

Economical Living.

The household economics committee of the Federation of Women's Clubs is reported to have mapped out a plan for economical living. By elaborate estimates they show how a young man and his wife can live comfortably on \$100 a month. This plan would be ever so much more useful if it were supplemented with one for getting the \$100 a month. When it is considered that only exceptional employes command more than \$20 a week, plans for living on \$100 a month are of limited value.

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The Negro Vote.

Most bitterly does the New York Age, Mr. Fortune's paper, complain of what it regards as the apostasy of Senator Foraker. Among all its surprises of a quarter of a century it heads the list with this Ohio senator's attitude toward the question of forbidding railroad discriminations against Negro passengers. He practically admitted, says the Age, the right of a State to authorize this discrimination and disclaimed any design to interfere. Not only did Senator Foraker apostasize, but not a single friend of the American Negro appeared in the Senate. After this not very original discovery The Age exclaims that the race it represents, although numbering 10,000,000 American citizens—about an eighth of the total population of the Republic—is without one representative in Congress. All this is regarded by the Age as "one of the most remarkable and significant facts in the history of the Federal Republic." Significant it is, indeed; but not remarkable. The reverse of this situation would be remarkable under the circumstances. Why should either party send Negroes to Congress. The Democratic party doesn't want to, and the Republican party doesn't have to so long as it can get the Negro vote on the strength of mere party traditions. When Negro leaders learn how to utilize the fact that the Democratic party (at the North at any rate) would be glad to get the Negro vote, and that the Republican party would be aghast at losing it, they will no longer have reason to complain of political neglect.

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MUNICIPAL OWNERSHIP IN GREAT BRITAIN.

From time to time the beneficiaries of private monopoly favor the American public with reports by "experts" regarding municipal ownership and operation in Europe. Great Britain has usually

been the place for their researches, and, of course, the reports are always discouraging. The latest of these experts is Mr. Everett W. Burdett, a Boston lawyer, who in "The Journal of Political Economy" for May, published by the faculty of political economy at the University of Chicago, tells us a great many things indicating that municipal ownership has in general proven a failure in Great Britain, from which he infers that it would be certain to prove a failure in this country.

It is to the credit of Mr. Burdett that he frankly states in whose interest he went to England last summer to study the question. In doing so he discloses his reason for saying so little about successes and so much about failures. At the beginning of his article he insists upon the inviolability of private property, telling us all that "we must in our own interest, as well as that of the body politic, try to enlighten and educate the honest and intelligent portion of our citizens." "*In our own interest*" implies a great deal; and when reading his report it is well to always keep those words in mind. Mr. Burdett evidently did when writing it.

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The immediate cause of Mr. Burdett's going to England to find out for himself if there were no drawbacks in municipal ownership which could conveniently be used to head off superficial readers of his report from continuing to listen to the advocates of municipal ownership, seems to have been "the great socialistic agitation that is upon us," and the fact, perceived by him, that there is "largely a spirit of destructiveness abroad in the land." He is evidently frightened by the enormous increase of the Socialist vote in the latest Presidential elections; although, it may be safe to assume that Mr. Burdett and the interests he represents are not so much afraid of party socialism as of a true civic awakening, and a true education of the masses of the voters.

The inquiry begins with the specific question of whether or no municipal ownership in Great Britain has been successful. In only one particular does Mr. Burdett admit success, and even here only partly. He admits that the municipalities have furnished equally good service with private corporations for the same or a trifle lower price. But in all other respects there have not been the expected results, and the measure of success, he says, is due only to such conditions as could not be duplicated in the United States. Thus we are asked to assume that municipal ownership in this country would inevitably prove a complete fail-

ure in all respects, and we must conclude with Mr. Burdett that the municipality should mingle in no affairs "other than those which are clearly within the limitations of ordinary municipal governmental functions."

Right here is just where the trouble begins. For although Mr. Burdett may not conceive of municipal governmental functions outside of street-cleaning, asphaltting, and the like, others believe that gas, electricity, and street railway systems are "clearly within the sphere of ordinary municipal governmental functions." Mr. Burdett fails therefore to be convincing in this particular, and we follow him further.

