

**THE CITY FOR THE PEOPLE! THE
BEST ADMINISTRATION NEW
YORK EVER HAD. CAMPAIGN
BOOK OF THE CITIZENS UNION,
SEPTEMBER, 1903**

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*From Professor J. A. Fairlie
Febr 17 04*

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CITIZENS UNION *N.Y.C.*
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MVP

Rec'd

THE FUSION TICKET
of 1903.

FOR MAYOR

SETH LOW

FOR COMPTROLLER

EDWARD W. GROUT

FOR PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF
ALDERMEN

CHARLES V. FORNES

WHAT THE CITIZENS UNION MEANS.

Origin and History of a Wonderfully Successful Non-Partisan Movement.

The purpose of the Citizens Union movement is to provide "that the business affairs of municipal corporations shall be conducted upon their own merits, uncontrolled by State and National politics." The New York State Constitution, adopted in 1894, provided that municipal elections should be held at times separate and distinct from State and National elections. Here was the opportunity to accomplish the Citizens' Union purpose in the municipalities of New York State.

THE UNION'S AIM PURELY LOCAL.

In New York City, for more than a century, the local agency of the Democratic Party had been perverted into a mere instrumentality for private "graft." It has maintained its strength on the one hand through the "cohesive power of public plunder," and on the other, through appeals to "loyal Democrats," demanding the fealty of members of a national party, where no party questions were involved. "Graft" and "Regularity" have been its watchwords. It is the purpose of the Citizens Union of New York to rid the City of this organized piracy. Its scope is purely local.

ENORMOUS POWER OF THE MAYOR.

The adoption of the Constitution of 1894, and the welding in 1897 of the nearly one hundred communities in and around Manhattan Island into a single Greater City, created a very real necessity for such an organization as this. The enormous increase of power and responsibility vested in the mayor—who was to be the chief executive

of a population of now 3,600,000—made it absolutely necessary that the head of this new and mighty city should be absolutely free and unhampered by any obligations of national political partisanship.

THE FIGHT FOR NON-PARTISANSHIP.

From its beginning the Citizens Union has advocated the principle that the Mayor should be the nominee, not of a party organization, but of an association of citizens, acting irrespective of party, and with sole regard to the attainment of an honest and progressive city administration.

THE UNION'S FIRST PLATFORM.

The first platform of the Union demanded "an honest and efficient administration, good schools, clean streets, more breathing spaces, better housing in the overcrowded parts of the city, better rapid transit facilities, strict supervision of the city's franchises, a full return for public privileges granted to corporations, and a just and fair enforcement of local statutes and ordinances."

WHAT THE VOTER WANTS TO KNOW.

The Union believed then—it believes now—that what the voter really wants to know is how the election will affect the health, business, dignity and order of his city; to be assured that the vast sums raised by taxation will be honestly and efficiently expended in the direct interest of himself and his neighbors and not squandered upon supernumeraries who are paid by the city to do national party service.

NO CONFLICT WITH ANY PARTY.

It is obvious, therefore, that the Union cannot have any interests that conflict with those of a national party. This organization is made up of decent citizens of all opinions, all creeds, all occupations, standing on one platform—the demand for an honest and efficient city government. The

union found reason for its existence in the example of British municipalities, who, since their liberation from national party bondage in 1835 have experienced such remarkable development and who have been able to call into public service the ablest and best of their citizens. New York City is rapidly assuming a position as the commercial center of the world. In order that its people may be awakened to a proper sense of civic pride and patriotism—where the CITY and not the PARTY shall be the object of supreme interest—the municipal government must be elevated out of the slough of partisan politics.

ENTHUSIASM IN 1897.

The first publication of the purpose of the Citizens Union, on February 22nd, 1897, was received with widespread enthusiasm. Asking no man to abandon his party affiliations, the Union received the support of men of all political faiths. In April the Union sought to obtain an enrollment of 50,000 citizens to support it. By June over 120,000 were pledged to its candidate. On September 1st, in a convention at which all five boroughs were represented, Seth Low received the Citizens Union nomination for Mayor.

A BITTER CAMPAIGN.

The campaign that followed was one of the most fiercely contested in the history of the city. Four candidates, representing four considerable bodies, were in the field, and at the outset all circumstances seemed to favor the Union, which numbered in its ranks the most distinguished men of both great parties. But toward the end of the campaign, Henry George, the candidate of the Jeffersonian Democracy, died. This fact contributed materially, if not decisively, to the subsequent victory of Tammany. At the polls the Tammany nominee was elected, the vote being Van Wyck, 233,000; Low, 150,000, and Tracy (the Republican nominee), 100,000.