

Legislative History for Connecticut Act

HB/91	S.A. 352	1913
Cities & Boroughs :	334-335	2
	765-835	70
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	Total	72

Transcripts from the Joint Standing Committee Public Hearing(s) and/or Senate
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**JOINT
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HEARINGS**

**CITIES
AND
BOROUGHES
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**CONNECTICUT
GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
1913**

R. W. Smith,
Stenographer.

S T A T E O F C O N N E C T I C U T
JANUARY SESSION,
A. D., 1913.

COMMITTEE ON CITIES AND BOROUGHES.

Senate Chairman, Mr. Alton T. Miner,
House Chairman Mr. Clitus H. King,
Clerk, Mr. Herbert C. Nickerson.

March 11th, 1913

Mathews
H. B. 191 AN ACT REVISING THE CHARTERS OF THE
CITIES OF NORWALK AND SOUTH NORWALK.

MR. GOLDSMITH: There is a bill now pending before this Committee consolidating the town of Norwalk into one city. That was presented by authority of the town meeting. Afterwards, on the 26th of last month, ~~at~~ another town meeting was held, and that first action was rescinded and the selectmen were authorized to withdraw that bill, and the Representatives and Senator from the district authorized to oppose any consolidation bills. There were two, but I have no authority concerning but one, and that was the one presented by authority of the selectmen. The selectmen have sent certified copies to each of the Representatives and to your House Chairman, Mr. King. The selectmen are now here, and they wish to give notice to

this Committee that they withdraw that bill, and I would like to have the selectmen heard.

The Representative has been requested by the selectmen to comply with that vote. Of course, they have no control over the selectmen.

SENATOR MINER: Do you wish to be heard?

MR. MATHEIS: In what way, in regard to withdrawing the bill? I don't care to withdraw it.

SENATOR MINER: That ends it.

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COMMITTEE ON CITIES AND BOROUGHS

797

Mathers

H.B. 191 AN ACT REVISING THE CHARTERS OF THE CITIES OF NORWALK AND SOUTH NORWALK, and any PUBLIC ACTS OR SPECIAL ACTS AFFECTING THE EAST NORWALK FIRE DISTRICT, AND CONSOLIDATING THE TOWN, CITY, AND FIRE DISTRICTS THEREOF UNDER ONE FORM OF GOVERNMENT:

Mathers

H.B. 538 AN ACT CONSOLIDATING THE TOWN AND CITY GOVERNMENTS OF NORWALK:

April 16th, 1913.

MR. JOHN J. WALSH: I want to call the Committee's attention to the main features of this charter, not speaking upon the general question as to whether there should be consolidation or not, but upon the contents of this charter, so the Committee may gain some idea as to just what it does contain.

We have in the Town of Norwalk a town government --

MR. JOHN H. LIGHT: I represent the South Norwalk end of this contest, and I think we ought to clear the atmosphere a little at first so we may concentrate our thoughts upon the direct issue. I understand there are two bills here, one proposing the consolidation of all the Norwalks, and I understand that one of those bills is introduced by an individual citizen of the town of Norwalk, Mr. John S. Seymour, and that there is no one representing that bill, or pressing it.

JUDGE WALSH: *I* am not representing it.

JUDGE LIGHT: May it please the Committee, you also have assigned the other bill, and I don't care to direct my criticism to this other bill if it is going to be withdrawn. I understand Mr. Seymour doesn't press it.

SENATOR MINER: The other bill is H.B. 538?

JUDGE LIGHT: That is a bill also for the consolidation of all the governments we have there.

SENATOR MINER: Those are the only bills.

JUDGE LIGHT: I think there is no one in favor of that bill.

SENATOR MINER: The latter bill?

JUDGE LIGHT: Yes. I would like to have the Committee ascertain whether that be so or not.

SENATOR MINER: Do these two bills conflict,

JUDGE LIGHT: Yes: they are very different. One bill was passed upon by the town. I don't care to address my criticism to that. I understand they are both down for today, and they are both consolidation bills.

REPRESENTATIVE MATHEIS: I haven't been authorized, but if that is the sense of the Honorable John Seymour to withdraw that, and he doesn't care to appear here, I will withdraw the bill. I am the introducer of it.

JUDGE LIGHT: I thought that would clear it up considerably, and probably save time.

SENATE CHAIRMAN MINER: This bill is withdrawn?

REPRESENTATIVE MATHEIS: Yes, sir; and the bill

before us is 191.

JUDGE WALSH: Would the Committee apportion the time between us?

SENATOR MINER: I understand there are people to speak on both sides.

MR. HUBBELL: There was offered as a substitute for 191 a division bill, and I have here, if Your Honors please, a completed bill, which I would like to offer. I would like an opportunity to say something on that question.

JUDGE WALSH: Mr. Chairman, at the present time, the Town of Norwalk is composed of the town government, the city of Norwalk, the city of South Norwalk and the fire district government of East Norwalk. The bill advocated by the consolidationists is summed up as follows: The first ward shall include so much of the territory as is included within the boundaries of the former city of Norwalk as the same exists at the time this Act becomes effective, and shall be represented in the common council of the city by two councilmen, who shall be residents of said ward. The second ward shall include the former city of South Norwalk, with two Councilmen. The third ward shall include substantially the present voting district outside of the city of Norwalk, with one councilman, and the fourth ward shall include substantially the present voting district outside of the city of South Norwalk, with one councilman. The fifth ward shall include "so

much of the territory of said city as lies southerly and westerly of a line commencing at the aforesaid intersection of the center line of Connecticut Avenue and the boundary line between said city and the Town of Darien, and thence running easterly along said center line of said Connecticut Avenue to the northwesterly corner of said second ward, and thence running southerly along the westerly line of said second ward and easterly along the southerly line of said second ward to the intersection of the same with the westerly line of the East Norwalk Fire District as heretofore existing, and thence southerly in a direct north and south line to the southerly line of said city", with one councilman.

Then we have provided for an additional councilman whenever the population of any ward shall exceed a multiple of four thousand by more than two thousand, according to the United States Census; and also that census may be taken by the order of the Council in two years time. So that we have included all of the town, except that we have provided that the nominations of the political parties must be confined to each separate place so that the present lines as they exist will be sure to be represented in the Council. Then we have provided for the taxing districts; the first taxing district comprising the city of Norwalk, the second the city of South Norwalk, the third East Norwalk, and the fourth all of those three, and the fifth the whole town of Norwalk.

We have provided for the present indebtedness for those wards must be maintained for that particular purpose. Then we have provided, and for the assuming of all the property and all the liabilities of the present town of Norwalk, and then we have provided for the new city commencing without any debt whatever; that is the first taxing district, which will be Norwalk, assumes all the indebtedness of the present city of Norwalk, and the second, third, fourth and so on; and the city also maintains the fire department in East Norwalk, and the sewer system and the water system. We have two municipal water systems. Those are given to the present owners. We have an electric light system in the city of South Norwalk, and all those are maintained for the benefit of those who built them and paid for them, and their management is provided for, so ~~that as~~ far as it was possible. This draft of this bill was prepared after two or three meetings, and the committee was appointed, of which I was a member. Our Judge of Probate, Judge Gregory, down there was the chairman of that Committee, and that bill was drafted, and the bill, or practically the charter as a whole submitted to the town meeting, and approved, and the committee proceeded to complete it, and another meeting was called and it was disapproved of, and I desire to introduce to you upon the main question whether there should be a passage of this charter or not, General Frost of South Norwalk.

GENERAL RUSSELL FROST: Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen; I shall endeavor in an entirely dispassionate way, in so far as I am able and perhaps my temperament will permit, to present certain facts, - plain, whole facts, with reference to the situation in the town of Norwalk, so as to throw some light on the subject for this committee as to what is ^{the} best thing to be done about it for the highest welfare of all the citizens of the Town of Norwalk.

As indicated by Judge Walsh, we have in the Town of Norwalk two separate cities, one the city of Norwalk, with a population somewhere around nine thousand (9,000), and the city of South Norwalk, with a population of about ten thousand (10,000), and the Fire District of East Norwalk, with a population of three or four thousand, and we have the regularly constituted government of the town of Norwalk; besides that we have various little villages or communities. In the northern part of the town; a community known as Silvermine, another as Cranberry Plain; and we have another community known as West Norwalk. In the south part of the town we have a village - I don't know how much my friend will leave in Rowayton, - will claim its population to be; but from five hundred to a thousand. That has no specific municipal government, but it has sort of a civic association, which controls the laying out of some of the local improvements there.

The agitation for consolidation in the town of Norwalk has extended over twenty-five years, at least to my personal knowledge. The pendulum has swung both ways, sometimes one way and sometimes another. In 1903 we had a division bill, constituting two separate towns, passed by the legislature and vetoed by Governor Chamberlain. It failed to pass over his veto. A year ago last fall, after considerable agitation it was concluded to permit the voters of the town of Norwalk to vote upon the abstract question of consolidation, without any specific charter being presented, for the purpose of ascertaining the sentiment of the people of the town of Norwalk upon the question of consolidation. That vote was taken by the three separate voting districts of the town. The first voting district comprises the city of Norwalk and the outlying territory, embracing three or four of these small communities. The second voting district comprises the city of South Norwalk and the village of Rowayton, and possibly some slight amount of farm territory. The third voting district consists of East Norwalk, a community on the east side of the river of some three or four thousand people.

