

A City Coal Yard and Public Market

The effort by Lincoln people to secure a municipal coal yard and a municipal public market is now before the city council in the form of ordinances. Mr. Charles W. Bryan was elected as a member of the city council at the city election last spring on a platform declaring in favor of a municipal coal yard, a municipal public market and a municipal ice plant. Lincoln has the commission form of government, consisting of five councilmen or commissioners. Mr. Bryan was voted for by the people and given the majority vote over the other candidates who had expressed a preference for the position of mayor. The city commissioners, however, refused to recognize the will of the people as expressed at the polls and voted Mr. Bryan into the position of street commissioner and selected the man whom Mr. Bryan had defeated in the preference vote for mayor at the election.

A movement is now under way in Lincoln to recall the mayor and also one of the other commissioners at a special election, and petitions are also in circulation asking that the ordinances establishing a municipal coal yard, public market and ice plant be placed on the ballot so that the people could vote on these issues direct. In the meantime Mr. C. W. Bryan is holding the position of street commissioner and has prepared and introduced ordinances providing for the establishment of a municipal coal yard and a municipal public market. If the council will adopt these ordinances, it will not be necessary to hold a special election to have these ordinances adopted under the initiative and referendum provision of the city charter.

Below is a copy of a statement given to the Lincoln press by Mr. Bryan commenting on the ordinances which he introduced, and a copy of the ordinances also appears below. Mr. C. W. Bryan says:

"I have introduced a municipal coal yard ordinance and a municipal public market ordinance. The object in asking for the adoption of these ordinances is for the purpose of reducing the price of coal and for the purpose of reducing the price of vegetables and produce and establishing a market for products of gardeners and farmers living in the vicinity of Lincoln.

"The price of coal has been reduced at the mine during the past six weeks, and during the same period coal has been advanced in the city of Lincoln. A municipal coal yard should save to the people of Lincoln who desire to patronize a municipal coal yard about \$3.50 a ton on good soft coal. A public market in Lincoln, properly established and conducted, should reduce the cost of vegetables, produce, home-grown fruits, berries, potatoes, apples and other home-grown foodstuffs thirty or forty per cent without reducing the price paid to the farmers, truck-gardeners, etc.

"With thousands of people out of employment in Lincoln and with incomes curtailed or entirely cut off not only of the laboring people but of all the middle classes, a municipal coal yard and a municipal public market would be a god-send to all classes of people and would stimulate all lines of business.

"The vote cast for me at the spring election was a vote to reduce the cost of living by establishing a municipal coal yard, a municipal public market and a municipal ice plant. As the people's will was overridden as to their preference for mayor, a great many people feel that the majority of the council is opposed to establishing these municipal undertakings for the purpose of reducing the cost of living to the common people. The people may be mistaken as to the sentiment of the council. I hope that they are, and I sincerely hope that the council will approve these ordinances without delay.

"The United States government reports show that the number of people out of employment is increasing notwithstanding the fact that we are in the middle of what should be the busy season of the year for all classes of employment.

The quicker we establish a municipal coal yard and a public market, the fewer people in Lincoln there will be who will have to be taken care of out of public funds during the fall and winter.

"The ordinances that I have introduced are in exact form to those that are being circulated by the people asking that these ordinances be sub-

mitted at a special election so that the people may vote on them direct. The public should not be compelled to go to the expense of securing the legal number of signers to get relief from the high cost of food and fuel or to be compelled to hold an election to enforce their will.

"So fearful are the people that a majority of the council will oppose the establishment of a municipal coal yard, a municipal public market and a municipal ice plant as other cities have established that they have placed in circulation petitions asking for a recall of the two members of the council whom the daily press reported during the recent city campaign as being opposed to establishing a municipal coal yard, a municipal public market and a municipal ice plant. When the people's will was overridden in the selection of a mayor, I refrained from doing what was done in Wichita, Kansas, under the same law that we have here and under the same conditions. In Wichita the man whom the council shunted into another position notwithstanding he was the choice of the public for mayor, resigned from the council and stood as a candidate for mayor in a recall election, defeated the man whom the council put in for mayor and relegated the usurper to private life.

"I could be of more service to the people in reducing the cost of living in the position of mayor than I can as street commissioner. However, I did not enter the campaign with a desire to hold office but only for the purpose of assisting to reduce the cost of living and putting Lincoln back on the map in a business way. I felt like the surer and more practical way to establish a municipal coal yard, a municipal public market, etc., was to hold the position as street commissioner and make the best effort possible to secure the establishment of the coal yard and public market through action of the city council while the people could undertake to secure them under the initiative, then if I failed to get relief for the people through the council, the effort could go ahead to secure relief through initiated ordinances without any loss of time.

