approval of "some of the most distinguished educators of the United States; not only such as are accounted radical, but also such as are accounted conservative." Among those cited were Charles Eliot of Harvard, Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia and John Dewey. The report quoted extensively from these men, including a speech of Butler's to the N.E.A. in which he enthusiastically supported the notion of a teachers' council, to which all permanent teachers should belong, which would regularly discuss textbooks, teaching methods and courses of study. Said Butler, "I need not enlarge on the great advantage that will follow from giving teachers an indirect voice in the matters that directly concern them."<sup>23</sup> Within a few months these words of Butler's were to prove particularly ironic, when in a speech to a conservative Chicago group, he was to interject himself into the growing Chicago school controversy with a vehement attack on the Teachers' Federation.

The conclusion of DeBey's report was a resolution that the educational councils already existing in the school system

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

be invited to submit to the Board "a revised constitution for the purpose of placing the teaching body of the Chicago public school system into direct advisory relations with the Board."<sup>24</sup> The School Management Committee took the report under advisement and the attention of Board, public and press shifted to another aspect of the Board/teacher relationship--the question of "secret marking."

#### The Post Report

On October 11, Chairman Louis Post presented the report of his sub-committee which had been established to investigate the methods of determining the "efficiency" of teachers. The fifty-page report reviewed the history of the development of the present system of rating teachers for promotion and concluded that it was detrimental to the best interests of teachers and pupils alike. The report concluded:

-- that all examinations, whether for entrance into the system or for promotion, be conducted by a three-person examining board to be nominated respectively by the Superintendent, the School Management Committee and the Normal School principal;

-- that once past their probationary period teachers could only be removed for cause, specified in writing and subject to appeal on the part of the teacher;

-- that principals submit annual written evaluations on

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

the efficiency of each teacher, these evaluations to be accessible to the Board and also to be shared with the individual teachers.

A final clause dealt with the inadequacy of present teacher salaries and recommended that the School Management and Finance Committees meet jointly to explore the question of developing a more equitable salary schedule.<sup>25</sup>

The newspaper response to what was immediately dubbed the "Post Report" criticized the recommendations as an attack on Superintendent Cooley and a return to the old system of "pull" in the hiring or promotion of teachers. Typical was a Daily News editorial which praised the former system as having the facts as to a specific teacher's abilities made known in confidence to Superintendent and Board "without starting a frenzied campaign on behalf of each incapable teacher by her friends and relatives." It contended that Cooley's system was "fair, rational and orderly" and the recommended changes would "turn each dissatisfied member of the teaching force into an active critic of the management." Using an analogy calculated to win the support of the business community it complained that opening the marking process to the scrutiny of the teachers would be tantamount to letting the apprentices judge

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<sup>25</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin V., No. 36, (October 19, 1906), 3.



the expertness of the shop foreman.<sup>26</sup>

The Post Report also brought to the surface differences between members of the Board. Opponents of the Post subcommittee's recommendations began to characterize their fellow trustees as "radicals." Trustees Dudley and White were among the most vociferous supporters of Cooley and the existing system. In an interview with the Tribune, Dudley declared that the result of implementing the Post recommendations would be that "larger numbers of the most objectionable teachers [would] be able to perpetuate themselves in the public schools [and] . . . as they increase their political influence, their salaries will automatically increase." The opposition argued that the plan would destroy the safeguards created by the Dawes Resolution because it would encourage any teacher who had been rated as incompetent by her principal to have her friends bring their influence to bear to get her mark changed. Dudley, for example, contended that weak teachers were often strong politicians who could exert pressure and thus influence the judgment of "right minded school officials."<sup>27</sup> Rev. White apparently shared Dudley's lack of confidence in the ability of administrators to withstand pressure on the part of the very teachers they might rate incompetent. White was

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<sup>26</sup> "Political Pull in the Schools," Chicago Daily News, October 15, 1906, 8.

<sup>27</sup> "Enemies of Pull Rally to Cooley," Chicago Tribune, October 14, 1906, part 1, 8.

quoted as saying:

I do not say that there is not a principal with sufficient backbone to tell the truth in these open annual reports, but I do say that he will need it all, and I further say there will be lots of principals who will beg the question, with the result that the reports will be practically worthless.<sup>28</sup>

Neither White nor Dudley seemed to see any incongruity in arguing that principals would only be able to resist political pressure on behalf of incompetent teachers if their professional judgment could remain confidential and free from the scrutiny of the persons most affected.

#### The Press and the Pulpit

The Board's consideration of the Post Report on secret marking and DeBey's proposals for increasing democratization of school administration took place in an atmosphere of steadily escalating criticism on the part of the Chicago daily press. Their attack on the Board came to a head on October 10, when the Tribune published an editorial entitled "Who Discredits Chicago?" The editorial lashed out at Mayor Dunne, who had criticized Chicago newspapers for giving Chicago a bad name by publishing stories about rising crime and other problems of the city. Instead, the editorial blamed the Dunne administration and Dunne appointees in various areas for "inefficiency, incompetence and . . . indifference" which were

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<sup>28</sup> "Those 'Secret Markings'", Editorial, Chicago Daily News, October 23, 1906, 8.

making the city a refuge for criminals. Along with attacks on the building inspectors, the health department and the board of local improvements, the paper attacked the membership of the school board.

When Mayor Dunne packs the board of education with freaks, cranks, monomaniacs, and boodlers and turns over to them the care of one of the greatest school systems in this country, he is doing much to bring Chicago into disrepute.

The editorial went on to criticize Dunne for permitting the unionization of teachers and firemen and finished with a flourish of invective about Dunne's "extraordinary municipal menagerie" which had disregarded tried and true business methods in the name of "erratic and crazy schemes of so-called 'reform.'"<sup>29</sup>

Dunne was furious. Claiming that charging him with putting boodlers on the School Board was libelous, he sent a letter to the States' Attorney urging that a grand jury either indict the Tribune for criminal libel or himself for malfeasance in office.<sup>30</sup> At its meeting on October 10 the Board of Education also responded angrily, unanimously adopting a resolution proposed by Raymond Robins. Taking the same tack as the Mayor, the Robins resolution stated that if indeed reasonable evidence showed the board guilty of

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<sup>29</sup> "Who Discredits Chicago?" Editorial, Chicago Tribune, October 10, 1906, 12.

<sup>30</sup> "'Indict Him or Me,' Urges Mayor Dunne." Chicago Tribune, October 11, 1906, 2.

"boodling" they should be indicted by a grand jury; therefore the resolution demanded that the Tribune furnish such evidence to the States' Attorney.<sup>31</sup> The Tribune defended itself, arguing that it was not questioning Dunne's personal integrity; Dunne "may have been so innocent or so ignorant that he did not know 'freaks' when he saw them." However the editorialist did not back down in his description of the Board of Education, saying some of its members "are spoiled, some . . . are tainted, some are decidedly rotten, and some . . . ought to be transported to another sphere of duty."<sup>32</sup>

A grand jury was in fact called, and on October 24 Dunne appeared before it, as did the managing editor and some of the staff of the Tribune. Since the hearings were not public, the press was forced to speculation about the nature of the testimony. Using the "it is said" commentary typical of many of the news stories, the Daily News anticipated the language and tactics of Senator McCarthy by half a century when it speculated that one piece of evidence that some Board members were "radical socialists" was that they had proposed to call John Dewey as a school advisor, and that Dewey had permitted a Mme. Andrieva, the "companion" of Russian writer Maxim Gorky, to visit him. To the editorialist, this breach of

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<sup>31</sup> Proceedings of the Board of Education. October 10, 1906.

<sup>32</sup> "The Mayor's Etymology," Editorial, Chicago Tribune, October 13, 1906, 8.

convention clearly disqualified Dewey's educational credentials, as well as tainting by association any Board member who might recommend him.<sup>33</sup>

The results of the grand jury's deliberations were not wholly satisfactory to either side. It refused to vote the indictment asked for by Dunne, although it gave as its opinion that the Tribune ought to be censured on the ground that the mayor was not guilty of an "intentional wrong" in his selection of the membership of the Board of Education. Dunne did go on to bring a civil suit against the Tribune for \$100,000 for "false, scandalous, malicious and defamatory libel," but the suit was not settled until long after he was out of office.<sup>34</sup>

A footnote to the great "boodler controversy" provides a minor but illustrative perspective on the personality of one of the trustees. At a public meeting held a few days after the grand jury hearing, most of the Board members present, including Emil Ritter, Wiley Mills and Raymond Robins, bitterly attacked the press for their criticism of the Board. Cornelia DeBey, however, once more took an unorthodox line, saying that she welcomed newspaper criticism since it at least stirred things up and "something should be stirred up"--

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<sup>33</sup> "Mayor Dunne Weeps: Demands True Bills," Chicago Daily News, October 24, 1906, 1.

<sup>34</sup> "Grand Jury to Dunne: 'No.'" Chicago Tribune, October 26, 1906, 3.

certainly an apt description of DeBey's own personal style.<sup>35</sup>

About this time, another constituency became more vocal and involved in the controversy and criticism surrounding the schools--the Protestant clergy. With increasing regularity, the personnel and the policies of the Board of Education were attacked from the pulpits of many of Chicago's "mainline" churches. Criticism focused on the "un-American" make-up of the Board (usually a not-so-veiled form of anti-Catholicism), on the "radical" proposals of the Board (especially those which were perceived as favorable to the Teachers' Federation) and on the need for a more "business-like" membership.

The attack on the Board was led by two ministers, the Rev. William Quayle of St. James Methodist Episcopal Church and the sitting Board member Rev. R. A. White of the Stewart Avenue People's Liberal Church. On Sunday, October 21, both men excoriated the Board from the pulpit and before their church boards of trustees. Quayle's attack was the most intense. In an "editorial" which he read from the pulpit, Quayle charged the Board with a number of offenses:

-- an "un-American" attempt at segregating the sexes in the high school. (In reality, it had been the so-called "conservatives" on the Board, including Rev. White, who had endorsed the experiment in segregation at the Englewood High School, while "radicals" like DeBey and O'Ryan had opposed

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<sup>35</sup> Chicago Record-Herald, November 2, 1906, 1 and 5.

it.)

-- the creation of a teachers' advisory board. (Quayle's argument was that if the Board was so incompetent that it needed outsiders to advise it, Board members ought to resign.)

