

Can YOU Live as Cheaply NOW as You Could Before the War?

CERTAINLY NOT! Neither can we. So we have finally had to ask the Public Utilities Commission for rates that will yield more income. This application to the Commission has been put off and put off. We have tried to get along on the same old rates for our service that you paid away back before the war. But we simply cannot do it *any longer without letting the service slump.*

We have been very proud of our rate record. In spite of war prices, and mounting costs of every kind, we have kept the rates down. A moderate sur-charge on the electrical power rate, a slight modification of the wholesale gas rate, and a moderate increase in the heating rate have been the only increases.

All through the war and up to now, homes, offices, stores and the like have had our electric and gas service at the old rates of 1914. The power sur-charge was dropped last May. Since then *all* customers have been on the 1914 rates, except a dozen or fifteen very large users of gas in manufacturing, and our heating customers; they still pay a little more than they used to.

You know from personal experience that *nobody* can get along now on the price he received in 1914 for his labor, his services, his merchandise or his manufactured product. You have to get more income to cover your increased expenses. And *nearly everybody is getting it.*

Our situation is no different from yours except in one respect; we are *not* getting more money to meet the higher costs. But *your* food and clothing have not gone up any higher than *our* materials and labor. Just see how these costs have risen since 1914, while rates are the same as then.

Coal, an essential for an electric, gas, or any other kind of a plant, now costs nearly three times the price of 1914. Oil for gas making has also trebled in price and the quality has declined. The price of gas generator fuel has more than doubled. And so on for practically everything we buy, from paper and pencils to poles and power house equipment.

Our materials and labor costs for this year (1920) will be all of \$700,000 more than they were in 1919. That is a conservative estimate. It is based on the experience of the first four months of this year and prices are still going up. It means a 1920 increase of \$700,000 on top of a \$500,000 increase in the same items in 1919—an increase of \$1,200,000 for material and labor in two years.

No business can pay these 1920 prices for what it buys, sell its products at 1914 prices, and *stay on its feet* in healthy growth. To keep our service up to the standard and provide for the growing needs of this community, we simply *must* have the rates which the Public Utilities Commission has been asked for.

Our customers here and elsewhere, we believe, are fair-minded and are for fair play. The facts of our situation are before you. When you face them squarely, we believe you will agree that we are entitled to increased rates.

Public Service Company of Northern Illinois

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Northwest Corner

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