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March 8, 1934

Mr. Bernarr MacFadden,
1926 Broadway,
New York City.

My dear Mr. MacFadden:

In my telephone conversation with you this afternoon I spoke of the frightful condition of municipal affairs in Kansas City, Missouri, and suggested the advisability of your having the whole situation exposed through the columns of Liberty Magazine. I also suggested it would be wonderfully helpful if one or more patriotic men of means would post a sum of money to be offered as rewards for convictions of corrupt judges and clerks of election and persons voting illegally.

The election will be held March 27th, and the contest will be between the Pendergast machine and the citizens' ticket. Kansas City is operating under a charter which has been in force a little more than four years. Its provisions contemplate the government shall be non-partisan and provides that no party designations shall appear on the ballots in the election of mayor, eight councilmen, and two municipal judges, the first election of which occurred four years ago.

Notwithstanding the intention of the charter and those who adopted it, the Pendergast machine at the first, election four years ago nominated a ticket composed entirely of Democrats which was elected. With one or two exceptions the ticket nominated by the machine Tuesday is the same as that elected four years ago.

According to the enclosed clipping the Pendergast machine received 103,257 votes, the citizens' ticket 63,827 votes, and the straight Republican ticket 4,319 votes, total 171,405 votes, in the primary Tuesday. The registered vote of the city is 242,000. There

is no doubt the machine polled every possible vote it could Tuesday. The total vote recorded for it includes beyond question several thousand votes which were taken from the citizens' ticket and/or cast by repeaters.

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I was in Kansas City last, Friday and gave out an interview denouncing the machine. It was printed in full in the Kansas City Times, almost in full by the Springfield News, and many papers published the report sent out by the Associated Press consisting of about a column. I enclose clippings from the Kansas City Times, Kansas City Star, St. Louis Post-Dispatch, St. Louis Star-Times, St. Louis Globe-Democrat, Springfield News, Springfield Leader-Press, and the Washington Post. I sent 47 daily papers copies of my interview so that it might be published last Friday morning at the time it appeared in the other papers. I do not know how many of these 47 Missouri papers printed the interview or any part thereof, but I know about a column appeared in the Joplin Globe, Cape Girardeau Southeast Missourian and a few others.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch and St. Louis Star-Times have been making a vigorous fight on the Pendergast machine for two years because of the fact that the machine is exerting a large influence in State affairs - the selection of congressmen-at-large, supreme judges and other state officials, including the governor, and a very cohesive block in the Legislature which has a tremendous influence.

My interview as published in the Kansas City Times is true in every particular and mildly states the case.

The actions which I think it very important that you take, if you feel you want to do so, are as follows:

1. Announce through the Associated Press other press associations that it is your intention to send a representative of Liberty magazine to Kansas City for the purpose of investigating conditions there and to print a full report of these conditions in the columns of Liberty.

A very sensational story of rackets, kidnappings, gross extravagance and grafts of many varieties can be obtained. I spent the better part of ten years in Kansas City just before coming to Washington and I know the conditions there. I think there is no doubt but there have been a large number of people kidnaped in the last two years whose kidnaping never became public. It is said Mr. Katz, a wealthy man, has been kidnaped three or four times. The first time he was abducted he paid \$100,000 ransom.

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2. If you would deposit with the Kansas City Star, which is an abundantly solvent concern, \$10,000, more or less, to be paid in rewards at the rate of \$100 each for every conviction of election judges and clerks and voters it would have a tremendous effect and would, no doubt, prevent a great deal of crookedness in the election. Convictions of election frauds are hard to obtain and it is doubtful whether more than five or ten could be secured at best, so the cost to you would probably run from \$500 to \$1000, if, in fact, any convictions were secured. If any other patriotic man or men would add an additional sum to the amount which you would post with the Star the effect would be better still.

As the time is very short it is important that any action you take, if any, be taken as soon as possible. I shall be glad to learn your conclusion as soon as it is reached.

I have known Dr. A. Ross Hill, the nominee for mayor, on the citizens' ticket, for many years. He is a man of high character and very unusual ability. For fourteen years he was president of the state university and made an unusual record in the administration of its affairs. He voluntarily retired.

The National Youth Movement, which consists of an organization of young men and young women to the number of about 10,000, has been organizing for several months in Kansas City for the purpose of ousting the machine.

I am quite sure that the only hope the machine has of electing its ticket on March 27th, is through ballot box stuffing and the making of false returns.

I am sure you have it in your power to render a great public service, not only to Kansas City but to the state and incidentally to the nation as well.

Sincerely yours,

E. Y. Mitchell.