

## Municipal Government in Germany.

The German conception of city government is that the city should do whatever is necessary to promote the welfare of the city and its citizens. Acting upon this principle, German cities have boldly assumed many municipal functions that in this country are held to belong to the field of private enterprise, such as municipal water works, gas plants, electric light and power plants, street railways, railroad terminals, tenement and lodging houses, slaughter houses, and markets, baths, laundries, garbage converting plants, street cleaning and sprinkling and pawn shops. German cities have been able to take on these extensive public service functions and carry them forward efficiently, economically, and honestly. It is doubtless true that municipal ownership of public utilities in itself tends to safeguard official integrity and to uplift the standard of public service, because of the well understood fact that under private ownership, private interests seeking valuable concessions already possessed have an incentive to corrupt men elected to municipal office and to control party nominations and elections to the end that men subservient to their interests shall be placed in power. But municipal ownership alone does not account for the high standard of municipal government in German cities. The German system not only successfully manages municipal public service plants, but if reports be true, it has been equally efficient in regulating the public service plants under private ownership.

The most notable feature of the German municipal government is that of the citizen committees. All the details of administration in German cities are executed under the direction of special committees, a separate committee being constituted for each important work. These committees are appointed by the city council and consist usually of one or more members of the council, the proper expert member of the executive board for the business of which the committee will have charge, and a number of private citizens, who are termed "Citizen Deputies," selected because of their special qualification to serve as associates on the committees. The entire oversight of the various branches of the city administration, including the construction of public improvements and the maintenance of parks, schools, charities and sanitary work devolves upon these committees. Service as a citizen deputy is compulsory and without compensation.

Municipal ownership is growing in the old land. There are in Great Britain 931 municipalities owning water works, 99 owning street railways, 240 owning gas works, and 181 supplying electricity.

## Public Lighting in Wisconsin.

During the last few weeks we have received from the city clerks the replies to our circular letters which were sent out for the purpose of gathering information with reference to costs of public and private lighting in the cities of the state. We desire in this connection to express our appreciation of the promptness and carefulness with which the city clerks have given us this information. Few people are in a position to appreciate the constant demand made upon our city clerks by those persons who desire information upon the various questions concerning our cities, and while it is with reluctance that we make the request, it is about the only means open for us for such information, and we hope that the results of this co-operation of the city clerks will fully compensate for the trouble which they have taken in assisting us.

About 125 letters were sent out and about ninety replies are received so that the information covers quite fully the whole state. The cities of all sizes sent in their replies. In some of the smaller cities the lighting is more primitive, consisting of oil lamp posts located at the street corners, but, on the other hand, some of the smaller villages possess a very complete system of public and private lighting. The main interest in this inquiry centres in the question of public and private lighting. Our replies show twenty-five cities possess public plants, the remainder being private, while Grand Rapids possesses a co-operative lighting system. The growth of public lighting has been marked in recent years. The public plants are as a rule confined to the smaller cities. The city council of Milwaukee has recently taken steps looking towards the construction of a public lighting plant and in other cities the agitation is quite pronounced, so that in the near future the list of public plants will doubtless be considerably increased.

From the point of view of economy, it is interesting to note whether the lighting and waterworks are operated from the same power plant. The returns show that only about twenty cities operate the two plants together. It is quite obvious that great economies may result from such operation. At least a duplication of power plant would be unnecessary. In most of our cities the pumping at night is very light and the power can thus be applied to lighting which of course in the day time is unnecessary. By this interchangeable process great economy may be secured not only in the cost of ground, building and plant itself but also in the cost of operation. Some of our cities that are fortunately located near natural water power can secure their lighting at comparatively little expense, but the great majority of our cities are not so situated and they must either purchase their power from a private company operating

this water power or else construct their own plants for the power of lighting within the city limits. These problems must be solved according to conditions and cannot be treated by hard and fast rules. In many of the cities the arc lights alone are used while in others the combination of arc, with gas and incandescent lights are found. Naturally the number of arc lights varies with the size of the cities and the degree to which they are combined with other lights. In our larger cities considerable use is made of the arc lights. According to our returns Milwaukee possesses 1,700, Oshkosh, 269, LaCrosse 219, Racine 225, Janesville 198, Kenosha 120 and Madison 149. An examination of the number of arcs in the various cities show that there is no relation existing between the number of lamps and the population. In fact some of the cities of less size have more arc lights than other cities of greater population.

There is also great variety with reference to cost of light per arc. This varies in the cities from \$85, in Chippewa Falls to \$30 in Hudson. The city of Hudson owns its own plant and doubtless its method of computing cost is somewhat different from the other plants, while on the other hand it has been in operation but a short period. There are a great many methods of fixing the rates for lighting. In some of our cities a flat rate is paid each year for each arc light while in others it is paid by the month, and in some of the cities there are all night and twelve o'clock lights so that it is extremely difficult to make any comparison or a review of the statistics which we have collected. The cost of lighting of the cities owning their own plants is materially reduced, but it should be said in this connection that the methods of computing the cost of public light is different from that of private lighting, and in many cases the material reduction of cost obtained by the public plants is due to the fact that as a rule no allowance is made for the depreciation of the plant; but it must be admitted that the community pays the bill in any case. And although the private company sets up a claim that a large part of their profits are put aside for plant depreciation, still we cannot escape the fact that this comes from the earnings of the community. A city is not compelled to use its funds in this way. Its reserve fund is the wealth of the community. Its enterprises are not designed to declare dividends. Its dividends are services well and economically done.—*The Municipality.*

Mr. Wm. Lucas, clerk of the township of Courtright, died at his home in Blackstock, on the 12th of August last aged eighty years. He had efficiently performed the duties of township clerk continuously since the year 1861. A portrait and biographical sketch of Mr. Lucas will be found on page 35 of THE WORLD for 1900.