



Public Utilities



PUBLIC SERVICE COMPANIES GROW

Recognize the Rule to Apply Strict Business Principles to Their Business.

REVENUES ARE INCREASING

Many Times as Great as They Were Some Years Ago.

LIGHT COMPANY EXPANDS

More Lights and Large Signs and Power Plants.

ELECTRICITY A NECESSITY

Nearly One Thousand Old Houses Equipped with Electricity Last Year—Most New Houses Are so Provided.

There was a time not so very long ago when real public service corporations did not exist. There were big companies doing business under city franchises, using the people's streets, tearing up pavements, stringing their wires up and down the principal thoroughfares and making their presence felt in many ways that were troublesome, and they did give to their patrons for high prices a certain sort of service, but it was different. They did not then consider it their duty to serve the public as a public. They were possessors of franchises and they gave services only because that was the way to get revenue.

Their revenues in those days were not large, however. Because they chose to offer their wares with a surly indifference to the customer's comfort, because they declined advertising and trade soliciting through periodicals and publications the people who had to buy of them did it only when it was absolutely necessary.

It was this situation and the seeming lack of desire on the part of capitalists to remedy it that led to a great deal of the ill feeling that has been engendered against organized industry. If the con-

sumer feels that the capitalist is dependent upon him and knows that the capitalist is well aware of his dependence and is taking it into consideration, the consumer will not feel it a grievance to pay a fair price for the commodity. But in former times the capitalist seemed to have forgotten his dependence, and his feeling was a perfectly natural sentiment for the consumer.

Times Have Changed. But within the last decade the most powerful of all motives—self-preservation—has led to a change in the situation. Plain business sense, the intuition that leads those who control large corporate interests to shift their policies with every change in business conditions has been awakened and it has forced the public utility companies to present themselves before their patrons in a very different guise.

They have begun to act upon the principle that a monopoly can be made more productive by the same methods that make any other business pay high profit rates. They have begun to serve their customers as if their desire was to satisfy them as thoroughly as possible, and the change of attitude has been the one force that has so materially increased the material prosperity of all the organized industries.

Nowadays a public service corporation considers it quite as much to its advantage to advertise as does any business firm. It is known that by advertising there is brought in, besides the trade that must come to any monopoly, the patronage of those who are attracted to the wares of the corporation, not as a necessity, but as a convenience.

The advertising of a public service company is educational. As a result every man, woman and child in every great city is now made to feel that the corporations have something to sell; that they need all the patronage that they can get and that they are willing to give courtesy and fair treatment as a return for the patronage.

They are beginning to reap their reward in better feeling between their representatives and the public, in greatly increased dividends and in all the benefits that follow sound business policies.

Electric Light Company. One corporation that has in the last decade changed its whole character in nearly every American city is the electric light and power company. As a prominent representative of the Omaha company remarked recently: "It used to be the natural thing for a representative of an electric power company to disdain to talk to a man who wanted so small a favor as a ten-horse-power motor installed, but nowadays we go after every little piece of business, and we make it a point to see that the most insignificant customer is satisfied."

It would be very hard to realize what a modern city would be like without the services of an electric light and power company. One reads vivid descriptions of the old days when gallants went forth into the darkness carrying blazing flambeaus before them and armed with sharpest steel, expecting any moment to be set upon and robbed by the marauders that found too comfortable a shelter in every dark corner. Crime and misery were developed most easily in the dark. In an unlighted street the traveler was liable not only to the dangers of discomfort and delay, but he was beset by the more terrifying dangers of desperadoes.

But the lights that we get from the electric light companies make traveling by night almost as comfortable as it is by day.

Even the most modest home can be brilliantly lighted in a city where electricity is available. Every possible convenience that lightens the strain on our eyes is afforded by new developments in these two commodities. The Omaha Electric Light and Power company operates throughout this city 1,500 miles of wire. On these wires are strung 350,000 sixteen candle power equivalents in lamps and about 12,000 horse power in motors. When the occasion comes for the celebration of some great event, some annual festival or other special time the downtown streets become flooded with brightness. Thousands of tiny shining points festooned back and forth across and along the crowded pavements, huge arcs that cast a radiance almost as bright as the beams of Sol himself, and the recently invented improvements in big lights that sellipse even the arcs all add to the glow that makes the streets at night so beautiful and so fascinating.

Light a Necessity. In private homes electricity is a convenience that adds so much to people's comfort for a small expenditure. Many a housewife has learned that by the aid of modern advantages such as electricity affords her work is easily done and not by any means interminable.

The Omaha Electric Light and Power company was organized in 1892 from the Thomson-Houston company, which had been doing business here for about nine years. When the Thomson-Houston company started out it had a little plant that occupied about 1,550 square feet of floor space and had a capacity of 200 horse-power.

But in twenty-six years the plant has grown to be capable of producing as much as 20,000 horse-power and occupies in floor space 125,000 square feet. This growth has been caused by the cheapness of electricity, by the recognition by the company of the value of advertising and

by the recognition by the public that with electric light many things are possible that are quite impossible without it. The greater part of the electric force generated by the plant of the Omaha company is, of course, used up in lighting but nearly as great a quantity is given out in power. Huge factories, that, before the general use of electric power, had to have immense boilers to run their engines, now have small motors that set in motion their whole complicated systems of machinery and the householders have learned to take advantage of the same opportunities.