The result of that vote taken by ballot at a town election was, the vote was taken in favor of consolidation throughout the entire town, by more than two to one, and

a substantial majority voted in favor of the consolidation in each of the three respective voting districts. A year ago last fall a town meeting was called for the purpose of acting upon the appointment of a committee to prepare a charter for consolidation. That meeting, up to that time, was the largest attended town meeting ever held in the town of Norwalk, and it was voted by a very large majority that a committee be appointed by the chairman of that meeting to draft a consolidation charter. That committee was appointed. A consolidation charter was prepared, and at a meeting held - I have got my dates somewhat confused, and I will have to look at my memorandum. Yes, it was the following March, March 1912. It was in March 1912 that the meeting was held at which by a large majority the appointment of this committee was directed to be made by the chairman for the drafting of a consolidation charter. In the following December - it was last December - this committee made a report, and presented to the meeting a consolidation charter, - a proposed consolidation charter. It was moved at that meeting that the committee be instructed to complete the charter as to some minor details as to the time of its taking effect and the succession of the present municipal governments of the town by the proposed consolidated government, and then upon the completion of that report that the committee

be instructed to present that consolidation charter to this legislature. That vote was passed unanimously without a dissenting vote. That is the situation up to last spring; that was the situation last March. It was in March that the Committee was appointed. It was in December they reported, and it was in December last that the vote was taken to have this committee present that consolidation charter to the Legislature, and that vote was a unanimous vote by the largest town meeting ever held up to that time. Then the agitation was continued, especially against consolidation. The result of that agitation was that a meeting was called and held in the armory, at which a resolution was presented instructing the representatives from the town of Norwalk to withdraw that consolidated charter. That was held in the armory. There were eleven hundred and fifty (1150) votes cast, and a majority in favor of that resolution to withdraw that charter from the legislature. A vote was passed by a majority of 134, so that we now have this situation: first, a direct vote by ballot by the people of Norwalk, by a majority of more than two to one in favor of consolidation, then a meeting, a town meeting, the largest held up to that time, at which by a very large majority a committee was appointed to draft a consolidation charter, which was in pursuance of the vote cast by ballot the preceding fall. Then the

still largest town meeting at which this report of the committee with this charter was adopted, and by a unanimous vote the committee directed to present that charter to the legislature for its passage. Then a meeting the following spring, at which eleven hundred and fifty (1150) votes were cast. Out of that number by a majority of one hundred and thirty four (134) it was voted to withdraw that charter from the legislature. That illustrates ~~some~~ the condition of affairs in the town of Norwalk.

It has been claimed that the final vote taken at that town meeting was a solution and a settlement of the question of consolidation. I have nothing to say on that question, except to ask this committee whether this hearing and this appearance of the citizens of the Town of Norwalk indicates to this committee that that was a final settlement of the issue of consolidation in the Town of Norwalk. Now gentlemen, I don't appear here so much a consolidationist or an anti-consolidationist, so much of a divisionist or anti-divisionist, as I appear here for the purpose of having this committee report to this legislature a bill, or bills, which will enable the citizens of the town of Norwalk to determine this question of consolidation, or division, by deliberate vote cast at

the polls. It will never be settled in any other way. We can agitate and hold meetings; and pass one vote at one time and another vote at another time; and we can get a vote in favor, or a vote in opposition, according to the activity and energy of one side or the other in packing a meeting, and getting its voters out to vote, one side or the other, upon this question; but this matter will never be settled, substantially, definitely, nor fairly to the people of the Town of Norwalk until they are given an opportunity to pass upon this question and express their preference by a vote at the polls.

CHAIRMAN MINER: Do I understand that you have never taken any action at the polls?

GENERAL FROST: We have never taken action at vote at the polls upon any specific charter on consolidation, but we took a vote on the abstract question as to whether the people desired consolidation or not, without the presentation of any specific charter for consolidation, and that vote was more than two to one in favor of consolidation, and a large majority voted in favor of consolidation in each of the three voting districts in the town. I shall not argue as to whether that was a better expression of the people of the town of Norwalk

or whether the vote at this mass meeting, following great agitation upon the question, at which a vote of a hundred and thirty four (134) against consolidation was passed. I leave that question to the judgment of the Committee.

I shall not enter into personalities.- I shall not enter into the thousand and one factional and personal and political contests that have been going on in the town of Norwalk over this question. I shall not enlarge upon the contest and the character of the contest. In my judgment many of the people have become embittered, of the town of Norwalk. I won't say South Norwalk, because I would be unduly reflecting upon my fellow citizens of South Norwalk; but until the people of Norwalk shall have the opportunity to deliberately express their preferences by vote upon the question it will never be settled. That is about all I desire to say.

I would desire to have the opportunity of five minutes later in the discussion to reply to some suggestion that will be made by those upon the opposite side of this question.

I may say, before closing, that in my humble judgment the situation is such that this committee might feel itself justified, in looking over the whole situation, the history and the progress of these contests, and the animosities which have grown out of it,

and sit down calmly and deliberately and determine what is for the best interests of the town of Norwalk and its people, and prepare such a charter as they think wise and will best serve the welfare of the whole town, without reference to politics or locality or factions, and pass that bill and give it to the town of Norwalk without a referendum. I say you would be justified in that attitude. It has been done; it may have to be done in this or some other cases, but my present situation is that I don't urge that, I don't desire it; but I do desire that the people of Norwalk shall have an opportunity in their calm and deliberate judgment, in the exercise of their best interests, with the highest comprehension of civic patriotism for the welfare of the whole town, to deliberately cast their ballot one way or the other, and then we shall be ready to accept the result and make the best of the situation that follows. That is the only fair and proper manner of settlement of this question.

REPRESENTATIVE RIDER: Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen, I do not wish to take the time, as there are a large number here who would probably like to talk, but I want to go on record as favoring the consolidation of the town of Norwalk into one city as a greater city of Norwalk, and I want to place with the committee the vote that has been taken there alluded to by General Frost of South Norwalk.

REP. MATHEIS: Mr. Chairman, if you are always as expeditious as Rep. Henry Matheis you will be home inside of two hours. My view upon this question is that I favor consolidation for the town of Norwalk, and hope the Committee will report as such.

JOHN KEOGH: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee. I have lived in all three districts of the Town of Norwalk, and although we quarrel in our town more than the people of some other towns do, still we are pretty good people; but we are laboring under a very bad government. I think, so that the Committee may get a bird's eye view of the town, that I would like to display this map. This at the head of the map, the top of the map, is Norwalk; this in here (indicating) with the Wall Street bridge and the continuation of West Avenue, called the Connecticut Turnpike, going out toward Darien. This lower part on this side of the map where the railroad stations are marked, where you see the draw-bridge across the river is South Norwalk. On the opposite side is East Norwalk.

CHAIRMAN KING: Where is the Fire District?

JOHN KEOUGH: East Norwalk is the Fire District. This map does not include all of the farming community, outside community, but does include the built up sections of

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the whole town. Now it will be claimed here, and I anticipate when I say this, that we are separated geographically,- not only politically, but that our interests are entirely different, and we have been separated by nature, and we are separated into three geographical communities. Now as the map will show,- and this shows not only the streets, railroads, etc., - a map printed some 15 years ago with considerable increase since,- the map will show that the parts have grown together. The only line of demarcation that I can see there is the river, and that nature has provided us with, and it cannot be changed.

CHAIRMAN MINER: What is the distance from one to the other?

MR. KEOGH: A mile from South Norwalk to Norwalk, from center to center is about a mile; from business center to business center, it is a quarter of a mile to the business center of South Norwalk and perhaps a half to the business center of East Norwalk, but the whole town has grown together. You can't see from that map, or you couldn't see if you stood on a hill at South Norwalk and looked down at the various communities,- you couldn't tell where South Norwalk and Norwalk commenced any more than you can say where the body of a snake ends and the tail begins.

CHAIRMAN KING: Can you tell by walking through the town ?

MR. KEOGH: You can't. You will see from this that our area isn't very great as compared with other

It was a surprise to me when I looked it over, but Bridgeport as the smallest area and largest population of any of our towns.

Norwalk is not very large as compared with some of the other towns. Norwalk is not near as large as Stamford; it isn't as large as Greenwich, Redding or Huntington, or Ridgefield, or many of the other towns.

CHAIRMAN KING: Or Fairfield?

MR. KEOGH: Or Fairfield. The agitation, as Gen. Frost has said, has been going on for several years. I know in South Norwalk a few years ago we had a little meeting called by the Mayor for the council room, and we adjourned to a larger hall. There was a discussion pro and con on the abstract question of consolidation. There were 79 voters and 74 voted on the question of consolidation in South Norwalk and 5 voted against it. The feeling now in South Norwalk is probably against consolidation.

I have attempted to tabulate, if your Committee please, to make a little table of the different officials in charge of the different functions in the different municipalities of the town. As has been said, there are 4 municipalities. Now we have in charge of those 4 municipalities 3 selectmen of the town, mayor and city council of Norwalk, mayor and city council of South Norwalk, 3 Fire District committeemen, a total of 20, 10 of them under pay. We have 6 treasurers in the town, 3 of them under pay. We have 4 tax collectors.

CHAIRMAN KING: Do they deposit in different banks?

