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Perpetual Grant Stirs Lake Forest

Lake Forest has developed a municipal quarrel worthy of Chicago, and which has divided the suburb's wealthy residents into two hostile camps. The cause of all the strife is the perpetual franchise granted the Chicago and Milwaukee Electric Road at the last meeting of the Lake Forest city council.

In brief, the charge of those who oppose the grant is that a perpetual franchise nowadays is a long step backward in municipal development. This is answered with the statement that the residents of Lake Forest, by referendum vote, have approved of the measure.

This franchise, which was voted for Thursday night by four of the six aldermen, promises to become a factor that will lead to sensational accusations, and perhaps to legal proceedings to have the ordinance set aside. Many of the prominent men of the city are arraying against the railroad company, and the storm is likely to break at any time, they say.

Mark Morton who lives in Lake Forest, touched the key to the universal sentiment today when he said:

"In these days of enlightenment the people of America do not farm out the rights of a municipality to a railroad company, as the Lake Forest council did. The franchise was granted to the railroad for the life of the company's charter or its assigns.

"The charter has about 43 years yet to run. At the end of that period the company can reorganize under a slightly different title, and assign the franchise obtained from Lake Forest for another 50-year period.

"This franchise thus gives to the railroad people rights that should have been reserved to the future generations of Lake Forest. The proposition is absurd."

Mr. Morton was asked if intimations of crookedness had been made.

"I am not prepared to say that the deal is crooked," he answered, "but the railroad company may have given minor favors. I don't think it would take much to influence opinion in the right place for the railroad company.

Alfred L. Baker, another prominent resident of Lake Forest, had this to say:

"I personally feel much mortified that a community like Lake Forest should take a retroactive step in the matter of granting municipal franchises.

"It is to be regretted that the political administration of Lake Forest should have realized the importance of the principle which it has sacrificed. It is almost incredible that men could be elected to office who would vote in favor of the principles of a perpetual franchise. This electric road must

have more influence with the city council than any regard it possesses for the body of Lake Forest citizens.

"The situation is so one-sided in the average person's mind that it is incredible how it happened and incredible that the community should permit it. I look upon it as a blot on our intelligence and on our moral as well as our political principles. It can be explained only by the persistent enterprise of a private corporation and the indifference of the good citizens of Lake Forest. It's a wrong which ought not to have been perpetrated, and which we should remedy unless too late."

At Lake Forest considerable talk is heard about passes alleged to have been given by the electric railroad company to various persons said to be concerned with the manipulation of political wires.

The franchise grants the company the right to lay a second track, parallel with the existing single track. The right of way involved so far as public property is concerned is only two or three blocks in the center of the town. The city however, abandons about two and one-half miles of road and receives in return equal stretch of new road from the railroad.

As compensation, Lake Forest gets two or three miles of street paving and twelve acres of land.

The Lake Forest council is made up of Aldermen John Gould, John Griffith, C. C. Pratt, Arthur Bissell, Spellman and Yore. Mr. Gould and Mr. Bissell voted against the perpetual franchise.

Speaking of the franchise today, Alderman Bissell said:

"It means simply that the council has given for all time a franchise, without any chance for a future generation to alter it. In no other enlightened community it is safe to predict, would a perpetual franchise be given under the terms of this ordinance.

David H. Jackson, mayor of Lake Forest, is said to have been in favor of the franchise.

At the office of A. C. Frost, president of Chicago and Milwaukee Electric Railroad Co., it was said Mr. Frost was too busy to be interviewed.—Chicago Post.

On the other hand and more in favor of the franchise the Lake Forester of last week says:

On the petition presented the council before the referendum vote was taken asking the council to pass the ordinance there were 350 voters' names out of a possible 540 voters. There was a majority of voters in every ward: and of the 54 business firms of the city 47 signed the petition. At the referendum election there were 362 votes cast, 284 being for and 59 against the passage of the ordinance; 17 ballots were spoiled.

There was a majority in every ward and a majority of the total number of voters in the city favoring the passage of the ordinance.

The ordinance is the best one secured by any city through which the road passes. It will not only take the railroad off over two miles of our streets on a mile of which the company already owned a perpetual franchise for two tracks and give us a better street free from car tracks, but it will improve and beautify that part of the city where the street is used by the railroad giving a wider drive with better paving.

It also gives the city a twelve acre tract of land in the south part of the city on which to erect a contagious hospital should that be deemed best. The city has long been seeking such a tract, but to the present time has been unable to secure it.

The council in its action has carried out the wishes of a large majority of the people and is to be commended for its action. The only opposition to the ordinance has come from a few people who never use the road, and do not realize the necessity for a double track system.

The matter has been thoroughly discussed at a number of open meetings of the council and was again thrown open for discussion Thursday night. Messrs. Morton, Crosby, Heyworth and W. Rumsey spoke against its passage and Mr. A. C. Frost spoke in favor of it.

A Chance for Someone

One of the merchants in Waukegan is planning the most novel stunt that was ever put into effect here with the execution of a marriage in the Waukegan Day industrial parade.

The merchant in question is a house outfitter of the progressive kind, and he is looking for a couple of young people who would be willing to get spliced before thousands of applauding people while the horses draw them along in the parade.

There would be all of the comforts of the home as far as the arrangements on the float are concerned and of course there would be a consideration.

While the merchant desires to get a couple that could be married on the float, he would be content with simply a young married couple if he could get two willing to perform the sacrifice.—Independent

Convention Dates

Saturday, August 4th.—Primary election.
Thursday, August 9th.—County conventions.
Tuesday, August 14th.—Senatorial conventions.
Thursday, August 16th.—Congressional conventions.
Tuesday, August 21st.—State convention.