What Boston Needs

JAMES M. CURLEY

A series of articles entitled "What Boston Needs" has been written by Mr. Curley exclusively for the Boston Traveler. These articles contain material that will cause much discussion. Mr. Curley has twice been mayor of Boston and his views of the needs of the community will interest everyone regardless of political affiliations and beliefs.—Editor's Note.

I am a native of the city of Boston. Here I grew up and here I acquired such training and education as I possess. I am very proud of the city of my birth, its traditions, history and achievements. I am zealous for its prosperity and growth and the expansion of its commerce and industry; and I am jealous of its good name and reputation; and resentful of those who for personal gain, political advantage, or for other purposes equally base and unworthy, have been willing to sacrifice much that Boston stands for in the annals of the Republic.

PAYS TRIBUTE TO IMMIGRANTS.

Boston, like every other great American city, is peopled by a population diverse in its origins and varied in its religious beliefs. These peoples have made their homes in Boston; they have absorbed its spirit and contributed to its growth and greatness and in the day of national trouble have always given good service and made willing sacrifice for the common weal. They have entered into the warp and woof of our national and civic life.

TRAINING AND TREATMENT IMPORTANT.

They and their children are here to stay, to become part and parcel of the American community; and upon the training and treatment the newer peoples receive from the older will depend much of the character of the future of our city, much of the happiness, peace and contentment of our citizens. These opinions are not especially new. They are based on the experience of all lands in their formative and fluid ages; and we in America must learn from the success and failure of others how to meet and solve the problems that emerge from the old conditions repeated here and now.
VITAL BEARING ON CITY'S FUTURE

The futility of attempting to indict a nation, a people, or a specific group of exiles and newcomers, has been stated time and again. Men are pretty much alike no matter where they originate, what tongue they speak, what God they worship, or what church they worship Him in. They love their homes and families, they react according to the treatment accorded to them in their new environment; and if for no other reason an enlightened self-interest should impel us to make the newcomers a source of strength, not of weakness to the community. Therein the attitude of Boston today and tomorrow towards the newer peoples, the latest comers, becomes of vital importance of the city's future.

MUST BE OUR OWN SIN-EATERS

It is as unphilosophical as it is illogical to attempt to hold the stranger within our gates responsible for our dere-lictions; we must be our own sin-eaters and learn to understand that no particular people are endowed solely with virtues; that a full pantry and a contented home are the best allies of law and order, and the best auguries of a happy community. The duty of securing these desirable conditions lies heaviest on the backs of the people who have been here the longest, and it is undeniable that if they refuse to do their duty and foolishly insist on pulling back in the harness they will realize later that they are delaying the coming of the perfect day.

TOO NEGLCETFUL OF CITIZENSHIP

They have enjoyed the rights and privileges of America a long time. The novelty of it has worn off. They are too prone to stress them and neglect the duties their citizenship and Americanism require; and to expect from the stranger a higher standard of duty than they themselves give, while they begrudge him the rights and privileges, is folly.

FOR REAL AMERICAN COMMUNITY

The new peoples in time merge with the old; they increase and multiply with the years; they become American citizens endowed with all the rights and privileges of their citizenship and for good or ill must be reckoned with. It would seem to be wisdom on the part of those who now constitute the majority of Boston to so guide and guard these people and their rights that when the inevitable day comes when today's majority becomes tomorrow's minority the spirit of political and religious fair play and justice will so saturate Boston that the rights and privileges of their children will be guarded and conserved by a genuinely American community.
TOO MANY SELFISH INTERESTS

This condition does not exist today; the political parties of the state see things as in a glass darkly; and the interests of the few are allowed to outweigh the betterment of the commonwealth and city; and unless we wake up we will be left laggards in the struggle.

We cannot live on traditions of former generations and leadership; traditions are spurs to activity and achievement, not foundations upon which to build accomplishments; and the day has come when Boston needs a community united in action and purpose, animated by the broadest of American ideals, infused by the spirit of progress, and regardful of the true meaning of Americanism.

MUST SHED OUR PROVINCIALISM

We must rid ourselves of the provincialism and we must meet the conditions of the restless, changing age, discard the limitations of the country town, and put on the garments of the potential cosmopolis we are; and by shedding the trappings of the village become metropolitan Bostonians.

