

Carlson Re-elected by all Parties

In 1895 Carlson was re-elected to the Council having the endorsement of all political parties. In a few months he was appointed a member of the Board of Public Works. In the meantime Carlson continued the advocacy of a water plant, since the private Company refused to sell its plant to the city. But recognizing that public sentiment was growing rapidly in favor of a new \$300,000 plant, the Water Co., as a result of Carlson's activities, finally offered to sell its plant for \$600,000. A majority of the City Officials approved this proposal.

Proposes Better Utility Control

In the meantime the City Council neglected to increase the capacity of the lighting plant sufficiently to meet the demands of the people for current, thus unwittingly playing into the hands of the private company. This led Mr. Carlson to propose that the control of the municipal plant be transferred from the Councilmen to an appointive Commission to be composed of persons experienced in business affairs and having technical knowledge in the mechanism of electrical machinery.

Carlson's First Election as Mayor

In 1908 Sam Carlson was elected mayor on a platform calling for Utility Extensions, Hospital, Public Market, Parks, Playgrounds, Bridges, Low cost Paving, R. R. Grade Crossing Elimination, Non-Partisan Elections and a new Charter. These proposals were all carried out.

In order to give minorities representation, Mayor Carlson appointed all three of his mayoralty opponents to membership in his Cabinet.

The Gokey Plant

In 1908 Mayor Carlson obtained an option from the Gokey Co. to buy its electric plant for \$90,000 with its valuable Franchise rights. A referendum was called. But there were certain corporate interests who were opposed to the elimination of competition in utility service in the city except under a private monopoly control. A large force of politicians were arrayed against the proposition, resorting to misrepresentation and other deceptive methods. The result was that the proposal was defeated by a small margin. The next day it was reported that the Street Railway Co. had purchased the system and would make extensive improvements of the same.

Expansion of City Plant

Mayor Carlson nevertheless determined to proceed with the equipment of the municipal system with larger units having greater capacity and a lower cost per K.W.H.

Non-Political High Class Appointees

In the important task of expanding the electric and water plants in order to cope with the stiff competition put up by the private power utility corporation, Mayor Carlson called to his assistance such capable industrialists as the late Frank O. Anderson, Karl Peterson, Alfred C. Davis and such outstanding engineers as Lyman Hapgood, Melvin O. Swanson and Louis T. Klauder. These men were non-political appointees as all other appointees were.

In 1923 the scope and powers of the Utility Board was broadened by a new charter framed by a Committee headed by the late Frederick P. Hall and legally guided by Ernest Cawcroft.

Jamestown Gains National Distinction

The \$15,000,000 investment by Jamestown in Public Utilities has been accomplished without any tax levies. And in years when surplus funds were not needed for expansion purposes, a dividend of 10% to 20% was paid to consumers. There has also been a voluntary tax contribution by the board to the city amounting to an annual sum three times greater than the city would have received if these utilities had been

privately owned. The utility rate ranges from 3¼c down to one cent per K.W.H. The average householder gets all ordinary electric service for about \$2.50 per month. And a residential room can be electrically heated for about 2 cents per hour.

Considering dividends that have been paid and liberal tax contributions the actual cost of electric service in Jamestown has been the lowest of any city in America where steam power has been used. And these utilities show a cash surplus of \$4,000,000.00

These remarkable gains to this community, Mr. Carlson tells us, were achieved in spite of the fact that municipal management constantly encountered for years the obstructive and harassing opposition tactics of a competitive corporation backed by an immense aggregation of capital.

Niagara Co. Opposed City Competition

In 1926 when the Board was making plans for another needed extension with its accumulated cash surplus of \$500,000 Mr. Corey, then President of the Niagara Co., offered to supply power at the same cost at which it could be produced here, on condition that we make no further extensions to our municipal plant. This proposition was rejected by the Board of Public Utilities on the ground that the acceptance of any such proposition by the city would make the municipal plant obsolete in a short time and give the Niagara Co. a monopoly of electrical supply in this city.

Niagara Co. Sells to City

In the next election, 1927, Mayor Carlson was defeated but two years later, as a result of an aroused public sentiment, he was again elected and shortly thereafter the Niagara Company concluded to sell its \$1,000,000 appraised distribution system including its franchise for \$750,000. The increased revenue which the city derived by this transaction enabled it to pay for this system out of profits in less than four years. The Niagara Company's annual revenue in this city at that time was about \$400,000.

\$25,000,000.00 Gain Under Municipal Operation

When Sam Carlson became Mayor, Jan. 1, 1908, the municipal electric plant was valued at \$136,000. When he retired after his 26 years tenure as Mayor in 1938 the municipal electric system was valued at \$7,500,000. The Water plant had been completely revamped from an obsolete \$600,000 system in 1908 to an up-to-date system in 1938 valued at \$2,500,000. Consumers of electricity had increased from 150 in 1908 to 16,000 in 1938. Today as a result of policies adopted under the Carlson administration by which bonds were redeemed in annual installments and liberal contributions made to the city from the Utility Board, we have a debt free city and a daily per capita cost of government that hardly exceeds six cents. Yet in every election there was arrayed against Mayor Carlson powerful political reactionary influences seeking his defeat because they wanted a mayor who was less aggressive regarding utilities than Carlson was. But he won out nevertheless in 12 out of 14 elections.

Mr. Carlson asserts that the city plant has been paid for out of profits and not by taxation, and the cost of service to consumers has been on the average about 50% less than paid in most cities under private ownership. As a result the actual gain to this community is about Twentyfive Million Dollars. And while every thing has gone up in price, Jamestown rates for light and water have thus far remained low. Jamestown is getting artesian well water at 1 cent per barrel while most cities pay twice that much for lake and river water.

During the recent world war Mr. Carlson urged that efforts be made to secure funds from the Federal Government to build a new electric plant to connect with the present plant as some other cities had done, but the majority sentiment seemed to favor postponing any such project until the end of the war. Later it was suggested by some, that a