

COST OF PUBLIC OWNERSHIP

Figures that Alarm Taxpayers in England Just Now.

HIGHER MUNICIPAL TAXES ONE RESULT Public Management of Gas Works Proves to Be Less Economical Than Private Ownership.

LONDON, Feb. 2.—(Special Correspondence.)—A local campaign of world-wide importance and importance will culminate in the London county council election on March 2.

The believers in the principle of municipal management of certain forms of trade and industry have had a remarkably free hand in London and the principal large cities of England and Scotland.

Patience is Exhausted. The English people are among the most patient in the world in bearing their public burdens.

But the situation has been suddenly reversed. The fact has been forced upon their attention that local taxation has been increasing in even larger proportion than national, and it has come upon them with the force of a sudden revelation that municipal indebtedness in Great Britain is growing at an appalling rate.

The debt of the municipalities of Great Britain has increased from \$65,000,000 in 1884 to \$2,345,000,000 in 1904.

But Englishmen have found that the rate per head of local taxation in the country has increased no less than 62 per cent.

Sir John Lubbock's Carelessness. The most thorough and fair minded exposition of the situation is that which has just been made by Lord Avebury (Sir John Lubbock).

He has done more both in and out of Parliament for the working classes of the community than any other man.

He analyzes briefly but thoroughly the whole British record of municipal trading in a small volume published a few days ago, and he reached these conclusions:

Firstly, the undertaking by municipalities of commercial undertakings is undesirable mainly on five grounds:

Secondly, it has involved and will involve an immense increase in municipal debt.

Thirdly, it will involve municipalities in labor disputes.

Fourthly, as there will not be the same stimulus to economy and efficiency, there will be a great probability, not to say certainty, that one of two things will happen—either there will be a loss of service or the service will cost more.

Fifthly, it is a serious check to progress and discovery.

It is hardly possible in the limits of a single article to discuss all the points made by Lord Avebury in his remarkable book and the article is therefore confined

to the single question of the economy or lack of trading enterprises. Erroneous Impression Corrected. The impression generally prevails in this country and abroad that municipally controlled tram lines, gas and electric supply, water works, etc., in Glasgow, London and other important cities show a considerable improvement in the matter of economy and efficiency over privately managed enterprises of the same nature.

WIZARDS OF MECHANICAL ART

Seeing 'Phones and Bookkeeping Devices Without Books, Pens or Ink.

SENDING OUT RECEIVING TYPEWRITERS All These Wonders and More Will Be on Exhibition at the National Business Show at Coliseum.

Bookkeeping without books, without pens and ink, without even a bookkeeper, yet with more accurate results and a better understanding all around, seems a bit visionary, but this is exactly what will be shown at the National Business show to be held at the Coliseum, Chicago, during the week of March 16 to 24.

Another startling thing that will be on exhibition is a machine that will work wonders in correspondence. By means of this machine it will be possible for every business man to have an automatic stenographer, office boy and mailing clerk.

The "seeing telephone" is another twentieth century wonder that will be shown. By means of the device it is possible to see the features of the person you are talking to. Colors and facial expressions will be distinguishable at any distance.

Still another invention to be seen is the justifying typewriter, which will make a matrix from which printing plates may be made at once.

Nottingham and Sheffield are identically situated as regards coal supply. In Nottingham gas is supplied by the city; in Sheffield by a private company.

There are in London two tramway systems, one north of the Thames, the other south of the river. The county council became possessed of both in 1900.

The capital value was approximately the same, \$4,350,000 on the north, \$4,650,000 on the south.

The council leased the northern lines to a company and worked the southern lines itself.

During the period, the council has electrified the southern lines, which has slightly interfered with their working, but the result of five years operations is instructive.

The auditor of the Local Government Board has objected to the insufficiency of the sum set aside for renewals, etc., and to the method by which only one-third of the cost of street widening for tramways is charged to the tramway account.

Moreover, nothing at all has been debited for central office charges, these expenses having been charged to the council's ordinary expenditure.

The foregoing forms a very small part of the revelations which have recently been made in the matter of municipal trading in Great Britain.

Mexico After Gamblers. EL PASO, Tex., Feb. 2.—Eduardo Arnold, mayor of Cananea, Mex., his brother and forty Americans have been lodged in jail by the prefect of Hermosillo for gambling and permitting gambling in Cananea after Governor Yasbel had ordered it closed.

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