

becomes a fixed passion, and the public purse comes to be looked upon as a pocket from which inexhaustible supplies are to be drawn.

The public authorities are approved by large sections of the community in proportion as they yield to their demands upon the public purse. Deputations wait upon the members of the municipal administrations who have charge of the finances, and demand subventions for this and that institution; for this and that monument; for this and that movement, and the like, and an administration is very unpopular which refuses to grant at least some of these demands.

2. There is also the consideration that the exercise of the compulsory powers of the municipality stultifies private initiative, and thus tends to diminish the total of production?

Under a system of complete municipal Socialism, the distribution of wealth might conceivably approach equality, but would there be an increasing quantity of goods to distribute, in the absence of spontaneous organization of production?

3. The area of indisputably advantageous municipal ownership is comparatively small, it may, indeed, perhaps be regarded as confined to the ownership of those utilities which make directly for the public health, that is to say, for those utilities which are directly hygienic in their character, such for example, as streets of adequate width and proper paving, parks, sewage, collection of rubbish, and perhaps water supply. After these services are performed, then we may regard the extension of municipal activities as coming fairly within the field of discussion, but not till then.

In England, for example, the central authority, in this case the Local Government Board, prevents the embarkation upon any scheme by a municipality which has not provided the rudimentary utilities. For cities in the