

The Municipal Coal Yard

The official report of the municipal coal yard of Lincoln, Nebraska, found below, will readily convey to the reader's mind the great work accomplished by the municipal coal yard in reducing the price of coal to the people of Lincoln. Lincoln's municipal coal yard was put in operation on Oct. 1, 1921, and sold one grade of soft coal for the following six months, closing its yards on April 1.

Notwithstanding the fact that all the retail coal dealers of Lincoln and the affiliated business organizations of the city opposed the municipal coal yard from its inception until it closed its season's business, it has been demonstrated that competition is the only sure way to curb the profiteer. The coal combination that was influential enough a year ago to pigeon-hole the bill which was before the United States Senate to regulate the coal business was unable to maintain the price of coal in Lincoln after the city got its municipal coal yard into working order.

The best grade of screened lump coal from southern Illinois, known as the Franklin County district coal, which was selling in Lincoln at \$14.50 per ton delivered to the consumer's bin before the municipal coal yard started, was sold in Lincoln during the past winter at an average price of \$10.00 per ton by the city and \$12.50 by the private coal dealers. The city's municipal coal yard was patronized so largely by the coal consumers of the city that the private coal dealers found it necessary to reduce the price of all kinds of coal about \$2.00 a ton in order to prevent the customers from changing from semi-anthracite and anthracite coals to the high grade soft coal sold by the city. Before the coal selling season was over for the winter, the municipal coal yard was selling fully one-half of all the coal sold in Lincoln to domestic consumers.

The official report of City Commissioner Charles W. Bryan—who established and conducted the city's municipal coal yard—found below is so complete that other cities desiring to establish municipal coal yards will be able to find a great deal of valuable information about the coal business by a careful study of the figures given. The people of Lincoln have been the gainers of about \$140,000 as a result of the operation of the first season's municipal coal yard. When the contest was started with the retail coal dealers of Lincoln, they were adding about \$7.00 a ton to the cost of the coal after it reached the city free on board the cars at their coal yard. The municipality was able to make a reasonable profit on its coal by adding \$2.00 a ton to what the coal cost the city free on board the cars at Lincoln.

The public does not have to stand for extortion in the necessities of life. If every municipality would establish a municipal coal yard, municipal ice plant and a municipal market, the cost of living could be reduced probably \$15.00 per month per family. The people of Lincoln hope to establish their municipal ice plant and a municipal public market before the opening of next season.

The official report of the municipal coal yard as submitted by Commissioner Bryan and made a part of the city's records, is as follows:

April 21, 1922.

To The Lincoln City Council:

The municipal coal yard closed its first season's operation April 1, 1922.

The municipal coal yard was authorized by a city ordinance to buy coal as near the original source as possible and to sell it to the people of Lincoln at a reasonable price.

The municipal coal yard commenced business by opening its books to receive orders for coal on Sept. 15, 1921, and commenced the delivery of coal a few days before Oct. 1.

The municipal coal yard only handled one grade of coal, which was the best southern Illinois soft coal known as Franklin County district coal, although there was a great demand from the people during the winter for the municipal coal yard to sell semi-anthracite, and later a steam coal.

The private coal dealers joined in an effort in the district court to have the municipal coal yard enjoined from doing business. The district judge denied the petition for a temporary restraining order, and in the hearing before the

district court on the city's right to engage in the coal business, the district court upheld the right of the city to buy and sell coal to the public. The private coal dealers have appealed the case to the state supreme court, which will be heard by that body sometime in the near future.

When the agitation was commenced for a municipal coal yard a little more than one year ago, the grade of coal that the city has been selling for the past six months was retailing in Lincoln delivered at the consumer's bin for about \$14.50 per ton, and the price at the mine for this grade of coal has not varied more than 50 cents a ton since that time. Upon the opening of the municipal coal yard for business, it fixed the price of this grade of coal at \$10.50 delivered, and three months later or about Jan. 1, reduced the price to \$9.90 per ton delivered.

It was the intention of the superintendent of the municipal coal yard to only operate it from Oct. 1 until April 1, and the municipal coal yard will open again on or before Oct. 1 next fall.

During the past six months the municipal coal yard sold 6,907 separate orders of coal, averaging something over a ton to each order. Allowing the usual estimate of five persons to the family, the municipal coal yard was heating a population of 34,000 or 7,000 more than one-half of the people of Lincoln according to the last census. However, this computation makes no allowance for several separate orders of coal being given during the winter by the same family.

When the municipal coal yard was started, \$15,000 was appropriated as a revolving fund, and \$500 was appropriated as an equipment or improvement fund. Three hundred twenty-six dollars and forty-four cents was used in rebuilding the old city scales, purchasing some equipment in the way of wheelbarrows, shovels, forks, etc., and building some coal bins. No part of the \$15,000 appropriation, however, has been touched, and the municipal coal yard has been operated without any expense to the taxpayers, and the \$15,000 originally appropriated remains in the city treasury.