-- the morals of Board members. (Here Quayle cited the Maxim Gorky story mentioned above, criticizing Dewey's effrontery in inviting young women to meet Gorky's female companion "in a social way" and contending that anyone guilty of such gross improprieties of judgment should never have been considered as a consultant to the Board. The basic inconsistency of Quayle's position which saw using teacher advisors as evidence of incompetence while accepting the value of outside consultants--as long they were morally acceptable--was, of course, not addressed.)

-- the composition of the Board. Quayle criticized the Board's religious make-up (seven Roman Catholics, two Jews, two "free-thinkers," five "unattached," one Quaker, and four Protestants), its political composition (fifteen democrats, four independents; among these, one member was "socialistic" and another "not only socialistic but a suffragist as well, while two are trade unionists and two are single taxers") and its ethnicity ("When we note that the board by heavy majority is foreign in its composition, we may be forgiven if we feel a sense of alarm. . . . a great city is a national hazard because its population is glutted with the unabsorbed foreigner. . . . Foreigners make stable and capable American

citizens when they become Americanized and not before.") Since Quayle did not identify Board members by name, it is not clear where his colleague Rev. White fits into this litany of undesirable characteristics.<sup>36</sup>

Louis Post responded to the clerical criticism by pointing out that the segregation plan at Englewood High School had been introduced and carried by the conservative members of the Board and that there were no more Catholics on the Board than there had been under the previous Harrison administration; any Catholic appointees by Dunne had simply replaced existing "Catholic seats" on the Board.<sup>37</sup>

Following Quayle's sermon, his church board of trustees unanimously voted to make Quayle's charges public and, if necessary, to lead a public protest against the "radicalism" of the Board of Education trustees. The congregation subsequently approved this action of its trustees by a vote of 520 to 20. The Tribune noted that most of the 20 negative votes were cast by school teachers who were members of the congregation.<sup>38</sup>

Rev. White preached in a similar vein on the same day. White's attack focused on his perception that the "commercial

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<sup>36</sup> "Pastors Arraign School Trustees," Chicago Tribune, October 22, 1906, 1.

<sup>37</sup> "Call to Prevent Ruin of Schools." Chicago Tribune, October 23, 1906, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



idea" was more and more being encouraged in the public schools at the expense of traditional "classical" education. White contended that the present system made the schools "a factory for making clerks and cooks."<sup>39</sup>

Once Quayle and White had introduced the churches of Chicago into the school controversies their role quickly escalated. Quayle took the lead by calling for a mass meeting of clergy from all over the city; the focus of the meeting would be to emphasize the position that the schools are for the benefit of the child, not "simply to give jobs to unionized school teachers." Planners of the mass meeting expressed their belief that Dunne Board members owed their appointment to the influence of Margaret Haley; their central theme was that Dunne Board members represented only one segment of the public, and that there needed to be more representation by "substantial men of affairs." Various businessmen--members of the congregations actively involved in organizing the mass meeting--argued for a return to control of the Board by men who would conduct the affairs of the Board in a businesslike way. In contemporary terminology, these businessmen clearly objected to the "anti-establishment" nature of the Board. "The business men should no longer sit still and let Tom, Dick and Harry run the schools, persons who never were heard of in the community until they were appointed

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<sup>39</sup> Chicago Tribune, October 22, 1906.

by Mayor Dunne."<sup>40</sup>

The wave of clerical criticism mounted; on October 28, only a week after Quayle's initial sermon, preachers throughout the city took the actions of the Board as the theme for their sermons. Newspaper stories soon credited entire Protestant denominations as being opposed to the Dunne Board.

Dr. Quayle's sentiments, generally speaking, are the views of the entire Methodist Episcopal church of the city. . . . The position of the Lutheran church is practically that of the Methodist church. . . . Such representatives of other denominations as could be seen also approved the position taken by the Rev. Quayle.

Critics seemed equally opposed to Dunne himself and to his Board appointees; one Congregational minister seemed to sum it all up when he said Dunne had made as bad a failure of the school board as he had of I.M.O., adding that while such trustees as Post and DeBey might be "intellectual and capable in their own lines" they had not been trained to do the work of the board and had thus made a sad jumble of it. Such "training" was implicitly only training in business methods; DeBey's qualifications as a trained teacher were clearly not what the disgruntled cleric had in mind.<sup>41</sup>

As the debates progressed, a number of other viewpoints began to emerge. One minister encapsulated the view of those who believed that the business of education was the

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<sup>40</sup> Chicago Tribune, October 23, 1906.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

assimilation of the immigrant into becoming a docile member of the labor force:

There are three things in any rational educational system, and no nation is great without them. First, training of the hands; second, training of the morals, connected with the emotions; and third, training of the intellect, which is the least important of all.

Other ministers complained of the socialistic nature of the board, citing as evidence the involvement of some members in the settlement house movement; one minister connected persons who ran social settlements with persons of "anarchistic or broad socialistic tendencies" and thus inappropriate as members of a school board. Some churchmen voiced their alarm at the "un-American" influence of the Teachers' Federation; others, citing Chicago's turbulent past record of "anarchy" and labor unrest, expressed fears that the Board's actions would encourage such activity again; yet others joined with Quayle in deploring the "foreign element" on the Board.<sup>42</sup>

Through all of this furor, the Catholic press generally remained silent. In the issue following the October 28 wave of sermons, the New World did lash out at the event, calling it a "scandalous prostitution of supposed religious influence for political ends."

Consider the time, the men, the manner, the utterances. All point to the one conclusion, namely, that an unholy combination of oleaginous hypocrites was formed on the eve of the election

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<sup>42</sup> "Churches Roused by School Board," Chicago Tribune, October 29, 1906, 1.

for the purpose of influencing and misleading the voters.<sup>43</sup>

However, although the New World criticized the anti-Catholic positions of many of the Protestant ministers and viewed the spate of sermons as the opening salvos in the next mayoral campaign, its editors were equally unhappy with the Board's actions. While in general any mention of schools in the Catholic press was simply a panegyric favoring the parochial school system, the New World occasionally did refer to the problems of the public schools--generally in terms of opposition to "fads" or "frills" such as high schools or technical courses at the expense of basic education for the primary grades.

Criticism of the Board of Education by the Protestant clergy was to continue throughout the term of the Dunne Board, generally emphasizing the need for a more businesslike approach and the threat of the Board's domination by foreigners, Catholics, anarchists, immigrants and other undesirable groups. These clergy were to be one component of the coalition which would defeat Dunne in April of 1907.

#### Classrooms and Costs

The problem of new school construction and creating classroom space for Chicago's growing number of school-age children was a chronic one for Chicago school boards and the

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<sup>43</sup> "The Prostitution of the Protestant Pulpit," New World XV, No. 10, (November 3, 1906), 12.

Dunne Board was no exception. Critics of Dunne's Board regularly accused it of fiscal irresponsibility while Board members contended that many of their deficit problems arose because of construction commitments made by their predecessors. One set of figures released by the Board showed that the Dunne Board had ordered only about \$977,000 worth of new building and site acquisitions, while its predecessor had ordered over \$4.2 million--most of which was paid for out of the budget of the Dunne Board.<sup>44</sup> The Dunne Board tried to deal with the problem of overcrowding by bringing in a consultant who ultimately recommended that classroom size be limited to forty pupils per room. In an effort to hold down costs, the consultant redesigned school and classroom layouts; the Board argued that these changes made it possible to build new schools incorporating the smaller classroom size at the same per pupil cost as in the past.<sup>45</sup> However, none of the proposed design changes could be put into effect before the Dunne appointees lost control of the Board.

Charges of fiscal irresponsibility were regularly linked with the issue of pay for teachers. Newspapers generally took the tone that the schoolchildren of Chicago were being made to

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<sup>44</sup> "The Dunne School Board." The Public X, March 23, 1907, 1204.

<sup>45</sup> "Address Delivered Before the City Club, by President Emil W. Ritter," Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 6, No. 16, (March 15, 1907), 2.

carry the burden generated by the increased salaries resulting from the elimination of the secret marking system. A typical editorial read:

The salaries of teachers have been increased, though by doing that it became impossible to establish more kindergartens and evening schools and take proper care of the high schools. The children suffer that the teachers may be better paid, for it is an axiom with the present board that public schools exist for the special purpose of giving employment to teachers.<sup>46</sup>

Even the monies generated as a result of the teachers' fight against the tax-dodging utility and transit companies became grist for the opposition's mill. Ignoring the fact that the previous board had to be compelled by the courts to use the monies to repay the back salaries due to the teachers, Dunne's opponents charged the Dunne Board with failing to share the payout with the non-union teachers. The fact that legal counsel for the Board had informed them that to include payments to teachers who had not been party to the law suit might invalidate the entire settlement was never mentioned<sup>47</sup>.

One other money-related action of the Dunne Board raised the special ire of the Tribune. In March the Board filed a bill in chancery asking that the ninety-nine lease of the school property occupied by the Tribune be declared null and

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<sup>46</sup> "Another Broken Promise," Editorial, Chicago Tribune, March 23, 1907, 8.

<sup>47</sup> "Mayor Dunne's Promises: No. 3," Chicago Tribune, March 22, 1907, 2.

void. The suit contended, among other things, that the valuation set by the appraisers at the time the lease was drawn was set far too low, resulting in significant loss of income for the schools. The Tribune, of course, claimed that the suit was simply an election-year ploy, that the valuation was appropriate, as was the rent the Tribune was presently paying, and that the whole thing was simply a conspiracy on the part of the "radicals" on the Board.<sup>48</sup>

#### The DeBey and the Post Reports: Final Appearances

For the next several months, as the campaign to deny re-election to Dunne moved into high gear, criticism of the Board of Education was to escalate and the deliberations of the Board received constant airing in the press. The Board was regularly taken to task for its "talkativeness;" clearly the model favored by most editorial writers was a Board in which decisions were made rapidly and unanimously by a few businessmen using "sound business principles" as their operating norm. Major attention was concentrated on two particular items on the Board's agenda: on the final decisions which would be taken on Cornelia DeBey's recommendations for the "democratization" of the decision-making processes in the schools and on the Post Committee's report recommending the abolition of the "secret marking" system in regard to

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<sup>48</sup> "Mayor Dunne's Campaign Suit," Editorial, Chicago Tribune, March 21, 1907, 8.

promotion of teachers.

