

Charities.-N.Y. Char. Invest.

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**Mgr. Dunn**

to the

**Noted Citizens Who Back the Mayor**

**No Public Comment Requested**

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Mr. [Name]

Date:

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CHANCERY OFFICE  
23 East 51st Street

June 21, 1916.

**Mgr. Dunn to the Noted Citizens Who Back the Mayor**

GENTLEMEN :

In a letter appearing in the city press June 19, you say, "we think it important to express our belief in the principle . . . that all private institutions . . . be required to conform to proper standards of cleanliness, nourishment and care . . . prescribed by the public authority."

In this statement we entirely agree with you. We have not advocated any other course.

You also say, "We condemn the attempt of any and all representatives of such private institutions, of any religious denomination whatever, to interfere with the impartial and thorough application of that principle."

In this statement also, we would entirely agree with you, if we knew of any such case. We are certain that no one of our "representatives" has done this, or anything like it, but we endorse the sentiment.

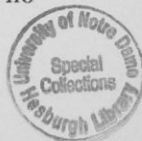
Again you say, "we deplore the attempt of a certain group of persons interested in some of these institutions to force the appearance of an issue on this subject between the Catholic Church as a whole and the civil government of the city."

We think you should name this "group" if it exists, for we have no one speaking for us who has done this, or tried to do it, or anything like it.

Finally you say, "in our opinion the attempt of any one claiming to represent a religious organization to obscure the issue by an appeal to sectarian prejudices deserves emphatic condemnation."

To which we reply, if by this you intend to convey the impression that any of our representatives have tried "to obscure the issues or appeal to sectarian prejudices," you are wrong. We have done nothing of the kind.

Under the circumstances your letter seems intended as a criticism of ourselves. We protest, however, that it does not apply. You have doubtless signed these statements in good faith and we are left, in charity to assume, that their writer has no



first-hand knowledge of the situation, and has been misled or deceived.

We feel sure that if you had followed the course of the Strong Commission and the city authorities and their unheard-of and indefensible procedure, you would not have lent your names to this publication, which not only broadly conveys a false impression, but is a direct and final criticism of ourselves, and is as unjust and undeserved as much that has gone before it.

### **A Review and Some Facts to Remember**

1. *When we heard that the Strong Commission had been appointed* to investigate the State Board of Charities, we had no particular interest. When we discovered that the charitable institutions were to be used as a hammer to smash the State Board we became attentive.

*When we saw that the purpose of the city government* as disclosed by Mr. Kingsbury and Mr. Hotchkiss was to convict the State Board of inefficiency, even if it destroyed the good name of the institutions to accomplish it, we were astonished.

At first we were innocent enough to believe that the purpose of the investigation was simply to get at the truth and expected that if the Board were found capable every one would be pleased.

*When we saw that the city government was going to extremes*, by the grossest exaggeration, the most venomous assertions against many of the institutions, to accomplish the ruin of the Board, we realized that our willingness to cooperate with the city authorities, had been framed for our betrayal.

As an illustration of our good faith, we finally called our Sisters to Mr. Strong's court, (the first time in the history of the Church such a thing had been done) expecting that they would win accord by telling of their work. We will not describe their experiences. The subject is too painful. Our Sisters are not liars, or thieves; nor do they lack in human sympathy, nor have they failed in love or power to minister to or console dependent childhood.

2. *As the investigation went on we learned* of the scheming which resulted in the appointment of Mr. Strong. The Governor was asked by Mr. Folks both for the Commission and the Commissioner by name. Mr. Kingsbury was in Albany with Mr. Folks, and on the evening of that same day, I am told Mr. Folks

was in company with Mr. Strong in Albany. Here we have the entire organization to "investigate" the State Board created by the representative of the city government, and his sponsor.

Had we known this at the beginning we do not hesitate now to say, we would have refused to submit those in charge of our institutions to the Commission and appealed to the Governor. Surely he would never knowingly have created such a travesty.

3. *Father W. B. Farrell noting the trend of events*, on Feb. 18, entirely on his own motion and responsibility, wrote an open letter to the Governor, complaining of the acts of the Commission.

4. On Feb. 16, we learned later, Commissioner Kingsbury secured \$500 from a lady to finance the Moree pamphlet. This shameful publication on its first page had headlines proclaiming to the world that in one of our Catholic institutions "orphans and pigs fed from the same bowl"! Protestant homes were also defamed.

5. *To meet this publication*, sent from the office of the State Charities Aid Association, Mr. Folks' Society, and some of the signers of this Mitchel letter are of this organization, I published three of Father Farrell's letters in a pamphlet. I was justified in doing so.

6. *On March 14 Mr. Strong abandoned the work* for which he was appointed by the Governor, summoned Father Farrell and began an investigation of "Who wrote the pamphlet?"

*I am told by competent authority that Mr. Strong had no power whatever to do this.* He was not appointed for any such purpose. If he or any one had been injured, the established courts offered a remedy.

