

## ONE MAN'S OPINIONS

BY N. D. COCHRAN

Influence of Advertising. — The people of Chicago now have a splendid opportunity to see how the advertising game works. They will be able to see if the advertising placed in Chicago newspapers by the Chicago Telephone Co. will chloroform the papers into a deep sleep while the phone trust grabs the Automatic plant and establishes an absolute phone monopoly in Chicago.

Council is asked by both the phone trust and the tunnel company (which owns the Automatic) to give the city's consent to a sale of the Automatic plant to the trust.

The city is to get nothing at all in consideration for this consent. Council is asked to waive one of the considerations given by the tunnel company for its valuable franchise.

The promoters of the tunnel under Chicago's business section agreed that if it was given a franchise and didn't do certain things then the franchise and the Automatic plant would be forfeited to the city. One of the forfeiture clauses was that the plant and franchise would be forfeited to the city if the Automatic didn't have 20,000 bona-fide subscribers by a certain date—long since past.

Another was that the plant and franchise would be forfeited if the company sold or agreed to sell its plant to another phone company doing business in Chicago.

Both of these clauses have been violated. The tunnel company hasn't got 20,000 bona-fide subscribers and never did have. It has agreed to sell its outfit to the phone trust.

Now both the telephone companies ask the city's consent to a sale—which would waive the city's right to a forfeiture on account of the sale.

And there is evidently something queer about that proposed count of Automatic subscribers. Various bod-

ies of reputable citizens have demanded a fair count—a count in the open, so that everybody can know whether it is fair or crooked.

Certain councilmen appear to be opposed to an open count. And the matter has become a public issue. Now let's see what the newspapers are going to do about it.

Why is the company so persistently advertising? Is it because that advertising brings it more business? Is it legitimate commercial advertising? Or is it a direct subsidy to the newspapers to make them keep their mouths shut while franchise grabbers and public service promoters tighten their grip on Chicago and again go through the people's pockets?

Don't forget that if YOUR council consents to that sale, and the trust pays several millions for the Automatic and then junks it, the trust will have the right to increase its rates and make telephone subscribers pay interest on every dollar it pays for the Automatic.

WHY should any councilman favor that sale?

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## LETTERS TO EDITOR

### VACANT LOTS

Editor Day Book—J. Kernes says: "The only hope that remains for labor is the co-operative commonwealth."

I want to ask him if he does not think that thousands of idle men would be put to work at once if a 5 per cent tax was laid on the 400,000 vacant lots in Chicago that are now being held idle and out of use.

A 5 per cent tax on these vacant lots would be such a burden that it would be no longer profitable to hold them idle and the owners would have to throw them on the market for sale or put men to work on them.—F. Williams, 218 S. Western Ave.

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### NATURALIZATION

Editor Day Book—A reader says