MR. KEOGH: I hope so. We have 4 tax collectors under pay, 4 different tax collectors. We have 3 Boards of Assessors, and we have the same property gone over by the different boards. We have our Town Board, City of Norwalk Board, and City of South Norwalk Board. Three Boards of Assessors, 4 Boards of Relief; we have 4 Health Officers, of Corporation Counsels and Attorneys we have 5, and they are all paid. We have 27 members of the different Boards of Apportionment. We have 5 clerks and assistant clerks, town clerk and assistant town clerks, 2 city clerks and a clerk of the Fire District. We have in charge of affairs in the Town of Norwalk ^{heads of} 35 men departments; 19 paid; 38 in ^{the City of} ~~South~~ Norwalk, 21 paid; in the City of South Norwalk 33 heads of departments and 15 paid, making a total number of heads of departments 119, 61 paid.

CHAIRMAN KING: Is there any one in Norwalk that is not paid ?

MR. KEOGH: Not that I know of. It is a good deal like a Cuban regiment, with 7 generals, 34 colonels, 107 captains, 200 lieutenants, 300 or 400 sergeants, 1 high private in the rear rank. The high private in our town if the man that hasn't got a job. We have 17 peace officers

and heads of departments in the town, that doesn't count patrolmen. Fire departments, we have 4 fire departments, we have 11 companies, we have 45 officers above the grade of sergeant, that is, lieutenants, captains, assistant chief engineers and chief engineers.

CHAIRMAN KING: You don't have many fire there, do you?

MR. KEOGH: No; a firemen's parade in our town is always a success, because they can, - they only have to get out the officers of the departments and they can make a pretty good showing. We have in the Town of Norwalk, not counting school officials or teachers or janitors of schools, altogether 430 officials of the town, and 300 of them are paid. We have besides that 134 connected with our schools as committees, teachers and janitors, making a total of paid and unpaid officials, if you include teachers in charge of our educational work, of 564. We have a population of something less than 25,000. Now this bill consolidates, as much as the prejudices of the committee and the feelings of the people would allow; this bill consolidates so that the officials, I don't mean the paid employees on the streets, or the police department, but the general heads and officials are cut to one-third. We have one Board of Assessment instead of 3 Boards; we have one Corporation Counsel instead of 5. We now have in charge of our roads 3 selectmen, a commissioner at each end, in each city, that is, 5, and 3 engineers. We have 8 in charge of our roads. The state of

Connecticut has one man in charge of its roads. This charter provides for one man in charge of the roads of the whole town. I realize it must sound like a joke when attention is called to our various municipalities and our various divisions, yet there are some up here favoring a further division.

I was taught that the smallest particle of matter was an atom. Later a scientist, with a little bigger microscope than the other fellow, came along and he divided atoms up into molecules. You can divide further than that in the Town of Norwalk when you get started. They want to take a much divided town and divide it up further than it is divided. We are going to take the upper end of the town and set that off as a town, and community by itself. The lower end of the town will remain as a city and fire district, as it is, plus a town government, which the other folks are going to obtain and let us take care of; so we will have to take care of in South Norwalk plus the whole of the town government which the upper end of the town wants to get rid of. It seems to me if you will eliminate politics, and eliminate these 400 and some odd officers, as well as eliminating partisanship and all prejudices and feelings, that the only sensible thing to do is to consolidate the town. We are not so big geographically, in population or business interests that we can't act as one city, under one city charter. It never was intended that we should be divided up into four or

five different municipalities, and it ought not to be so. That charter calls for a vote by districts. The way the feeling runs now, if a vote is given by districts, that charter will be defeated; some one of the three districts will vote against it. Uptown favors division. They were red hot for consolidation a few months ago. The people of the whole town if left alone, and if they can go into the voting booths and prepare their ballots, I feel very sure, from the votes that have been taken and from talking with those that are rabid one way or the other, the cooler heads in Norwalk will vote by a large majority in favor of consolidation as one big city, and put us on the map and let us amount to something geographically and physically, with our nearness to New York.

I trust your committee will find that we ought to be consolidated under some form of city government, under one municipality. I don't care whether that charter - I was a member of the committee drafting it, the secretary, - I don't care whether that charter is adopted or not. I haven't any feeling in that matter. But we ought to be given some form of consolidation charter that will put us together where we ought to be.

DR. WILLIAM J. TRACY, of Norwalk: Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee. We find, all of us, today after an existence of 250 years; we find Norwalk tossed in the stormy sea of discontent. We find that we are like a

ship without a rudder, and we come here to you in our difficulty and ask you to assist us. We are existing under a form of government, the like of which does not exist in the civilized or uncivilized world; a form of government pointed at by the finger of scorn, by every intelligently edited newspaper in the state of Connecticut. A form of government that could not exist in Heaven itself and have harmony prevail there.

We are here today to ask you to assist us. The question has been submitted to town meeting after town meeting, and we find ourselves today in a worse condition than ever. The agitation brought about by each town meeting only intensifies the feeling, and we find today a feeling of bitterness and resentment. We find that it has entered into our political life; it has entered into our social life; it has entered into our organizations throughout the town, and our domestic life, and our charities; it has entered into our schools. The time has come until we have reached the climax, and this question ought to be settled once and for all. The only way it can be settled is by submitting it to the voters of the Town of Norwalk. I don't think it can be settled by submitting to the voters of the town of Norwalk a bill on division, or a bill on consolidation. I think the only way that question can be settled today is by the legislature itself settling it, or by submitting to the voters of the town of Norwalk two

bills, one for actual division, and the other for real consolidation, a bill for consolidation that would wipe out the imaginary lines that now divide us, lines that could not be found even with a microscope, but lines that have caused dissention. If we are going to have a consolidation bill, those imaginary lines should be wiped out. There should be no sectionalism. South Norwalk, East Norwalk and Norwalk should be wiped out. That is the only form of consolidation that we can submit to the people. We should have a consolidation bill of that form, and a division bill, so we can vote upon the question, and live together either as one family, or live separated as friends and neighbors. This question ought to be settled. It ought to be settled for the sake of those who have been born in Norwalk, who have existed all these years under this strife and discontent; it ought to be settled for their sake, so that their declining years may at least be spent in peace and harmony. It ought to be settled for the newcomers, who are not content with the spirit of sectionalism; and it ought to be settled for the little tots in our schools. Sectionalism shouldn't be taught to them, and the word shouldn't be in their vocabulary, and I believe that if you will pass these bills in such manner, it will be settled at least for our generation.

JUDGE WALSH: I would like to reserve twenty minutes for rebuttal. We have taken forty minutes.

JUDGE LIGHT: I would like to say, may it please you gentlemen; I understand that Judge Hubbell introduced a substitute bill here. I think it is only fair that they say what they desire to say on this before we are heard. Do I understand that the gentlemen who represent the division interest, are to have a separate time?

CHAIRMAN MINER: The matter before this committee is consolidation or not consolidation, is it not, and that is the purpose of those two bills?

JUDGE LIGHT: I understood the committee had received a substitute bill, known as a Division Bill.

SENATOR MINER: This bill is a substitute, and the committee has not read it, does not know the purport of the bill.

JUDGE LIGHT: I would like to hear from you on that.

MR. HUBBELL: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen: You have heard the story here of the differences of opinion which have occurred in the town, and we feel in our end of it, that in view of the pendulum having swung back and forth that we would like to go off by ourselves. I may anticipate, I think, and not unfairly, some remarks that will be made by the gentlemen who are opposed to any change whatever, and who desire the existing status of affairs to remain intact. They will claim, for their end of the town, certain advantages, certain developments, and I desire and design to remain as

they are among their interests, because they have developed an individuality peculiar to themselves, and they have acquired a name to which they attach great importance, and in view of that fact, - in view of what, I presume, will come later, I want to say that between the two ends of the town there is a fundamental difference. It has been hinted here that politics and other things have something to do with it. There is no real rivalry between Norwalk and South Norwalk. We agree wonderfully and thoroughly in a great many matters, and we get along very nicely; but South Norwalk is a lively, hustling town. It is an industrial town, and has a great many people of moderate means in the sense of business matters, but they are active and there is a difference in the atmosphere between Norwalk and South Norwalk, which, to my mind, constitutes a fundamental difference. Norwalk is more residential - and I am claiming no superiority - but there is as much difference between Norwalk and South Norwalk as there might be between some staid town in Massachusetts and Chicago, and if you undertake, gentlemen, to yoke us together by a consolidation act, you will be yoking adverse interests, and we won't, and we haven't, pulled together, because we think differently, we act differently, and we believe differently. The situation will be something like the old German couple who used to have terrible scraps, and one night they were sitting by the fire, the cat on one side and the dog on the other, and the ~~husband~~ wife says to the

husband see the cat on the one side and the dog on the other, see how peaceful they are, and why should not we be just as peaceful as they, and Hans says, "That's all right, Katrina, but if they were tied together with a string, they would not be so peaceful". If you tie us together with a string, there will be trouble, because there is a fundamental difference between the two communities, and if you will set us aside we will be just as good friends and neighbors as ever. The spirit of the age is to centralize and put things together, but there may be exceptions, there have been exceptions. Take the New York, New Haven Railroad, with the lust for empire and gathering together of railroad after railroad; is it any better off than it was 20 years ago; does the stock pay any better? I believe if you will set the city of Norwalk off one side, as provided in that bill - it divides the town, incorporates North of a certain line as a city, and provides for aldermen, mayor and ten councilmen, Board of Assessment and Apportionment, and it is a sort of a composite makeup of our present city charter, and I have helped myself very liberally to some provisions in the Bridgeport charter, because Voltaire said that originality is nothing but judicial plagiarism. I have endeavored to make a charter and provide that the new city or town will pay its share; that has been borrowed from the division bill between Ansonia and Derby,

and each takes its share of the debts.

