
MUNICIPAL EXPANSION.

IT seems to me that the promise of municipal expansion just now is in the direction of common ownership of public utilities, and of home rule. Even the most superficial thinkers freely admit that "something is wrong." In all our cities too many men, and women too, are "up against" a stone wall; they have reached a point where they can go no further. Their labor, which is the only thing they have to sell, is a drug on the market, which none will buy. They must buy the necessaries of life from a monopolized market. As they cannot sell their labor, and their chattels are in the possession of the pawnbroker and the mortgage-loan shark, they are face to face with the fact that their liberty is a mockery; it is not even the liberty to beg, for that is a crime; it is only liberty to exist on a crust, if it can be found, and to live the life of a dog.

Municipal ownership will gradually give these disinherited millions a larger share in the commonwealth. The shorter work-day that is generally observed by the municipalities will divide the work among a larger number of persons; the referendum and home rule will lead people, now indifferent to the suffrage, to see that they actually do have a share in making the government that rules them. More than one-quarter of all the voters in this city (over seven thousand) failed to register last fall, thus voluntarily disfranchising themselves. Why? Because the "sacred right of franchise" is sacred only in name. Men are coming to realize that the right to work is more sacred than the right to vote, is indeed anterior to every other right.

Municipal ownership will lead to public ownership of all public utilities, and public ownership will lead to common ownership, which in turn will lead us to see our common origin and our common right to the natural resources of the earth. In short, municipal ownership and home rule will lead us to see

that private ownership of public utilities is a house divided against itself; that that city is not truly rich that has a single pauper within its limits. It will teach us that we can only be truly patriotic when we study the welfare of all. It will teach us that if there is a single man within the limits of our city, denied the right to work and to enjoy the fruit of his toil in bringing out the best manhood and citizenship that is in him, every man and woman who is enjoying reasonable comfort is morally guilty of the injustice done to the man denied the right to work. It will teach the meaning of the word OUR; and not until we fully comprehend that our country, our state, our city, includes every soul within those political boundaries, can we properly appreciate our responsibility. If we are truly patriotic and love these "OURS" that I have mentioned, we will never be content until the most unfortunate babe within their limits shall have an equal chance to bring out the best possibilities of its nature, with the babe born in the most favored spot of this fair land of ours.

The people believe in this kind of doctrine; it is the doctrine of *Fair Play*. Municipal ownership and home rule lie in the direction of fair play, and in this direction we are making progress. In this way the people will regain their lost liberties.

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