

both the water and electric utility business regardless of this opposition influence.

I am now the only surviving public official of the pioneer period when most of our municipal projects, which we now enjoy, had their inception.

Improvements Proposed and Completed.

In my first year as Mayor, (1908), I submitted the following recommendations.

Enlargement of the lighting plant for an extensive supply of electricity to residential districts; a municipal hospital; new bridges; grade crossing construction; sewage disposal plant; a park system; abolition of the contract system in paving and sewer construction; unit foot assessment; publication of assessment roll; non-partisan elections and a new charter. All of these betterments have been accomplished. The credit for the completion of this program I gladly accord to my colleagues who have been elected to office and to those whom I have appointed during these years.

Consumers Increase From 150 to 17,300.

In 1908 when I was first elected Mayor, the Municipal Lighting Plant had less than 150 consumers; today the plant has 17,300 consumers. During its early period of operation the city plant was managed by the City Council. This was a period of slow rather than progressive electrical development, because Councilmen were too engrossed in legislative functions to give the plant that degree of business administration which was essential to its success. This situation brought about a demand for the creation of an appointive board to conduct the business affairs of the lighting system. It is the appointment of a high caliber type of men, experienced in large financial undertakings that has made possible the building up in recent years, without bond issues, a water and electric system now valued at \$8,000,000.

The administration of these utilities by this method has been such that compared with rates elsewhere, there is now an annual saving in low cost service to the people of this city, equal to the entire city tax levy. This fact cannot be emphasized too often.

It is not generally understood that more than \$4,000,000 of public improvements, such as pavements and sewers, built during the last twenty years, have been financed by the Board by means of loans which enabled the city to carry on construction by direct municipal supervision, rather than through private profit contract operation. In addition more than a half million dollars of cash distributions have been made to the city by the Board during the past ten years.

Competing System Purchased.

One of the most far-reaching and most advantageous transactions ever entered into by the Board of Public Utilities was the purchase of the competing Niagara Power Company's distributing system, within the city, at \$750,000, thereby adding about \$400,000 additional annual revenue to our municipal system.

I may also state that the Board under the able leadership of Alfred C. Davis, its Chairman, has proceeded without delay in the promotion of the present million dollar expansion program, in preference to a renewal of the five-year power contract with the Niagara Power Company at an approximate basis of \$600,000, as previously proposed. (Original contract was a part-purchase agreement.) The difference between the renewal contract first proposed and the present contract, negotiated by Mr. Davis, represents a gain to the city of more than \$300,000.00.

Independent Plant and Lower Rates

The policy now being carried out, not only benefits every citizen and every taxpayer, but insures for the future, complete independence

and sewage disposal. The present tax levy, exclusive of schools, is less than 5 cents daily per capita. **City Government and Industries.** During the past thirty years there have been times when our industries expanded and prospered and there have been times when industries failed and went out of business. But I have never contended that the City Government had any responsibility for either condition, because these are matters of national not local control. The only effective way of bringing industry to the city is by bringing about a further reduction in gas and power rates.

The Official Personnel.

During the many years of executive responsibility I point with pride to the high caliber of citizens who have consented to accept appointment to important administrative positions. It is a source of satisfaction to know that, although the extent of our public improvements have amounted to many millions of dollars, no graft conspiracy has ever shadowed any of these undertakings. Out of several hundred officials who have been in public service during this long period in the city's history only two have seriously erred; they were removed from office.

The most trying task in all my public experiences was the "Chairmanship" of the Local Draft Board during the tragic days of the World War.

Recommendations Awaiting Action.

There are a number of recommendations which I have made in past years, but which still await favorable action by your honorable body. Among these are the following:

First, a municipal milk plant and distribution system for which the people have voted.

Second, legislation permitting the city to constitute itself into a county, within its own boundaries, and perform with its own governmental machinery all the functions for which it now pays county taxes.

Third, a charter amendment requiring candidates for Mayor and Councilmen to be voted for independent of any group designation on the ballot and providing for proportional representation in order that civic as well as political minority interests may be given representation.

Fourth, the consolidation of Police and Fire Departments and the creation of one single Public Safety branch so that there may be cooperation in crime and fire prevention. Modern equipment makes such a plan entirely feasible.

Fifth, the completion of the proposed municipal gas system, which, even in its initial stages of discussion and favorable consideration by the Council, has already resulted in an annual saving of \$82,000 to at least a part of the gas consumers, as a result of reduced rates granted by the Gas Company after a municipal plan had been recommended.

The local law skillfully and carefully framed by Mr. Fowler, the Corporation Counsel, and approved by the people, confers upon your honorable body all the power necessary to establish a municipal plant regardless of what the opposition may say or do to obstruct its final consummation. A municipal gas rate below 50 cents per m. c. f. means a smokeless city.

Gratitude for Loyal Support.

To those citizens, in and out of office, who have loyally supported my efforts and policies in all these turbulent years I shall feel indebted to the end of my days.

The Ideal City

My philosophy as to the ideal city may be expressed in the words of the poet:

"What makes a city great and strong
Not wealth's display or tilted fame,
Not fashion's loudly boasted claim