The official report of DeBey's sub-committee to consider the idea of an advisory organization of the teachers was submitted to the School Management Committee on December 28, 1906. The stated intention of the recommendations was that:

the advice of the teachers as well as that of the Superintendent may be available, and that complete and cordial co-operation of the Board, the Superintendent and the teaching body may be thereby established.<sup>49</sup>

To this end, the report recommended that all teachers and principals should be members of a Council in their respective schools, that these School Councils should then form District Councils and a Central Council, and that provision should be made for these Councils to provide advisory co-operation to the Board, analogous to the co-operation between Superintendent and Board. The report emphasized that the intent of the recommendations was to ensure the "cordial co-operation" of teachers by a trusting and sympathetic openness to their views.

If they are to do their best for the children, the teachers must be consulted about educational policies--not now and then and here and there as real or apparent favorites of superiors in authority, but as a body of educators organically recognized by the Board and its employees. . . . The important thing is not that the recommendations of the teacher shall be adopted by the Board regardless of their merits, but that they shall be

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<sup>49</sup> Plan for Official Advisory Organization of the Teaching Force of Chicago. Submitted to the Committee on School Management, Friday, December 28, 1906.



considered in good faith upon their merits.<sup>50</sup>

Despite DeBey's efforts to present the plan as one which would not bind the Board to any action, but merely provide for their receiving input from the teachers, some Board members were firmly opposed. Trustee Dudley complained that the plan was "revolutionary" and an utter misinterpretation of the meaning of democracy. "It would be almost as absurd to organize the school children into a committee on school management." Similarly Mrs. Keough felt that the new plan would set up a teachers' "oligarchy" which would usurp the legal functions of the Board, while George Duddleston felt it was contrary to sound business principles.<sup>51</sup> These three Board members would hold out to the end against the proposal.

Support for the DeBey Plan came from some educational professionals. At an open meeting of the School Management Committee on January 15, 1907, Professor George Mead of the University of Chicago endorsed the concept, criticizing the historic isolation of the teacher from the decision-making process and arguing that a democratic process which recognizes the experience and personal skills of individual teachers

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>51</sup> "Board is Split by School Plan," Chicago Daily News, November 18, 1905, 3.

would improve the nature of schooling.<sup>52</sup> An article in the Elementary School Teacher of January 1906, shortly after DeBey had first unveiled the plan, enthusiastically endorsed the concept. Its author, Wilbur Jackman of the University of Chicago, argued that under the present system the teachers, who are in the best position to know the needs of the schools, have their lips "hermetically sealed" out of fear of attracting unfavorable notice on the part of their superiors, possibly resulting in transfer to a less desirable school. Jackman felt that the particular strength of DeBey's concept was its insistence that school management should come from the "bottom up" instead of from the top downward.<sup>53</sup> Trustees O'Ryan and Kuflewski also enthusiastically supported DeBey.

Other educational professionals were less enthusiastic about putting democracy into action in the operation of the schools. In a speech before the Merchants' Club of Chicago in early December, President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia University attacked the concept, arguing that one could no more "democratize school management than one could democratize the treatment of appendicitis." Butler argued that a school board should secure the services of the most efficient

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<sup>52</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 6, No. 8, (January 18, 1907), 1.

<sup>53</sup> Wilbur Jackman. "The Relation of the Teaching Force to the School Board and the Superintendent." Elementary School Teacher 6, No. 5, (January 1906), 270.

superintendent possible, and then "leave him free to carry out his policies."<sup>54</sup>

After several weeks of discussion within the School Management Committee, DeBey's proposal was brought before the entire Board, where it was amended and formally adopted on February 13, 1907. As adopted, the report called for formation of a central council on which each school would be represented. This council would have a formal procedure for transmitting its recommendations to the Board and the Board would have, as part of its structure, "proper arrangements . . . for receiving, tabulating and considering such expressions of opinions from the teaching force." After considerable parliamentary maneuvering, the resolution was modified to provide that recommendations from the teachers would go to the School Management Committee rather than to the Board as a whole and also that any group of teachers could submit to the Committee a plan for organizing the teaching body into advisory councils. The final vote for adoption of the original report, as amended, was 14-5, with only Trustees Keough, Hayes, Duddleston, Weil and Sethness voting against it. Even Rev. White swallowed his antipathy to the teachers and voted for the report.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> "Democracy in the Schools," Chicago Daily News, December 11, 1906, 8.

<sup>55</sup> Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, February 13, 1907, pp. 893 ff.

In reality, control of the Board changed before the procedures could be put into effect and the implementation of the advisory councils languished for several years. A similar system was finally implemented in 1913, under the superintendency of Ella Flagg Young.<sup>56</sup>

#### The Post Report on Secret Marking

Probably the most intense division generated by the Dunne Board of Education was demonstrated in the controversy over the "secret marking" of teachers. As was described earlier in this chapter, the sub-committee headed by Louis Post had begun with the assumption that there were inequities in the process by which teachers were graded and discrepancies between the ratings of teachers and their actual salaries. The final report bore out this assumption; as described by Louis Post at an open meeting of the School Management Committee on October 31 "the proportion of teachers whose efficiency marks are between 80 and 100 is just about the same among the teachers who are promoted in salary, and getting a higher salary, as it is among the teachers who have not been promoted." Therefore, the system was clearly not doing what it was designed to do.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, March 5, 1913, p. 931. ff.

<sup>57</sup> "The Post Report," Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin V., No. 40, 1.

In particular, the Post Report criticized current practice, in which teachers received annual salary increments for seven years after being hired, after which increments were only made upon successful completion of an examination. Post argued that teachers ought to be held to a consistent standard of excellence, observing sarcastically: "They [the Superintendent and his supporters] believe that the level of mediocrity is all right up to the seventh [pay] grade, but at the end of the seven years it is cut off. . . No one can jump the hurdle [to higher salary] unless they get eighty [per cent]." <sup>58</sup>

Post's sub-committee made several recommendations in its final report. These included:

-- encouraging teachers to take professional enrichment courses at the Normal School, but not making such courses mandatory for salary increases;

-- salary advances to be based on the teacher showing increased efficiency as judged by a committee of three: the teacher's own district superintendent, another district superintendent, and a representative of the Normal School;

-- rigid adherence to high standards in the entrance examinations required of new teachers;

-- removal of teachers only for cause, and with the right

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<sup>58</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation papers, Chicago Historical Society. Address by Louis Post to Chicago Federation of Labor, Sunday, December 1, 1906.

of appeal;

-- abolition of the system of marking relative teaching efficiency by percentages, substituting reports by the principals rating teachers either as "efficient" or "not efficient," these reports to be open to inspection by the Board and the individual teachers. Teachers receiving a "not efficient" rating were to receive written notice and to have the right of appeal.<sup>59</sup>

Even before the Post Report was formally presented to the Board it was under attack in the press. The arguments presented in opposition were generally the same as those which had been used earlier: it was a "trade-union" plan designed to preserve the jobs of incompetent teachers and it laid the principal open to the operation of "pull" in the form of pressure from the friends or supporters of inefficient teachers if he attempted to get rid of them. Twenty-six former members of the Board, including five former Board presidents, issued an open letter claiming that the Post plan was "a menace to the integrity of the schools" because it would take away from the superintendent the functions that would permit him to properly administer and control the teaching force.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Proceedings, Chicago Board of Education, November 21, 1906, 477-534.

<sup>60</sup> "Former Trustees Issue a Protest," Chicago Tribune, November 15, 1906, 1.

When the Report came before the School Management Committee on November 13, Jane Addams, Chair of the Committee, proposed a compromise plan. Addams' plan provided that every teacher would receive released time one afternoon a week for ten weeks every other year. This time would be used for study at the Normal School or its extension department. Addams argued that teachers should be encouraged to study, but not forced to do so at the end of a long working day when they were already exhausted. Her plan was designed to provide this option. Although Margaret Haley objected to the plan on the grounds that classroom discipline would suffer at the hands of the substitute teacher, leaving the teacher with extra work to catch up with upon her return from classes, the Committee unanimously accepted Addams' compromise plan.<sup>61</sup> Post expressed himself satisfied with the amended report, saying that his main objective had been achieved. "Since the report has been amended the teachers can go to ten years--to the maximum--without any hurdle. This is more than we expected we would be able to accomplish at first." Post responded to critics who contended that his plan eliminated the merit system; ". . . we are establishing a merit system, not abolishing it. By taking power away from the superintendent we are increasing the merit system. We want the board to

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<sup>61</sup> "Gives Black Eye to Report of Post," Chicago Tribune, November 14, 1906, 1.

govern the schools."<sup>62</sup>

The Post report was presented to the Board by the School Management Committee on November 21, 1906. Action on the Report was deferred for two weeks, and it was finally approved on December 6 by the narrow margin of 12-5. Hayes, Duddleston, White, Sethness and Spiegel remained firmly opposed; Blaine, Keough, Weil and Chvatal were absent from the meeting. The losing side, however, viewed the defeat as only temporary. Trustee John Hayes, a holdover Harrison appointee, raised the threat of Dunne's political demise:

"You have the laugh on us now," said the old Harrison appointee, "but I want to tell you that there is a mayoralty election coming, and two years from now will see some vacant places here. Perhaps you will see some changes in the work done here tonight."<sup>63</sup>

The adoption of the Post Report enflamed rather than ended controversy as the press raised the two specters of additional power for the teachers' union and an increased deficit in the salary budget. Rev. Quayle returned the school issue to his pulpit with the charge that the time was coming that the pupil in the Chicago schools whose father did not belong to a union would not get a "square deal with the union

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<sup>62</sup> "Gross and Post Debate Schools," Chicago Tribune, November 16, 1906, 3.

<sup>63</sup> "Merit Rule Ends in City's Schools," Chicago Tribune, December 6, 1906, 1.



teachers."<sup>64</sup> Education professionals also got into the debate. President Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, in his speech to the Merchants' Club, had condemned the notion of a "secret organization of teachers affiliated with labor unions" as bringing anarchy to the schools. Butler's speech articulated many of the principles espoused by the administrative progressives. He pointed to the growing national trend toward smaller school boards, directly equating the size of the board to the efficiency of the schools--the larger the board, the worse the school district. Another speaker at the same event, a Mr. Eliot of St. Louis, articulated another tenet of the progressive credo when he described the at-large election of the St. Louis school board, saying that "The theory of local representation is in such situations misapplied."<sup>65</sup> A few educational professionals still spoke out in favor of the "radicals'" position. Professor George Mead of the University of Chicago defended the elimination of the secret marking system:

. . . if we assume that the examinations were intended, directly or indirectly, to raise the efficiency of the teachers, there is no question of its complete failure. The investigations of the Post committee demonstrated that the markings for efficiency remained the same for teachers who had passed the examinations and for those who had not

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<sup>64</sup> "Dunne's Board Called a Menace," Chicago Tribune, December 28, 1906, 3.