CHAIRMAN KING: Your bill makes two separate towns as well as two separate cities.

MR. HUBBELL: Yes, two separate towns, and I have endeavored to make it, as far as I could. I don't claim paragraph for paragraph, I don't claim it ought to be adopted verbatim ad litem, and I leave it to the committee. But I want to say that there is a fundamental difference in the thoughts and ideas of the two communities. If you unite them together, one end of the town or the other must dictate the policy to have any progress.

MR. MITCHELSON: Do you want two different towns?

MR. HUBBELL: Yes.

MR. MITCHELSON: You think the state would allow it?

MR. HUBBELL: I don't know; the state is acting by its committee.

MR. MITCHELSON: They wouldn't back us up in it.

MR. HUBBELL: But if you don't want it, trim us and we will say amen to it.

MR. KING: You would be entitled to two representatives, you are more than 5,000.

MR. HUBBELL: That is a situation. I can't say that my idea is the most progressive one, but we feel that if we were allowed to go by ourselves, there would be just as much harmony as there is now. We might not be as progressive as our friends in South Norwalk, but, at the same time,

we will plod along in our own way. We have our failings and misfortunes; we are not as active as they are, they view life differently, and to yoke us together, we are going to have little bickerings, and it is going to be a bickering process all the time, like a high school building, a two acre building on a one acre lot.

DR. CLUNE: Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Committee: You have heard so much of this Norwalk trouble that perhaps you have come to the conclusion that in a civic sense, at least, we are absolutely incompetents and that there is real necessity for the kindly offices of a conservator. If you have that opinion, you are amply justified in it. I beg to grasp an opportunity to beseech you gentlemen to extract us from the present condition that exists in the Town of Norwalk.

It is but natural that some of our people here look toward the consolidation of the community, and they desire to look upon that rosy picture of a large municipality, which will bring remarkable development. It is in a sense the ideal. But under the existing conditions in our community today it is not practical. There must be unity of action and harmony of purpose as essential, necessary factors. In some sections the word consolidation is repugnant and obnoxious. Consolidation, to my mind, is not practical or desirable. At this large mass meeting held in Norwalk Armory, to which

General Frost has referred, there was an opposition on the part of the people of South Norwalk against the consolidation of the town. They have seen the beginning of their little city and have watched tenderly the progress of its development, and as the United States has said in the Munroe Doctrine, that the ^{attempted} annexation by any foreign country of territory in the Western hemisphere would be considered an unfriendly act, so, gentlemen, South Norwalk says to you that any endeavor to wipe out our individuality will likewise be considered an unfriendly act. That is the sentiment expressed. Subsequent to that meeting, there was a change in the opinion of the people of the city of Norwalk. They simply said, if we have no consolidation then we must have division. The present conditions in Norwalk are intolerable. The form of government, as you gentlemen will readily perceive, is absolutely obnoxious. I say we are here today for a fair and equitable division of the Town of Norwalk. South Norwalk has made her declarations of independence in the words to which I referred. If they desire independence, and desire to perpetuate this little city, they are placed shoulder to shoulder with a fair and equitable division for the Town of Norwalk. These gentlemen tell us, in a sense, that division is preposterous, inasmuch as you do not care to make any more small towns and that would deprive us of our representation. I have another proposition to submit,

that we maintain nominally the Town of Norwalk simply for the purpose of representation and the making of voters, and that we extend the present cities of the Town of Norwalk to take in all of the outlying districts, by so doing we eliminate all of the sectional prejudices. It may ~~not~~ seem to you people that any suggestion or idea of division is probably something that is not up to date and something that is not progressive. It is progressive and it is constructive. This means the consolidation of those elements, which by their very nature and character should be consolidated. With the proposed extension of the city lines, we make two taxing districts, those enjoying city privileges shall pay for them. Those people in the second taxing district, which represents the outside, they simply pay for what they get. Now we have been told that our friends in South Norwalk, after making this great declaration of independence for the preservation of their little city, are not satisfied, that is, with division as an alternative, that they wish a continuation of existing conditions. Gentlemen, any one with any idea or any common-sense would not wish to perpetuate a system of government which could not possibly exist in any civilized community outside of the state of Connecticut.

CHAIRMAN KING: Won't you confine it to Norwalk?

DR. CLUNE: Under existing conditions, it imposes an injustice on the citizens of the town, and Norwalk says that South Norwalk, under existing conditions, are getting more out of it than they could under division. I don't say that is so, but I say that is the only possible reason for continuing existing conditions.

The gentlemen tell me that they never have done anything of consequence but what has been done under the existing town government. The high school was not accomplished without a fight held in the Armory.

Existing conditions should not go on. In fairness to our people at the other end of the town, we proposed this idea of the extension of the two cities, at least if we can't get absolute division.

SENATOR MINER: There seems to have been two sets of people here, those in favor of consolidation, and those that want the town divided; is there still another element here to be heard?

A VOICE: Several more.

JUDGE LIGHT: There is an element here to be heard in opposition to consolidation.

SENATOR MINER: The divisionists and the consolidationists.

JUDGE LIGHT: So far as South Norwalk is concerned, we are here in opposition to consolidation; our contention rests there.

SENATOR MINER: Division too?

JUDGE LIGHT: We don't care anything about that.

SENATOR MINER: The committee is anxious to give each side all the time possible, and we are trying to find out the existing circumstances.

JUDGE LIGHT: I think so far as Norwalk is concerned, she is divided; so far as South Norwalk is concerned, she is divided.

MR. KEOGH: That is not so.

SENATOR MINER: You are standpatters, you want to leave things as they are, is that your idea? I want to find out so as to divide this time. There seem to be three elements here. We have the consolidationists, the divisionists, and the standpatters, if I may use that term.

JUDGE LIGHT: Yes.

SENATOR MINER: If that is the case, they ought to be divided equally as to time. The consolidationists have had 40 minutes. In order to do that, we would have to give you two hours. If that is what you wish, and the committee will back me up, I will give you the time. Now we will give those three elements 40 minutes each, and the divisionists have ~~had~~ 10 minutes more to be heard.

MR. HUBBELL: There is nothing more on the division proposal.

SENATOR MINER: Now we will hear the "standpatters".

JUDGE LIGHT: May it please the Committee, I disclaim the title. We are not "standpatters". We might be termed "standpatters" so far as insisting on the maintenance of our own government is concerned, but so far as it may concern the efficiency of those in our city to act by themselves, we are not "standpatters". I do not care to moot that issue. I hark back a few ~~months ago~~ minutes ago in listening to Judge Hubbell and Dr. Clune. They said what I said to the Committee ten years ago, in regard to division. The Committee agreed with me and passed a division bill, and the governor vetoed it. We are not a whit different than you are. We belong to the same race, our faces shine from the reflection of the same sun. We have the same feeling, and our government is precisely the same as the government in other parts of the state of Connecticut. Our cities are patterned after other cities. The Fire District of East Norwalk is patterned after other districts in other parts of the state. The officials are no more numerous and are not paid any more salaries than the officers in other parts of the state. The great majority of the officials serve for nothing, and there are a few lawyers who are paid. The great majority ^{of them} serve without pay. Now I believe, with Thomas Jefferson, that the closer in touch you can come with local government, the better that government is. The form of the charter does not determine

the character of the citizens. Strange as it may seem, everyone of the South American governments have conformed to our constitution, but how different the government there! The trouble is not in the government. The fault is in us. There's where the difficulty is.

But, as has been said here, so far as the two cities are concerned, they have gone along swimmingly and prosperously, and successfully, may it please you gentlemen, and I resent any reflection on either city. The fact that two cities exist there must be taken note of. You can tell by the style in which they have grown, and the fact that they exist there justifies really the existence of the two.

Now let me give you a brief history of the situation. Their very history is like the history of every township of the state of Connecticut. The settlement grows up, a church is built there, business and factories are established there, and by and by they asked the legislature for a charter. Very oftentimes, in the first instance, like the East Norwalk Fire District, charter, they have proposed a borough charter, a city charter, and so on. So, one town after another in this state, has grown in that same way. We are not peculiar - it has several centers. Norwalk is not peculiar; Norwalk is unfortunate in this. The same thing was true of Derby and Ansonia. And they divided; they had two centers some distance apart. They divided.

