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COMMON COUNCIL MEETING

A regular meeting of the Common Council was held at City Hall, Monday evening, December 6, 1909. Present—Aldermen D. E. O'Neill, McMurray, Mahoney, Cassidy, Near, Clappett, Finlan, Conlin, Brady, Lavery, J. P. O'Neill, Paddock, Primrose, Gould, Wilder, Bertilson, Fletcher, Bullard, Jackson, O'Connell, Stewart, Feyer, Meyer, Zink.

On motion the reading of the minutes of the previous meeting was dispensed with and the records approved. Alderman D. E. O'Neill moved that the rules adopted by this board for 1908 and 1909 be adopted as the rules for 1909 and 1910. At this time nominations for President of the Board of Aldermen were called for. Alderman McMurray presented the name of Dennis O'Neill. Alderman Fletcher presented the name of William E. Primrose. Aldermen McMurray and Fletcher were appointed tellers.

the name of Thomas F. Cleary. Alderman Meyer presented the name of John J. Hines. Aldermen McMurray and Fletcher were appointed tellers. The ballot resulted as follows: Whole number of ballots cast 24 Necessary for a choice 13 Thomas F. Cleary received 12 John J. Hines received 12 The Mayor then broke the tie in favor of Thomas F. Cleary, whom he declared elected President of the Board for the ensuing year.

senting the people. During our terms of office new tasks and responsibilities are likely to be imposed upon us, the accomplishment of which will require our earnest co-operation. We would keep before us in the performance of our work but one aim, "that we shall faithfully and impartially execute the duties of our office according to the best skill and judgment" in such a way as to promote the best interests of the city.

The Charter imposes upon the mayor or the duty of recommending from time to time such measures connected with the security, health, cleanliness and ornament of the city, or with the improvement of its government and finances, as he shall deem expedient. I feel it my duty at this time to call your attention to the existence of certain conditions and to recommend for your consideration measures which I believe to be conducive to the welfare of the city.

The investigation of the Electric Light Company should be pursued with a view to ascertaining the actual investment of the company and its cost of producing electricity, for the purpose of obtaining a reduction in price both for private and public consumers. Only with an adequate knowledge can it be determined whether the charges now made for this commodity are just charges. A public service monopoly unlike an ordinary private business, is not permitted by law to charge what price it pleases for its product, but may charge only such a price as will yield a fair profit on its actual investment.

I recommend that the Committee on Harbor Improvements be empowered to enter into negotiations with the New York, New Haven and Hartford Railroad Company relative to the purchase of more dock front adjacent to the existing wharves of the City at the foot of Wall street.

While the Common Council has small control over the expenditure of the public money, it is possible, because during the coming year the city will be called upon to meet several extraordinary demands upon its treasury. The most conspicuous of these demands is the State Tax imposed upon us by the last General Assembly. This alone will add substantially one mill to the tax rate. It should be borne in mind that this extraordinary drain on our revenues is due to the condition of the State's finances, and is a matter over which we have absolutely no control.

Most of the deficiencies in the City of Bridgeport at the end of the fiscal year, will be found, upon investigation, to have had their origin in its inadequate income. This inadequacy of the public funds to meet the demands for necessary improvements cannot be remedied while our homes, together with the lands, furnish more than five eighths of the public revenue.

The platform upon which the Mayor was elected pledged him, and all those who were elected with him, to an equitable adjustment of the tax system. This promise, as every other promise made to the people, must be scrupulously kept.

Section 2 of the Charter says: "The Board of Police Commissioners, Fire Commissioners, Park Commissioners, Charities and Apportionment, respectively shall elect from their own members a president who shall be known as the head of such department. Such heads of departments shall have seats in the Common Council, and they shall be entitled to take part in the proceedings and deliberations of the Common Council on all questions relating to or affecting their respective departments; but they shall not have the right to vote thereon."

This privilege certainly has not been taken advantage of by the presidents of the above departments in the past, except on rare occasions, and the consequence has been that matters have come up for consideration affecting these departments and have been acted upon without a proper understanding of the conditions relating to them.

