

MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP IN GREAT BRITAIN HAS PROVED A SUCCESS

Dr. Howe, Who Made a Thoro Investigation at the Request of the United States Government, Submits an Interesting Report that Is Not Colored by Political Considerations.

By W. W. Jernam. WASHINGTON, March 23.—The general government, thru the current bulletin of the bureau of labor, has made an interesting and important contribution to the literature of municipal ownership.

IMPORTANCE OF DR. HOWE'S REPORT.

All this that Dr. Howe says about public ownership in Great Britain is of the widest possible interest and importance in the United States, for that issue, in some phase, promises almost certainly to be one of the big issues of the 1908 presidential campaign.

Dr. Howe's article is based on a study of the leading cities of England, Scotland and Ireland during the summer of 1905. It represents, in reality, however, the results of three separate investigations into the same subject, the earlier ones being on personal initiative. The official investigation, made at the request of the American government in 1905, and upon which the article in question is founded, was conducted by personal and inquiry conference with officials and citizens in nearly all of the British cities of importance.

What has already been accomplished in Great Britain in the way of municipal ownership is so important and widespread that the problem, so far as that country is concerned, may be said to have been solved. The United States sits up and takes notice because there has been developed a strong municipal ownership sentiment in Chicago, New York, Seattle and various other American cities, and because, further, the average man here is likely to think that this country is a pioneer so far as that great question is concerned.

The extent of municipal ownership thruout the British isles is so great as to have completely changed the character of municipal administration there. In all Britain there are 2,810 public undertakings of various sorts, including water works, gas plants, electricity plants, street railway systems, etc., and of this number 1,777 are now owned by municipalities, and only 1,033 by private corporations.

In Great Britain, within the past ten years, public as opposed to private ownership, Dr. Howe says, has become generally accepted as to water, gas, electric lighting, street railways and markets. Parliament itself, which has been cautious of its grant of powers, now treats these industries as naturally public ones, and in cases of contest the doubt is in favor of the local authority.

Active hostility to municipal ownership is almost entirely confined to the big business interests which suffer thru the loss of franchise privileges. "All other classes accept municipal ownership," says Dr. Howe, "such as America accepts schools, libraries, parks, and water, gas and police service."

While the principle of municipal ownership is thus widely accepted by the British people, its application by the individual city is a question of present expediency, of the price to be paid, or the relationship of the private enterprise already in the field to the community.

"An analysis of the returns," says Dr. Howe, "shows that London has municipalized water, the Thames steamboat service and the surface tramways. The gas, subway and bus systems are still in private hands. Out of the twenty-nine administrative areas of London endowed with certain municipal powers, fourteen have taken over the electricity supply, while fifteen private companies have granted franchises within the metropolitan area."

"Outside of London, the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the Newcastle district, Bournemouth and Preston are the only local areas of any magnitude supplied by private electric lighting companies. Practically all of the large cities, with the exception of Edinburgh, Dublin and Coventry, both own and operate their traction systems. Sheffield and Liverpool are among the few large cities outside of London which are supplied by private gas companies."

Municipal ownership in Great Britain, it is interesting to observe, further, has become an issue of much greater magnitude than the ownership of street railways, gas, electric lighting and water service. These so-called natural monopolies have been very generally taken over by the cities, and the general public has indorsed such action, and in notable instances called for more. "In various places," says Dr. Howe, "municipal ownership has now come to include municipal dwellings, docks, markets, baths, race courses, oyster fisheries, slaughter houses, milk depots, employment bureaus and sewage farms. The city of Brighton owns the local race course, from which it derives a revenue of from \$10,000 to \$15,000 a year. Municipal theaters have been opened at Brighton and Southborough. West Ham manufactures its own paving stones and sells them to contractors at a profit. Colchester has a municipal oyster bed. Manchester produces soap, oil, tallow and mortar as residuals from its gas and other industries. Many cities supplying gas deal in stoves and gas fittings. Others, dealing in electricity, wire the houses and supply them with fittings. Southport and Bradford are advocating municipal tailoring establishments to manufacture the uniforms of town employes."

In some of the northern districts of Great Britain proposals have been advanced that the municipalities should buy up coal mines for the supply of

