

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP

The following are extracts taken from the address delivered by Mayor Dunne of Chicago at Lafayette, Ind., and later at Denver:

"In the year 1900, while on a visit to Europe, I sent a telegram from Interlaken to Lucerne in Switzerland. It cost me somewhere about eight cents in American money. I was astounded at the smallness of the charge and, upon making inquiry, discovered that the telegraph system of Switzerland was in the hands of the government and operated by it. This started me upon a train of thought and investigation. If a publicly owned telegraph system in Switzerland could be operated at such prices, why should not the United States be able to do likewise?"

"Upon pursuing my investigation I discovered that every civilized country upon earth except three, Honduras, Costa Rico—if my memory serves me right—and the United States, owned and operated its own telegraph systems. I further discovered that not only were the telegraph systems of the world being operated as public utilities in public hands but that in many countries the railroads, street car systems, electric light systems, gas systems, water systems, and the telephone systems were being operated by the public, and I found that there was a reason why such utilities should be in public instead of private hands.

"When one seeks to do business with his butcher, his grocer, his dry-goods merchant, his doctor, his lawyer, or his plumber, he stands at arm's length and has the right to make a free and voluntary contract. If the character of the goods that he seeks to purchase is not satisfactory or the price is unreasonable, he may go elsewhere. He is not bound to deal with any one person or corporation in the purchase of such necessities of life. But when he comes to utilize the telegraph, the telephone, the street car, the steam railway car, to purchase gas or electric light, he finds himself deprived of the right of free contract. He must take such service as is offered him and pay the price demanded.

"If his gas is of deficient quality or the price is too high, he must either pay his bill or have his meter jerked out. If his telephone service is unsatisfactory or the price unreasonable, he must stand and deliver or have his telephone wires cut. If he objects to the service given him upon a street car or to the price charged, he must either pay or be thrown off. In other words, in dealing with public utility companies and in purchasing from them these latter day necessities of life, he is deprived of the right of free contract and must take such service as is offered and pay the price demanded. He is face to face with a monopoly and individual protest or objection as against such a monopoly is absolutely unavailing.

"Strange to say, this country, which has been in the vanguard of progress in all other matters, has been among the last among the civilized countries of the world to take up and seriously discuss this question.

"In 1894 the dissatisfaction arising out of the mismanagement and rapacity of private utility corporations brought about a revolt in the British empire, and commencing in the city of Glasgow that protest has worked a wonderful change in the operation of public utilities. Up to 1894 the ownership and operation by private companies of public utilities, such as street cars, electric light plants, gas plants, and telephone systems, was almost universal throughout the world. But within the last ten years, city after city, and nation after nation, has turned from the operation of public

utilities by private companies to the operation of these same utilities by the public.

On February 18, 1904, as is shown by the report of the American consul, 142 cities of Great Britain owned and operated their own street car systems. That number has been largely increased since then and today there are twenty-four more cities now constructing municipal street railways. In Great Britain and Ireland 282 cities now own and operate their own gas works. In the same countries 334 cities and towns are operating their own electric light systems, leaving only 174 in that kingdom which are privately owned.

"A great number of British cities are owning and operating their own telephone systems and within the last few months the government of Great Britain made a large appropriation for the taking over by the general government of the telephone systems of the kingdom.

"This same movement towards the public ownership of these utilities has also proceeded with giant strides throughout Europe and Australia.

"This wonderful change that has taken place practically within the last ten years in Europe has resulted from the fact that wherever any city has taken over a street car line, a gas works, an electric light plant, a water works, a telephone system, or other public utility of that character, it has been found that almost invariably the change has been accompanied by tremendous advantages to the public.

"It has produced in almost every case the following extraordinary results:

"First, it has reduced the cost of the utility to the public.

"Second, it has increased the efficiency of the service. Lines and plants have been re-equipped according to modern methods, the service has been more regular, the schedules more frequent and in the case of street cars, there has been less overcrowding and better accommodation given to the public.

"Third, in almost every case the wages of the men who operate these utilities have been increased.

"Fourth, in nearly all of these cases the hours of the men employed in operating these utilities have been reduced.

"Fifth, it has been found that,

wherever the public has taken over such a utility and operated the same, strikes were a thing of the past.

Sixth, the last and probably most important of all, is that by the taking over and operation of these utilities by the public, graft and corruption have been eliminated.

"Such has been the record of the municipalization of these utilities in Europe. The people, where the change has taken place, are thoroughly satisfied with municipal management, and there is but one case in all Europe where the public, having taken over any public utility, has allowed it to revert to private ownership.

