

over an abyss' . . . Dostoevsky saw in the later years of his life where lies the new Russian capital. He quite clearly realized that Petersburg, the second capital of Russia, is merely a spectral and transitional capital. The third, imperial, and final Russian Rome will be Constantinople, and the Oecumenical Russian Cathedral the Church of St. Sophia."

Are we not justified in asking what there is in these dreams to inspire in England such a moon-struck homage? And what can Miss Rebecca West mean by saying that "Russia is to the young

intellectuals of to-day what Italy was to the Victorians?" Is it nothing but another manifestation of the proneness of people to shut their eyes to what they do not wish to see? There is something amusingly fatuous in the indiscriminate admiration which the English have developed for things Slavic simultaneously with the growth of the German terror. The spectacle of Protestant England in love with the Orthodox Russia of Dostoevsky ought not to escape the pen of Mr. George Bernard Shaw.

JACOB ZEITLIN.

State or City Control of Schools?

THE morning newspapers of February twelfth reported briefly and with little comment a resolution which had just passed the Board of Estimate and Apportionment of the city of New York, looking to a considerable extension of its powers. The resolution provided for the preparation of a bill to be acted upon by the state legislature, giving the Board of Estimate the power to determine the number of all city officers and employees paid from the city treasury and to fix their salaries. The point of the proposed bill is that it applies to the employees of the counties, courts and Department of Education, whose salaries are not now fixed by the Board. The action was taken only after a more radical and drastic proposition, giving the Board the power to eliminate and modify departments and bureaus, had been lost—the mayor and controller, however, both voting for it. The purpose of the proposed bill is to secure a greater measure of self-government to the city in the fundamental matter of control of the budget. At the present time a very considerable portion of city expenditure is imposed upon the Board by mandatory statutes.

Those who believe that many of the evils of our municipal government are due to an absurd division of responsibility brought about by state-imposed regulations will wish well to this measure. With respect to the control of educational policy—which inevitably goes with control of the purse-strings—the measure is, however, more revolutionary than at first sight appears. The question of the relation of the Board of Education to the state on the one hand, and to the municipality on the other, is about the most vexatious and the most unsettled of all our administrative questions—which is saying a good deal. The theory and

the earlier school charters the Board had not only plenary control of educational expenditures, but also power to fix the amount to be spent. While the principle has since been modified, it has been, in the words of the Court of Appeals, "the settled policy of the state, from an early date, to divorce the business of public education from all other municipal interests or business, and to take charge of it as a peculiar and separate function through agents of its own selection and immediately subject and responsive to its control."

It so happens that the city of New York is amply endowed with literature on the subject of municipal control of school expenditures. The Committee on School Inquiry—popularly known as the Hanus Survey—evolved two reports on this topic. The first, prepared by Professor E. C. Moore, now professor of education in Harvard University, was not acceptable to the Board of Estimate. Its official censorship resulted in this particular report getting more newspaper publicity than any other document of the whole inquiry. Professor Goodnow, now president of Johns Hopkins University, and Mr. Howe, now Commissioner of Immigration, then prepared another report which stands as the official document. Mr. Moore warmly espoused the theory embodied in the words of the Court cited above. It happened—happened is, I think, an unusually exact word in this case—that the present school charter of the city is loosely drawn and contains inconsistent provisions. This has led to considerable friction between the Board of Estimate and the Board of Education. The former felt that the latter was trying to evade proper recognition of its subordination in fiscal matters. The latter felt that the former was invading its own proper domain. In view of the inconsistent statements of the charter, an unprejudiced out-

charter one should attach the most importance.

The weight of educational history and of past political policy was undoubtedly, however, on the side of the Board of Education. Approaching the matter from this side and influenced by educational considerations rather than by those of city administration, Professor Moore took sides with the Board of Education and against his employers, the Board of Estimate. A former superintendent of schools in a Western city where he had made a gallant fight for the integrity of the educational system against the attacks of local politicians, he was especially sensitive to all the historic considerations which have made public education a ward of the state rather than of the municipality. He concluded that by gradual usurpations the schools were becoming "almost as completely annexed to the City Hall as they would have been if the proposed new charter had become the organic law of the city."

Mr. Goodnow and Mr. Howe approached the matter from the side of efficient city government rather than from that of general educational considerations. While their report is more reserved than Professor Moore's, their specific recommendations all looked to securing for the Board of Estimate more complete and responsible supervision of all funds paid for the schools out of the city treasury. So the case stands. The conflict is a real one, not only in fact but in the principles involved. The reasons advanced for regarding education as on a different footing from street-cleaning or police service are genuine and weighty. The dangers of injection into the public educational system of a petty and sordid kind of politics, in case the schools become in effect a city department, are not fanciful. Under an assured Tammany regime, for instance, one might imagine what would happen if the Board of Estimate could fix the number of school officials and employees and their salaries. One can imagine under any system what might happen if teachers, as great in number as they are in New York City, had a motive to organize politically with place and salary in view. But on the other hand it is difficult to see how a scientific budget control with efficiency of administration is to be secured if the municipal authorities cannot control the expenditure of the moneys which they have to raise by taxation and bonded debt.