<sup>65</sup> "Anarchy Stalks in City's Schools," Chicago Tribune, December 9, 1907, 1.

passed. . . . But Mr. Cooley's belief in the system remains unshaken.<sup>66</sup>

By early spring of 1907 the campaign for the next mayoral election, to be held in April, swung into high gear and the Board's actions on democratization and secret marking became ammunition in the effort to oust Mayor Dunne. Typical was a Daily News editorial of February 1907.

Last summer the Chicago board of education passed into the control of a handful of radicals appointed by Mayor Dunne. Being radical on all subjects and bitten with the desire to change everything they touch, they have gone a long way toward substituting their cocksureness for the superintendent's knowledge in matters relating to the educational work in the schools.

They have created an examining board for teachers, only one of the members of which the superintendent is permitted to name. . . . This plan, if carried out must bring demoralization.

. . . The radicals on the board draw their inspiration largely from obscure influences which are unofficial and steeped in political pull. . . . The children . . . are becoming the secondary consideration as fast as the plotters behind the radical puppets can work the wires.<sup>67</sup>

Thus, in a flourish of rhetoric, the editorialist summarized one of the major themes of the 1907 mayoral campaign: Dunne's incompetent and/or radical appointees to various city positions had brought Chicago to the verge of disaster. In his bid for re-election in the coming months

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<sup>66</sup> George H. Mead, "The Educational System in the Chicago Public Schools," City Club Bulletin 1, No. 11, (May 8, 1907).

<sup>67</sup> Editorial, Chicago Daily News, February 7, 1907, 8.

Dunne would try to defend his appointments and to demonstrate the success of their actions.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE MAYORAL ELECTION OF 1907: DUNNE'S DEFEAT AND THE "OUSTER" OF THE DUNNE BOARD

The mayoral election of 1907 saw an increasingly beleaguered Mayor Dunne under attack not only by the Republican Party and the Republican-dominated press but also within his own party. Dunne had failed to solve the Municipal Ownership question which had brought him into office in the first place. In addition he had made enemies over his opposition to a Sunday closing law, his sympathy toward labor unions and, of course, his "radical" appointments to the Board of Education.

The move toward Municipal Ownership had progressed only slowly during Dunne's two years in office. While Dunne consistently supported the concept, he left most of the day-to-day maneuvering to Walter Fisher, whom he had appointed in 1906 as his Special Traction Counsel. Fisher took a more moderate approach than many of Dunne's most ardent supporters might have wished and some of their fears were realized when, in April, 1906, Dunne sent to the City Council's Committee on Transportation what became known as the "Werno letter." (The Committee's Chair was Charles Werno.) The letter described the conditions under which the City would begin a new round of

negotiations with the traction companies. The letter was couched in terms of moves toward municipal ownership rather than immediate municipal ownership and was well-received by the newspapers and City Council as a pragmatic short-term solution to a difficult problem. In the long run, however, Dunne's moderate position was to antagonize both ardent supporters and opponents of municipal ownership.<sup>1</sup>

In December 1906, Fisher's settlement with the traction companies was made public. It provided for twenty-year franchises for the major city railway systems, with the city having a right of purchase during the last five years of this period. The traction lines were to be rehabilitated, the city was to receive fifty-five percent of the net profits, and a permanent board of overseers with veto power over the companies' actions was established. While Dunne initially praised the compromise as a good one, and a major victory over the traction companies, many of his supporters were disappointed. Dunne himself seemed openly ambivalent, since within a few months he was openly identified with a newly formed referendum league which attempted to put on the April 1907 ballot three propositions which would have the effect of refuting the Fisher settlement and re-opening the Mueller Law option of municipally-operated street railways. When taxed with this inconsistency, Dunne argued that he had been elected

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<sup>1</sup> Morton, Justice and Humanity, 76-82 ff.

upon a platform calling for a referendum on any traction settlement and thus was remaining true to this original position.<sup>2</sup> To many moderates, however, Dunne's lukewarm acceptance of Fisher's settlement was disappointing. As Morton observes:

It was Dunne's opposition to the Fisher settlement that did his campaign the most harm. It was difficult for many independents and Republicans who had voted for the mayor in 1905 as the best means to solve the traction situation to understand either the mayor's objections or his devotion to the ideology of immediate municipal ownership. For these citizens, the issue was efficient, comfortable traction service, which seemed to be guaranteed by Fisher's settlement. Under these circumstances, it was not difficult for the opposition . . . to successfully portray Dunne as an opportunist controlled by [newspaperman William Randolph] Hearst and Tom Johnson to the detriment of the true interest of the people of Chicago.<sup>3</sup>

Dunne's position was also weakened by the traditional infighting within the Democratic Party. Although he was re-nominated by acclamation in February, the nomination was of limited value. John Buenker describes the fragmentation of the Party at the time:

Nor could Dunne derive much clout from his status in the Democratic party, where he was at most the leader of only one faction. He never gained control of either the city or county central committees and failed to forge any solid alliance with the Harrison or Sullivan-Hopkins factions. Real power lay with the ward bosses, who functioned autonomously, and Dunne commanded the consistent loyalty of only about one-third of the Democratic

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 102-3.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 110.

aldermen.<sup>4</sup>

Although Dunne retained his popularity with large segments of the electorate, including, of course, Margaret Haley and the Teachers' Federation, he had lost the support of all of the city's major newspapers except those controlled by Hearst. Richard Morton summarizes the reasons for Dunne's ultimate defeat:

In 1905, Dunne had ridden the crest of a popular crusade, and this more than cancelled out the Republican control of the media. Now in 1907, the mayor's political strength was more limited with the consequence that his opposition was successful in defining the campaign's issues. These soon emerged as the actions of the Dunne school board, the mayor's refusal to enforce the Sunday Closing law, his affiliation with Hearst, and his opposition to the proposed traction ordinances.<sup>5</sup>

Dunne's opponent in the election was Fred Busse, a German-American coal and ice dealer who had a steady, though unspectacular, political career in various local and state offices, climaxing in his 1902 appointment as postmaster of Chicago by President Theodore Roosevelt. Unlike Dunne, whose marriage and large Catholic family were regularly referred to by his supporters, Busse was unmarried, living with his parents.<sup>6</sup> By Chicago standards, Busse was a particularly

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<sup>4</sup> John Buenker, "Edward Dunne," in The Mayors, 41.

<sup>5</sup> Morton, Justice and Humanity, 109.

<sup>6</sup> Harold Ickes, Autobiography of a Curmudgeon (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1943), 109. After the election, a woman Busse had secretly married forced him to recognize her. This put to rest the campaign propaganda showing a "son so devoted

colorless figure; the most notable feature of his campaign was that he made no public appearances and gave no speeches--the result of having been injured in a train wreck just a few days after his nomination. Most observers seem to have agreed that this was probably a fortuitous circumstance; one commentator said the accident "relieved him from the necessity of a speechmaking campaign, which would not have been at all to his liking. He rarely talks in public."<sup>7</sup>

Many observers were less charitable toward Busse. Harold Ickes, the quintessential Progressive who went on to serve Franklin Roosevelt as his Secretary of the Interior, regularly refers to Busse in the pages of his Autobiography of a Curmudgeon. Talking about the 1907 election in which Ickes, although a Republican, had supported Dunne's candidacy, he describes Busse as a "semi-notorious character" who "was in politics for what he could get out of it." Busse's father had been a boodler, and "Fred had been brought up in that school." Busse "had no background of education and no ideals of good citizenship, but his supporters contrived, in spite of it all, to create for him the reputation of a keen, aggressive,

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to a gentle old mother that on her account he had never married." 108.

<sup>7</sup> Maureen A. Flanagan. "Fred A. Busse: A Silent Mayor in Turbulent Times." in Paul M. Green and Melvin G. Holli, The Mayors: The Chicago Political Tradition. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987), 50.



competent businessman and able administrator. . ."<sup>8</sup> More simply, Margaret Haley just described Busse as "one of the Boys."<sup>9</sup>

The Board of Education remained as one of the principal issues in the campaign and the press continued its attempts to portray Margaret Haley as a sort of "eminence grise" behind Dunne's throne. Typical was a Tribune reference in a story dealing with a relatively unimportant debate over a minor expenditure. "At 11:30 Deputy Assistant Mayor Haley [emphasis mine] arrived on the scene and directed the movements of her forces. . ."<sup>10</sup> Charges were also regularly made that teachers and Board members alike were being pressured into publicly campaigning for Dunne's re-election and that teachers had been asked to contribute to Dunne's election campaign fund. Although an investigation by the School Management Committee resulted in Jane Addams' announcement that there was no evidence to support the charges that campaign assessments had been levied upon teachers, the charges were to continue until election day.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ickes, Autobiography of a Curmudgeon, 108-9.

<sup>9</sup> Haley, Battleground., 198.

<sup>10</sup> "Quorum Talked to Death," Chicago Tribune, March 14, 1907, 1.

<sup>11</sup> "No Slush Fund in Schools Is Finding of Committee," Chicago Tribune, May 14, 1907, 6.

Haley did, in fact, use the pages of the Chicago Teachers' Federation Bulletin to print a lengthy defense of the actions taken by the Dunne Board. In addition to praising the Board for its actions in regards to the elimination of secret marking and the establishment of a process for teachers' advisory councils, Haley addressed charges that were being made about fiscal irresponsibility, extravagance, and lack of businesslike methods on the part of Board members. The fiscal defense fell into two main categories:

1) The previous Board had showed in its budget a sum of nearly a quarter of a million dollars as a cash asset; in reality this money, which represented ground rents currently under litigation by the State Street stores occupying school-owner lands, was not available to the Dunne Board. If it had been, they would have ended the year with a surplus.

2) Many of the expenses charged to the Dunne Board were actually the fulfillment of previous construction commitments authorized by previous "business" boards. In fact, the Dunne Board had been unable to authorize new construction to deal with the problems of overcrowding in the schools precisely because it had been bound by the fiscal commitments made by its predecessors.<sup>12</sup>

Louis Post's Public had printed an almost identical defense of the Board's actions on March 23. Although the

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<sup>12</sup> Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 6, No. 18, (March 29, 1907), 2-3.

Teachers' Bulletin does not cite the Public as the source of its article, it appears that at least in this instance Post and Haley had collaborated in developing their defense of the Board's activities.