Human nature is the same, place it in any territory

you please, Place it in the state of Connecticut, or place it in the state of New York. Unless their interests are segregated and not locked together, there is inevitable strife, That is always so. Don't you for a moment think that we differ from you; we don't in the least. The people of Norwalk do not differ from any other township, for if you separate the people of any other township as nature has separated us, you would have the same strife that we have. The city of Norwalk was incorporated as a borough in 1836. It existed as a borough until 1893; and since that time it has existed as a city. That was a separate part of the town at that time, and South Norwalk was called Old Well. A few factories were there, and the place wasn't of very much consequence, but it grew very rapidly and just before 1870 they held a public meeting and asked the borough of Norwalk to extend their boundaries and extend the present city of South Norwalk, then Old Well; and the borough of Norwalk told us to go away. They wouldn't do it; that we were a working, manufacturing community. They didn't like the looks of us; they refused to take us in, and they told us to go on our way. In 1870, we came to the legislature and obtained a city charter for the city of South Norwalk. After that charter was obtained, the city of Norwalk had a waterworks, and we asked them to furnish South Norwalk with

water. They absolutely refused to do that, and we were obliged to come to the legislature and obtain a charter to provide a water plant to the city of South Norwalk. That was done. So we have been absolutely forced to build up our present institutions, and it has grown so it is larger now by 2,000 than the city of Norwalk. We have over 10,000 population, while the city of Norwalk has probably 8,000. The East Norwalk Fire District has 4,000 or 5,000. There are probably now upwards of 25,000 people in the whole township. So you see that we have grown and all the development of that territory has been by the two cities and not by the township. The township government has been of comparatively little importance, save to make expenses; and out of that grew the desire to wipe out the town government, so the strife came up - we wiped out the town government, or divided the two municipalities. Now I want to say this, call your attention to this - and you will excuse me if I go over this in a hop, skip and a jump - I haven't seen any good reason why these governments should be consolidated under the circumstances, not any very good reason at all why they should be consolidated. Every institution is duplicated in the two cities. The upper city has the same number of churches as the other city, every denomination exists downtown which exists uptown; there are the upper town business

clubs and the downtown business clubs, the uptown lodges and the downtown lodges. There isn't any social reason why they should be united. You would not add socially or businesswise to either community by uniting them; you would simply have the city of Norwalk with 25,000 inhabitants, that's about all there is to it. By consolidating these people under the form of government which is proposed, you would not unite them.

What has been the cause of the strife? The town meetings during all these years have been held in the upper city; the two cities are a mile and a half apart. I have tested it by walking, and I have always heard they were a half a mile apart. Now I say the people of the two communities, though friendly, they are different, - different in enterprise, different in sentiment. That is naturally so, because the business of the two is different. The upper town is the old, residential, aristocratic part of the township. The wealth existed up there, and the other end of the town consists of the workaday people. Every man in the lower end of the town made his own wealth. That is, the business part of the town has grown up so that the people, as a rule, differ. I don't make that statement offensively. I use it in the same sense that the people of Norwalk and Darien differ. They are two separate communities, with different ideas and different notions of government, and they are not homogeneous in sentiment at all.

Let me say this; all of the town meetings are held in the upper city. It is very easy to fill that meeting and control it, and that has been done, so the people of South Norwalk couldn't get what they wanted in an uptown meeting, and never have been able to get anything. I am speaking as a rule. You can easily see that it is easy to fill a town meeting up there in the center of the city of Norwalk, with the people of South Norwalk half a mile away, some of them who would not take the trouble to pay their carfare and go up ^{there} and perform the duties of citizenship. They have controlled the situation right along. We have had to fight out our own existence, and we owe no success to Norwalk. Now then, about the sentiment, about which General Frost speaks, of these various meetings. That straw vote was taken a year or two ago at the polls. Senator Donovan was the originator of that; he got up the petition. It was illegal and wasn't authorized. He got the selectmen to put it in the call, and there were comparatively few, I am told, who knew about it. He saw to it that there were plenty of consolidation votes, and he and others spent their time in getting consolidation votes, and he was at the polls at South Norwalk all day. A great many didn't know it was voted upon, and not over 25% voted on it at all. It was generally understood that it didn't have any legal influence whatever, and I am told that the argument used was that this won't hurt anybody, and I say that this vote

Is not significant at all. It was not effective for anything except, possibly, to serve as an argument. The other meeting referred to by General Frost, held at the upper town, he said was a large meeting, which was true; but it was so largely filled by the people in the upper city that people from South Norwalk couldn't get in. It was practically a vote from the upper city.

It was thought by the people of South Norwalk, and some of the people of Norwalk agreed with them, that the only fair vote should be in a hall large enough for all to be heard upon the question, and so they agreed upon having a meeting called in the Armory; that is, half way between the two places. It was thoroughly advertised, and it was more largely attended than any town meeting ever held. And the South Norwalk Sentinel was anti-consolidation, and the paper up-town, the Norwalk Hour, was in favor of consolidation, so that the whole community understood the situation, and the meeting was largely attended; and let me tell you just what the Norwalk Hour said in regard to that meeting;

"We hear that the anti-consolidationists want another meeting, this time in the armory, for the purpose of getting a vote of the town withdrawing the consolidation bills now in the legislature.

"We thoroughly believe in this move. Settle the thing once and for all time. Give the "anti" contingent all the leeway there is. Then if

the sentiment is against them, this should settle the matter once and for all.

"Every meeting thus far held has shown the sentiment to predominate in favor of consolidation. Let the proposed meeting at the armory settle the question. We believe the residents of the town of Norwalk should see that this meeting is the last straw of consolidation, one way or the other. If the "anti" spirit carries the day, consolidation is dead. If the progressives carry the day and the meeting favors consolidation, instruct the legislature to cast aside the proposed referendum and pass the bill.

"This is business. What is the use of fussing over non-essentials. Nobody in the Town of Norwalk wants to force consolidation if it is not wanted, but there has been so much bellowing about irresponsible agencies that many of the people do not know whether they want bread or biscuits. Let the armory meeting settle it".

You will see here on both sides the armory meeting, - it says settle it.

"Let us stop plucking geese feathers and get busy with other affairs that are of far more vital importance than bickering over the color which

we shall paint the Wall Street pavement when it really gets dirty.

"Give us the armory mass meeting by all means and let us wind up this consolidation fuss once and for all, for we really haven't the time to absorb any more hot air upon the question. Even a sponge has its limit and we are not all sponges."

I take it the "Hour" meant just what it said, because immediately after it began to agitate for division.

SENATOR QUINN of the Committee: For the location of those two cities, South Norwalk and Norwalk, and that Fire District, do you think they have a sufficiently large population, considering their advantageous location with reference to New York?

JUDGE LIGHT: I think so; I think they have a sufficiently large population for a continuous or city government, but Dr. Clune will be cutting the Gordian Knot anyway. If you don't want to divide the town you could divide the town into two cities.

SENATOR QUINN: Do you think the population is as large as if they had been consolidated some time ago under one city, or government?

JUDGE LIGHT: I think so, because between the

two business centers that won't grow together, even if they are consolidated.

SENATOR QUINN: Do you think the consolidation would tend toward more homogeneity?

JUDGE LIGHT: I think it would tend towards the opposite. If it hadn't been for this armory vote - my mind is decisive, I agree in every word the "Hour" says in regard to that. We ought not to have come here. This representative here who represents Norwalk, and not South Norwalk, was requested to recall the bill. But there is the difficulty, if the representative comes from Norwalk, he doesn't take orders from South Norwalk.

SENATOR QUINN: Wouldn't you have more homogeneity by joining the two cities?

JUDGE LIGHT: Not at all. You see, may it please you Senator, unless the people are homogeneous a form of government would not change them. I want to say right on that point that to my mind this proposed charter of consolidation will irritate and provoke strife more rapidly than the present form of town government has. Now why? because it divides the whole territory up into district governments. The present City of South Norwalk would be one district and Norwalk another, and East Norwalk another, and they would have certain representatives in the

Common Council, and is there any doubt whatever but that the representatives in the Common Council from South Norwalk would be fighting for South Norwalk, the same with East Norwalk?

The only way you would accomplish that and wipe out strife would be a commission form of government, and if it hadn't been for this vote I was going to prepare a charter, and send it to this committee, but I think the people of that community ought to be permitted to rule; and I say, this charter is not a perfected charter. The town referred it back to its committee to perfect it. It has only been passed upon, the substance of it, and the Committee have not been able to agree upon it; yet they come here and tell you to force it down their throats.

I think it is a vicious charter, and instead of consolidating the whole people under one simple form of government it multiplies a series of governments, and makes necessary a number of offices.

There is a good deal of sentiment in both of these cities. In season and out of season, and through good report and through evil report, the people of South Norwalk have built up those institutions; they own an electric light plant, and a splendid system of water works, and they own a filter there. There is well situated there,

recently built, a new city hall, and Carnegie has given us a library to offset the library given to the upper city a few years ago. We are taking care of all the people that come to us. All the highways are looked after by the selectmen under the town government.

The conditions have changed since ten years ago when I was here in the midst of the fight. Then the town government was running us into debt \$30,000 a year, practically, but since that time we have succeeded in getting a Board of Apportionment and Taxation which compels us to pay as we go; and the town has been conducting its business on a business basis, and has not only paid its obligations, but has created a sinking fund, and we are going along splendidly.

Two years ago they took a vote on consolidation of the schools. That vote, or the result of that vote on the consolidation of schools, has not been ~~so~~ happy in its influence upon consolidation, and it has engendered more or less strife. Before that there was very little difficulty in the schools, but since that time there has been considerable. Some members of the School Board are here and can speak for themselves if what I say is not a fact. The people of my district have taken a census of the sentiment, and I think it is fair to say that ninety per cent. of the

people of the second voting district, which includes the City of South Norwalk, are absolutely opposed to the consolidation,- absolutely opposed to it. I don't think you will hear anybody in contradiction of that whatever. The people in the upper city are not strongly in favor of consolidation, or else they are inconsistent. They recently took a vote of the citizens of the city, five hundred attending the meeting, and the vote was practically unanimous in favor of division. I think one paper stated there was only one vote against. It was practically unanimous in favor of division. Within a short time the common council of the City of Norwalk took a vote in ~~favor~~ fact endorsed the division measure, so that there you have municipal action.