To the accomplishment of this purpose we must subordinate the sectarian and the party man to the Bostonian emulous for the greatness and betterment of our city, each of us free in his place and thought and action, and all united for the common weal. Let us at least make a start for the goal on the mountain top where the Boston of our affections may sit in the honor and respect that were once hers.

TIME FOR CONCERTED ACTION

I am firmly convinced that the time has arrived for concerted action by all organizations and individuals interested either in the city or the commonwealth to work whole-heartedly for a greater Boston. I have a profound realization of the obstacles that must be overcome to achieve an object so desirable and necessary; but I firmly believe that the beneficial results that will accrue from the establishment of a Greater Boston will justify the effort and energy expended on its accomplishment. The last federal census quoted Boston in eighth place among American cities, despite the fact that a Greater Boston, embracing the cities and towns within 15 miles of the State House, gives Boston fourth rank among the cities of America.

POLITICS HANDBICAPPING GROWTH

The commercial and industrial benefits that would result from this favored position should be apparent to every thoughtful citizen, yet politics prevents favorable action, to the detriment of both city and state.
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The port of Boston, which for more than a century occupied first place commercially, and for half a century second place in the matter of exports and imports, is today relegated to eighth place, and a harbor once alive with the shipping of the nations of the world is today merely a port of call. This negligible condition of commercial Boston is reflected in the rivers and harbors appropriation bill adopted annually by Congress, and which each year, prior to 1925, out of a total expenditure in excess of $16,000,000 allotted the scanty sum of $200,000 to the port of Boston. Since 1925 Congress has failed to pass any rivers and harbors bill, although the engineering department of the war department has been allowed fifty millions for rivers and harbors work, and from this amount allotted the war department but $50,000 has been allowed Boston for ordinary survey and repairs.

REFLECTS ON STATE'S STANDING AT CAPITAL

It seems a direct reflection upon the political standing of the majority party in Washington from Massachusetts that with the exception of $450,000 in 1925 for widening and deepening Broad Sound channel we should receive such scant consideration.

It is further reflected in the failure of international and national industries either to locate within the city limits or to establish branch distributing agencies here for overseas trade, notwithstanding the commercial advantage represented by a saving of nearly three days in round trip shipments to Europe, or a saving of time and risk in shipments to the Pacific coast via the Panama canal, or to the Atlantic ports of South America.
REAL OBJECTIVE FOR GREATER BOSTON

The same hostile attitude displayed by the federal government in the case of Boston in the matter of development of commercial agencies is constantly manifested by our state Legislature, almost wholly as a matter of politics.

Personally, I believe that too much consideration has been given the question of political control in the event of a Greater Boston, and consequently the real object of such consolidation has been lost sight of, namely, the benefits that would accrue to both city and state from an expanded municipality with a community of interest.

The creation of a Greater Boston will mark an end of petty hostilities and the beginning of a constructive program for the restoration of commercial activity and the promotion of industrial prosperity; it should be welcomed by all citizens. The present geographical area of the city inevitably tends to the slower growth annually in population when compared with other American cities.

BOSTON NOW LABORS UNDER HANDICAP

The increased demands of education, of religious and charitable institutions, coupled with the normal growth of mercantile and industrial establishments and the necessary extension of playground and park facilities must result, not only in an increase in the valuation of land within the city limits, but lessen the area available for places of habitation under our present political and municipal organization. The inviting character of the towns and smaller cities adjacent to Boston and the excellent facilities afforded by transportation systems and good roads, inevitably tend to the development of the suburbs of Boston to the disadvantage of the city, from the standpoint of numerical position based upon population, a large percentage of which shares our advantages without contributing to their upkeep.

WOULD PLAN 25 YEARS AHEAD

Under these circumstances the city of Boston, until such time as a Greater Boston has been established, must be confronted with the necessity of providing, at a great expenditure of public money, for street widenings and construction of the arteries necessary for the convenience and benefit of a transient population, equal in actual numbers, and sometimes exceeding, the total population of the city. Railroad transportation, rapid, frequent and adequate, for a numerous commuting population who earn their livelihood in the city and live elsewhere than Boston, presents a problem difficult of solution. Believing that sentiment might sometime assert itself in our legislative assembly in favor of a Greater Boston, the city planning board should draft a program of municipal requirements covering the next quarter of a century.