"The weight of public opinion in Great Britain is that municipal ownership in the concrete has justified itself there, and present criticism is largely resolved into the theoretical one of the proper functions and powers of government. Assuredly, municipal ownership has not involved an increase of municipal corruption. The instances of corrupt dealings between councilmen and those dealing with the city are so rare as to be almost nonexistent. Nor is there any evidence that the increase in municipal employes has led to their tyranny over departments or officials. Municipal employes are not organized to promote their own interests, however reasonable it may be to assume that they would be. Nor is there any evidence that the personnel of the town councils has deteriorated, or that they are incapable of managing such intricate undertakings as those taken over. Of all these criticisms the reverse seems to be true. The interests of the city have become so vast that men of strength and character are attracted to the public service. Similar considerations make the public and the press very alert and awake to municipal business. The doings of the town council are published widely and carefully perused. Public spirit is constantly on the lookout to maintain the character of its representatives in the council. At the same time a sense of dignity and self-respect seems to have been bred by the public service among its employes. "There is no considerable sentiment in favor of a return to private operation among any portion of the community, except the very small class interested in private franchises. This is the best test of the success of the movement. For, after all, even public trading is a matter of politics, and if public opinion has come to approve of a policy after a sufficient trial, it is a better proof of its permanence and its success than a favorable balance sheet. The taking over of these enterprises is no longer looked upon as a novelty or an innovation. They have now established themselves as an essential part of municipal administration, the same as the schools, police, fire, health and other departments. Even parliament, the personal interest of many of whose members is closely identified with the big business enterprises, has come to recognize the general principle that no private franchise should be granted in an area where public authority shows a disposition to undertake the enterprise."

Chicago Not a Pioneer. This rapid development of the municipal ownership idea in British cities has been going on without very much being known about it on this side of the water. People in Chicago, for example, who have thought that they were blazing their way thru what was almost a virgin forest when they decided to buy up the street railways, will have much to learn from British experience. Chicago, and the rest of the United States, already know something of what Glasgow has done in the way of street railway control, but it is very evident that they have not known that Glasgow was doing it—merely one of many cities which have taken over the street car lines. What has been done there has been done widely over Britain, and the municipal ownership idea is being extended at a pace that is alarming to many good British subjects. But in spite of criticism the extension goes on, and it is believed in this country that W. J. Bryan, when he returns home next fall, after a study around the world of municipal ownership, will find nothing more interesting to tell us about than what he has seen in Great Britain. This essay of Dr. Howe's is but a foretaste of what Bryan will bring us.

The Opposition to M. O. The British opposition to municipal ownership is summed up by Dr. Howe under several heads. First—Municipal ownership is a menace because it piles up a large public debt. Second—That because of municipal ownership the tax rate, in order to pay for the investments made, has been increased alarmingly. Third—That the burden is especially felt by manufacturers, merchants and the other capitalist classes, but must in the end fall upon the laborers in the form of higher rents, etc. Fourth—The municipal ownership, whether intentionally or not, plays into the hands of the socialists, and therefore ought to be discouraged. Fifth—Municipalization generally has been carried to unwise lengths, especially in the small communities. Sixth—That too many municipal plants are being conducted with a view to making a profit. Seventh—That the increasing magnitude of the enterprise tends to build up a powerful bureaucracy. These criticisms are examined in detail by Dr. Howe, who presents his conclusions as to each of them.

The Defense. The defenders of municipal ownership in Great Britain are not slow to reply to their critics, and to state the reasons why they believe in the city owning as many as possible of the public utilities. These reasons are thus summed up: First—Municipal ownership stimulates public spirit, promotes good citizenship and arouses local patriotism. Second—Public operation is consistent with the best interests of the community. It permits city administration to be co-ordinated, and the service of the street railways, electricity, gas and water, to be better adapted to serve one another, and the community. Third—Public ownership has greatly cheapened the cost of service, whether gas, electricity or transportation. The same is true of telephones. Fourth—Municipal ownership has proved a financial success. Already in many cities it has, out of its earnings, paid off a part of its indebtedness, and in many instances reduced the local taxes. Fifth—Municipal ownership has improved the condition of labor by increasing wages, shortening hours and establishing cordial relationship between the public and its servants. Sixth—Municipal ownership is subject to public sentiment. Every voter is a critic and can make his influence felt. This makes the industry responsive to public demands.

Dr. Howe's Conclusions. After making an examination of these claims in defense of municipal ownership, Dr. Howe writes his own conclusion, from which I quote in part:

"The condition of the very poor has been relieved thru cheap and abundant water, thru cheaper and more available gas for lighting and heat, and thru cheaper transit. Seventh—The condition of the employes has been greatly improved. Thousands of men have been raised to a fair wage and relieved from the fear of capricious dismissal. Their service has been dignified and their standard of living improved, not only by better wages, but by shorter hours."

Thousands of men have been raised to a fair wage and relieved from the fear of capricious dismissal. Their service has been dignified and their standard of living improved, not only by better wages, but by shorter hours.

THE COUNTRY ROUND Odd and Humorous Phases of Life in America.

THE Philadelphia board of education has undertaken to go into the question as to whether the wearing of high heels by a woman is an act of contributory negligence. The matter came up in connection with the application of a teacher in one of the public schools for the allowance of full salary while absent from duty because of a sprained ankle. In her petition to the board, the teacher set forth that while in the discharge of her duties she slipped on the "stone steps" leading to the playground, and sustained thereby a severe ankle strain, which kept her in the house several days. She claimed that the accident was due solely to the badly worn condition of the steps.