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He dwells largely upon the detrimental effects of municipal ownership in Great Britain. In the first place, he claims, it has hampered and restricted industry, especially checking the development of electrical enterprises. This he proves by completely contrasting the greater electric traction mileage, etc., of this country with that of Great Britain. But if this be good proof, we must conclude that steam railroads are state or municipally owned in Great Britain because there is not less than ten times the mileage of railroads in this country. Yet all steam railroads in Great Britain are owned by private companies, and anyone having traveled in England knows that the private companies do not show such an enormous amount of enterprise, if one compares the accommodations with those offered either in the United States or on the European continent.

There is no doubt of the backwardness of England in industrial matters; but that is equally true of private and of public enterprises and is no valid reason for condemning municipal ownership. The English are conservative by nature, and do not readily adopt new industrial improvements. It would be unreasonable to expect that the municipalities would in this particular take the lead, if private enterprises are not progressive enough to make use of new inventions and improvements. It is unfair to blame municipal ownership for consequences of the inborn conservative nature of the nation.

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Finally Mr. Burdett tells us that political conditions in Great Britain are different from those of this country, and that we could not expect, with our local governments, to obtain even as successful results as Great Britain's, small as these are. That England has a higher grade of city officials, we do not for a minute doubt. But did it ever oc-

cur to Mr. Burdett to inquire into the causes? Is it not chiefly on account of the absence of the corrupting influences for which Mr. Burdett's article is a plea? Could not we also elect a high grade of officials if we were not the victims of a machine rule created by the very public utility corporations which we are requested to nourish? British representatives of the people guard their honor with jealousy; but so, Mr. Burdett, do American representatives—of the people. Representatives of private corporations, however, are not quite so jealous of their honor. They are perfectly willing to trade it for gold. Let us rid ourselves of these corporations, and we shall also rid ourselves of their representatives. Then we can hope for a class of public officials of an equally high grade with that of British municipalities. Then we shall find that even among us, there are true, honest men, proud of public confidence, who will guard their honor even as jealously as any city official in Great Britain.

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Of the mere details furnished by Mr. Burdett in order to prove the failure of British municipal ownership, we shall consider the more important ones.

In the first place he compares the small number of consumers of municipally owned gas and electricity in England, with the number using the same commodities in this country when furnished by private companies. Here, in fact, we have to deal with differing conditions. But the difference is in favor of the United States, on account of the more general prosperity of its population; the small number of consumers in England only indicates the greater inability of the British masses to afford these comforts. As Mr. Burdett admits that municipal ownership has been measurably successful in Great Britain as regards service and fair prices, it may be inferred that it would be still more successful here, where a greater volume of business would decrease the actual expense per consumer.

The enlargement of public functions is another special objection raised by Mr. Burdett. It is true that governmental functions would be more complex; but it is equally true that governmental functions become more complex when a village of a few hundred inhabitants grows in half a century to a city of half a million inhabitants. As there is no such objection to the growth of the city, there ought to be none such to the city's assuming the new governmental functions that result.

As the objections by Mr. Burdett come in the rotation to which we have already become accus-

tomed, we next find that the great indebtedness which the English municipalities have incurred should not be duplicated in the United States. But if the municipality contracts debt, does it not also make an investment which will yield yearly returns? And if all public ownership functions can be made self-supporting, as they plainly can under proper management, how can municipal ownership increase the taxes paid by the taxpayers?

It is queer, the conflicting statements we hear about the paying qualities of municipal ownership in Great Britain. While official statistics usually indicate that the public ownership of public utilities is an important source of municipal revenue in many English cities, Mr. Burdett's article seems to indicate that municipal ownership there has in general been a losing investment. However, we must not forget what Mr. Burdett said about "our own interest" at the beginning of his article.

Mr. Burdett's points are many, and here is the next. He says:

Without private capital and skill new industrial enterprises do not receive that impetus and development which they otherwise would. Private initiative is always necessary. Public officials do not invent, exploit or develop new things, but leave the field of discovery, initiation and development to private persons actuated by the hope of large rewards.

