

New Mayor Pledges Nonpolitical Rule

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The administration will not be so favorably considered.
We can all afford to be courteous and civil to the people, whose servants we are, and we will best win their favor by doing whatever we are called to do in a workmanlike manner.

Contract Government to Go

A much-discussed reform in administration politics is the subject of contracts in Philadelphia. The intent of the law as to contracts in all departments is clear. The interests of the city are to be safeguarded against unfair contracts and against self-interest entering into contracts, against contracts controlled by politicians who unduly influence inspectors or public officials which has long aroused the ire of our citizens.

It is largely a question of putting our own house in order, of doing big things in a big way, of putting down faction and selfishness and grinding them under our heel. In the part of Philadelphia, which is not Philadelphia alone, but the lower half of New Jersey, the eastern half of Pennsylvania and the whole of the state of Delaware, we have a national, nay, an international asset. We must develop that part to the utmost of our financial ability. We must keep the channel of the Delaware deepened. We must encourage the improvement of its tributaries north, east, south and west, and we must provide here terminals that will attract and accommodate trade with the world.

The Broad Point of View

The point of view is extremely important in considering municipal problems. The narrow and restricted point of view will not do in a city like Philadelphia. We will better understand this if we get the perspective of those who have been away from Philadelphia and who have not been limited in their estimates to the particular interests served in the city's business walls and workshops.

Philadelphia is vastly bigger than any local or selfish interest. It will be made great and its influence will be widened as we improve in a national sense upon its wonderful natural advantages and its tremendous industrial output. We know that congestion is growing apace. Our streets in the 'old city proper' are crowded.

We need improved transportation facilities. We need more houses for an ever-increasing population. The necessity for broadening our conveniences and means of approach is upon us. People from outside Philadelphia are taking up their abode in Philadelphia and we must be prepared to meet them, whether workmen or capitalists, in a big way.

It is essential to the health and happiness of the community that we spread out, give more elbow space to those who desire to relieve those upon whom congestion is enforced; build up the suburbs and open up new means of communication. When we get the proper point of view we shall grow in influence, diverging toward Philadelphia, the state coming down to the city, neighboring states making this the mecca of financial, commercial and industrial life.

The Delaware Bridge

Construction of a bridge across the Delaware river connecting Pennsylvania and New Jersey at Philadelphia and Camden is another of the big projects that looms up in our contemplation of the city from the broad point of view. Such a bridge is most desirable, and work upon it should be commenced at the earliest day. The increasing traffic across the river, occasioned by the growth of our industrial enterprises on either side of Philadelphia, heightened by the growing trend of travel from Pennsylvania and points west to the seacoast of New Jersey, justifies the expectation of those who see an expansion of industry and commerce in this achievement. It develops, however, that consent of the city of Philadelphia is necessary to enable the Interstate Commission to decide upon preliminary plans.

The interest of the city in this great work is self-evident, but a large expenditure will be required for the city's participation with the state in the cost of the superstructure of the bridge and for property taken by condemnation, and as to this the attention of Council will be directed. I will bring this matter before the new legislative body at the first opportunity.

Health of the People

While on the subject of the health and happiness of the people, I would direct attention to the great importance of an early inquiry into the present water supply system of the city. It is evident we are running short and must find increased means of supplying the people with water for drinking or business purposes and to protect ourselves against fire. Any failure of the present water supply system would lead to disastrous results, particularly in the densely built-up wards. We must protect ourselves against epidemic or contagion, and early in the administration expert information and advice will be sought as to ways and means for adequately meeting this situation. Likewise in the matter of sewage disposal, special inquiry will be made at an early date. The city is short of houses to accommodate those who seek to live separately and comfortably. We must help

It will be the effort of the department of public health and of the department of public health to reach out after those who are drifting, who are helpless, who are at unrest, and by suggesting remedies or offering assistance, ameliorate conditions that have in some of the congested districts gone unheeded for too long. Encouragement and a helping hand to those who are in distress; to those like the colored brother who is sometimes troubled with problems which other men cannot understand or analyze; to the immigrants, and non-English-speaking residents who have not yet come to comprehend the spirit of America, will assist, we believe, in bringing about a better civic feeling and a happier prospect for the restlessness and the unfortunate.

respect to colored people in order that they may have a voice in the solution of the problems that affect them, and as the foreign born who, if properly encouraged, will become good citizens.

