

of way for the local transportation lines, timber or fuel supplies, mining and fishing rights, etc. Thus, for instance, in the matter of water powers, the distribution of the benefits from these affects many individual, corporate and civic interests and several departments of the Provincial Government. Owing to the physical conditions of a mountainous country divided into more or less extensive valleys, with other highly specialized climatic conditions, all the varied industries and public utilities carried on in one of these valleys are usually to a greater or less degree dependent upon the common water supply of the central stream of every such valley, be it large or small and with or without lake expansions. The mining industries which are apt sooner or later to spring up at various points in the valley, require to utilize the water power for their development. The various agricultural interests, from live stock to fruit-growing, may depend to a very considerable extent upon the common water supply for irrigation. With an influx of population and the growth of one or more civic centres there comes the need for electric light and power, alike for town and country. Similarly local transportation, when sufficiently developed, will claim a share of the power for electric tramways. The indispensable water supply of the towns and villages, as also of the larger industries which may grow up, has likewise to be considered. The common water supply of the valley, including the various tributaries which combine to produce it, if its efficient application to all the prospective services required of it is carefully planned in advance, may be quite adequate for all ordinary requirements for an indefinite time to come. But if, without a proper regard for all the essential interests to be served, the water supply is permitted to be recklessly exploited by the first interests which appear, and which may obtain prior and more or less

exclusive rights, the results are liable to be disastrous for the subsequent and much more important interests which require to depend upon it. Thus, not only in civic centres and as regards the special matters dealt with in this report is there likely to be wasteful strife between the rival interests, but inasmuch as these may be supported or at least their difficulties occasioned by different departments of the Provincial Government, these departments are more or less involved, to the general embarrassment of the Government as well as to the detriment of the country. If, however, there is provided a single body whose function it should be to regulate the privileges and safeguard the respective rights of corporations dealing with public utilities such as sanitary water, power, light, transportation, irrigation, etc., the various public and private interests as regards public service utilities may be fully harmonized by a reference to the single test of the public interest.

IRRESPONSIBLE GROUPS MAY DESTROY INTERESTS OF PUBLIC

Nothing, however, is more dangerous and misleading than the constant attempts made to identify with the public interest the merely sectional or class interests of a small but clamorous minority. Under the cry of protecting the public interest against the encroachments of large corporations or other combinations of capital, such small and irresponsible groups would destroy some of the most permanent and essential interests of the public at large. No services, whether public or private, are perfect, but as the smaller services can be safely left to free competition, under general regulations for the public safety, the discontented are able to pass from one to another in the search for something a little less objectionable than the last.

But when of necessity a service is so large, so general, so vital to the public and involves such large