Fusion Mayor Reformed DOC&C

(Continued from Page 1) vents proper assistance to those incapable of self-support and prohibits the best results from being obtained from corrective discipline.

With such mayoral encouragement, the state Legislature passed the agency division bill. In order for it to become law, city "acceptance" had to be communicated officially to Gov. Levi Morton, a prerequisite to the latter signing it into law. Since Mayor Strong had advocated, encouraged and supported the legislation, his formal approval was a foregone conclusion. Nevertheless, on May 7, 1895, he conducted a hearing, as legally required, on whether the city would consent to the new DOC&C. After leading social reformers spoke in favor of approving the bill and no one opposed it, Morton declared: "I have given this bill a great deal of consideration and I am entirely in accord with its provisions. I shall, therefore, take great pleasure in approving the bill." On Dec. 21, 1895, in

Robert A. Van Wyck
1st Commissioners

R. J. Wright, F. J. Lantry
(Continued from Page 1)
His appointment as DOC&C's first commissioner was fully expected because he was already familiar with its operations.

While Wright was DOC&C's first commissioner, his successor — Francis J. Lantry — was first commissioner when New York changed from a one-county to a multi-county city in 1898.

With Fusion forces divided in 1897, Tammany's candidate City Court Judge Robert A. Van Wyck, won election as the first Mayor of Greater New York. Among his Van Wyck's achievements were: Jan. 1, 1898, Lantry — variously a butcher, a butchers union leader, and an Alderman, was named Commission Commissioner. Lantry also was the Tammany leader in the 16th District where the new Mayor lived.

After scandals during the Van Wyck administration inspired anti-Tammany forces to unite again, the municipal government was re-elected.

Columbia University president Seth Low as their mayoral candidate in 1901. He named Thomas W. Hynes to replace Lantry in 1902. When Tammany's nominee, George B. McEllen, son of the famous Civil War general and Presidential candidate, defeated Low in the majority of 1903, Lantry was re-appointed DOC&C Commissioner Jan. 1, 1904. Thus he became the only city Correction Commissioner ever to serve twice.


Jefferson Market Prison, at 6th and Greenwich Avenues and 10th St., was built in 1866. It featured a tall tower on northeast corner with lightly tinted glass. The police court, jail and market were located on the same level.

The jail served as an annex of Tombs. The judges at the Jefferson Market Police Court, like those at the Tombs, Essex Market, Yorkville and Morrisania police court/jails were named by the mayor but, unlike the Criminal Court judges today, they did not have to be attorneys. Terms ran for 10 years at $5,000 per annum.

Most charges involved drunkenness, disorderliness, assaultive conduct, and petty larceny. Most of the sentences consisted of modest fines and/or short imprisonments. Those inmates charged with serious crimes were held for higher courts.

John William Goff

Compliance with the new law's provisions, the mayor named the new commissioners of the separated agencies, he re- deemed the historical structure of the combined agency had not been satisfactory but that he expected the new agencies to bring major improvement. A few weeks later in his annual message, January 1896, he noted: "On the first of this month the provisions of the statute passed at the last session of the Legislature went into effect, dividing the then existing Department of Charities and Correction into two separate departments to be known as the Department of Public Charities and the Department of Correction. Provision was made for three Com- missioners of Public Charities and for one Commissioner of Correction. These appointments have already been made. "I am quite sure that our citizens generally do not appreciate the magnitude of the present departments referred to, or the work imposed upon the former Department of Charities and Correction. The management of the City Prisons, the care of the insane and paupers, and the care of the Penitentiary and hospital together with the hospitals, covers already about 17,000 people, when all the necessary care is made."

The condition of our City Prisons, to speak with others, is such that much time is used in sentence.

The sermon and affidavits fired public indignation prompting a probe in the spring of 1894 by a state legislature-appointed investigating committee. The vigorous and un- compromising efforts of its chief counsel, Democrat attorney John Goff, uncovered systematic police and political corruption ranking in more than $7 million annually and involving payoffs for promotions up the ranks.

Richard Crocker

Tammany Hall Leader

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Margarette M. McCall, the Jefferson Market Prison scene came from the Police Museum curator John B. Podiatry. Another source: Darkhouse and Daylight, from the Fielding Collection. Published Co. in 1897.

The Archives provided access to relevant City Record volumes and to pictorial histories such as Notable New Yorkers of 1896-1899, by Moses King, 1896, New York Brown Books, a Book of Record of Public Officials of the City of New York for 1899-99, Martin B. Brown Co., N.Y., 1899, and The Kings Handbook of New York, also by King, excellent sources for period photos of individuals and institutions. Additionally the Archives provided access to such authoritative volumes as The History of the State of New York, by Columbia University Press, 1929, N.Y., and A History of New York: The Political Careers of Cleveland, Platt, Hill and Roosevelt, by Harry Holt & Co., 1920, N.Y.