Welfare work among women and children is also contemplated. It is substantially true that one-half of the world does not know how the other half exists. We have the aged, the infirm and the helpless with us, and we will add to our own happiness and to our own good health by making them as happy and as healthy as possible. The department of welfare and the department of health will deal with housing, with unsanitary conditions, with unwholesome congestion and with other problems which have been thrust upon us by reason of the general increase of our population.

Under the head of public welfare we might also deal with the need for increased playgrounds and open-air spaces for children and adults whose living quarters are restricted. Playgrounds being regarded as a prime necessity, will be objectives to be attained by the new department. I am tempted to add under the head of public welfare the desirability of providing some substitute for the saloon in order that those who were in the habit of frequenting those now disreputable resorts may be provided with some means of entertainment that will lead them away from improper influences. This, I take it, will be another of the objectives of the new department.

Welfare Department Work

A new department in government authorized by the new city charter is the department of public welfare, which, under the department of health, will enter upon a wide field of activity as speedily as funds may be provided for the encouragement, protection and development of human life and character. Many voluntary associations, some of them inspired by the war, have been urging the formation of such a department, which now, for the first time appears as a part of the official life of the city. In the broadest sense the work is humanitarian. It cares for the child and the defective. It helps to sustain the weak and the unfortunate. The increase of those who are mentally or physically incompetent, while coincident with the general increase of population, has reached a point where men, women and children are drifting upon a sea of unhappiness and unrest, a menace to our social fabric.

It is proposed to specialize with our working people and give them adequate housing facilities. To this end we shall hasten the construction of sewers and the installation of such municipal improvements as will enable those who are ready to invest their capital in dwelling construction to proceed as rapidly as may be. The city should be abreast of the requirements of the builders, and every effort will be made to open up those facilities that speak of advancement, and to check those which are premature and spell waste.

As to Building Improvements

In the matter of street improvements it is timely to refer to a rush of street opening ordinances passed by the city in 1919. There is reason to believe that the repeal of some of these ordinances may be compatible with the public interest. The practice of opening streets and authorizing improvements for the purpose of establishing land damage claims against the city is not a creditable one, and the city solicitor will be asked closely to scrutinize every recent measure that may tend to pile up damages against the city.

Another matter to which the attention of the city solicitor will be drawn is that of mandamus. The issuance of mandamus may have legislative sanction, but the system has grown to such an extent as to endanger our financial structure. The new charter provides for a budget, the purpose of which is to compel a showing of city finances which the people can understand. The budget is to comprehend every form of receipt and expenditure. When it is complete and the people believe they have provided by taxation for the requirements of the city, along comes the mandamus by direction of some authority apart from the Mayor and Council, directing that money shall be paid for expenditures authorized without their knowledge and consent. It is not just to the taxpayer, the special attention of the new administration and may require legislative action, viz., the creation by the Legislature of employes for county offices for whom the city taxpayers must pay. Home rule for cities of the magnitude of Philadelphia is no unfair demand. It pays a large proportion of the state taxes. It yields to the commonwealth much revenue collected from special sources as in the case of corporations, automobile licenses and mercantile taxes. It is not reasonable that unnecessary employes should be thrust upon the city without its consent, especially if done for political reasons.

In conclusion, I would say that the import of the oath of office recently administered was fully understood. I did not quit the important and congenial station occupied by me at Washington without carefully weighing the consequences of success or failure in this great municipal enterprise.

I have sought out the best men available to accomplish results in the new service. I have faith that all of the directors who will be my associates will as keenly their share of the responsibility in the great work we are about to undertake, as does the Mayor.

I have asked each of them and all of their assistants to stand courageously and manfully by the task we have jointly assumed. They will be held to the same strict accountability as will their chief. Their known characters in this community and their splendid performance in every work they have undertaken justifies the belief that they will not fail to support him or to uphold to the utmost of their ability the honor and integrity of the city.

We stand four-square for the right and against the wrong. We believe in the upright, forward-looking citizen, and we stand unalterable against the crook; we care for those who build up and against those who tear down; in short, we stand for the progressive municipality and the human side of government. We are against the corrupt and the vicious.

We have too much at stake, we associates in the new government and ourselves, to willfully or negligently permit this experiment to fail. It will not if we have the support and the confidence of the people.

May our big undertaking be guided by the blessed light of reason, as it comes to us from the Most High.

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