Even if we admit this to be true, to what extent does it influence the success of municipal ownership? Consider for instance the street railways. The great field for development there is the electric generators, motors and cars. None of these would be manufactured or designed by any public officials. Their building would be left to competitive business, and as the municipalities would insist upon buying only the best, just as private companies now do, the inventions and developments would suffer no harm from the incompetence of public officials in designing electrical machinery. If Mr. Burdett believes that the officials of our street car companies are as a rule inventors, and aid in the development of the machines used in their business, he is not as well informed upon technological questions as upon legal. For it is mostly the case that the real inventor is a man working in obscurity in a far off manufacturing establishment; and to all familiar with mechanical industries it is a well-known fact that the patent is not even always secured in the name of the inventor, but in the name of his employer. Thus the objection to officials who do not invent is very distant from the actual question. We who believe in letting the municipality assume its proper

functions, though we do not expect our officials to be inventors, shall nevertheless hopefully expect the municipality to succeed.

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In conclusion let us meet a few statements, which, although undoubtedly true, are misleading. We are told that Glasgow has less than one-third of the mileage of street railways that the company which serves the City of Boston has, although Glasgow has a greater population than Boston. Even if we here disregard the fact that the company serving Boston runs its tracks far beyond the limits of the city, and thus serves a population far greater than that of Boston alone, even if we disregard this, an analysis of the true state of affairs will show us that Mr. Burdett is making a comparison that cannot be made on the basis of population alone. The length of the necessary track depends largely upon the area of the cities, a fact which Mr. Burdett seems to disregard altogether. Glasgow covers an area of less than half that of Boston, and in an area of only one-quarter of that of Boston it has as many inhabitants as Boston. This makes it appear very natural that Glasgow should not have as great a mileage of street railways as has Boston. It does not discredit its municipal ownership in the least.

We are also informed that the municipal plants do not furnish service at any considerably lower price than do private companies. This we do not doubt. In a country where municipal ownership is so well recognized a policy as in Great Britain, the private companies are well aware of the consequences should they try to extort higher prices than are usually charged by the municipal plants. In this connection it may be of interest to know that the price for gas in England varies from 51 to 55 cents per 1,000 cubic feet, according to one statement in Mr. Burdett's article.

It would of course be unfair to deny that in instances poor business management of municipal affairs may result in unexpected financial outcome. But do not we Americans boast that we are the best business men in the world? Should we not then be able to conduct our public business so that what under good management in Great Britain proves a success, would under excellent management by us, prove a greater success?

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I have endeavored in the foregoing to disprove the importance of the objections of Mr. Burdett to municipal ownership. I do not doubt his statements in so far as they pertain to statistics. But he went to England evidently with the intention

of finding the points wherein municipal ownership had failed, and he has blindfolded himself to the instances wherein it has been successful. If we are to believe Mr. Burdett, who went there thus handicapped, we are equally under obligation to believe the men who return from there having seen only the success, and been blind to the failures. But there is one great difference. Mr. Burdett admits that he went "in our own interest" while others who have gone there have gone in the interest of the people, and with unselfish enthusiasm for a great cause. This one great difference alone should be enough to incline the fair-minded to put greater faith in the reports of those who have proclaimed success, than in him who reports failure.

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NEWS NARRATIVE

To use the reference figures of this Department for obtaining continuous news narratives:

Observe the reference figures in any article; turn back to the page they indicate and find there the next preceding article on the same subject; observe the reference figures in that article, and turn back as before; continue until you come to the earliest article on the subject; then retrace your course through the indicated pages, reading each article in chronological order, and you will have a continuous news narrative of the subject from its historical beginnings to date.

Week ending Wednesday, June 6.

Official Exposure of the Chicago Packing Houses.

