

Municipal Profits in England

We have just received from Mr. James Carter, Borough Treasurer of Preston, England, his interesting and valuable annual pamphlet of statistics of "Rates Levied in various Towns" in England, which now appears for the 27th time. We have expressed our admiration for this booklet annually as it appears, and cordially repeat our appreciation of its great value from many points of view.

Although, as usual, Mr. Carter states that the Statement is "not intended to demonstrate the desirability or otherwise of Municipal Trading (Municipal Ownership)" yet the tables showing how municipal ownership of public utilities affects the rates, or taxes, prove an irrefutable argument against those who state that in England it is a failure, and results only in losses.

In discussing these tables it must be remembered that only Profits and Losses which affect the rates or taxes, are given; in some cases profits are carried to Reserve Funds, and are then not taken into account.

The number of towns in which rates or taxes have been reduced by receipts from municipal ownership is 82. The amounts by which the rates, or taxes have been reduced varies from one farthing ($\frac{1}{2}$ cent) in Leamington, to 1s. 10d. (45 cents) in Macclesfield, in the £. The total amount which has been applied to the reduction of the rates, or taxes, from the profits of the municipally owned public utilities reaches the enormous sum of £1,431,257 (\$7,156,285).

The table showing "Deficiencies on Municipal Undertakings" which have caused an increase in the rates or taxes, is one which could be quoted by itself with great effect by the enemies of public ownership. And by itself it would mislead very easily. It contains a list of 43 towns, but of these all but 4 appear in the profit making list. Of the 39 in only 9 do the losses exceed the profits, and in most of these the loss is on waterworks. The total losses are £364,559 (\$1,822,795) of which £122,882 (\$614,410), were for waterworks—an acknowledged necessity, whether profitable or the reverse; and a large sum in Preston and Bristol was for Harbour Improvements; so that the net amount of loss was only £241,677 (\$1,208,385).

Deducting these losses from the profits, the net profits of municipal ownership, applied to the reduction of rates or taxes, stands at the very respectable sum of £1,189,580, or \$5,947,400.

This ought to convince anyone that municipal ownership, when properly managed, can be made to pay. But the opponents will certainly use their old arguments, and say that the figures are cooked up to produce these results, and that it is impossible for any public utility, owned by the public, to produce profits.

The variation of the rates in various towns is remarkable, extending from 4s. 8d. (\$1.16) in Oxford to 10s. 8d. (\$2.66) in Norwich.

Charges for Water range from 7d. (14 cents) in King's Lynn to 2s. 4d. (58 cents) in Lincoln.

Gas, per 1,000 feet, runs from 1s. 1d. (27 cents) in Widnes to 2s. 6d. (87 cents) in King's Lynn.

Electricity for domestic lighting varies from 2 3-4d. ($5\frac{1}{2}$ cents) in Bury to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. (13 cents) in Bournemouth.

Public Health Association

The success of the First Congress of the Canadian Public Health Association held in Montreal last month must have been most gratifying to Dr. Starkey, the President, who founded it, and to those who helped him to such a marked success. H. R. H. the Governor General not only accepted the position of Patron, but attended the inaugural meeting, accompanied by T. R. H. the Duchess of Connaught and the Princess Patricia. Further, the Governor-General delivered an address which was full of practical and welcome information, and thus showed his genuine interest in helping forward a movement which means so much for the betterment of Canadian Citizens both now and in the future. At the inaugural meeting Hon. R. L. Borden expressed his practical sympathy and promised that as Premier, he would see that the Federal Government aided in a broader and larger way the cause of Public Health. Hon. M. Burrell, Minister of Agriculture, also promised the active sympathy of his Department in which the subject is at present included. Premier Gouin fell into line with the Federal Ministers for the Province of Quebec. So that the inaugural meeting was not only a brilliant social event but was the occasion of Governmental utterances which were very encouraging.

We shall, from time to time, use such of the papers as our very crowded space will permit. Meantime it can only be said that the papers were of a very high order, the writers representing the foremost men in different branches of Public Health all over the Dominion, including Medical Health Officers, Medical Men and Ladies, City Engineers, Military Men and Social Workers. McGill University generously gave rooms in the new Medical Building. Prof. Starkey retires from the Presidency leaving the association well organized and with all the glory of a successful beginning, and is succeeded by Dr. Hodgetts, Medical Adviser to the Commission on Conservation, whose enthusiasm for the "Conservation of Canadian Citizens" (especially children) makes him worthy of the Presidency. The Association will certainly be an influence for good in improving conditions of health all over Canada.

An Existing Board of Control

Reference was made last month to the feeling in the City of Sherbrooke, Que., in favour of a Board of Control or Commission form of Government. It is interesting to know that Sherbrooke already has what is called a "Board of Control," which is, however, entirely different from the bodies with the same name in Toronto, Montreal, etc.

By 8 Edward VII., Chap. 87, the "water department, and light, heat and power departments" are separated, and the Council empowered to establish a "Board of Control" for "the administration of these two departments." The Board is to consist of the Mayor and four Aldermen (though this is made doubtful by a later clause); they are appointed for one year; but are to receive no salary. The Council, by a majority vote, may vary or upset their decisions, which can also remove any member of the Board except the Mayor, and has power to order the members to be elected by the voters.