WHERE BOSTON SETS THE PACE

From the point of view of public health, Boston has achieved the distinction of ranking first among American cities. Boston has front rank among American cities in municipal hospitalization facilities. Boston's fire department has received the highest commendation from the board of fire underwriters. In public education Boston is...
the only city in America defraying the entire cost of education and schoolhouse facilities from its current taxes, paying as it goes, without burdening the future, which was inaugurated by me in 1916.

In park and recreation facilities, Boston's place is in the forefront. Boston's police accommodations, through the completion of the largest police station in the world and the best equipped police headquarters to be found in America, are surpassed by none. In view of these evidences of a constantly progressive activity, with an exceptionally well-organized and efficiently conducted public works department and a sane consideration of the commercial and industrial needs of this community, the case for the consolidation of Boston and the suburban cities and towns she has built up and fostered into a Greater Boston should be apparent to every intelligent citizen.

NEEDLESSLY DELAYED BY PETTY CLAIMS
Against the claim for this most needed change is heard the plea of local autonomy, largely from sources that have never been solicitous concerning home rule for Boston; yet this plea, feeble and fatuous as it is, has, by political bolstering, been accepted by politicians as sufficient to deny a movement, healthful and stimulating to the territory that would be embraced in the greater city, and the state generally. The elements of Greater Boston are here; the embryo of the creation exists already in various commissions and activities, called metropolitan, when no metropolis is functioning, and which under consolidation would become integral parts of the machinery of the greater city.

TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION
It is true we have certain functions already under metropolitan control, parks, sewers, water, and the division of metropolitan planning; and while admitting on one hand that these have worked well, on the other hand opposing any extension of the same system is archaic. There is also a grave element of danger involved in the present system and the fact that we may not have suffered from it in the past is no guarantee that we will be immune in the future.

An extension of the present system means putting more authority into the hands of a group of men appointed by state officials and in no way responsible to the nearly two million people comprising the metropolitan district. That is a modern interpretation of taxation without representation, a principle which we paid dearly to refute a century and a half ago.
CITIES EXPERIENCE OF NEW YORK CITY

Practically the same situation existed in New York until the last century. As one student of municipal affairs expressed it:

Metropolitan population was not one body politically, but upward of 40. Chaos reigned supreme. Cities, counties, villages, school districts, detached boards and quasi-independent offices contracted debts, enacted local legislation, and carried on the administrative operations and local government without any co-ordination or co-operation. The effect was calamitous. Not only was the natural evolution of the metropolitan area retarded because of the difficulty of securing united action on the great problems of transportation, sanitation, city planning, housing, public safety, and the like, which were basic determinative factors in growth, but the financial situation except in the case of New York was desperate.

ONE OF THE MARVELS OF THIS AGE

The development of New York in the 20th century has been one of the marvels of this age, and it will hardly be disputed that one of the most potent factors has been the consolidation of which we have just been speaking.

The history of Philadelphia is much the same, while Pittsburgh and Los Angeles and Chicago and Cleveland, and in fact, most of the large cities in the United States today are studying their problems from a metropolitan or regional point of view. Of course, there are obstacles and drawbacks to any plan, but the adjustment of the borough system in London presented far more difficult problems than any likely to be found in our own country, but even in London none was found insuperable. A thorough study by a fact-finding commission of the advantages and disadvantages, what should be surrendered to each particular district and what retained, together with a knowledge of what has been done and is being done in other communities, should result in some plan of procedure acceptable in that it would be advantageous to all.
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Changes in the field of transportation are pending and Boston should be in a position to take advantage of them, not as a community of less than a million people, but as a centre of a metropolitan district numbering 2,000,000 people. An attempt on the part of the Delaware & Hudson Railroad Company to obtain control of 16 railroads in the eastern and New England states, including the Boston & Maine and the New York, New Haven & Hartford railroads, was recently reported as part of the scheme involving more than 13,000 miles of trackage and an investment of nearly three billion dollars.

SHOULD PREPARE FOR ELECTRIFICATION

Whether this or some other merger materializes, electrification will be but the next step, as in the case of the Grand Trunk railway, also reported as about to spend $100,000,000 in the electrification of its lines between Detroit, Birmingham and Pontiac, and in constructing an automobile speedway over the route. Boston has dreamed of electrification for years, and yet if it were presented to us today we would not be in a position to take proper advantage of its possibilities.