President Roosevelt has sent to Congress the first part of the report on conditions in the Chicago packing houses (p. 202), made under his direction. In his letter of transmittal, dated the 4th, Mr. Roosevelt describes the report as "of a preliminary nature," submitted at this time "because it shows the urgent need of immediate action by the Congress in the direction of providing a drastic and thoroughgoing inspection by the Federal government of all stockyards and packinghouses and of their products, so far as the latter enter into inter-state or foreign commerce." He adds that "the conditions shown by even this short inspection to exist in the Chicago stockyards are revolting," and that "it is imperative necessary in the interest of health and of decency that they should be radically changed." He therefore recommends "the immediate enactment into law of provisions which will enable the Department of Agriculture adequately to inspect the meat and meat-food products entering into inter-state commerce and to supervise the methods of preparing the same, and to prescribe the sanitary conditions under which the work shall be performed."

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Eliminating the details, which are numerous and for the most part revolting, the report thus transmitted to Congress is as follows:

We investigated the conditions in the principal establishments in Chicago engaged in the slaughter of cattle, sheep and hogs, and in the preparation of dressed meat and meat-food products. Two and a half weeks

were spent in the investigation in Chicago, and during this time we went through the principal packing houses in the stockyards district, together with a few of the smaller ones. . . . We have made no statement as a fact in the report here presented that was not verified by our personal examination. Certain matters, which we were unable to verify while in Chicago, are still under investigation. The following is therefore submitted as a partial report touching upon those practices and conditions which we found most common and not confined to a single house or class of houses. A more detailed report would contain many specific instances of defects found in particular houses. . . . Abominable as the above-named conditions are, the one that affects most directly and seriously the cleanliness of the food products is An absence of cleanliness was also found everywhere in the handling of meat being prepared for the various meat-food products. . . . The radical defect in the present system of inspection is that it does not go far enough. It is confined at present by law to passing on the healthfulness of animals at the time of killing; but the meat that is used in sausage and in the various forms of canned products and other prepared meat foods goes through many processes, in all of which there is possibility of contamination through insanitary handling, and further danger through the use of chemicals. During all these processes of preparation there is no government inspection and no assurance whatever that these meat-food products are wholesome and fit for food—despite the fact that all these products, when sent out, bear a label stating they have been passed upon by government inspectors. As to the investigation of the alleged use of dyes, preservatives, or chemicals in the preparation of cured meats, sausages and canned goods, we are not yet prepared to report. We did look into the matter of sanitary handling of the meats being prepared for the various food products. The results of our observations have already been partly given. Other instances of how products may be made up and still secure the stamp of government inspection are here given. . . . The lack of consideration for the health and comfort of the laborers in the Chicago stockyards seems to be a direct consequence of the system of administration that prevails. The various departments are under the direct control of superintendents, who claim to use full authority in dealing with the employes and who seem to ignore all considerations except those of the account book. Under this system proper care of the products and of the health and comfort of the employes is impossible, and the consumer suffers in consequence. The insanitary conditions in which the laborers work and the feverish pace which they are forced to maintain inevitably affect their health. Physicians state that tuberculosis is disproportionately prevalent in the stockyards, and the victims of this disease expectorate on the spongy wooden floors of the dark workrooms, from which falling scraps of meat are later shoveled up to be converted into food products. Even the ordinary decencies of life are completely ignored. . . . The neglect on the part of their employers to recognize or provide for the requirements of cleanliness and decency of the employes must have an influence that cannot be exaggerated in lowering the morals and discouraging cleanliness on the part of the workers employed in the packing houses. The whole situation as we saw it in these huge establishments tends necessarily and inevitably to the moral degradation of thousands of workers, who are forced to spend their working hours under conditions that are entirely unnecessary and unpardonable, and which are a constant menace, not only to their own health, but to the health of those who use the food products prepared by them. . . .

The report concludes with extended recommendations for Federal inspection and labeling of products for interstate and foreign commerce.

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The Packers' Defense.

Replying to the President's message and the Neill-Reynolds report, Mr. J. Ogdan Armour called from Paris on the 4th an interview to the Chicago Tribune in which he said:

It is preposterous to believe for a moment that the great Chicago firms with hundreds of millions of dollars