

PUBLIC WEALTH GIVEN AWAY

A Columbus Man Relates Facetiously the City's Experience With Corporations.

The following letter from a prominent and well known citizen of Columbus, O., who, having held an important office there, is in a position to know whereof he speaks, facetiously but none the less forcibly describes the experience of that city with the matter of franchises:

"Franchises are given away here. Our municipal legislature is always composed of large hearted, generous, public spirited servants. They believe in encouraging people who know a good thing when they see it. They are not miserly and stingy, as some people are. Why, they built a bridge over the railroad tracks at a cost of \$160,000 and gave the street railroad company space on it for double tracks, which occupy nearly all the roadway, and they only charged \$250 per year. This, you will note, is a mere nominal consideration. It should have been in consideration of \$1 and natural love and affection."

"We have just finished a fine viaduct, carrying our street (this is sometimes called the city of one street) over all the railroads that pass through the city. This has cost, as a whole, about \$600,000. The street railway has two tracks across this at no expense whatever. It has not yet put in any bill for damages to its business resulting from interference with its free use of the street while building and from the change of grade, which necessitated the lengthening of its track a few feet. It is probable that our municipal dads will recognize the manifest equity of this claim when presented."

"Unfortunately the writer happened to be city auditor when the gas company applied for a renewal of its charter for a term of years—ten years. He was one of those 'ornery cusses' that has no more sense than to be sticking his nose into other folks' business, and was just fool enough to make a fight against granting a public spirited body of capitalists a ten year franchise without a visible consideration. But the fight was on, and retreat would be disgraceful. Reinforcements came in from the ragtag and bobtail element, college professors and such, and the company accepted a charter requiring a payment of \$4,000 per year. It passed June 27, 1892. Its passage was followed by the financial panic of 1893, and, in fact, times have not been very durned good ever since. He has always regretted the stand he took in that matter, especially if it produced the panic, and, besides, this city would be a nice place indeed if we had no fight when it's dark."

"The Electric Light and Power company on May 27, 1895, obtained a franchise for 25 years and did not seem to have sufficient power at the time to escape a 2 per cent gross receipt requirement. How much the city will receive from this source will of course depend a good deal upon how much power the company uses and the quantity of light it throws upon its business, but you may set it down as a fact that our city has a dead sure thing on \$250 per year from street railroads and \$4,000 per year from Gas and Coke company and 2 per cent on gross receipts from Electric Light and Power company. The street railways ballast their own trucks at present. The city used to do it for them. This, of course, indicates a growing of the spirit of mob violence and may blow over after awhile."

A Sad Chapter.

Hand in hand with the growth and developments of our American cities, and as an entirely natural and logical result, municipal franchises have greatly increased in worth and importance. The value of the right to furnish water or light—whether by gas or electricity—or transportation facilities to the citizens of a growing municipality has long been fully recognized by promoters and capitalists, although, unfortunately, not by the citizens or their representatives in local legislatures. Within the last decade, however, there has been an awakening to the importance of a business-like administration of franchises, but in many instances this awakening has come too late.

Some cities have imprudently granted perpetual franchises. Others, a little shrewder, or perhaps with representatives and trustees a trifle less dishonest, have granted them for long periods, leaving it to their successors in incompetency, inefficiency and betrayal of public trust to extend the time of the privileges upon terms satisfactory to the grantor.

I know of no sadder chapter in our American municipal history than that dealing with the treatment of the question of franchises. It brings home to us forcibly and in a way we cannot escape the truth of the indictment very generally preferred against our municipalities. It demonstrates conclusively the charge that "the conduct of public affairs has fallen into the hands of the least estimable and least trustworthy," and that we find in the management of public business wastefulness, inefficiency and frequent scandals.—Clinton B. Woodruff in New York Independent.

Woodchucking Bonds.

If Congress should pass the house bill now before the senate authorizing the issuance of \$600,000,000 1 per cent bonds, what would be the total obligations of the government? Let's see. The bonds are to run ten years. John Doe buys \$100. He gets a bond with coupons attached for \$130. Richard Roe buys \$1,000 and gets bond and coupons for \$1,300. Moneybags buys \$1,000,000 and gets bond and coupons for \$1,300,000. It will thus be seen that when the \$600,000,000 are sold your Uncle Sam has obligated himself to pay \$780,000,000. What do you think of it? Are you in favor of such financial string at this time? Would it not be patriotic and just to vote the resignation and issue legal tender until we have money enough to do the business of the nation? If the national credit is good for bonds, it certainly is for currency.—National Intelligence.

HORTICULTURE.

Rabbits Gnawing Trees.