The Republican campaign strategy seems generally to have been to avoid attacking Dunne directly; his personal integrity and probity were rarely questioned. Instead his opponents concentrated on attacking the wisdom of his appointments. For example, one of his former judicial colleagues, Judge Charles Cutting of the Probate Court, cited his respect for Dunne and his willingness to support him if he were running for a judicial office. However, Cutting argued that Dunne had been unable to control his appointed School Board.

If you want the kind of a business administration the office requires, vote for Fred A. Busse. . . . If there is one place above others than requires level headedness, it is in the management of the school board. Under the Dunne regime it has been one constant case of wild experiments and crank ideas carried on by people who made no pretense of having the education or ability for the duties required until they were elevated to a place on the board.

It's all right to have one or two cranks on the board, because they will inject new ideas. This board, as constituted by Mayor Dunne, has a preponderance of people with excessively progressive notions. . . . The board can no longer be the playground of cranks and experimenters.<sup>13</sup>

The mayoral election was held on April 2, 1907 and Dunne, predictably, was defeated. Busse received forty-nine percent

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<sup>13</sup> "School Board Too Wild," Chicago Tribune, March 31, 1907, 6.

of all votes cast, Dunne forty-five percent, with the usual Socialist and Prohibitionist candidates dividing the remainder. Almost equally disappointing to Dunne, Fisher's settlement with the traction companies was endorsed by a margin of fifty-six to forty-four percent, a clear setback for the supporters of immediate municipal ownership.<sup>14</sup>

### The Busse Mayoralty

The Dunne-to-Busse transition was unorthodox, even for that colorful political era. As described in the pages of the Public of April 13th:

There was a sensational occurrence on the 6th in connection with the recent municipal election. Arrangements had been made by the City Council for the ceremonial retirement of Mayor Dunne and the inauguration of Mayor Busse, the ceremony to take place in the presence of the Council on the 15th. But on the 6th Mr. Busse qualified before the City Clerk by taking the oath of office and executing the bond.<sup>15</sup>

According to the popular press, the cause of Busse's precipitate action was that he had moved promptly so as to be able to get rid of Police Chief Collins, another Dunne appointee who had been under fire for incompetence. The papers also cited Busse's move as a "check on the so-called radical element of the school board that is said to have in

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<sup>14</sup> Morton, Justice and Humanity, 112.

<sup>15</sup> Chicago's New Mayor," The Public 10, April 13, 1907, 33.

view certain changes in the management of the public schools."<sup>16</sup>

In practice, Busse never actually assumed the duties of his office until April 15. As described by Richard Morton:

The Republican panic had subsided and Busse was, in any case, too ill from a "severe cold" to assume the powers of his new office. Thus it was that for a week Chicago had two mayors.<sup>17</sup>

Dunne's final address to the City Council was a moving appeal for a return to the cause of municipal ownership. He then returned, but only briefly, to the obscurity of private life. In 1912 he was elected Governor of Illinois, the only one of Chicago's mayors to make the transition from City Hall to State House. As Governor he compiled a commendable record, retaining his reputation for integrity and supporting Progressive legislation on a state-wide basis.

Even before Busse officially took office, a curious phenomenon occurred in the press which foreshadowed the climactic event in the history of the Dunne Board of Education. Both the Tribune and the Daily News published editorials clearly recommending that Busse take the unprecedented action of removing the members of the Board of Education who had been appointed by Dunne. The Tribune based its arguments on the municipal charter which "gives the mayor

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<sup>16</sup> "Busse Takes Oath by Sudden Coup: Collins the Cause." Chicago Daily News, April 6, 1906, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Morton, Justice and Humanity, 115.

power to remove on any formal charge any officer appointed by him whenever he shall be of the opinion that the interests of the city demand such removal." It then cited an Appellate Court case which, according to the Tribune "gives to every mayor the power to remove the unsatisfactory appointees of his predecessor as well as his own."<sup>18</sup> The News was even more direct.

All members of the school board, regardless of whom they were appointed by, serve at the pleasure of the mayor, and he may remove them at any time. Unless the mayor-elect uses this power of removal the new school board will be made up of fourteen Dunne and seven Busse appointees during the first year of his [Busse's] administration.<sup>19</sup>

Within a few weeks, Busse was to put this advice into practice.

### The Great Removal

On the evening of May 17, several members of the Dunne Board received unexpected visits at their homes. As described by Louis Post:

Hardly had Busse taken his seat as Mayor when I was waited upon at my house in the late hours of the night by a burly policeman who, claiming to represent Mayor Busse, impudently held out, with a demand for my signature, a blank resignation as member of the school board. . . . When I refused to sign, the policeman took the blank resignation with him as he left my apartment. Afterwards I learned that several "Dunne Board" members had been

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<sup>18</sup> "The Mayor's Power of Removal," Editorial, Chicago Tribune, April 9, 1907, 8.

<sup>19</sup> Chicago Daily News, April 4, 1907, 1.

approached in like manner, and with like results.<sup>20</sup>

The other members whose resignations were requested were Wiley Mills, Cornelia DeBey, Raymond Robins, John Sonstebly, Philip Angsten, W. A. Kuflewski, C. A. Weil, James Chvatal, George Duddleston, John Hayes and Charles Sethness. Not surprisingly, Jane Addams was exempted from the purge, as was Mrs. Blaine and Board President Ritter.<sup>21</sup> There was no explanation as to why non-radicals like Hayes and Sethness were asked to resign; one writer speculates that it might have involved some possible future legal defense for Busse's action.<sup>22</sup> Post's own writings suggest a similar interpretation, saying that Busse "made a gesture" by removing six Harrison appointees "whose terms of office were about to expire and who had all along opposed the Dunne members in their efforts to clean out . . . the public school system."<sup>23</sup>

The reactions of the twelve trustees who were asked for their resignations varied greatly. A few complied promptly with the request. Chvatal indicated his satisfaction with the action, saying that Busse was to be congratulated for "putting

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<sup>20</sup> Louis Post. Living a Long Life Over Again.

<sup>21</sup> "Call Time on School Trustees: Twelve Will Go," Chicago Tribune, May 18, 1907, 1. "Busse's School Ax Nicked by Trustees," Chicago Daily News, May 18, 1907, 1.

<sup>22</sup> Dominic Candeloro. "The Chicago School Board Crisis of 1907," Journal of Illinois Historical Society 68, 402.

<sup>23</sup> Louis Post. Living a Long Life.

those reformers out" and that he would have resigned long ago except that he had not wished to give Dunne an opportunity to put someone new in his place.<sup>24</sup> Weil also resigned immediately while Duddleston, who had not yet received the request from Busse at the time he was contacted by the press, said that he would resign if requested to do so and would not "dispute Mayor Busse's right to a board of education best suited to his policy."<sup>25</sup> Wladyslaw Kuflewski also agreed to resign, while Charles Sethness indicated he was unwilling either to resign or to fight the dismissal in the courts.<sup>26</sup>

By noon on the 18th six other trustees had indicated that they would go to court to test the Mayor's power to remove them. The six were Sonsteby, Post, Robins, DeBey, Angsten and conservative John Hayes; they were soon joined by a seventh, Wiley Mills. A few days later John Harding was also asked by the Mayor to resign after he had demonstrated his support for the ousted members, and Board President Ritter also submitted his resignation as a protest against the removals.

The press were remarkably vindictive in their treatment of the ousted trustees. Cartoonists gleefully lampooned the "long-haired radicals." The Inter-Ocean of May 20, under the

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<sup>24</sup> Chicago Tribune, May 18, 1907.

<sup>25</sup> Chicago Daily News, May 18, 1907.

<sup>26</sup> "School Funds Shy; Bring Busse Ouster," Chicago Daily News, May 20, 1907, 1.



heading "Busse's Ax Will Fall 9 Times Tonight; To Oust 'Longhairs'" showed an ape-like individual with Louis Post's glasses and hairstyle, wearing a ballerina's tutu and tattered fairy wings, holding a sign "I Want Work" and captioned below "A Suggestion for Dunne's fairy school board." The Daily News of May 21 showed a man in a barber chair wearing boots labeled "School Board" being shaved by Barber Busse holding shears labeled "Business." The caption: "Less long hair will make the head cooler as summer comes on." Newspapers treated the legal efforts of the "Ousted Seven" as either laughable or obstructive; the general theme was that the people had spoken through their new mayor and the dismissed trustees ought to exit quietly.

But far from exiting quietly, the seven ousted members fought back vigorously. They engaged a prominent local attorney, Eugene Garnett, and laid plans to attend the regular Board meeting of May 22, arguing that their removal had been illegal and that they were still legally members of the Board. Although Board secretary Lewis Larson indicated that he would not call their names at the official roll call, the seven hoped that Board President Ritter would still recognize them. As described in the Proceedings of the Board, the meeting opened as follows:

The Secretary called the following members: Mr. O'Ryan, Mrs. Keough, Dr. White, Mrs. Blaine, Mr. Spiegel, Miss Addams, Mr. Harding, Dr. Guerin and Mr. Ritter.

The Secretary: "There are nine members--no quorum

present."

The President: "Call the remaining names."

Secretary Larson agreed to call the names of the remaining members only "under protest and on the advice of my counsel." As their names were called, each of the seven responded "Present as a member of the Board of Education." President Ritter then declared a quorum present and called the meeting to order. Mrs. Blaine then asked for the opinion of the Board's attorney as to the legality of the removal of the members. Spiegel, seconded by White, attempted to adjourn the meeting on the grounds that a quorum was not present; Ritter overruled their request. Because Board Attorney Maher had a cold, Assistant Board Attorney Shannon then read the opinion of the Board's Attorneys to the effect that the removals were illegal, that the power of removal rests with the Common Council, and that a two-thirds majority of all aldermen must approve such removal before it would take effect. The key sentence was unequivocal: "The law of this state does not give the Mayor the power to remove a member of the Board of Education during the term of office for which he was legally appointed."<sup>27</sup> Ritter then ordered the meeting adjourned.

The next day Board Attorney Maher amplified for the press his reasons for sustaining the contention of the ousted members. Maher denied Busse's claim that authority for the

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<sup>27</sup> Proceedings. Chicago Board of Education. May 22, 1907, 1117-18.

removals came under the Cities and Villages Act. Instead Maher argued that the school trustees were state officers who did not fall under the jurisdiction of that Act.<sup>28</sup> Maher apparently felt very strongly about the illegality of the removals. A month later he requested that his name be withdrawn from the list of Board employees recommended for re-election for the coming year, since "I do not seek re-employment from your Honorable Body."<sup>29</sup>

The terse prose of the Proceedings covered a great deal of behind-the-scenes maneuvering. Louis Post's autobiography describes in detail the original intentions of the expelled members. After consultation with their attorney, the seven had agreed to attend the May 22 meeting, with various alternative actions planned depending on President Ritter's decisions. However, they abandoned these preset plans for one proposed by Mrs. Blaine. As originally described, Mrs. Blaine was to ask the Board Attorney for his opinion of the legality of the proceedings; if his opinion proved against Busse's right of removal Blaine was to move that the Board take legal action to protect the integrity of the Board; once Blaine's motion was approved the Board would adjourn immediately. Blaine, however, deviated from this script.

