

contract be made with the Niagara Co. to buy power instead of building a new plant here. However Mr. Carlson's resolution to proceed with the proposed expansion program was finally adopted July 16, 1946 and is now under way.

A Justifiable Filibuster

In 1916 a suspicion aroused among citizens that certain politically minded Councilmen and certain contractors were conspiring to bring about the repeal of the low cost paving and sewer construction plan by direct municipal supervision which at that time was saving the taxpayers about 25% in the cost of such work.

A Citizens Committee announced that it intended to summon certain Councilmen and contractors in a 'John Doe' proceeding, a majority of the Councilmen called a special meeting for the purpose of recalling the committee and then adjourned to within a few hours before Court proceedings were to begin. It was then that the Mayor presented his veto and took the floor at the Council meeting in order to stop action by the Council to override the veto to which he supplemented the charter.

He began to read slowly from lengthy passages of the City Charter touching on the functions of the City Government and in spite of the protests of some of the Councilmen who demanded a roll call on their resolution, the mayor continued to read until the Committee which was then securing sworn evidence of collusion between contractors and Councilmen, had obtained the evidence from which a basis for an exposé could be made in a report to the City Council and the public. The result of that report was that no repeal of the Municipal construction plan has ever been attempted to this day.

An Unrivaled Record

Samuel A. Carlson (born in Jamestown, 1868) beginning his 50 year career in 1893 was

- 2 times elected Councilman.
- 4 times appointed Commissioner of Public Works.
- 12 times elected Mayor.
- 2 times elected President of Conference of New York State Mayors.
- 4 times appointed Member of Board of Public Utilities.
- 4 times endorsed by the voters of Jamestown as candidate for Congress.

And in 1933 he was elected chairman of a Commission composed of Municipal Engineers, Professors and Civic Leaders selected by The Carl Schurz Foundation to investigate City Government in Europe.

During this long record Mr. Carlson met only two defeats, one in 1927 when he was defeated for mayor by Ex-Councilman Lars A. Larson mainly because the city Assessment Roll had been uniformly increased by order of the State Tax Commission which the mayor had no power to veto and which made no increase on the average tax bill.

In 1933 he was defeated by ex-Councilman Leon F. Roberts who promised to secure more public utility profits for use by the City Council while Mr. Carlson contended that such surplus profits was needed for expansion of the plant. Mayor Carlson however was re-elected at each election following his defeat.

Make Golden Rule a Reality

Mayor Carlson has always maintained an attitude of independence in thought and action. He has stood for free enterprise in the field of open competition but whenever such necessities as water, light and heat service have been monopolized for purposes of exploitation he has advocated City control.

He has also favored a municipal central sanitary milk distribution system.

He believes that the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount means the practice of the Golden Rule in all walks of life.

He has long advocated an election system which would make it less difficult for civic minded citizens of scholarly qualifications to be elected to public office. He has stood for majority control with minority representation.

He holds with the late Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes that freedom of speech under the constitution means freedom not only for those with whom we agree but also for those whose doctrines we abhor.

Mr. Carlson believes in combating radicalism and fallacious theories with the power of truth and not by persecution and other undemocratic methods.

He wants full compliance with the spirit and intent of our Bill of Rights.

COMMENTS

Charles A. Beard, historian, writes to Mayor Carlson: "Your Autobiography is a living document for the history of popular government."

Henry Goddard Leach, noted publisher and lecturer said: "No American since the good Swedes landed on the Delaware has better interpreted the high ideals and efficient practice of Swedish Administration than Samuel A. Carlson has done in Jamestown."

Justice Jackson: At the dinner given by citizens Jan. 16, 1938 to Mr. Carlson on the occasion of the termination of his career as mayor, Robert H. Jackson, now U. S. Supreme Court justice, said among other things: "I am glad to make this trip here tonight to publicly acknowledge the debt that I owe Samuel A. Carlson. He, a republican, appointed me to my first public office, although I was a democrat. The thing that I see in Mayor Carlson that has enabled him to keep his leadership during this long period is not integrity alone, most people have that. The distinguishing thing about Sam Carlson has been a certain vision and basic understanding of people.

"The result of this vision was that no group ever was able to surround Sam Carlson. No little coterie ever could overwhelm him. He could think his way through them and around them.

"Whatever may have been said about the wisdom of his financial policies, or the merits of particular projects, this community has never stood for one moment in doubt that Sam Carlson was striving for a good life for this city, for an abundant life—if you will, for a wholesome life, and for free life where men and women might develop without political or economic or social suppression or oppression."

Here is what the Jamestown Journal said Feb. 21, 1894 concerning Mr. Carlson when most of our public improvements were in the controversial stage:

"The man who worked in and out of season, to whom a large share of the credit is due, is Samuel A. Carlson. His sledge hammer arguments fell in all places at the right time and no one seemed to be able to stand against them. He was armed with an array of facts and figures and so well grounded in his position that it was impossible to shake him."

Post-Journal, Editorial, May 1, 1943: Down through this long span of years, Sam Carlson has made a contribution to the life of Jamestown which entitles him to the deep respect of all our people, regardless of differences in community politics and policies. No one can question the fact that at all times he has sought with intense sincerity and downright honesty of purpose to serve his native town to the utmost of his ability, and that he has succeeded in accomplishing a great deal of lasting value is true beyond the shadow of doubt. In certain phases of city government he has pioneered movements which have eventually become recognized as of vital significance in local history. Especially is everlasting credit due him for his part in the establishment and the development of the city electric light and water systems, which will always remain a monument to his civic leadership.