

**"NO POLITICS BUT THE
CITY'S GOOD." HOW
SHOULD THE FRANCHISE
QUESTION BE SETTLED?**

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"No Politics But the City's Good." How Should the Franchise Question be Settled? by Allen Ripley Foote

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ALLEN RIPLEY FOOTE

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HOW SHOULD THE FRANCHISE QUESTION BE SETTLED?

A PAPER READ BY

ALLEN RIPLEY FOOTE,
OF TAKOMA PARK, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

AUTHOR OF

*A Discussion of the Economic Principles Involved in "The Issue
of Incorporated Companies Operating under Municipal
Franchise." Member of American Economic Asso-
ciation and of the American Academy
of Political and Social Science.*

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Review msp 12-8-31

CITY OF PEORIA.

MAYOR'S OFFICE.

PEORIA, ILL., Feb. 15, 1899.

JOHN WARNER, Mayor.

ALLEN R. FOOTE, Esq., Takoma Park, D. C.

Dear Sir:—A call has been issued for a State Convention of Illinois Municipalities to be held in this city, March 1 and 2, 1899.

You are undoubtedly informed as to the great public interest that has been aroused in this State by enactments relating to franchises for street railroad corporations, which the people believe to be subversive of their interests. This makes the question of proper franchises for public service corporations an issue of vital importance, and one that will inevitably receive much attention at the convention of municipalities about to be held in this city.

Knowing that you have been writing upon this subject for several years, and believing you to have studied it closely, I invite you to attend this convention, and to prepare a paper to be read before it in which you will give your views as to how this franchise question should be settled.

Kindly advise me at your earliest convenience if it will be possible for you to prepare a paper on the subject indicated, and to read it before the convention. You will recognize the necessity of having a program for the convention completed at an early date.

Yours truly,

JOHN WARNER, Mayor.

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HOW SHOULD THE FRANCHISE QUESTION
BE SETTLED?

INTRODUCTORY.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen:

The question you have requested me to answer presents the most difficult and important problem now demanding solution by the citizens of this Republic. The wisest known and ablest citizen might well shrink from the task of formulating the answer for which you ask. I certainly should hesitate to undertake it did I not feel that ten years devoted to a special study of the subject has been a fitting preparation for the responsibility I have assumed in accepting

your invitation. But once before have I felt the inspiration of a responsibility commensurate with the one I have accepted in responding to your request to give my views on this question in behalf of what I believe to be right and just; for the good of the people and the welfare of our country.

In 1861 I marched from my home in response to the call of our President, to do my duty in defending the unity and honor of our government, the rights and liberties of our people. One year afterward, standing under the folds of the flag presented to my regiment by the patriotic women of 1861, I was struck down by a Confederate's bullet. Fourteen out of sixteen of the color guard were killed or wounded within as many minutes that day. But the flag did not fall. Every man who wore the Blue did his full duty, "That a government of the people, by the people, for the people, might not perish."

I was of the men who stood behind the guns in 1861; I am of the people now. For ten years I have devoted myself to the study and discussion of the economic principles involved in the organization and control of public service industries, a subject which I find has now reached an acute development in your state. I have cultivated the acquaintance and closely studied the views of the managers of every class of public service corporations. I count among my warmest

friends the ablest advocates of the municipal ownership and operation of one or of all public service industries, and have diligently analyzed their demands. Overshadowing both of these, I have listened with acute sympathy to the voices of a great, generous, honest-hearted people, who desire only justice for themselves and who desire to be just to others.

You have called me to perform a duty. You demand of me the truth. I will declare the truth to you, as God has given me the ability to see and understand it. In doing this my words seek audience with your reason; they seek companionship with your hearts. If they satisfy your reason and your hearts that what I say is right and just my duty will be well done. The duty of and responsibility for right action will then be yours.

How should the franchise question be settled? But one answer can ring true to the sense of right and justice in the reason and heart of every citizen of this republic who is worthy of its citizenship. That answer is, "*It should be settled in the interests of all the people.*" Until it is so settled agitation must continue. God's justice is done only when man is just to man: Any law or ordinance enacted to secure a settlement of this question that is unjust to the people cannot endure. All the forces of the universe that make for the good are pledged to its destruction.