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<sup>28</sup> "Ousted Seven for War," Chicago Daily News, May 27, 1907, 2.

<sup>29</sup> Proceedings. Chicago Board of Education, June 26, 1907.

Meanwhile Mrs. Blaine, without consulting any of us, diverged from the plan on which we had relied in abandoning our own. Instead of moving instructions to the official attorney of the Board to institute legal proceedings in accordance with his official opinion, she proposed, manifestly in the interest of Mayor Busse's unlawful action, that the president of the Board obtain opinions from "eminent outside lawyers."

Post adds that Mrs. Blaine subsequently denied having made any such arrangement with the ousted members.

But whether she deceived us or we deceived ourselves, the fact remains that the most astute of Busse's aids [sic] on the Board could not have played more efficiently into the hand he held.<sup>30</sup>

Blaine's biography also leaves the question in doubt. According to Gilbert Harrison, shortly after the "ouster" occurred, Addams and Robins visited Blaine to discuss strategy. Although both were "ready to fight," Blaine felt that the legal issues were beyond her competence; she told Addams she "wanted to be helpful, but could think of no way." Finally, after phone conversations with Emil Ritter, they evolved the strategy described above and the "radicals" agreed to try it. Harrison adds:

Anita said subsequently that she had never spoken directly with any of the removed members about her intention, and that she had not promised to join any concerted protest. The exact truth is obscure.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Louis Post. Living a Long Life.

<sup>31</sup> Carter Harrison, Growing Up with Chicago, Chicago: Ralph Seymour, 1944, 124-25.

Jane Addams also disappointed the ousted Board members by her reluctance to speak out vigorously in their support. An anecdote told by Margaret Haley bitterly describes how Addams agreed to call off a scheduled meeting of the School Management Committee; this would eliminate the need for Addams to take a position on the removal question. Haley then describes a meeting between Addams, DeBey and Haley at the height of the crisis.

The three of us went out on the street to go over to the old Union Restaurant. As we went along, Jane said to me, in her usual sweet and gentle manner, "Do you know that I'm not at all ashamed to be seen walking along the street with you?" I thought for an instant that she was joking and started to retort in kind; then I saw the glint in Dr. DeBey's eyes and the quirk of Dr. DeBey's mouth. I knew then that Jane had meant exactly what she had said.<sup>32</sup>

Addams herself apparently was unhappy about her term on the Board of Education and specifically about her role in the removal struggles. In her autobiography she says that she "certainly played a most inglorious part in this unnecessary conflict." She adds that during her first year on the Board the membership seemed "exasperatingly conservative," the next year they were "frustratingly radical," and "I was of course highly unsatisfactory to both."<sup>33</sup>

On May 23 Ritter sent his resignation to Mayor Busse, and

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<sup>32</sup> Margaret Haley, Battleground, 109.

<sup>33</sup> Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, 193.

a few days later John Harding, who had called a regular meeting of the Buildings and Grounds Committee of the Board and permitted the "ousted" Committee members to attend, was also removed by Busse. Harding subsequently joined the group of ousted trustees who were seeking legal remediation for their plight.

The next move was for the "expelled" members to call a special meeting of the Board. The intention of this move was to establish their legitimacy if a quorum was present. Since the Board meeting rooms were locked against them, the rump group met in an ante-room, using candles for light. Robins was elected President pro tem and Sonstebly secretary. The others present were Post, Angsten, Mills, Hayes, Harding and DeBey, leaving them only three short of the necessary quorum. Disappointedly, Post adds that Dr. Guerin had indicated his willingness to attend and that if only two other "Dunne members" had come to the meeting a legal quorum could have been present. Apparently Post visualized a sort of government-in-exile which would have gone on making educational policy; those policy decisions would have been subsequently confirmed when the Supreme Court, some months later, did in fact rule that Busse's actions were illegal and that the removed members should be restored to their seats.<sup>34</sup>

At this "rump session," the "belligerent eight," as the

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

newspapers now called the ousted trustees, adopted two resolutions, which had been prepared by their attorney Eugene Garnett. The first resolved that "we, the members of the board of education, resist by every lawful means all attempts made by the mayor to remove members of the board"; the second appointed Garnett and Garnett as attorneys to represent the board of education in whatever action was taken to resist the mayor.<sup>35</sup> Both of these actions were designed to emphasize the point that they, and not Busse's appointees, were the legal incumbents and that policies made by the "Busse Board" were not binding.

At the regular meeting of the Chicago City Council on Monday, May 27, eleven new appointments were made by Busse to fill the vacancies created by removals and resignations. This gave the Board a total of eighteen members, with three vacancies still to be filled. The eleven new appointees clearly signified Busse's intention to return the membership of the Board to the business-orientation that had been characteristic in the years before Dunne. There were no women, no representatives from organized labor, no clergymen, no representatives from settlement houses or other typically Progressive backgrounds. The new members were (names in parentheses indicate the Dunne member whom they replaced):

John R. Morron (Ritter) -- President of the Diamond Glue

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<sup>35</sup> "The Power of Removal," Editorial, Chicago Daily News, May 26, 1907, 8.

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Daniel R. Cameron (Sethness) -- Former President of the Board of Education. Cameron had been President of the Board at the time that it negotiated 99-year land leases with the Tribune.

Chester M. Dawes (Duddleston) -- Another former member and sponsor of the Dawes Rule designed to eliminate "pull" in the system. Dawes was a railroad attorney.

Severt T. Gunderson (Kuflewski) -- Officer of a real estate and building firm.

Otto Schneider (Weil) -- Retired. Another former Board member and a personal friend of Mayor Busse.

Alexander Blackwood (DeBey) -- Physician active in the Republican Party.

George Limbert (Robins) -- President of an iron pipe company.

F. C. Waller (Mills) -- President of Waller Coal Company and personal friend of Mayor Busse.

George Trumbull (Post) -- President of the Trumbull Safe Co.

Alfred Kohn (Sonstebly) -- Physician active in the Republican Party.

T. W. Robinson (Chvatal) -- First Vice President of the Illinois Steel Company.<sup>36</sup>

Busse had provided for the aldermen a lengthy statement of his reasons for removing the eight Board members. In brief, his charges were that the Board had been in a constant state of "discord, turmoil and disorganization," that the Board's financial condition was unsound, that there was constant friction between Board and school administration,

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<sup>36</sup> "New Board In; Old Hit," Chicago Daily News, May 28, 19076, 1-2.



that the Board's actions and policies bred factionalism and encouraged insubordination on the part of the teachers.<sup>37</sup>

Alderman William Dever, one of the Dunne stalwarts remaining on the City Council, attacked Busse's actions and moved that the City Council form a committee to investigate Busse's allegations as to the incompetence of the ousted members. Dever's impassioned speech argued that the ousted members had a right to be heard. "If we are to treat these men fairly we will bring them before a tribunal where the charges against them may be proved or disproved." However a roll call vote seeking concurrence on the appointments of the deposed members supported Busse 63-2, Dever and Alderman O'Connor providing the only negatives.<sup>38</sup>

A few other voices were raised in defense of the Board. Professor George Mead of the University of Chicago defended the Board in a paper presented to the Ethical Society on May 29. Mead argued that friction and dissent not only were not grounds for dismissal of the trustees, they sometimes served a healthy purpose.

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. Alderman Dever had consistently been a Dunne supporter on municipal ownership issues. In 1923 Dever was to become Mayor of Chicago. During his term the 20-year traction franchises which had been negotiated by Walter Fisher came up for renewal and Dever was once again to be involved in an unsuccessful struggle for municipal ownership of public transit.

Lengthened debates and even wrangling are unavoidable consequences of the methods of any legislative body, and can never be justifiably made the ground of complaint against such bodies unless they render legislation impossible, and the ground for the mayor's complaints is not the absence of legislation but the nature of that which has been passed.

Mead also warned of the consequences of the action for future Boards.

As it is always possible to bring forward unsubstantiated charges of unbusinesslike methods . . . the school board in the future must always face the possibility that its members will be bundled incontinently out of office if their legislation does not meet the approval of the city's executive.<sup>39</sup>

Years later, George Counts confirmed Mead's prediction.

As a consequence [of the Supreme Court decision] the perfectly arbitrary exercise of power over the board of education came to an end; but in its essence the practice of Mayor Busse has continued through the years.<sup>40</sup>

Even the Daily News, which had strongly endorsed Busse's actions, recognized the problems inherent in such use of arbitrary power. In a May 30 editorial, the writer observed that in general the people have "no fondness for arbitrary action by their chief executive." Such action should only be taken when necessary, the writer went on, adding:

While exceptional conditions that work harm require

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<sup>39</sup> "Hits One-Man Power." Reprinted from Chicago Daily News, June 4, 1907. Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin VI., No. 27, (June 7, 1907), 1.

<sup>40</sup> George S. Counts, School and Society in Chicago, (New York; Arno Press, 1971), 249.

exceptional remedies, each must be clearly recognized as exceptional. Orderly government cannot be carried on if the painful exception becomes the established rule.<sup>41</sup>

At the meeting of the Board of Education on May 29, Board Secretary Larson acted as temporary Chairman. He read the letter of appointment from Mayor Busse for the eleven new members and the roll was called; the membership of the Board now stood at eighteen. Ex-President Ritter's letter of resignation was read and approved and the Board then unanimously elected Otto C. Schneider as President and Rev. White Vice President. Jane Addams was retained as Chair of the School Management Committee, Chester Dawes named Chair of Buildings and Grounds and Modie Spiegel Chair of the Finance Committee. The meeting then promptly adjourned.<sup>42</sup>

Writing in the Public, Louis Post added some colorful details not a part of the official record. As Post described the meeting:

The circumstances of the seating of the unlawfully appointed trustees were curious. Three policemen in uniform guarded the corridor. Twenty-one police detectives in citizens' clothing were placed in advance in the seats of the twenty-one Board members, each holding a chair until directed by an assistant corporation counsel to yield it to an

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<sup>41</sup> "The City's Governing Boards." Editorial, Chicago Daily News, May 30, 1907, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Proceedings. Chicago Board of Education. May 29, 1907, 1113-19.

approved applicant.<sup>43</sup>

The Chicago Tribune's description of this event adds a note of humor. Since three trustees' seats were still vacant, three of the Chicago policemen remained in place throughout the entire meeting.