General Frost states that they should have a referendum in each district. This matter has been thoroughly thrashed out, and there isn't any doubt whatever but that the vote would be negative in the City of South Norwalk, in the Second Voting District; it would also be negative in the Third Voting District. I speak by the books when I ^{that} say; why ^{therefore} should your time be taken up to frame a charter,- that charter isn't fit to pass. I don't think anyone will say that that charter is in proper condition at the present time. I don't think the members of the Committee will

say so. Why should you be asked to perpetuate this strife and force it upon us? You see, too, what we have already done, and the "Hour" says that ought to settle it, and we say so too.

Now I don't know how much time I have taken. Those men that back up what I say, stand up, so that the Committee will know who are here representing that sentiment; all stand up. (a rising vote was taken).

I understand there are over a hundred here to be heard in opposition to this bill, so you will see that it has been carefully considered, and I don't know as I am justified in calling on the gentlemen to make arguments in opposition to it because it would be unfair. I don't see any reason why we shouldn't all agree with the "Hour" editorial. It was a very large meeting; my friend General Frost made one of his most eloquent speeches. Some found fault with him because it was said he had taken a leaf from the book of one of the United States Senators speaking against time, but I think the intensity of his thought caused him to go ahead. That vote was opposed, very markedly to consolidation, and I say, gentlemen, it ought to end it.

MR. JOHN F. McMAHON: Gentlemen of the Committee, I would like to impress upon you that I haven't any objection, nor do I intend to interpose any objection to the upper end of

the town of Norwalk in their effort to seek separation from us at the lower end, if, in your judgment, it may be deemed advisable, and possible, but I do want to say a word or two in regard to consolidation matter which is before us. This consolidation matter, as has been stated, is one of long standing. It has occupied a great deal of the time of the people of Norwalk in its discussion pro and con. We have had numerous meetings to consider this subject.

Just ten years ago the matter was under consideration, when the division question was brought before our people and considered, and the result was that we reached this General Assembly with a division bill, which was passed by the General Assembly and vetoed by the Governor. I have been very earnestly and regularly connected with our town and city governments in the territory of the Town of Norwalk for about thirty years. Up to ten years ago when the Division Bill was presented I have never had the pleasure of attending a town meeting, it was always held at the other end of the town, and dominated by the Norwalk end of the town. I have never had the privilege of witnessing one proposition tending towards the welfare or affecting the lower end of the town that has ever received favorable consideration at the hands of the voters at the upper end of the town.

JUDGE WALSH: How about the bridge?

MR. McMAHON: That is up to ten years ago. I would like to impress upon the committee that this is history up to ten years ago. Ten years ago after that division fight was settled, we have enjoyed in the Town of Norwalk, since that time, and up to within a very few months, the most peaceable times we have had in our political and governmental history in thirty years, since that division controversy. Since that time we have agreed in town meeting to build a hundred thousand dollar high school, and a two hundred and fifty thousand dollar bridge over the Norwalk River. This has all been done in town meeting harmoniously, and I was under the impression, and many others at my end of the town, that we were arriving at the time when the town of Norwalk would see some satisfactory way of consolidating their governments, but we voted last Fall at the October election, when we voted on the question of consolidating the town, we voted also on the question of consolidating various school districts of the town of Norwalk and that vote was successful. That consolidated form of school government went into effect the 15th day of last July. Just previous to the consolidating of our town schools we were on the verge of building a fifty or sixty thousand dollar school house at South Norwalk. The Selectmen were

renting quarters to house our children, but when the schools were consolidated as a district we were prohibited from building the schools, and the very first report brought in by the new town superintendent of schools at a school meeting, just prior to your closing day for new business at this session was that the town of Norwalk needed more in addition to that sixty thousand dollars, and a meeting was called asking the Legislature to permit the town of Norwalk to issue \$200,000 worth of bonds to build school houses, if necessary, for the entire town of Norwalk. That led up to the first town meeting, which was one of the old-time town meetings. The upper end of the town had presented to that town meeting a proposition which condemned one of the most valuable country estates in the town and acquired it for park purposes, and build a new town high school, and turn over the old high school for the purposes of the South Norwalk school children. That is the first division we have had in ten years townwise, and we have accomplished a great deal in the whole town of Norwalk.

As brother Light has told you, the town government has not only paid every dollar of outstanding indebtedness, but has created a very large sinking fund to meet the indebtedness of the town. Prior to that our town government was running /

us in debt some thirty thousand dollars a year, and that was the primary cause for South Norwalk asking for a division of the Town of Norwalk, and for what? at that time the upper end of the town were absolutely responsible for the town government, because they had two members of the Board of Selectmen out of three for eighteen years, so South Norwalk people held themselves not responsible to any degree for the condition of the town government.

Now, gentlemen, it has been said by the previous speakers that there are conditions which should not be tolerated for a minute. Things are not always as they are represented, and I want to say to you this that the little City of South Norwalk stands forth in the State of Connecticut as furnishing the greatest demonstration of what municipal ownership means, of the indispensableness of municipal ownership, of any city in the United States. We have people come from all sections of the country to find out about our conditions of municipal ownership. We have built, a few years ago, I think fourteen years ago, by permission of legislative grant, an electric light plant down there. We have expended for that plant \$240,000, and there has never been one penny of taxes levied against that plant, except the absolute cost of lighting the streets, but the revenue from light has paid off the \$240,000, with the

exception of \$20,000 worth of bonds that haven't matured, but they have money enough on hand to meet that obligation, so the plant has absolutely freed itself in fourteen years. The two cities, although they have been pointed out to you as being in this condition, there are not two cities in the State of Connecticut that are better off than Norwalk and South Norwalk; and those two cities today, under this great misgovernment as represented to you, are in such a condition that their assets will wipe out their indebtedness and put a large fund in their treasury. That is a condition which I don't think needs any further demonstration to convince you that we are not suffering for a new government.

I might say this, that consolidation will only put us in the condition where we were prior to ten years ago, when we will have to seek our city needs through the consolidated form of government as we have always had to seek our town requirements and needs. The time for you gentlemen to consider or entertain for a moment the advisability of consolidation is not opportune, for the reason that the consolidation of schools, beginning the 14th of July, is in such a condition that sectional feeling, - that if the entire town of Norwalk could absolutely vote this minute, or this fall, to go back to the old district system, I will venture to say ninety per cent, of the voters in the town would vote to rescind that and go back to the old school government system. That would obtain, I am absolutely sure, in ten of the old school districts out of eleven, and they would vote to return, but, under the statutes,

we can't return for five years; but at the end of five years we may find that we have solved the question of consolidation; consolidation may have been proved to be beneficial to us schoolwise. That is the greatest demonstration of whether the town could live under consolidation. If they cannot do it under consolidation of schools they can't do it under consolidation of towns; and I say that there is absolutely no need, at this time, of changing our form of government.

We have in this general assembly, very recently, secured the right to manufacture artificial ice, establish a municipal plant, and if left alone we will demonstrate to the State of Connecticut one of the greatest examples of success in that line that has ever been demonstrated. It is not only for the interests of our little city, but for the state of Connecticut in general, that we be left alone in our present condition, until, at least, some future time.

MR. GEORGE H. VOSBURGH: I want to say a few words in rebuttal of a few statements.

The map which has been submitted to you gentlemen does not portray the present existing status of Norwalk and South Norwalk, except as to boundary lines. That is a map which is fifteen years old. Since that map was perfected and finished the two communities have grown. I want to call

your attention to the official figures of the population of the two centers of Norwalk and South Norwalk, showing their percentage of growth during the last thirty years. In 1880 the Borough of Norwalk, whose boundaries are the same as the present City of Norwalk, contained a population of 5308. The City of South Norwalk then contained a population of 3726. In 1910, the last Official Government Census, Norwalk contained a population of 6954, South Norwalk 8968. In thirty years Norwalk has grown 31%, and South Norwalk during the same period has grown 140%. I simply give you those figures, gentlemen, to show the different spirit prevailing in the two communities. As Judge Light has said, Norwalk is the residential, the staid section of the town. South Norwalk is the progressive business section, and during the last decade alone we increased 37%, a pretty good percentage, under our present form of government. The national percent of increase throughout the country was 21%, under our national government, and we under this terrible government, which has been depicted here this afternoon, have increased 37%. Now these frightful governmental conditions don't prevent industries from coming to South Norwalk, as certain gentlemen would have your committee believe. We have in South Norwalk two very large hardware concerns; the Norwalk Company and the Lockwood Manufacturing Company. We have a very large hat manufacturing

company, the Crofut & Knapp Co., manufacturers of the Knapp felt that you see advertised in every magazine throughout the country. We have the R. & G. Corset plant at South Norwalk, and recently Cluett-Peabody, manufacturers of shirts and collars, have located a branch in South Norwalk, and during the past few months purchased additional property for the increase of that plant. So we can attract investors and we can attract business interests, and we do it, too, under our present form of government.

As has been said here this afternoon, South Norwalk stands as a unit almost against consolidation. If this Committee, in its wisdom, sees fit to divide that town, or to create a town government and establish two separate city communities, South Norwalk, I presume from my talks with the gentlemen here, would bid their northern brethren Godspeed, and wish them success in their course.