7. *At this point the Strong Commission ceased* to be of any use in the work for which it was created. Mr. Kingsbury and Mr. Hotchkiss, evidently beside themselves, resorted to tapping the telephone wires of three citizens, under the authority of the Mayor. The object of committing this crime was to obtain information about the Farrell pamphlets. *A matter, it must be conceded, beyond the scope of the Commission*, and undertaken to gratify the curiosity of Mr. Kingsbury and Mr. Hotchkiss and if possible open the way to revenge.

8. *Then came the exposure*, and when compelled by publication of the facts, the Mayor's admissions. At first he insisted and testified that only three wires were tapped, but when another was proved to have been listened on he changed his testimony.

9. This whole matter went to the Grand Jury in Kings County, where, as is known, indictments were found.

10. The Mayor, not satisfied with what had been accomplished, went before the Thompson Committee, and in self-defense we appeared there.

11. *The Mayor has taken the same "charges,"* an attempt to justify his lawless wire tapping, together with his "evidence," much of it already discredited, practically all of it hearsay, and the notorious phonograms to District Attorney Swann. We shall see what we shall see. I have recited the facts.

*Now I ask you gentlemen who have signed the letter of "principles,"* upon which we agree, wherein are you justified in reading even by implication a lesson on civic behavior to us?

*And wherein, since we endorse your principles of civic government relating to charitable institutions, are you justified, at this time in "commending the Mayor for his courageous stand"?*

Wherein has he shown courage or civic righteousness in this matter in any distinguishing degree?

12. *We ask you to particularly note.*

*a. We have never objected to having any of our institutions inspected, or investigated by the lawful authorities, civic or State. On the contrary we have welcomed investigation. We did not object to an investigation by the Strong Commission. After it began, for many reasons, only a few of which are stated above, we objected to the manner and animus of it. We objected to misstatements, to slanders, to the insults shown our Sisters, to the Moree defamations, to injuring the institutions to injure the State Board, and last of all to the wire tapping.*

*b. The Kingsbury company of case makers dealt as harshly with Protestant institutions as with ours. They have offered that fact repeatedly as a defense, or to prove their fairness and kindness to our institutions.*

*c. We have not objected to honest criticism. We have objected to attacks for sinister purposes.*

*d. We have not raised a sectarian issue.*

*That was done at the Strong Commission when Mr. Reeder was led to testify of city money, "such funds might also be used to help build up religious orders."*

*Mr. Kingsbury did it, when he testified before Mr. Strong that he had appointed Doherty a deputy "to cope with the opposition of the Catholic Church."*

*The Mayor did it, when he accused the Church the other day*

of conspiring to take possession of the city government. He later narrowed this down to "a few priests" and his "co-religionists."

*The Mayor you see has done this thing himself.* He had the Church attacking the "altar" of civic government. He has tried to create the impression that he was compelled to fight the Church to save the city and secure humane treatment for dependent children.

*Let me tell you Gentlemen,* the Mayor is in error and you have been needlessly concerned. The Church is not seeking to do anything but defend itself, do right, and save souls.

Long, long before our time the old Church was caring for the sick and poor as well as it knew how, longer indeed and better than anybody else. Long, long after we are all gone she will be doing the very same thing—sacrificing and bearing burdens to do it, and it will be done—well done. Neither Mr. Strong, nor Mr. Mitchel, nor the tapping of telephone wires, "nor length nor depth nor any other creature shall be able" to stop it.

Gentlemen, since these charges of the Mayor, quite surprising if true, (but you must remember they have been changed, modified, minimized, vamped and re-vamped almost daily for some time past) and his carefully manufactured phonograms, and hearsay evidence in general are all in the hands of the officers of the law, would it not be the part of good citizenship to wait until the courts decide before taking a stand? Previousness is seldom pardonable.

Now then, is it possible that Mr. Wickersham, in saying "if the present investigation and the new one that the District Attorney has planned develop a situation where the Mayor may need more than moral support," intends to threaten, as the wording seems, that if the courts are adverse to the Mayor, then "more than moral support," i. e., force is to be supplied?

It may be that the "emphatic condemnation" spoken of may not apply to us after all.

Finally, we invite you gentlemen to appoint a committee to inspect our institutions at any time convenient to yourselves.

Very truly yours,

JOHN J. DUNN,  
*Chancellor.*

To E. H. Gary, George W. Wickersham, Jacob H. Schiff, John G. Milburn, Victor Morawetz, James M. Beck, Bronson Winthrop, Joseph H. Choate, George W. Perkins, Herbert C. Croly, Eugene H. Outerbridge,

A. Barton Hepburn, Edward M. Bassett, Ludwig Nissen, R. Fulton Cutting, J. G. White, Irving T. Bush, Cleveland H. Dodge, F. W. Whitridge, Amory G. Hodges, Alfred E. Marling, Albert Strauss, Adolph Lewisohn, Willard D. Straight, Judge Learned Hand, Walter Lippmann, William M. Chadbourne, Elmer G. Sammis, Frank Harvey Field, Felix Adler, William E. Harmon, C. C. Burlingham, Albert Shaw, Prof. Franklin H. Giddings, Haley Fiske, Oscar S. Straus, Mark Sullivan, George Haven Putnam, Hamilton Holt and A. S. Frissell.