Policeman Tim O'Brien filled the seat of Mr. Hayes, Officer Pat Reed sat at the desk formerly occupied by Mr. Angsten, and John O'Shea from Central sat at the old desk of Mr. Harding and looked the part of wisdom. Although their names were omitted from the roll call they were dressed in frock coats and did their best to look their parts.<sup>44</sup>

#### Legal Moves

From the beginning, the ousted trustees had sought legal counsel in their efforts to counter Busse's forced removals. This resulted in a series of legal moves and counter moves over the next few weeks. The first was a request for a temporary injunction to prevent Busse from appointing their successors at the City Council meeting on May 27. The request was filed with the Circuit Court of Cook County on May 26. It charged Busse and other persons unknown with unlawful combination to prevent the eight complainants from exercising their lawful duties as trustees and asked that Busse be restrained from presenting the names of their proposed

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<sup>43</sup> "The Chicago School Board," The Public 10, June 3, 1907, 226.

<sup>44</sup> "New Board Sits, Old Is a Memory," Chicago Tribune, May 30, 1907, 3.

replacements to the City Council.<sup>45</sup> Judge Windes of the Circuit Court refused to grant the injunction on several grounds, the most notable being that "the Supreme Court will hold [emphasis mine] that school trustees are officers under municipal government and can be removed at any time by the mayor." Windes added that under the Cities and Villages Act the Mayor did in fact have the right to oust those officers of the municipal government whom he had the power to appoint.<sup>46</sup>

The next legal move was an appeal to the States' Attorney to join with the ousted trustees in quo warranto proceedings to test their successors' claim to office. Quo warranto is a legal proceeding which derives from the English common law and guarantees protection to the citizen against violation of rights conferred by the king or the state. It is used to compel a state official to file suit on behalf of a citizen who does not have standing to enable him/her to file it on his own.<sup>47</sup> States' Attorney Healy refused to intervene on the grounds that he had "reached the conclusion that the Mayor is

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<sup>45</sup> Bill for an Injunction. Circuit Court of Cook County, State of Illinois, May 26, 1907.

<sup>46</sup> "Eleven New Men in School Board; Judge Aids Busse," Chicago Tribune, May 28, 1907, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with attorney at Chicago firm of Coleman and Associates.

clearly empowered to make removals."<sup>48</sup> Like Judge Windes, Healy clearly saw his role as that of interpreter of the law, rather than as the conduit by which petitioners could exercise their right of appeal to a higher court.

Next the trustees tried for a writ of mandamus to compel States' Attorney Healy to bring an action on their behalf and again the appeal was denied, this time by Judge Chytraus. In effect this decision removed the last possible avenue of appeal for the trustees. As the Teachers' Federation Bulletin observed:

With the refusal of Judge Chytraus in July to confirm his writ of certiorari . . . the members removed by Mayor Busse have exhausted every means within their power to test in the courts the legality of their removal, and as all access to the courts are denied them, it is impossible to test the legality of their removal.<sup>49</sup>

Actually, Judge Chytraus' decision did not turn out to be final. Garnett and Garnett carried his decision to the State Supreme Court on appeal and in December 1907 the Supreme Court reversed the lower court and sustained the Dunne trustees, holding both that Busse violated the law in removing them and that States' Attorney Healy violated his official duty by

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<sup>48</sup> "The Chicago School Controversy," The Public 10, June 29, 1907, 300.

<sup>49</sup> "All Access to Courts Closed Against Board Members Removed by Mayor Busse," Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin, September 13, 1907, 4.

refusing to initiate quo warranto proceedings.<sup>50</sup> The eight removed trustees were thus restored to their places on the Board and served out the remainder of their terms.

An interesting aside to the legal discussion is that the Supreme Court's decision resulted in part from the voters' rejection of the proposed municipal charter, which had been decisively defeated at the polls in September of 1907. As the Teachers' Federation Bulletin pointed out, the proposed charter would have conferred on the mayor the power to remove board members and "the courts refuse to hear cases which are technically designated as "moot."<sup>51</sup>

#### The Busse Board

The Supreme Court decision was still in the unforeseeable future when the Busse Board took office in the summer of 1907. In the meantime, the new Board lost no time in making their intentions clear. A major priority was to be the reduction of

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<sup>50</sup> "Decision in the Chicago School Board Case." The Public 10, December, 1907, 902.

An interview with an attorney in the law firm of Coleman and Associates elaborated on the implications of the Supreme Court decision in regard to Healy's culpability. A Supreme Court case heard only a few months before that of the trustees had ruled that the States' Attorney had no authority to refuse to file a quo warranto suit. The Court's reasoning was that providing this option left too many opportunities for political calculations and manipulations to enter into the decision.

<sup>51</sup> "Decision of the Supreme Court of Illinois Case of Harding vs. Busse, McCabe et al," Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin, (October 25, 1907), 3.

the influence of the Teachers' Federation. In response to a statement by Margaret Haley to the effect that any efforts to interfere with the teachers' organization would be vigorously resisted, newly-elected President Schneider left no doubts as to his position on the appropriate role of the teachers. "If we are going to put the schools on a sound moral [emphasis mine] basis, the disturbing influence introduced by teachers dominated by organized labor ought to be wiped out."<sup>52</sup> Schneider specifically related his opposition to any type of organization on the part of public employees to the recently adopted plan for advisory councils.

. . .the plan of Miss DeBey to have the schools run not only by a board of education, but also by a system of teachers' councils is absurd and impracticable. I stand, furthermore, for the appointment of all teachers on a basis of merit only.<sup>53</sup>

The new Board's actions quickly demonstrated their desire to return to the pre-Dunne status. Cooley was re-elected Superintendent in June, and the Post Plan was rejected. As Addams sadly describes the process:

. . . under the regime of men representing the leading Commercial Club of the city . . . I saw one beloved measure after another withdrawn. Although the new president scrupulously gave me the floor in defense of each, it was impossible to consider them upon their merits in the lurid light which at the

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<sup>52</sup> "Union of Teachers Defies School Head," Chicago Daily News, May 31, 1907, 7.

<sup>53</sup> "New Board Sits, Old is a Memory," Chicago Tribune, May 30, 1907, 3.



moment enveloped all the plans of the "uplifters."<sup>54</sup>

By the end of June, the Bulletin of the Teachers' Federation provided a dreary list of the actions of the Board at its June 26th meeting. These included the repeal of the Post Report, the restoration of the Cooley system of secret marking and promotional examination, voting an increase of \$60,000 for the Board's civil service employees while instituting a \$50 pay cut for each teacher on ground of "Financial Stringency," and abolishing the Dunne Board's proposed standard of 40-seat classrooms and returning to the previous 54-seat norm.<sup>55</sup> Another action that must have been particularly galling to the ardent single-taxer Louis Post was the July 3rd decision to rename the Henry George School the George M. Pullman School. Only Jane Addams and Dr. John Guerin cast dissenting votes.<sup>56</sup>

There was one notable victory for the Dunne forces in the summer of 1907. One of the first acts of the Busse appointees was to attempt to drop the land-lease suit against the Tribune. The Board's attorney, Clarence Goodwin, refused to do so on the basis of the contested legality of their

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<sup>54</sup> Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, 336-37.

<sup>55</sup> "What the 'Business' Board Did," Chicago Teachers' Federation, Bulletin 6, No. 30, 1.

<sup>56</sup> "Chicago School Affairs," The Public 10, July 13, 1907, 345.

appointments. O'Ryan, Addams and Guerin supported Goodwin in this decision and the suit went forward. It was ultimately to be decided in favor of the legality of the leases by the State Supreme Court in 1910, but at least for the present the Tribune and its allies had lost the round.<sup>57</sup>

#### Restoration of the Dunne Board

On Tuesday, December 3, 1907, the Illinois Supreme Court handed down its verdict in the case of the "The People ex rel. Appellants v. John J. Healy, States' Attorney." As described above, the verdict both denied Busse's authority to have removed the members from office and affirmed Healy's error in refusing to file quo warranto proceedings. Post, DeBey, Robins, Mills and Sonstebly were restored to their seats on the Board, replacing the Busse nominees. Louis Post's autobiography describes with his usual gusto how Busse's five discredited appointees "walked out like dogs with their tails between their legs," while Post and his four colleagues returned to their lawful seats "triumphantly though modestly."<sup>58</sup> (The other "ousted" members were not restored to their seats, either because their terms had expired in the interim or because they had not chosen to be a party to the lawsuit.) However, the victory was a hollow one. As Post wrote in The Public,

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<sup>57</sup> Margaret Haley, Battleground 199.

<sup>58</sup> Louis Post, Living a Long Life.

The efforts of the "removed" trustees to organize the public school system upon a basis of mutual confidence and democratic co-operation between pupil and teacher and principal and superintendent and Board, have been frustrated by the re-establishment of a policy of domineering coercion . . . [in regard to most matters] the responsibility is now with another set of trustees who constitute a majority. . . . So the actual going back of the "ousted" members can count for little, either for them or to the public.<sup>59</sup>

The next year must have been a frustrating one for Post and his "radical" colleagues. Within a few months of his return, Jane Addams' term expired, as did Cornelia DeBey's. The "radicals" were denied representation on special committees of the Board, which regularly held their meetings outside the Board rooms, and without giving the required statutory notice of such meetings to the minority members. The "gangster board" was regularly able to pass resolutions favorable to the business community as well as take lesser actions infuriating to their more liberal colleagues.<sup>60</sup>

By 1909 all the members of the Dunne Board had returned to private life. The significance of the brief period in which they attempted to reform the Chicago public school system remains to be discussed as the "Legacy of the Dunne Board."

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<sup>59</sup> "The Chicago School Board Decision," The Public 10, No. 508, (December 28, 1907), 914.

<sup>60</sup> Louis Post, Living a Long Life.