I would earnestly recommend that whenever any matter affecting the department is before the Common Council, the head of such department will feel it his duty to be present. I am confident that if such a policy is pursued it will produce a more effective co-operation and a closer and more satisfactory relationship between the various departments and the several boards.

It is perhaps not out of place at this time to refer to the lack of interest that is taken in public hearings before this body in matters of general interest. Those in favor of a project or improvement, as a rule, appear for its sake, but those in opposition frequently are not present. For this reason the members of the body are often unable to obtain a full expression in reference to the matter before them. I trust that during the coming year your honorable body may be able to devise some means to promote a full expression of opinion at all public hearings.

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the "car barn surrender," by which in the one case a large portion of the harbor was yielded to the New Haven Railroad company and in the other case permission was given to the same company to establish death traps at the ends of the two principal bridges connecting the east and west sides of the City. We declare this bargain injurious to the City and harmful to good public policy.

Under our system of government parties submit issues for the approval of the people. Such are merely expressions of party opinion and are only binding upon the officers of the City after they have been approved by popular vote. It is possible that no remedy now exists which the City may seek. But we may at least use our best efforts to protect the harbor from further encroachment and may do much to cause its improvement, increasing its use to commerce and manufactures.

It is my judgment that every honorable effort should be made to prevent the laying of trolley tracks across the sidewalk in Stratford avenue, near the westerly approach of the Stratford avenue bridge. It is my purpose to request the City Attorney to look into the situation and if a remedy can be found under which the City can escape the consequences of the disastrous arrangement entered into between the city and the railroad company, prior to the election of this administration, I believe it should be done.

In conclusion I desire to say that while the selection of municipal officers is necessarily under our system a matter of party and of politics, yet the officers who are elected are the servants of all the people. In performing their functions entrusted to them their chief attention must be given to the needs of the entire city as it comes under their care and supervision.

Improvements must not be made with a view of building political capital for either party, but solely for the purpose of making the city a desirable place of residence, and a community which will attract capital and progressive and enterprising manufacturers and skilled workers from all parts of our country. This should be our aim.

As we are successful or unsuccessful in attaining this ideal, we shall be judged by the people who have entrusted us with the power. Respectfully submitted this 6th day

of December, 1909. E. T. BUCKINGHAM, Mayor of Bridgeport, Conn. Accepted and ordered printed in the year book. His Honor the Mayor then announced the following committees for the ensuing year:

- WAYS AND MEANS. Aldermen Lavery, McMurray, Paddock, Stewart, Primrose. HARBOR IMPROVEMENTS. Aldermen Paddock, McMurray, Clappett, Fletcher, Meyer. LAMPS. Aldermen Mahoney, Cassidy, Finlan, Jackson, O'Connell. CLAIMS. Aldermen Near, Lavery, D. O'Neill, Gould, Stewart. ORDINANCES. Aldermen Finlan, Lavery, Brady, Gould, O'Connell. MISCELLANEOUS. Aldermen Conlin, Paddock, Mahoney, Jackson, Meyer. FIRE DEPARTMENT. Aldermen J. O'Neill, Clappett, Mahoney, Wilder, Bullard. STREETS AND SIDEWALKS. Aldermen McMurray, Clappett, Conlin, Meyer, Jackson. SEWERS. Aldermen Clappett, Cassidy, J. O'Neill, Fletcher, Primrose. PRINTING. Aldermen Brady, Near, D. O'Neill, Zink, Feyer. RULES. Aldermen Cassidy, Mahoney, J. O'Neill, Bertilson, Gould. MEMORIAL DAY. Aldermen Brady, McMurray, Finlan, Wilder, Feyer. UNFINISHED BUSINESS. Aldermen D. O'Neill, Near, Brady, Bertilson, Zink.

Upon motion the communication was received and the appointments confirmed. At this time Alderman McMurray presented the following resolution: Resolved, That the following named Aldermen constitute the Committee on Finance of the Common Council for the ensuing year: Aldermen D. O'Neill, Cassidy, Conlin, Fletcher, Bullard. Adopted.

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