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Seabury Assails Bund Meeting As 'Disgraceful'

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Lawyer, on 66th Birthday,
Look Back on Changes
in Municipal Government

Samuel Seabury observed his sixty-sixth birthday in quiet fashion yesterday at his home, 154 East Sixty-third Street. Chatting with an interviewer, the veteran lawyer and jurist, whose investigations paved the way for the reform administration of Mayor F. L. LaGuardia, expressed faith in the steady growth and extension of good municipal government and citizenship, but denounced the spirit of race intolerance demonstrated in such public gatherings as the Madison Square Garden rally of the pro-Nazi German-American Bund Monday night.

"That mass meeting," Mr. Seabury said, "was a disgraceful exhibition of the spirit of intolerance possessed by those who seem to recognize that their primary allegiance is due to Hitler."

"I feel very strongly on this subject. We in this country must insist that there be no dual allegiance. A citizen of this nation owes his allegiance exclusively to the United States of America. I can't help wondering how long this sort of thing can be allowed. These are difficult times, and thoughtful American citizens must be prepared to meet these issues and to deal with them effectively, but without permitting any injury to fundamental civil rights."

And Mr. Seabury added that he was an incurable optimist with regard to the future of the American people and their government.

"You just can't be a pessimist," he said, "when you see the type of young men coming into American public life—men like District Attorney Dewey, and John Harlan Amen, and Commissioner William

Herlands. I only name those few, prominent now in New York City. But there are hundreds more, coming up to share in the work. And for the most part they are better equipped for the task than we of the older generation were.

"Then just look at the change in New York City's own government in the last five years since Mayor LaGuardia took office. I believe that he has given New York City the best administration it has ever had.

"And that's another reason why I can't have much respect for the pessimists. They have been wrong on every occasion since 1930, when the first investigation into the magistrate's courts was opened. They told us we wouldn't be able to show anything of importance, and they were wrong. They said we could never force anyone out of office, and they were wrong. They said we could never elect a reform ticket in 1933, and they were wrong again. And they were still wrong when they came around warning us that no reform administration could ever get itself re-elected in New York City."

Mr. Seabury and his assistants in the municipal investigations, from 1930 to 1933 developed the highly effective technique of checking up on public officials and their associates through bank accounts and financial records—a technique employed and expanded in all the important crime inquiries since then.

"Many of the changes urged as a result of those investigations have become realities," Mr. Seabury said. "New York City has its new charter and a city council elected by proportional representation. Remember the old days, when the Board of Aldermen consisted of sixty-four Tammany men and Joe Baldwin? I still hope to see a unicameral legislature for New York state, elected by P. R. vote within state districts. And it may come sooner than we think. I'm an optimist about that, too."