The Demoralizing Campaign. The amount of work to be done in this country by legislative bodies, local, state and national, is appalling. To the uninformed, it might seem that too much lawmaking is done, and that too many things are "regulated." But to one whose ears are open to the small voices of complaint that rise up here and there the necessity for extra activity is apparent. For example, a Rochester reformer has arisen to demand that the Albany legislature step in and pass a law that shall demoralize checkers. His point is plain: Whereas football kills its scores, checkers sacrifices its thousands every winter. The specific reforms demanded are these: First—Abolish the king row. Second—Limit the jumps to one in any given direction. Third—Restrict the bets to one glass of hard cider on each game. Fourth—Fix the maximum age limit of 75 years for players. Fifth—Prohibit discussions of the game outside of the cobbler's shop or grocery. Sixth—Compel each player to produce a written permit from his wife. Seventh—Restrict the playing to one evening a week, and stop the game when curfew rings.

St. Louis the Sainted. "St. Louis the Sainted" has become "St. Louis the Sainted." From all reports two white wings should be added to the Missouri city's coat of arms and the scene of Folk and Hadley's reform operations should be held up to the erring commonwealth as the model of purity. It is a star of hope to reformers and a menace to evildoers. In fact, the wave of reform, once started, cannot be stopped and it is engulfing high ground never before touched by the wavellet of reform. Old blue laws have been dug out and are being rigidly enforced. Policemen who swear are fined or discharged. A citizen who uses profanity in public, spits in the street or takes a second look at a pretty girl, does so at a risk of arrest, fine or imprisonment. In St. Louis gambling is a lost art and the knights of the green cloth have all migrated to less dangerous feeding grounds. All saloons are rigidly closed on Sundays, and there is no raising of the "lid" for brief dips. In fact, things have gone so far that one "tenderloin" judge has forbidden the use of slang in a courtroom. It was in a peace disturbance case that Judge Tracy made himself famous by stopping a prisoner who remarked that one of his pals was "chawin' de rag."

A Stick's Wide Travels. MAILING stick that has probably traveled thru American mails for a hundred thousand miles or more, going to and fro between Washington and various internal revenue offices (according to the Hawaiian Star), is in the possession of Collector or Chamberlain of Honolulu, waiting to start on another trip to the national capital. It is decorated nearly all over with the stamps of revenue collectors from Honolulu to Brooklyn. The stick is used to wrap monthly reports around before they are mailed, and the collector has a habit of putting their rubber stamps on it before remailing it. The stick appears to have begun its career in October, 1902, by a trip to the collector at Cleveland, Ohio. Since then it has been here twice and has been one or more times to Arkansas, Illinois, New York, Texas, South Carolina, Indiana, Louisiana, Missouri, California, Tennessee, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan and Massachusetts. After each trip there is a return trip to Washington with a report.

Gotzian Shoes

Fit Like Your Footprint.

C. Gotzian & Co. begs to call public attention to its personal history and record.

Conrad Gotzian began to make shoes as a shoemaker in St. Paul in 1855, when he was twenty years old. His business grew from this humble beginning until, at the time of his death in 1887, thirty-two years thereafter, its capital was \$600,000.00 and his shoes were sold in every city and village of the Northwest.

The house which he founded has continued now for more than fifty years. In 1905 it made five times as many shoes as he made in 1886. It employed nearly six times as many people. In 1886 its warehouse was a fifty-foot building, three stories in height, and its factory occupied part of a building of the same dimensions. Now its warehouse and main factory cover half a city block, and it operates in addition a branch factory at Chippewa Falls, Wis. Its present total resources are nearly \$1,500,000.00.

This progress has been achieved not by artificial means, but by a persistent policy of honesty and fair dealing. Conrad Gotzian himself was a man of commanding presence, of great force of character and organizing ability. His success was based on merit. A shoemaker at the bench at 20 years of age, he became in the course of a short life the head and owner of a great industry, because he made good shoes and deserved and commanded popular confidence. C. Gotzian & Co. has grown since his death because it has followed his methods. It makes good shoes. It deserves and commands popular confidence. It makes shoes for men, women and children. It makes shoes in many styles and at all prices, but all the shoes it makes are of the best quality for the price.

Gotzian Shoes are now sold in six thousand stores. C. Gotzian & Co. wants to have them sold in every shoe store in the Northwest. It asks the co-operation of the public in its further growth and progress. The people of the Northwest should wear shoes made in the Northwest. Loyalty to industries of the Northwest means greater growth, prosperity and wealth for the Northwestern people.

The people of the Northwest should wear Gotzian Shoes not only because they are made in the Northwest, but because they are better than other shoes. They are correct in style, high in quality, low in price and are made by experienced workmen who are familiar with local needs and local conditions. They have fifty years of honorable record behind them. For fifty years millions of people, fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, have been wearing Gotzian Shoes with satisfaction. They have the verdict of success.

When next you talk with your shoe dealer, ask for Gotzian Shoes. Help to increase the demand for them. If your dealer does not carry them, ask him to, or communicate with us and we'll tell you where they may be bought.

Watch for our annual spring announcement of latest styles for men and women.

C. GOTZIAN & CO., St. Paul—1855-1906.