"This one case is so obscure and peculiar that it would be well to refer to it. Tunbridge Wells, England, is the only city that has tried public ownership and abandoned it. For three years it operated a telephone system of its own in opposition to the National Telephone company's exchange. The company's rate was \$40 a year and two cents a call. The municipality cut this to \$29.37 a year for an unlimited service, or \$17.50 and one cent a call. The first year's operation left a net surplus of \$650. The National Telephone company organized a body called the Rate Payers' league and carried on a skilful campaign by which it won a majority in the town council. Whereupon an ordinance was passed leasing the public lines to the company. This was simply a case where a private corporation obtained control of the members of the city council, a thing which is quite common in the United States. The single, obscure exception merely proves the rule that the public operates public utilities more to the satisfaction of the people than does any private interest.

"The city of Chicago has been operating its own water works for over half a century. It is today selling water to its citizens as cheaply as any city of its size in the country. We have within the limits of our city a splendid opportunity to test the efficiency of a publicly and privately owned water plant. By annexation to the city within recent years we have acquired certain territory in which private companies are operating water plants.

"To the west of the city, and now within the city limits, the former village of Austin was supplied by a private company. That company charged three times the rate charged by the city water works to other cit-

izens of the same community. In the village of Rogers Park, now within the city limits, a private company has been and now is furnishing water to the citizens of that portion of the city. The private company charges twenty cents per thousand gallons and charges citizens in addition thereto for all connections made between the houses and the mains in the streets. The city of Chicago in the same neighborhood is selling water to its citizens for ten cents per thousand gallons and makes all connections free of cost to the citizens.

"The city of Chicago owns and operates its own municipal electric light plant. It has gone very extensively into this business within the last eight years. We are not empowered to sell electric light to citizens but are simply authorized to light our own streets. Chicago has now probably the largest municipal electric light plant in the world. It has extended its electric light system very rapidly throughout the streets of the city and is today manufacturing electric light for less than one-half the price charged by private companies when the system was instituted. And the citizens of Chicago are finding out that they are just as capable of operating a street car system as they are of operating an electric light plant or a water works.

"Under private management we have in Chicago today probably the worst managed and most scandalously conducted street car system in the world. There is no pretense of giving decent accommodation to the public. Our cars are dirty and insufficient in number. Our citizens are crowded like herring in a box. Our schedules are irregular and our service at night is either scandalously insufficient or non-existent. The owners of these companies, in defiance of public sentiment and every rule of decency and justice, have been managing these systems so as to mulct the public of their nickels without any attempt to give a decent return therefor.

"The citizens of Chicago have cried out against this sort of treatment. They have protested and protested in vain. At last they have declared by a most emphatic vote that they will have no more of it and that the municipality must take over and operate its street car systems.

"Thrice has the voice of the people been heard at the ballot box. In April, 1902, they declared for owner-

LOST EYESIGHT

Through Coffee Drinking

Some people question the statements that coffee hurts the delicate nerves of the body. Personal experience with thousands prove the general statement true and physicians have records of great numbers of cases that add to the testimony.

The following is from the Rockford, Ill., Register-Gazette:

Dr. William Langhorst of Aurora has been treating one of the queerest cases of lost eyesight ever in history. The patient is O. A. Leach of Beach county, and in the last four months he has doctored with all of the specialists about the country and has at last returned home with the fact impressed on his mind that his case is incurable.

A portion of the optic nerve has been ruined, rendering his sight so limited that he is unable to see anything before him, but he can see plainly anything at the side of him. There

have been but few cases of its kind before and they have been caused by whiskey or tobacco. Leach has never used either, but has been a great coffee drinker and the specialists have decided that the case has been caused by this. Leach stated himself that for several years he had drank three cups of coffee for breakfast, two at noon and one at night. According to the records of the specialists of this country this is the first case ever caused by the use of coffee.

The nerve is ruined beyond aid and his case is incurable. The fact that makes the case a queer one is that the sight forward has been lost and the side sight has been retained. According to the doctor's statement the young man will have to give up coffee or the rest of his sight will follow and the entire nerve be ruined.—Register-Gazette.

Let it be remembered that the eyes

may be attacked in one case and the stomach in another, while in others it may be kidneys, heart, bowels—general nervous prostration. The remedy is obvious and should be adopted before too late.

Quit coffee, if you show incipient disease.

It is easy if one can have well-boiled Postum Food Coffee to serve for the hot morning beverage. The withdrawal of the old kind of coffee that is doing the harm and the supply of the elements in the Postum which Nature uses to rebuild the broken down nerve cells, insures a quick return to the old joy of strength and health, and it's well worth while to be able again to "do things" and feel well. There's a reason for

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