

This step was not taken without careful deliberation, and upon the assurance that in other cities where it is adopted it is frequently the means of arrests being effected which would not otherwise be made. So far we have no reason to regret the indulgence extended.

DUTIES OF THE BOARD UNDER THE ELECTION LAWS.

One of the most important obligations of the Board is that connected with the enforcement of the Election Laws; and its sense of responsibility is often intensified by apparently conflicting legislative enactments. A notable instance, brought into prominence at the recent elections, occurs between that provision of the General Laws (Revised Code, Article 5, Section 25) which requires the Judges of Elections, at the closing of the polls, to open and read the ballots publicly, "*in the presence of such persons as may choose to attend ;*" and that provision of the Maryland Code, (Vol. 2, Art. 4, Sec. 226) which declares that nothing in that Article relating to Elections, shall be construed to deprive the Board of Police of any police powers, or relieve them from any obligations imposed, and which likewise authorizes them to take special measures to promote the purposes of the Article relating to Elections, and *the security of the elective franchise*. Elections in Baltimore are conducted at 180 polling places, generally small rooms at central points in each precinct. In these rooms are the three judges and two clerks required by law. On election days the Police Force is divided into details at the various voting places, and this Board felt that, to allow, at the closing of the polls, to all who might choose to attend, unrestricted access to the small room occupied by the judges and clerks would not only impede the latter in the discharge of their duty, but would also put it beyond the power of the policemen in charge, to suppress any serious disturbance in the room, and thus impair the security of the elective franchise, which we are specially required to preserve. Under the circumstances we had issued, and carried out the following orders on the subject :