



National Municipal Review, Vol. 1 (Classic Reprint)

National Municipal League



Excerpt from National Municipal Review, Vol. 1 It is unnecessary, in addressing a body like the National Municipal League, to disclaim any thought that the commission form or any form of government is in itself a panacea for municipal ills. At the same time it must be conceded that the introduction of the commission form has been accompanied by very material improvement in municipal administration in those communities where the experiment is being tried. This improvement has been most marked in the matter of finances, (which are sadly in need of attention in all American municipalities), and of certain public functions like the care and maintenance of the streets. There has also been a marked improvement in the supervision and management of municipal utilities, whether run directly by the city or by private concerns. The explanation for this lies in the fact that the responsibility is concentrated upon officials who have adequate authority to produce results, and who know that in the eye of the people they are responsible. Bureaus of municipal research speak with aptness and propriety of the necessity of a mayors eye which shall be all-seeing and far-seeing, and which shall be directed to all phases of municipal administration. Highly important though the mayors eye is, still more important has been the public eye, which has gained in strength and clarity with the growth of a sound educated public opinion in municipal affairs. In no one field has this public eye been more conspicuously developed than in the matter of municipal utilities franchises. When the League first began the agitation for a more rigid enforcement of franchise laws and demanded a more adequate supervision of them in the interests of the whole people, there was very little interest manifested. The suggestion that franchises should be granted for short terms, with increased power of supervision in the hands of the city authorities, received scant public support. Thanks to the very active agitation which has been carried on in the intervening period, the insistence on long-time franchises no longer prevails and we find corporations, civic organizations and public officials uniting for the drafting of franchise ordinances that will at one and the same time serve the ends of the public, guarantee a safe return on a reasonable valuation of the investment, and subserve the convenience of the users of the utility. While it is quite true (as the governor of Wisconsin pointed out in a recent address) that the public interest has always in the eye of the law justified regulation in behalf of the people as a whole, nevertheless the tendency for many years was to disregard the public and its interests, on the principle that it had no rights which a corporation was bound to respect. About the Publisher Forgotten Books publishes hundreds of thousands of rare and classic books. Find more at www.forgottenbooks.com This book is a reproduction of an important historical work. Forgotten Books uses state-of-the-art technology to digitally reconstruct the work, preserving the original format whilst repairing imperfections present in the aged copy. In rare cases, an imperfection in the original, such as a blemish or missing page, may be replicated in our edition. We do, however, repair the vast majority of imperfections successfully any imperfections that remain are intentionally left to preserve the state of such historical works.

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