"The argument cannot be fairly made that it will cost too much to establish a municipal coal yard and a municipal public market. The establishment of these two municipal projects will save money to the people, and a great deal of it. The municipal coal yard ordinance provides for a revolving fund of \$20,000. The \$20,000 is to establish a credit on which to buy coal. When the coal is sold—which it will be—the credit fund is restored. The coal yard, therefore, pays its way and the \$20,000 revolving fund, or the greater part of it, will be constantly in the hands of the city treasurer. Omaha set aside a fund of \$25,000, and none of it has been used during the three years the municipal coal yard has been in operation there.

"A municipal coal yard, therefore, will not cost the taxpayers any money but will reduce the price of coal three or four dollars a ton and should save the people \$40,000 to \$50,000 a year their coal bills without being unfair to the private coal dealers.

"The \$25,000 asked for for the municipal public market is for the construction and equipment of a public market as other cities have. Some members of the city council have publicly expressed themselves in favor of a municipal public market in the past. Some of the civic clubs of Lincoln, including the women's organizations, ministerial association, home economic departments of the university, etc., have publicly declared in favor of a municipal public market. A properly conducted public market should save to the people of Lincoln \$100,000 a year as a conservative estimate on their vegetables, produce, fruit, butter, eggs, poultry, meats, etc. The public market, therefore, will not cost the taxpayers anything but should save them 300 per cent a year on the small amount needed to establish a public market.

"I hope the council will immediately pass these ordinances and help carry them into effect for the purpose of giving the people relief as early as possible in the cost of food and fuel. If the people have to go to the expense of holding a special election before they can get relief from the combination on coal and the monopoly in fruits, vegetables and produce in Lincoln, the blame will rest on the city council. If the council defeats the coal and public market ordinances, the people will feel that it is not

only necessary to adopt the ordinances through the initiative but to also place men in the council who may be depended upon to carry the ordinances into effect after they been adopted by the people at a popular election.

"The election of two other members of the council in a recall election would not be for the purpose of giving me the position of mayor but for the exclusive purpose of placing in the council a majority who were in favor of reducing the cost of living and again start Lincoln on the upturn. I have waived my claim to the position of mayor notwithstanding that a majority of the people selected me for that position, and I will hold the position of street commissioner to help carry into effect the ordinances for the establishment of a municipal coal yard, and public market if approved by the council, or if necessary, through initiated ordinances.

"I cannot believe that the so-called business interests will join in a united effort to help freeze the poor people of Lincoln out of \$4.00 a ton for their coal or to oppose a public market that may enable hundreds of families in Lincoln to buy as much food as their physical needs require."

ORDINANCE FOR MUNICIPAL COAL YARD

An ordinance providing for the establishment and maintenance of a municipal coal and wood yard, and appropriating money therefor, and repealing all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict therewith.

Section 1. Immediately following the passage and approval of this ordinance the city council shall either provide a place or purchase and build or lease the necessary buildings and grounds for the establishment of a municipal coal and wood yard within the limits of said city.

Section 2. The management and supervision of the municipal coal and wood yard shall be under the superintendent of the department of streets and public improvements, who with the approval of the council, may prescribe such rules and regulations as may seem advisable.

Section 3. Coal and wood shall be purchased as direct from the original sources of supply as possible, and sold to citizens of Lincoln at a reasonable price. No one purchaser of coal shall be permitted to purchase more than two tons of coal at any one time.

Section 4. There is hereby appropriated of moneys now in the hands of the city treasurer not otherwise appropriated, or which may hereafter be in the hands of the city treasurer, a revolving fund in the sum of \$20,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary, to make effective the provisions and purposes of this ordinance.

Section 5. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

ORDINANCE FOR MUNICIPAL PUBLIC MARKET

An ordinance providing for the establishment and maintenance of a municipal public market appropriating money therefor, and to repeal all ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict therewith.

Section 1. Immediately following the passage and approval of this ordinance, the city council shall either provide or purchase and build or lease the necessary grounds and buildings for the establishment of a municipal public market centrally located within the limits of said city, where produce, vegetables, fruits, poultry, eggs, butter, meats and such other foodstuffs as are usually offered for sale in municipal public markets may be offered for sale, with such provisions for heat, ice and cold storage facilities as may seem necessary to successfully operate a public market.

Section 2. The management and supervision of the municipal public market shall be under the superintendent of the department of Public Safety.

Section 3. Venders of foodstuffs may be assigned stalls or space for the sale of such foodstuffs on such terms and under such rules as the superintendent, with the approval of the council, may determine.

Section 4. There is hereby appropriated out of moneys now in the hands of the city treasurer not otherwise appropriated, or which may hereafter be in the hands of the city treasurer, the sum of \$25,000 or so much thereof as may be necessary, to make effective the provisions and purposes of this ordinance.

Section 5. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.