Now, gentlemen, if you were in Norwalk, and familiar with our local conditions; if you would pass from one city to another you would see a reason why we are geographically separated. There is an estate in the southern part of the City of Norwalk and the Northern part of the City of South Norwalk of fifty acres known as the Grant Lockwood Estate. Until that estate is sold, until it is cut up into building lots, until on it are erected structures, either of a residential or a business nature, Norwalk and South Norwalk can never be consolidated. They are a mile and three-eighths apart. It

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has been stated here a mile; it has been stated here a mile and a half. The record of our city engineer shows exactly a mile and three-eighths from the Boston store at Norwalk, which is the center of Norwalk to the Mahackemo Hotel in South Norwalk, which is the center of South Norwalk. These two communities can't grow together, gentlemen. They are growing, but South Norwalk joins Norwalk on its northerly boundary and the southerly boundary of Norwalk. Norwalk should grow southerly and South Norwalk should grow northerly, but they are growing in exactly opposite directions. Norwalk's building is all going northerly, while the growth of South Norwalk is in its southern section away from Norwalk.

Gentlemen, we have stood up here and shown our strength to your committee, and if you asked those in favor of division to rise and those in favor of consolidation to rise you would find Norwalk a house divided against itself. Outside of a few who have agitated this question, there is no popular demand within the town of Norwalk for consolidation. None whatever. It is my belief that were a bill passed by this committee, or by this legislature, ^{with a referendum by districts} /not only would the second voting district of the town, but every voting district of the town would vote down consolidation, and in their meetings held in the City of Norwalk much was said about referendum, much talk was had about referendum. The question was

agitated and votes were obtained on the pledge of the gentlemen that they would see to it that a referendum went on this bill. This afternoon we have heard that it is the duty of your committee to pass this bill without a referendum.

GENERAL FROST: I would like to leave some figures here. I spoke about that straw vote. I meant to say the vote cast for consolidation, that straw vote, was not over 25% of the registered vote, not over 25% of the registered voters voting on that question at all. I have the figures here now and I see I misquoted them.

GENERAL LIGHT: There are two bills here - two measures.

MR. LEO DAVIS: I speak for the proponents of consolidation and the proponents of division have allowed me their remaining time.

JUDGE LIGHT: I would like to ask the gentlemen here that are opposed to consolidation to rise (rising vote taken). I would like to ask the gentlemen here in favor of division to rise (rising vote taken).

REPRESENTATIVE MATHEIS: I would like to vote upon that question, but I would like to give my reasons; I don't think it is a fair question to ask.

JUDGE WALSH: I want to say, before calling upon General Frost, Mr. Chairman, you will find that charter

completed. Here is a synopsis of it.

Judge Taylor

Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen of the Committee, I want to call your attention to some particular features that have been touched upon but slightly by the previous speakers in passing. This bill at the town meeting that was referred back to the Committee was referred back to this Committee with the idea of perfecting and presenting it to the legislature. I have understood from a member of the Committee that by report nothing officially was done by that Committee with respect to this bill, but the bill was taken by some of the members of the committee and presented to the General Assembly in its incomplete state as it left the town meeting. At every town meeting held in respect to this bill absolute assurance was given by every proponent of consolidation that that measure involving the referendum should be so worded that that referendum when attached to the bill should be submitted going back to the town to vote upon it by districts. This bill does not involve that referendum in that way. Now, our friends are aware of the fact that if this bill comes back to the town of Norwalk in that condition that the bill will be defeated in the second voting district, which includes the City of South Norwalk, and in the third voting district which includes the East Norwalk Fire District. What

is the proposition now? I say it is absolutely unfair. General Frost who was chairman of that town meeting, and Brother Keogh, as a member of the Committee, now say to you that if the bill comes back in that way it will be defeated, we don't want it defeated, please send it back and let the town vote on it as a whole. That was the suggestion, or no referendum at all, just let us have consolidation as a report of this Committee. Now I say, and the inhabitants have said, in talking over the principle of consolidation in those several town meetings, that the stand was that South Norwalk will be treated fairly if, when that bill comes back, it will come back for a referendum vote by districts, any district voting against having the bill will defeat the bill itself. In all fairness, if it does come back, the only proposition of that referendum should be a submission to each voting district of the Town of Norwalk, an adverse vote in any district against the bill defeating it. It is unnecessary for me to tell you anything about this sectional feeling. Brother Walsh is here advocating consolidation; Brother Hubbell, his law partner, is representing anti-consolidation. That is a fair example of the sectional feeling. Brother Light has told you that after the town meeting in the Armory our friends in the upper city immediately got together ^{and} about a week ago held a city meeting and voted in favor of division. On that issue, gentlemen, individually, ever since the division of

about ten years ago, I have constantly been a believer that the best interests of the Town of Norwalk would be served by dividing that town, that the town would be better off. I would say to you now, in my judgment, that the bill before you consolidates only in theory, and no matter what you have in the form of a consolidated government, you cannot consolidate the sentiment, - you cannot legislate sentiment. I want to say further, in respect to this division bill, if, in the judgment of the Committee, the Town of Norwalk should be divided; if our friends from the upper part of the Town, as the "Hour" has been stating for the past week, are sincere on the question of division, we would say determine that question, South Norwalk, whatever your position may be on that question, if you determine it on a referendum vote, we will say to you Godspeed. We are not opposing you on that, but we have our little city of 43 years standing and growth with an increase in the last decade of 30%, and with an increase in the available assets, with a municipal electric lighting plant netting us \$25,000 a year, which will next year pay off its debt; and a filtration plant that cost us \$100,000. We say we have a pride in those things, and on the vote to legislate us out of existence, the vote should be a referendum by districts.

I want to make it plain to this Committee that if you vote on a referendum vote, ~~you~~ to divide the town of Norwalk into two towns, we should say Godspeed, because I

have believed for ten or twelve years that it would be advantageous to both ends of the town to divide and have separate towns.

JUDGE LIGHT: I want to lay in a remonstrance signed by 781 electors against consolidation. I have the originals in my office here in the Capitol.

MR. HOMER BUTTERY: I wish to say as representing the Broad River section of Norwalk, we are opposed to division, in the first place, because there hasn't been anything submitted for our consideration in the way of division of the town. In the second place, we believe it will be detrimental to our interests. It will depreciate our property; and I represent 95% of the electors and taxpayers of that section of the Town of Norwalk. We are satisfied with the present system, and we are progressing. The last ten years we have accomplished more than we have in the last one hundred years. In the last ten years there has been over \$40,000 worth of permanent bridges built in the Town of Norwalk. They have also built a High School, at a cost of \$98,000. We also have a Town Farm, assessed at \$20,000; also by progressive means we have voted to provide for the construction of a bridge in South Norwalk at a cost of \$200,000. We are progressing, and are opposed to division, because we believe it will depreciate our real estate. Today our real estate is selling for more than it ever did before.

The farms in the rural section of Norwalk have advanced from \$1,000 to \$3,000. Broad River is in the north section adjoining the city of Norwalk.

GENERAL FROST: I would like to ask our friends on the anti-consolidation proposition, who have declared here that this consolidated charter will be defeated by a majority of each of the three voting districts, if submitted to a vote of the people, whether they are in favor of, or whether they object to, this proposed consolidation bill with a referendum to be determined by a vote of the three districts, any one of which voting against the bill will defeat it, or whether they are opposed to the consolidation measure being submitted with such a referendum. I would like the attitude of the anti-consolidationists on that question.

JUDGE LIGHT: I can answer that. Our attitude is that if this Committee submit a bill at all, you submit it to each district separately and allow each district to vote. That is what the town passed upon at that meeting where it was approved. I believe it has been agitated and passed upon by the town, and we believe the Committee ought not to recommend any bill at all.

GENERAL FROST: You are opposed to this bill being presented and submitted to a referendum of the three voting districts, any one of which may defeat it ?

JUDGE LIGHT: Yes, we are opposed to any consolidation bill, but if it is submitted, should be submitted to each district.

MR. McMAHON: I don't think it is necessary at all to have this matter sent back to our people, to keep us in a turmoil from now until next October. I am satisfied, and I believe every man here is satisfied, that there is no question about the result, but that this thing pending until next October will keep us in a turmoil.

GENERAL FROST: First, with reference to the eloquent argument of my good brother Light. I heard him make the same speech at the time of the division movement before a Committee of the Legislature.

JUDGE LIGHT: You were with me then.

GENERAL FROST: Yes; but not quite so eloquent as today, and I made very much the same speech myself, in a much ~~feebler~~ way. . . . We were both divisionists at that time. Brother Light became an earlier convert to consolidation than I did, but, following his brilliant example, as I always do when I can, I became a consolidationist myself, and up to today, is the first of my knowledge that brother Light has become an anti-consolidationist. He told me before this hearing began that it was his purpose, except for the vote at the Armory meeting, to present a consolidation charter to the Legislature under a commission form of government, and, under that form, to advocate consolidation. Now I am not charging him with the crime of inconsistency, because

inconsistency is not a crime, because it shows mental growth and the broadening of a man's notions and a man's views; when he becomes broader than he formerly was. He says that these two votes upon the question of consolidation do not reflect the sentiment of the people of South Norwalk. First, where it was unanimously voted, without a single vote in opposition, that this Committee present this charter to the Legislature for its passage, at the biggest town meeting ever held up to that time; he says that vote did not reflect the sentiment of the Town of Norwalk, for the reason that the meeting was so big that the South Norwalk people could not get into it. Now it will not be disputed by any gentlemen here, from the most ardent anti-consolidationist to the most ardent consolidationist, that there were several hundred people from South Norwalk in that meeting, when that unanimous vote in favor of consolidation was passed; and if anybody denies that statement as a statement of fact, I listen to hear his denial. So much for that.

