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FRANCHISE FOR LIGHTS AND POWER REJECTED

Council Works Harmoniously on All Questions Coming Before Them—Contract for Sidewalks on Bryan Street Was Let.

The city council met last night in regular monthly session, all members being present except H. E. Cole, who is not now active on account of his removal from the city.

This was undoubtedly the busiest meeting the council has held for several months and matters were dispatched in a businesslike manner, without discord, loss of time or unnecessary quibbling. It was teamwork, pure and simple.

The mayor called the session to order promptly at 8 o'clock and the usual routine of business was deferred owing to the many visitors present, some of whom wished to be heard.

The first called was E. J. Fountain, representing the firm of Fountain Brothers. He stated that he was merely following up an application for a franchise for power and lights which was presented at a former meeting. Mr. Fountain believed the franchise should be granted owing to the advantages offered by him in the reduction of rates to the consumers, etc.

The mayor stated that this matter had been gone into by the council and asked that their findings be discussed, wherein City Attorney J. W. Doremus addressed the meeting as follows: "Mayor and Gentlemen: "After the matter was turned over to the ordinance committee they called at my office for the purpose of finding out what the rights of the city were in regard to this matter, and as to the advisability of granting a franchise in view of the fact that the city of Bryan owns its plant or owns its water, light and sewerage system.

"The council has conferred together in regard to this matter, and I think the consensus of opinion is that it would not be to the interest of the city, but would be detrimental and would possibly put its plant out of business if a franchise as requested by Mr. Fountain was granted.

"In regard to the granting of franchises between private individuals, we might say that as between private individuals that the right to grant all individual exclusive franchises is not tolerated under our laws, but the rule is different regarding municipal ownership. The town owns the plant in behalf of the people; it is operated in the interest of the people; they all have an interest in the plant, and by reason of such, the city has the right to an exclusive franchise and can deny (according to my views) the granting of this franchise.

"The city, as the council realizes, has gone to a large expense, investing over \$128,000, and has built up a system that, I believe, has given general satisfaction. I had my attention called to the rates fixed throughout the State, and I find that this town is lower than Ennis, Corsicana, Galveston; in fact, I think it gives the people the lowest minimum rate in Texas. We find that where municipal plants have been taken over by private individuals or corporations they charge a much higher rate than is charged by our city authorities.

"Now, another thing in regard to the plant—when the water, light and sewerage plant was owned by a private corporation in this town we had about fifty hydrants here. The city paid from \$70 to \$75 a hydrant per annum. Since then we have installed one hundred and fifty-three hydrants. At \$75 would be \$7,500, that is now free water in case of fire. In addition to that we have put in lights on Main street and street lights that are furnished free to property owners over the city, consisting of about two hundred outside of Main street. If you grant a franchise to a private individual or corporation...

...have to come from somewhere, and it now looks like any additional weight laid on the people's backs would strain them to the breaking point. The contract for the sidewalks on either side of Bryan street has been awarded. When the work is finished and the graveling being done by the I & G. N. is completed, Bryan street will be one of the best in the city.

Tomorrow is Sunday—regular church services, Sunday school and all the auxiliaries. All the church doors are swung wide open in welcome to you.

But isn't that interurban service between Bryan and College fine? Every hour on the hour. Set your watch by the interurban.

poration the city will pay \$7,500 for hydrants and about 2,400 for lights.

"I read Mr. Fountain's article to-night, and he states that the council is making no provision for a sinking fund, but he must understand that the revenues derived from the plant monthly goes into the up-keep. If the new corporation established a plant there would be a ten per cent wear and tear every year and on an investment of \$128,000, which would be required to meet the demands of this town, they would have to exact of the people at least \$12,800 to provide against depreciation, besides what they would charge the people for water, light and sewerage.

"We believe that the people of this town are interested in their water, light and sewerage plant; that a large majority are in favor of municipal ownership. We have municipal ownership now, and I don't believe this council should take any action whatever that would cripple this plant in any way.

"That the city of Bryan has the exclusive right to this franchise in behalf of the people, I don't think can be questioned, and under the law, I believe, they have a right not to grant a franchise to any private individual or corporation in opposition to the plant owned by the city of Bryan.

"I feel like encouraging all propositions, but that whenever you grant a franchise to a corporation or private person to carry on business in opposition to your water, light and sewerage system, then your plant becomes worthless, and for that reason I believe this franchise should not be granted."

A general discussion followed in which Mr. Fountain said: "The proposition is, our rate is nine ninety against fifteen that you are now paying, and this question is—would it pay the city to adopt this proposition or continue to pay from thirty-five to forty per cent more for their lights than they can get from us?"

This led to further discussion by the council, whereupon Alderman Wilson moved that the franchise not be granted. The motion was seconded by Alderman Haswell and the vote as recorded was unanimous in favor of the motion.

The next matter was presented by J. L. Edge, who appeared before the council as a committee from the Commercial Club in regard to establishing hitching posts on the side streets for the convenience of the community at large. This matter was referred to the street and finance committee.

J. J. Ray appeared before the council and made application for the position of city sexton. This matter was referred to the cemetery committee with power to act.

Sealed bids for city scavenger were brought to the attention of the council, but action on this matter was deferred until January 1st on account of the year being now near the close.

The grades for curbs and gutters on Dallas street as made by the city engineer were made permanent.