During the time that the municipal coal yard has been in operation, there has been on deposit in the city banks money derived from the sale of coal, amounting from \$5,000 to \$15,000 upon which the banks have paid the city treasurer 2 1/2 per cent interest which should properly be credited to the profits of the municipal coal yard. After paying all expenses for operating the municipal coal yard, including cost of coal at the mine, freight, war tax, shrinkage, delivery charge, cashier and bookkeeper, weighmaster, and all other expense that should be properly charged to the municipal coal business, there remains as a net profit derived from the operation of the municipal coal yard \$3,820.30.

Given below is a detailed report of receipts and expenditures and quantity statement covering the six months that the municipal coal yard was in operation during the winter, and following this detailed report is the report for the month of March.

MUNY COAL REPORT FOR THE SEASON

Number of separate orders of coal sold to the people	6,907
Total cash sales	\$85,440.07
Total number of tons bought	8,644
Total number of tons sold	8,484
Total number of cars handled	186
Total amount paid for coal	\$70,178.90
Total paid to coal haulers for delivery of coal	\$ 8,564.86
Total overhead expense	\$ 2,876.01
Average cost of coal per ton f. o. b. Lincoln	\$ 8.08
Number of tons shrinkage from railroad track weight at Lincoln	160 tons,
which amounts to about 37 pounds on each ton sold to the people or one 37 pound lump of coal for good measure to each ton sold to municipal coal customers.	
Total tonnage shrink in transit based on 1% shrink from mine weight ..	86 tons.
Gross profit per ton97
Total per cent of shrink per ton028
Cost of shrinkage per ton21
Cost of overhead per ton32
Net profit per ton44
Amount appropriated by the city as a revolving fund, no part of which has been used	\$15,000.00
Amount of appropriation for improvement and equipment fund, \$326.44 of which was used or rebuilding scales, building bins, purchasing shovels, forks, wheelbarrows, etc..	\$500.00
Total net profit from the operation of the municipal coal yard for the	

first season covering a period from Oct. 1, 1921 to April 1, 1922 \$ 3,820.30

MUNY REPORT FOR MONTH OF MARCH, 1922

Tonnage bought during March	1,018
Tonnage sold during March	1,103
Balance of coal on hand	None
Total cash receipts for coal during March	\$10,978.02
Amount paid for coal in March	\$10,861.00
Total paid to coal haulers for delivery during March	\$ 1,891.47
Total paid for overhead during March	\$ 861.60
Balance in operating fund, including appropriation	\$18,820.30
Less appropriation	\$15,000.00

\$ 3,820.30,

which is the net profit from the operation of the coal yard during the season.

Respectfully submitted,

CHAS. W. BRYAN,
Supt. of Municipal Coal Yard.

PROTECTING THE BIBLE

(Copied from Page 1, New York Times, Sunday, April 9, 1922.)

Religion and the Bible cannot be derided in the public schools, City Superintendent William L. Ettinger has informed James F. Morton, Jr., of 211 West 138th Street, who protested to him because the New York University Philosophical Society was not allowed to hold a meeting in the Washington Irving High School on March 23, at which Joseph Lewis, President of the Free Thinkers Society, was to have spoken on "The Bible, the Nemesis of Mankind."

The technical rounds of the refusal of Director Eugene C. Gibney to permit the meeting were that no permit had been obtained for the use of the school building. Dr. Ettinger told Mr. Morton that he would have revoked the permit, had one been granted, as soon as the Board of Education was informed of the topic to be discussed.

Mr. Morton, in his letter to Dr. Ettinger, had stated that the Philosophical Society had been offering "a platform for the discussion of different subjects, not making itself responsible for the opinion of its lecturers, but hearing and thoroughly debating their views as presented."

"Unlike your society," Dr. Ettinger said in his reply, "which you state feels free to offer its platform for discussion without making itself responsible for the opinions of its lecturers, the Board of Education must assume, and does assume, a very definite responsibility with reference to the use of school platforms, and does not permit such use to extend to the discussion of a topic that is fundamentally repugnant to the cherished ideals of a Christian community."

"It may interest you to know that Section 1151 of the Charter of Greater New York makes permissive the reading of the Bible in the schools, and, furthermore, the by-laws of the Board of Education provide that 'all schools under the jurisdiction of the Board of Education shall be opened with the reading of a portion of the Holy Scriptures without note or comment.'"

"Therefore, to permit the same platform, for which the Bible is read daily as a basis of culture and inspection the pupil, to be used for the presentation of a thesis to the effect that same Bible has been the direct cause of great evil and suffering to the world would be not merely to tolerate but to encourage views that give deep offense to all decent people in the community and which run counter to a definite policy of reverence appreciative of the Bible as legalized by statute and by laws."

"Such limitation on your right to use school property of course does not imply any criticism of your right as a society to discuss in proper places any theories which you deem appropriate, but I am firmly convinced that your expectation exceeds your sound judgment when you assume that the Board of Education will place at your disposal school buildings to house meetings diverted to a discussion of views that aim to ridicule, divert and destroy any phase of our political, social or religious life, which represents the honest convictions and highest aspirations of the community."

"The Board of Education cannot permit its meeting places to be used by political or religious iconoclasts, whose condition of thought and debasing emotionalism make them apostles of disorder. In meeting the protests of such folks one is often reminded of Job's rebuke to Zophar and his companions, who sought wickedly and deceitfully to fill his mind with distrust of God: 'No doubt, but ye are the people and wisdom shall die with you.'"