Many Different Uses.

The modern "haus frau" has in her kitchen an electric stove, she does her ironing with an electric iron and she curls her hair with an electric curling iron. She gives her laundress the pleasure of having the washing machine and the wringer run by the motor that can be moved around from one place to another as it may be needed. She cools her rooms just as a hotel or an office does, with electric fans, large or small, and if she is really well-to-do and able to take advantage of every possible chance of comfort, she has her own electrically run refrigerating plant.

The power from the ordinary householding wire can be made to run a refrigerating or ammonia evaporating plant, and the plant can be installed for a cost of less than \$1,200 for an eight-room house. The machine, when complete, will furnish a draught of cold air for any spot that is too hot, and ice-cream and such frozen delicacies are prepared in a moment.

The factory is more greatly improved and benefited by the use of electricity than the household. Power from enormous steam engines is very expensive and every individual user has to install a complete plant capable of producing as much power as he may use only on very rare occasions. A large item in his expense under such a system is the wages of his engineer and fireman.

Electricity Saves Waste.

The waste of energy in a steam power system is enormous. The energy must be carried from the central generating plant to every part of the building with comparatively little waste, and only very simple machinery is needed. The engineer is practically dispensed with in a factory run by electricity and the maintaining expenses are reduced to a minimum.

There is always plenty of power on hand for the new factories that want to come into this territory or for the manufacturers who want to change their power systems. The electric light company has made it a business rule to be always ready to make any addition in the amount of energy that it dispenses. New factories are encouraged to come here and the efforts of the power company, and its assurance that there will never be any dearth of "juice" are a part of the influence that brings new industries to locate in this section of the country. The big grain elevators, big implement factories and dozens of other big factories have been installed in Omaha through the efforts and substantial promises of the company that furnishes them with power.

able to get as much for their money lies in the manner in which electric current costs are figured. In setting out to render its consumers a service the company figures that it is giving them something to use and not that it is offering something for sale as a commodity. To furnish them with the service that will give them electricity the company must undertake two burdens, one of them is the readiness to give the current to the lamps and motors. This readiness costs the company a great deal for machinery and equipment.

One of the most recent uses to which electricity has been put is in lighting the huge street signs that have become so numerous. When they were first put in the merchants were very slow about undertaking to keep them because the outlay was great and they seemed of doubtful necessity. The electric light companies in Omaha (and in most cities) saw an opportunity and went after it. They offered to merchants who wanted signs to undertake the initial cost for them and to allow the merchant to pay for the sign in installments as a part of the rent for the light. This put the burden upon the company and the merchants were not required to undergo

any initial expenditure. The electric light company owns all of the big signs in Omaha except one or two of the large ones that were put up by corporations, and it furnishes the light for all of them. The brilliant appearance of Omaha streets at night, is not altogether due to the 1,057 arc lamps that are put there for that purpose. The huge signs with their thousands of incandescents and their flashing and swirl effects add the finishing touch to the scene.

Business is Growing.

The need of all these things that the company can supply to the people and the desire on the part of the company to please everybody has resulted in the growth of the business to its present proportions. Last year 333 old houses were wired, houses that had formerly had only gas, and the city electrician issued permits for 2,474 different jobs of wiring. This year the company has already spent \$300,000 for improvements and extensions, and most of this money has been paid out for labor and materials.

The company, for its own good and for the good of the city, works up whole districts.

(Continued on Page Nine.)

Cost of Service. The reason why small consumers are un-

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Write for Information

TERMINAL INDUSTRIAL LOCATIONS TRUCKAGE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT CO.

Organized 1880
"We Have Grown Up With Omaha."

Mc CAGUE INVESTMENT CO.

..OMAHA..

Wonderful Industrial Opportunity in the Great Gateway of the West

With its 175,000 Population, Invites New Industries and Offers to all New Comers

- Tax Rate For All Purposes of 1½ Per Cent.
- Adequate Supply of Labor.
- Thirteen Lines of Railway Covering 21,700 Miles.
- Nine National Banks, Deposits \$60,000,000.
- Cheap Industrial Electric Power.

OMAHA HAS

- Area of 24 Square Miles.
- Annual Bank Clearings, \$750,000,000.
- Annual Grain Receipts, 50,000,000 Bushels.
- Annual Live Stock Receipts, 5,000,000 Head.
- Annual Packing House Output, \$140,000,000.
- Annual Factory and Jobbing Output, \$400,000,000.
- Sixty-one Grade Schools and Two Universities.
- The Largest Freight Depot in the World.
- The Greatest Butter Factory in the World.
- The Second Largest Corn Market.
- The Third Largest Packing Center.
- A Central Power Station.

That is furnishing cheap electric power to practically all industries doing a flourishing business, and has a reserve capacity of great promise, that is capable of supplying power for any and all purposes to all new comers, at a rate that is right.

Omaha Electric Light and Power Co.