In a recent issue of your paper there appears a request for some one to tell what to do with apple trees that have been gnawed by mice. Since this question is of no little importance, owing to the fearful destruction made so often by mice gnawing the bark off from young trees, I have thought it well to offer some suggestions of my own which may or may not meet the views of all. In the first place it has been through improper care or neglect that they have been thus injured. Had B. D. kept the surface clean about his trees for three feet of all seeds or trash, or even tramped the snow down about them as soon as the ground was covered, the mice would have given them a wide berth. But this is not the question we are asked to answer. It is not the "ounce of prevention" that appears to be asked for, but the pound of cure. If the trees have not been gnawed entirely around or even slightly, and discovered soon before the wood dries hard, they can often be saved by making mud of clay, putting it around and over the whole, wound, holding it there with some old cloth or stove pipe. But when too far gone, I would advise a serious change. In early spring, as soon as the earth has thawed out in April, cut the trees either close to the ground or a little below the injury and set in some choice variety of scions that you have recently learned to be superior to the tree when set, or at least would be now preferred by the nurseryman who started these three or four years ago. If the work be properly done, he will lose but little in time or value, but frequently will find this a blessing in disguise. If his gnawed trees were scrubby, crooked or poorly trained, as very many are, he can make a great improvement, and in the end lose very little and often secure a much more desirable variety than the tree dealer put off on him in the start. If your variety is not strictly hardy, be sure to put in a scion of well known hardiness. This will help even a tender root. This is not the best plan to make sure of a long lived tree, but it is the best cheap way to repair the evil. If the trees were as hardy as Duchesse or Hibernia then I would not cut the stems any lower than just below the injury, providing there is a chance to retain the hardy stem or any part. But, as a rule, mice gnaw trees close to the ground, and it is very seldom one can save even two inches of the trunk, as mice never climb trees to gnaw the bark except when about in a pile of trash that is often piled about the stem in the fall or winter. Then, as a rule, he had better mud up or wait till early spring and graft close down, say three inches, below the surface, so when the scion is set it can be banked around with fresh earth as high as the third bud. If the root be good so will soon grow a fine new stem that will often be much superior to the one the tree dealer sold him. But if the trees were all he now desires, cut off the stems close to the ground and rest to their sprouting from the stem. This will save him from being humbugged by some scheming grafter, or let this furnish him a fine opportunity to practice grafting, and if the scions all he will still have a chance on the coming sprouts. I would trust to the prompt if the original tree was what I now wanted and could not do the grafting myself. But grafting adds another chance to save the tree, as such stumps are more liable to fall to grow than are scions well set. Would advise A. D. to go over his trees soon and examine carefully and such as appear past recovery saw off close to the ground and cover the stubs till wanted a graft or to sprout in spring. Thousands could have been saved in 1885 and we sawed our old tree off before warm weather close to the ground. The greater share of trees has treated would have sent up vigorous shoots and often been a great improvement on the original stem. If B. J. concludes to trust to sprouts let him reserve as many as three of the most vigorous so as to better balance the root and top. I invariably retain tree shoots, as each will aid to protect together by shading the ground and the trunks of each other.

EDMON OATFIELD.

Apple Scab Fungus—Now is the time to spray for apple scab fungus. The experimenters say that the winter is the time when the work must be done. If good results are to be expected for the coming year or years, there are many mild days in winter that can be utilized for this purpose. The spores of the fungus are cast off in the air and find their lodgment on the twigs and limbs of trees.

Chomponized Milk—A process has been invented in France for the sterilization of all fermentable liquids by means of compressed oxygen. The liquids in a closed vessel, are subjected to a current of gaseous oxygen, proportioned in volume to the quality and quantity of liquid to be sterilized. The inventor claims that by this process milk can be kept indefinitely. He is enabled to prepare a very beautiful and palatable drink—"chomponized" milk. The milk must first be skimmed; then, if necessary, coloring and the desired flavor added. The whole is placed in a closed vessel and sterilized by current of oxygen gas, then "chomponized" by the introduction of the necessary amount of carbonic acid gas. The result is a refreshing, healthful drink, which keeps fresh indefinitely.—Star Ocean.

Russia possesses at least one luxury, a breed of dogs which are said to be naturally quite unable to bark.

SHAKING HANDS.

Men Indulge in the Practice Far More Than Women.

Men shake hands with strangers of their own sex with far greater readiness than do women. Two men, on being presented to one another, will frequently extend the hand in a grasp of greeting, which gives opportunity to form a general idea of each other's make-up, and know whether they are attracted or repulsed. Occasionally there is a man with sufficient good nature and courage to refuse another man's hand without causing offense. There are men who have been so impressed with the discoveries of bacteriology that they maintain hand-shaking to be the cause of dissemination of disease germs. The bare hand comes in contact with innumerable germs looking for pasturage on some vulnerable spot in our anatomy. A cut or abrasion on the hand leaves the air open for the admission of an enemy. Therefore it is with reason that men argue against promiscuous handshaking out of the home among the men met in business life. Science long since frowned upon the practice of promiscuous kissing, which prevailed among women. Is the ungloved handshake also doomed?

Interesting Legal Profession Anecdotes.

A curious judgment was pronounced the other day by a judge in a court of law at Volosco, in the Island of Sicily. An action for damages was brought by two persons against the local railway company for losses sustained by a collision. It appeared that a man had lost an arm and a young woman had lost her husband. The judge, a Greek, assessed the damages thus: He gave 6,000 piasters to the man for the loss of his arm and 2,999 to the woman for the loss of her husband. At this there were loud murmurs, whereupon the judge gave his reasons in these terms: "My dear people, my verdict must remain, for you will see it is a just one. Poor Nikola has lost his arm and nothing on earth can restore that priceless limb. But you turning to the woman you are still young and pretty. You have now some money; you will easily find another husband, who possibly may be as good as perhaps better than your dead lord. That is my verdict, my people, and so it must go forth." So saying the judge left the hall. The people cheered him and congratulated themselves on having such a judge.—Exchange.

No Actual Shrinkage. Mr. Flower (angrily)—"Just look at them pants! An' yew warranted 'em not ter shrink." Mr. Cohen (blandly)—"Mein friend, vateffer dose bants haf lost in der length dey haf gaint in der vidth. Uf der goods vos all dere vot cause haf you for gombaint"—Truth.

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