It is easy to construct a mental picture of a situation in which the balance would fall heavily on the side of education as a state function under its complete control. Education is the concern of the whole of organized society in a way in which other governmental services (unless that of public

tional experts—organize the information bearing on the best methods of administration and instruction, and put both experts and knowledge at the disposal of every community. It would be easier for the state than for a particular community to achieve a broad intellectual outlook, to free educational endeavor from the ruts and prejudices of local custom, to undertake well planned experiments, and to secure a progressively developing educational tradition. The state could look ahead, and act less from local pressure and more from the bidding of constructive intelligence. However, such statesmanship has not in the past been the characteristic feature of our state educational officials. New York State has a more centralized machinery for affecting the public schools than most other states, but its management has been largely in the hands of routineers who have been more interested in imposing mechanical uniformity, and in that kind of administrative efficiency denoted by reports and examinations, than in educational leadership. Our state boards of education have much to learn from the methods of the national and state agricultural officials in the way of stimulating local action and guiding it by expert help. In some Western states the state universities have rendered signal service, but their influence has been confined to the high schools.

The fact is, I think, that we have no experience which will enable us to decide conclusively in behalf of either state or local control. If the experiment of complete municipal control could be tried under favorable auspices, the result might be an immense furthering of the interests of the schools in all our larger municipalities. The difficulty with the present system is that it is in practice, whatever be the theory, an ill-digested mixture of both methods, with the same dispersion of power and responsibility and the same empirical puttering-along that marks our other civic governmental services. In at least eight or ten of the largest cities of the United States the development of playgrounds, recreation centers, public baths, child hygiene work, social centers, together with the general extension of "social service" activities on the part of the municipality, give good grounds quite apart from fiscal reasons for making the experiment of whole-hearted municipal control. The peculiar industrial conditions of large cities also demand freedom of educational action.

But the experiment, to have a fair chance, must be whole-hearted. The municipal authority must be plenary. However it may be with financial needs, educational requirements are not in the least met merely by conferring power upon the city au-

mandatory provisions regarding the nature and powers of the educational administrators and even from statutory provisions, so far as possible, regarding the course of study. The chief objection—and it is a very serious one—to the action referred to in the opening paragraph is that it does not go far enough. It may aid in getting fiscal autonomy for the city, but it does not do the least thing for securing its educational autonomy. On the contrary, it increases the existing facilities for concealing responsibility and paralyzing initiative. If it becomes a law without further changes of the charter it will enable the Board of Education and the Board of Estimate endlessly to lay the blame for educational stagnation upon each other. It is an invitation to friction for which the children in the schools and the city itself will ultimately have to pay the penalties. It was reported in the press that Mr. McAneny, the author of the resolution adopted, objected to the more radical proposition to which reference has been made, that it involved changes so sweeping that they ought to be taken up only in connection with a general revision of the city charter. So far as the schools are concerned, the same objection applies to Mr. McAneny's own resolution. If complete fiscal control is to pass from the Board of Education as a separate corporation, by all means let us also provide for the freedom of the educational system and for bringing it into the closest possible touch with the other administrative agencies of the city.

I doubt if this can be accomplished without the abolition of the Board of Education in its existing form. All authorities are in favor of a great reduction in its size. Their imagination does not seem to have been adequate to conceiving it reduced to zero. But city boards of education are an anomaly at present. They are a monumental symbol of the haphazard way in which the enterprise of education is carried on, and of a fatal dispersion of initiative and direction. They are historic relics of a theory of state control which does not exist in fact. They are the middleman of our educational organization, and like the middleman in other fields they divide instead of bringing together. They are supposed to check and enlighten the professional wisdom of educational officers by bringing to bear the advice of other specialists and the general fund of municipal common sense. In small towns they render this service. In our large cities they have as much representative capacity as any other colossal accident. The Goodnow-Howe report expressly lays down as one reason why the Board of Estimate should have control over the school budget the fact that it would then

and not a matter of established custom. In all important aspects the recommendation gave to the Board of Estimate the main functions of the Board of Education and yet retained the latter in corporeal existence.

The principle, as I have been trying to say, is the correct one, provided the Board of Estimate is to take complete control of school finance. But in the form in which it was presented it was not thought out. It properly involves the elimination of the Board of Education, and the establishment of a paid expert educational department, one member of which shall be a member of the Board of Estimate, and which shall be responsible for submitting educational policies to the Board of Estimate, with the facts and reasons upon which they rest, so far as they involve the expenditure of funds. The late Mayor Gaynor's proposal of a small paid board of education was a halfway step in this direction. But it contemplated the retention of the Board of Superintendents, thus continuing in intensified form the existing division of intellectual responsibility and the existing causes of friction. The Board of Superintendents should be the heads of the Educational Department of the city, and put it in direct and reciprocal touch with all departments through the body supremely concerned with municipal policy and planning. Will it prove easier to patch than to construct?

JOHN DEWEY.

A Vision of Spring

(Late Winter, 1915)

IN the night, at the sound of winter thunder,
As I brooded upon my wounded planet
From my country beyond the reddened waters,
All my thoughts were at once of spring returning.
Broken rain from the gulf upon my window
Passed down shadowy ways and there was silence.

Out of quietness light arose within me
Shedding luminous magic on the darkness;
Moon on moon from a cloud of vanished Aprils
Lit my heart with a dream of springs remembered.
Unborn beauty in flowers not yet risen
Waved before me in bright immortal pastures
Till alone of the year's four worlds of wonder
Spring seemed tender and I forgot the others.
Only spring could assuage my grieving planet
Scourged with graves of the young men darkly fallen
In long harrowing straightness on the meadows.
None seemed healing beside the blossom season;
When grass rises again (I thought) these furrows
Will lie hidden forever under beauty;
On each sleeper a loveliness arising
Soon shall cover his deep unwhispered trouble,
None will signal of anguish from these trenches,
None not carried among the roots of roses.