Now, upon this question of the straw vote, which brother Light so strongly derogates, which he says did not amount to anything: on that straw vote, as he calls it, upon the question of consolidation submitted to the people of Norwalk for a vote by ballot, not in a town meeting, packed or jammed by either side, but there were 1948 votes cast in

the Town of Norwalk. At this great meeting at the Armory, upon which so much reliance must be placed, according to our friends, there were just 1150 votes cast. The vote by ballot, they say, does not express the sentiment of the people of Norwalk, but the vote at the Armory does express the sentiment of the people of Norwalk. Upon that vote by ballot, where men in their cool moments reflecting privately their best judgment by going to the polls and by themselves depositing their ballots as their conscientious judgment directed, there were 1948 votes cast in favor of consolidation. At this great Armory meeting, where this question was definitely and permanently settled, according to the argument of the anti-consolidationists, there were 642 votes in favor of anti-consolidation and 508 in favor of consolidation. In other words, at the Armory meeting with 1150 votes cast, there was a majority in favor of anti-consolidation of 134. In the Town of Norwalk voting by ballot, each man voting in his judgment and his discretion, in his cool moments, there were 1346 votes cast in favor of consolidation. Now gentlemen, which reflects the sentiment of the people of Norwalk most clearly and most forcibly as between those two votes? In the second voting district, which is comprised almost wholly of the voters of the City of South Norwalk, which does not want consolidation, according

to the views of our friends here, on that ballot there were cast 502 votes in favor of consolidation, and there were cast 382 votes against consolidation, and the majority in that voting district only was 122 in favor of consolidation. Now it reflects both clearly and strongly the judgment of the people of the City of South Norwalk and the judgment of the people of the Town of Norwalk in those two competitive votes; and General Light says the only reason that he has changed his view upon the question of consolidation, and the only thing that stopped him from presenting to this Legislature a consolidation charter under a commission form of government, was the vote of the Armory meeting, following the vote by ballot of the electorate of the Town of Norwalk. Whether that is a good reason or not, and a wise reason for influencing the judgment of brother Light, I won't argue, but shall submit it for your consideration. Now, I have very little further to say upon this question.

The matter broadly is before you all. It is before every person here present.

Here is the City of South Norwalk with a full-fledged municipal government, and with municipal officers; and in Norwalk we have precisely the same thing; two municipal governments, duplicated in two cities lying side by side, and I challenge any member of this Committee to go down into that

community and point to any person where the dividing line is between the City of Norwalk and the City of South Norwalk? They say the centers are a mile and three-eighths apart. The cities are lying side by side. The great city of Bridgeport has two centers, the old Bridgeport and East Bridgeport, and they are probably two or three miles apart. Is that any reason because in a great city there happen to be two particular centers of business, that they should not be united into one city? Every great city has certain little centers, little clusters of business, or municipal administration. That is no reason why they should not be united into one great city.

So, the great question before this Committee is whether it is better to have three municipal governments lying side by side, with no ostensible division, with no one being able to tell where one begins and the other ends, except the river lying between East Norwalk and South Norwalk, yet they come here and argue that for that reason these cities should not be united into one great city of 25,000 people, instead of three little disputing, contesting cities, filled with animosity and jealousy, and lacking in harmony, which is necessary to make a great city in the state of Connecticut.

That is the issue before this Committee.

Now gentlemen, I have said that there have been municipal charters given to cities which could not agree, and which were regarded as a wise thing for those cities, and which were passed without a referendum. That was the case in 1897 in the city of Meriden. They came here with a proposed - substantially new - charter, which divided the community into all sorts of political, sectional, personal and almost religious factions. They came before the Committee on Cities and Boroughs, of which I was House Chairman, and they had repeated hearings, and worked themselves up into almost a malevolent spirit; and that committee looked the situation over and said those people down there aren't fit to vote on what they ought to have; they won't vote upon the merits of the question, they will vote one faction seeking to down the other faction, with no regard for the city; and that committee reported the charter which they deemed best for the City of Meriden, and that charter was passed without a referendum, and I say this committee would be justified in passing such a charter for the town of Norwalk, - but I don't desire it done. I desire it passed with a referendum, and I desire it passed with a referendum to each voting district of the town of Norwalk, with the power to defeat this measure if a majority of votes against the bill is cast in any one voting district.

Now what is the attitude of our anti-consolidation friends? Their attitude is that they are entirely opposed to such a bill. They are utterly opposed to the people of Norwalk having an opportunity to express their sentiment and say by their ballot whether they want consolidation or not. Is that an attitude that is justified before this committee, - that is justified before the Legislature? that is justified before the State, that is justified before the Town of Norwalk, that is justified before the anti-consolidationists themselves? It is an attitude of domination, not an attitude of fairness. They say "what we say is right" and the people shan't have an opportunity to say whether it is right or not; a dictation, clearly, to the Legislature; a dictation of the middle centuries where they said "the King can do no wrong; what the King says is right, and is right because the King says it is right," whether it is right or wrong in the judgment of the people. And that is their attitude. They say "we don't want consolidation, and because we say we don't want it it isn't right that the people should have the privilege of saying what they want." And that is the attitude I am here to contest, and which I am here to condemn in words as forcible as I can speak here to this committee; and I say to the Legislature of the State of Connecticut that the people of the Town of Norwalk want an opportunity to vote upon this question and say whether they want consolidation or not.

MR. LEO DAVIS: My Brother Light when he started off said that we breath the same air, and view the same sun, and I presumed he was going to follow with saying that we run the same course, and then in the very next breath he said that we are different from the people of Darien and Westport. It is South Norwalk here, regardless of the rest of the town. What we want is one large city down there. Whether we increase thirty seven per cent. or not, I say we are not growing as we should. We are small and divided, and they would have us infinitesimally smaller, and while they may have grown thirty seven per cent. there is absolutely no reason why this town shouldn't increase one hundred per cent., if we had one large city and worked in harmony, as we could.

If you were to send two bills down there, one on division and one on consolidation, in all probability it would be division, but if you send a bill down there so each voting district can negative the proposition it is an absolute waste of time, because the small district from which I come could negative it,

What this Legislature out to do is prepare a charter and say "you people have been incompetent. We go to a town meeting and have a unanimous vote for a separate town, and they you go to a town meeting and vote for consolidation; and we say in 1903 Brother Light appeared here in favor of division, and a little bit later he appeared in favor of consolidation under a commission form of government, and today he appears for neither; and in 1903 - I want to read

to you from Brother Light's January 9, 1903, speech:

"This will be a step in the direction of economy and efficiency. It is just such a step as all wise business men would take if this township were a private enterprise. It is strange that men will not do as well for the public at large as they will do for themselves. The secret of this may be found in the fact that we have been educated too much along the lines of individual gain and too little along the lines of true socialism. Why not put aside all prejudice and make an honest effort to better our conditions?"

When the Town of Norwalk went before the Legislature and asked for a County Court House Bridgeport sneered at us as always divided against ourselves. When we went to Washington and asked for a public building they said "Get together and we will give you one." When we asked for an armory unitedly we got it. We asked for a bridge in the town of Norwalk at an expenditure of a quarter of a million dollars, and we got it. And I say there are many things we could get if we were united,

This charter doesn't lose the identity of South Norwalk, but divides it into districts, allows them to regulate their own municipal affairs, and allows them to tax for their improvements desired in that one section. But it is like the gentleman who died and went to Heaven and when he knocked for admission Saint Peter said who is it, where are you from, and

and the man said from South Norwalk, and then Saint Peter said "you can come in, but you won't be satisfied. We of the younger generation say we can improve over one hundred per cent. Brother Light says there's no reason why we should have consolidation, Brother Keogh has mentioned four hundred and thirty four good reasons. We have four hundred and thirty four (434) office holders, and there is no reason why we can't get rid of a good many of them; and when you tie us together for five years we can get rid of this multiplicity of government.

Brother Light says those six hundred people didn't know what they were voting for, - didn't know that they were voting on the question of consolidation or on the question of the charter. That is another good reason why you gentlemen should take us in hand and say "here's a charter, and you will work under it, and unite and grow. If you elect a new town clerk do you put the town safe on a truck and cart it to another part of the town? The town hall is the meeting place.

It is useless to send down a bill with a referendum by districts, and if you do send down a referendum of any kind, send down one where we must vote on consolidation or division, where we must have one or the other.

With reference to the consolidation of schools, there is one gentleman on that Board from South Norwalk who has created dissention in that Board for the sole purpose of

creating antagonism against this consolidation movement, and that is exactly and the only reason it has been done, and to start petty jealousy. At that Armory meeting where everyone had a right to vote by ballot and according to their conscience one gentleman had a ballot in his hand in favor of consolidation when another gentleman, who had been his employer, went up and grabbed it out of his hand and said "this is the ballot you want" and made him put in another ballot.

I am about to close when I answer my brother from the Broad River Section when he says farms have advanced from \$1,000 to \$3,000 in value, and say that the first thing the school superintendent did was to condemn a school house, and now comes the representative and says that Broad River comes up here against consolidation.

What we want is the right to grow to the full statu of manhood and to have unity, and we ask you gentlemen to force it upon us, and make us live under it for a term of five years, It is no worse than we have been doing for ten years, and we can stand it for five years more.