Bids were received for the building of sidewalks on both sides of Bryan street, the contract being let to the lowest bidder, T. B. Hubbard, at 15 3/4 cents per square foot.

A claim from A. J. Wagner, brought by his attorneys, for \$5,000 damages to his property on Bryan street by recent excavations, etc., was presented and refused by a vote of the council. However, the council indicated a willingness to provide, at the city's expense, proper means of access to and from this property.

The chairman of the finance committee reported the retirement of one of the deep-well notes amounting to \$1,000. This was the means of apparent pleasure by the body. This amount was reserved from utilities department and pays the first borrowed obligation dating back only seven months.

Council adjourned to meet Thursday night, November 18th, at 8 o'clock.

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All my farm and pasture lands, six miles southwest of Bryan, are posted. Trespassers will be prosecuted. AUGUST DOCKOL.

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AND PILOT.

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PRICES FOR PUFFS.

The editor of an Eastern paper, who facetiously refers to himself as the "Peerless Prince of Puff Purveyors," has evolved the following scale of prices for puffs:

For telling the public that a man is a successful citizen, when everybody knows he is as lazy as a hired man, \$2.70.

Referring to a sick citizen as one who is mourned by the entire community, when he will only be missed by the poker circle, \$10.13.

Referring to one as a hero and a man of courage and one that will stand by his honest convictions, when everybody knows that he is a moral coward and would sell out for thirty cents, \$6.21.

Referring to some gallivanting female as an estimable lady whom it is a pleasure to meet and know, when every man in town would sooner see Satan coming, \$8.10.

Calling an ordinary pulpit orator an eminent divine, 60 cents.

Sending a doughty sinner to heaven, \$5.

Referring to a deceased merchant who never advertised in his life as a progressive citizen, \$4.95.

Lambasting the daylighters out of the demon rum at the request of the local prohibition committee, \$6.77.

Ditto for the prohibitionists at the request of the local wet committee, \$6.77.—Exchange.

We have read the above clipping over and over again and with increasing interest with each reading. We have now been astride the editorial

tripod for nearly twenty-seven years and this clipping opens up a wide range of vision before us. We tried to make some figures, but they soon ran into numbers beyond the power of calculation or enumeration. If we had gotten ours during these twenty-seven years at the above scale of prices, compared to our wealth John D. Rockefeller would be a pauper.

TAXING EUROPE HALF ITS INCOME.

The grave and measured statement in the House of Commons by the Financial Secretary of the Treasury that Englishmen must be prepared to surrender to the government no less than half their incomes, either as a tax or loan, must make the people of England ponder deeply on the cost of the war.

What this war will cost, not only those engaged in it, but their posterity for generations to come, is strikingly shown by Secretary Montagu's statement. There is no reason to believe that it will bear more cruelly upon the British taxpayers than upon those of other nationalities. Great Britain is largely financing her allies, but their debt to her will have to be paid by them in time of peace. Germany is spending no less money than other belligerents, and although thus far her war debt has been incurred mainly with her own people, it will have to be paid with interest. Whether in form of indirect or direct taxes, the prophecy that half of all European incomes will for long time to come be taken by the State is probably well founded.

A great part of the working class of every Nation, even our own, earns a bare subsistence. What will happen if the State, by one device or another, exacts one-half of this already slender stipend for taxes? The victims will face starvation. If they emigrate, will the United States be eager to receive them? If they stay at home, will they endure starvation meekly? Or will they rise in revolt and destroy their governments and the values of the bonds that will be their bonds of slavery?

The United States cannot look with indifference upon the drift of Europe toward this maelstrom. Any state of chaos there would inflict injury upon us by closing our markets and flooding our shores with fleeing Europeans. Even while we remained, as at present, a debtor Nation, a European cataclysm would work tremendous injury to us, but if unwisely and most imprudently we become Europe's greatest creditor, lending our money to any and all of the belligerents, such an overthrow of governments and credits in Europe, as is quite possible, would

overwhelm us, too, with bankruptcy, penury and distress.—New York American.

There already exists a considerable sentiment in this State against capital punishment. It interferes seriously with the securing of jury panels to try capital crimes. The gruesome incident at Fort Worth Wednesday in which a condemned man more than sixty years of age was decapitated when swung from the gallows will have the effect of increasing this sentiment. It will find expression in a strong effort before the next Legislature to have that body enact a law forbidding capital punishment. And it is not improbable that the effort will succeed. There are no cities of refuge in this country except through the door of the court house, hence the old Mosaic law of a life for a life is more honored in the breach than in the observance. Civilization is beginning to doubt the wisdom of capital punishment.—Houston Post

Capital punishment has already been abolished in ten States and in time all the people will come to realize that it is a relic of barbarism not to be longer tolerated. The question is, has society the right to take a strong, able-bodied man and kill him, even by law? Taking human life is a serious thing. If a man by his conduct is a menace to the public peace and safety, let him be forever restrained of his liberty. His life is in the hands of God alone.

It is proposed that the neutral powers hold a peace conference at some neutral capital in Europe before Christmas. We hardly see how a peace conference would accomplish anything without participation by the belligerents. They could hardly propose measures that would be acceptable to all the Nations involved. Every effort, however, looking toward peace is worthy the very best efforts of the Nations participating.

President Wilson and his Cabinet are considering methods to raise the money to carry out the President's National defense policy. It is well that they do so. Should the policy be adopted by Congress the money will

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