## CHAPTER 7

### THE LEGACY OF THE DUNNE SCHOOL BOARD

The relationship of the Dunne Board to the Progressive Movement as a whole was an ambiguous one. Like the larger movement, which is sometimes described as an umbrella which sheltered a wide variety of viewpoints ranging from the New Nationalism of Theodore Roosevelt to the New Freedom of Woodrow Wilson, from the urban reforms of mayors like Tom Johnson to the Populist-rooted crusades of Wisconsin's Robert LaFollette, the Dunne Board contained a diverse group of individuals representative of a number of streams of reform thought. While the newspapers and other critics might have lumped them together as "cranks" and "radicals," they were in fact far less monolithic than the businessmen boards who both preceded and succeeded them. Just as some of the Board's actions were contrary to the positions of the educational establishment's administrative progressives, some of the positions which individual Board members espoused were antithetical to mainstream Progressive ideas. For example, the objection to examinations for teachers as part of Cooley's promotional plan was contrary to the Progressive emphasis on civil service examinations for job holders. And while individuals like Addams and Robins were to be politically

active in the formation of the Progressive Party, Louis Post and Cornelia DeBey remained independent of the larger movement.

The importance of the Dunne Board of Education lies not so much in what they accomplished as in the fact that they presented a microcosm of some of the key educational struggles of the early twentieth century. On the one side were the "administrative progressives"--the "business boards of education" and the strong superintendents who emphasized efficiency and centralized control. These "administrative progressives" had many similarities to the larger Progressive movement of the time. Their call for a strong superintendent and a small school board, either elected at-large or appointive, paralleled the growing movement toward city manager government and small, at-large elected city councils. On the other side there was the "Dunne Board"--far less easy to define because it represented a wide spectrum of positions, including but certainly not limited to support for labor organizations, for broader rather than more centralized input into decision-making, for openness in policies ranging from teacher promotion to textbook contracts, for inclusion of various segments of the community on boards and commissions. It is important to note that, although to contemporary readers these concepts are somewhat self-evidently progressive--in the sense that equates progressive with liberal--to contemporaries of the Dunne Board of Education this was not so self-evident:

their policies might have been viewed either as exasperatingly "radical", as in the "democratization" of the teaching force and the recognition of the legitimacy of the Teachers' Federation, or as "un-progressive" in apparently re-introducing politics into the school system by reducing the powers of the superintendent. Yet the self-identification of most of the Board members would probably have been that they considered themselves progressives, and a few, like Addams and Robins, were to be stalwarts of the Progressive Party when it was founded a few years later.

What were some of the elements that made the Dunne Board so unique? Certainly one was its composition. Unlike previous Chicago boards of education, which had been dominated by male leaders of the business community, the Dunne Board included women, labor representatives and social reformers, and drew much of its support from the larger Progressive community. Typically, the relationships between these men and women overlapped. Just as members of the "business boards" mingled at the Merchants' and City Clubs, the Union League or the wealthy mainstream Protestant churches, the progressives served together on settlement house boards, civic committees, labor and women's suffrage groups. While still predominantly Protestant, their Protestantism was of the "Social Gospel" variety. Less typical of the progressives of the day, their activities and their sympathies for labor and the immigrant frequently led them to identify with individuals and

organizations like Margaret Haley and the Teachers' Federation, who battled against the domination of the propertied classes.

With the overlapping came diversity. Jane Addams and Raymond Robins were most identified with the settlement house movement, Anita Blaine with support of progressive education as developed by Dewey and Parker, Cornelia DeBey with the Teachers' Federation, John Harding and John Sonstebly with labor organizations, Louis Post with the single-tax movement. But DeBey had also been a resident at Hull House, Addams had been an early supporter of the Teachers' Federation merger with the Chicago Federation of Labor, Blaine was a major contributor to Hull House, Post and Addams were to work together for years in the peace movement, Sonstebly would serve as Chief Justice of the Municipal Court, and together with other Chicago Progressives like Harold Ickes and Florence Kelly, Addams, Post and Robins would all go on to be involved in progressive causes at a national level.

With the exception of Anita Blaine, the Dunne Board was less concerned with progressive education as defined by educators like Dewey and more concerned with such issues as a salary structure more favorable to the teachers and increased input from teachers in the Board's decision-making. The latter would have, as a consequence, implications for the reduction of the power of the superintendent.

In comparing the Dunne Board with its predecessors the

press regularly criticized it for his "talkfests." Board meetings frequently lasted for three and four hours and heated debates were frequent. With the coming of the Busse Board, talkativeness became a thing of the past. Newspaper stories wrote admiringly of the first (May 29, 1907) meeting of the Board, which conducted all necessary business, including the election of officers, in just twenty-two minutes.<sup>1</sup> Louis Post, on the other hand, defended the Dunne Board's procedures. In The Public Post wrote that, although saving time may be essential in the operation of a business, it

. . . cannot be valuable for a public service requiring the consideration and deliberation that genuinely useful service on a school board does require. . . . deliberation rather than speed, controversy rather than caucus harmony, and publicity rather than silence--these are best for an official body entrusted with the policies and property of a great public school system.<sup>2</sup>

Post's logic was the same progressive logic that fought for secret ballots but open meetings and that regarded public service as an obligation. Of course, progressives could often be as myopic as businessmen in their conviction that their way was best and as paternalistic in their frequent tacit assumption of the importance of government by the "better sort." The major difference lay in how that "better sort" was

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<sup>1</sup> Chicago Tribune, Chicago Daily News, Chicago Record-Herald, May 30, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> "The Busse Business Booster School Board," The Public 10, (June 8, 1907), 220.



defined.

The Dunne Board also differed from previous boards in its attitude toward the Teachers' Federation. Although Cornelia DeBey was frequently derided by the press as being the "representative of the CTF on the Board," she was not alone in her support. Jane Addams had defended the right of the teachers to affiliate with the Chicago Federation of Labor on the grounds that it had been "but one more tactic in the long struggle against the tax-dodging corporations,"<sup>3</sup> and although Margaret Haley sometimes found Addams a weak reed on which to lean the teachers generally regarded her as their advocate. Raymond Robins and his wife Margaret were long-time sympathizers with the cause of women in organized labor, and both Robins and Post often worked with Margaret Haley on such campaigns as municipal ownership and charter reform.

A third element which differentiated the Dunne Board from its predecessors was the nature of the major reforms that it attempted to initiate. The most important of these were the efforts to deal with "pull"--both in purchasing and contracts and in the hiring and promotion of teachers--the move for teachers' advisory councils and the opposition to Cooley's "secret marking" system.

The press frequently ridiculed the Dunne Board for its efforts to become involved in the selection of textbooks

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<sup>3</sup> Jane Addams, Twenty Years at Hull House, 192.

instead of leaving such questions to the informed judgment of the superintendent. And indeed there were occasional elements of the farcical as hordes of salesmen endeavored to convince Board members of the superiority of their particular reader or speller. But the intention underlying the Board's efforts was the elimination of "pull" or favoritism in the awarding of such contracts--a situation that did, in fact, exist in cities across the country. Cornelia DeBey may have been scattershot and unspecific in her charges, but the American Book Company did sometimes engage in questionable practices, and the two requirements of an affidavit from the dealer denying any conflict of interest and of Cooley's provision in writing of his reasons for adopting or dropping a textbook were reasonable approaches to the solution of the problem.

The question of the Board's approach to "pull" in regard to teacher appointments is closely tied to the whole "secret marking" controversy. Cooley and his supporters argued that the marking system was a safeguard against "pull," since it protected the principal from the importunities of friends and relatives of individual teachers who might be given low marks. For members of the Dunne Board, this "safeguard" was harmful to the teacher, since it threatened her with possible dismissal or lack of promotion without knowledge of the cause or right of appeal. While Cooley and the press painted the issue in "either/or" terms--either the superintendent or the teachers' union would be in control--the Board tried to defend

the rights of both teachers and administrators in the process of increasing teacher efficiency.

The "democratization" dispute over the development of teacher advisory councils demonstrates some clear parallels with Progressive principles and illustrates one of their major ambiguities--the assumption that the Progressive elite knew best what was good for the masses versus the tradition Jacksonian faith in the value of participatory democracy. Here the Dunne Board generally reflected the latter value. For business boards, the teachers apparently seemed to pose a threat similar to the urban political machine, with Margaret Haley as the sinister political boss manipulating her followers who, like the immigrant masses, were assumed to have no minds of their own. For the Dunne Board, the teachers instead seemed to be viewed as a valuable resource, whose wealth of classroom experience could supplement--not supplant--the decision-making of Board and Superintendent alike. The same Progressive spirit that called for advisory referendums and direct election of senators also called for providing the teachers with the opportunity to voice their opinions and suggestions as to the best way to operate the public school system.

The contribution of the Dunne Board of Education to the City of Chicago was, in one way, very transitory. Most of the reforms which they proposed were rescinded by the Busse appointees almost before their implementation. But in a

larger sense the ideas and the personalities of the Dunne Board stood the test of time in a way that other Boards of Education did not. On an individual level, Jane Addams remains one of Chicago's best-known and best-loved citizens. Although she sometimes disappointed Margaret Haley and the members of the Teachers' Federation, the respect in which she was held in the larger community probably helped preserve the CTF from total dissolution. Louis Post went on to serve in the national administration of Woodrow Wilson, John Sonstebly to the Municipal Court, Raymond Robins to a leadership role in the Progressive Party. Edward Dunne himself became the only Chicago mayor to go on to be elected as Governor of the State of Illinois, thus achieving a stature permanently denied to his successor. Some of the ideas espoused by the Board have likewise endured. The concept of Teachers' Councils, ridiculed by the press as a dangerous move in the direction of socialism and anarchy, is now enthusiastically endorsed by many educators as a mechanism for obtaining valuable professional input from the teaching profession into educational questions. The Englewood High School experiment in sex segregation was ended in 1911 when Ella Flagg Young became Superintendent and has never been tried again. Perhaps most important, the notion of a Board which debates, talks, discusses, and is open for public input is no longer an object of ridicule on the part of the press but rather the norm embodied in the governmental concept of the open meetings act.

In today's climate the free flow of ideas and the opportunity for debate and input from a variety of constituencies would be far more respected than the rubber-stamp consensus achieved by the Busse Board.

#### Further Research

The history of the Dunne Board of Education and its relationship to Chicago leads to several possibilities for future study. An examination of the interaction between city governments and boards of education in other major cities might provide additional insights into the role of local politics during the Progressive Era. A study of the changing relationship between the Board of Education and Chicago's mayors throughout the city's history up to the present would be useful both for historians and political scientists seeking to understand the role of the school in the history of the city. Finally a comparison of the issues faced by the Dunne Board with some of the problems facing contemporary school systems might help to shed some light on possible solutions to problems with which our city schools continue to struggle.

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The dissertation is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D.

October 21, 1992

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