The word "annexation" has become noxious to the ears of many of our neighboring cities and towns, partly as expressed on the ground of fear of political exploitation and contamination and partly on account of a highly developed historical self-consciousness. As a matter of fact the integrity of the government of Boston will compare favorably throughout the years with that of any other municipality in the metropolitan district. It has perhaps been more frequently assailed, but for the most part the accusations have been proved unfounded.
GREATER BOSTON WOULD MEAN BOOM

Its tax rate is nominally the lowest among the cities in the metropolitan district and lower than many, if not most, of the towns. It is also a fact that the rapid increase in the cost of government in Boston is due chiefly to the state and metropolitan charges and to the cost of schools, and that it corresponds to similar increases in the other metropolitan cities and towns. As for local traditions, they would be strengthened and upheld rather than lost sight of as they frequently are under the present disjointed arrangement.

As a “Greater Boston” we would have an enhancement of real estate values. This has proven true repeatedly under similar conditions throughout the United States. Large undertakings could be handled far more readily and advantageously if the metropolitan district were working as a unit. An expenditure that seems large for a city of less than a million people would not be a formidable undertaking for a metropolis of double that number.

WOULD MEAN FOURTH CITY IN U. S.

Our subway system, built at the expense of the city of Boston, carries two passengers from the metropolitan district to every one of our own citizens, while the chief difficulty in a consideration of the Elevated problem is that it is really a metropolitan system affecting more than a dozen municipalities. The advertising value of a population total entitling us to a place as the fourth city in the United States and the seventh city in the world would be very considerable, while at the same time if we had a united city of 2,000,000 people we could make a much more effective appeal in Washington for freight rates and other federal functions which are vital to the success of the community.

HAS BEARING ON TERCENTENARY

The need of the hour is the self-reliance and faith that made successful the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Boston next year will celebrate the tercentenary of the settlement of the city. The time has arrived to consummate a Greater Boston as an enduring memorial to our work and worth in this century. It is the character of task in which all can play a part, and should success crown our mutual efforts it will be the character of victory in which all may well rejoice.
THE HIGHWAY PROBLEM

It is a most interesting commentary that a solution of traffic congestion due to narrow highways was presented to the city of Boston some 85 years ago by Robert Fleming Gourlay and rejected. The recommendation made by him was that no street, even the shortest, should be less than 30 feet wide; if a quarter of a mile long, 50 feet; if half a mile, 70 feet, and if a mile, not less than 90 feet.

POINTS WAY TO IMPROVE TRAFFIC

Yet, strange to say, the same ground for rejection of his program, namely, "that nobody cares for such matters here; no two people here will agree about improving the streets. All are intent on securing the mighty dollar; show them how to get it, then you will have plenty to approve and assist."

I have a profound appreciation of the difficulties represented in traffic congestion and its solution, and recognize that it is in no sense local and that it is today an unsolved problem in every portion of the world.

The difficulty in the case of Boston may be traced in large measure to narrow highways and failure to properly plan, and lack of courage in execution of plans when large financial obligations are involved. Not only are wider thoroughfares essential, but also a courageous system of enforcement of traffic regulations and a larger expenditure of money for smooth-paved thoroughfares and a traffic signal system.

PARK SYSTEM ANSWERS PROBLEM

There is less traffic congestion in the Boston park system today than in any other section of Boston's highways. Yet prior to 1914 the congestion was as great there, due to poor roads, as elsewhere.

In 1914, during my first term as mayor, the total yardage of permanent smooth paving in the Boston park system was 1200 square yards, and recognizing the need for early action this problem was attacked with both courage and vision, the result being that in 1925, at the conclusion of my second term, substantially every foot of park roadway enjoyed permanent smooth construction, or a total of 600,000 square yards completed under Curley as against 1200 square yards when I assumed office.
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The value of wide thoroughfares is emphasized in the case of Morton street, where six roads of traffic flow continuously without congestion at the present time.

Cambridge street, upon which during a period of one-half a century not one single structure had been erected despite the fact that it was an important connecting highway, was widened to 100 feet, and is today bustling with activity and gives promise of becoming one of the most important Boston arteries.

STREET WIDENINGS BOOM VALUES

Tremont street, from Stuart street to Castle square, despite general protest, was widened to 80 feet, thereby making possible an artery for the relief of downtown traffic congestion. The widening of Tremont street resulted in a general realty development in this section, the returns from which represent already 200 per cent. in excess of the amortization requirements.

The widening of Kneeland street, from Washington street to Atlantic avenue, not only enhances the value of Stuart street but is rapidly developing into a high-class wholesale district with substantially built structures covering most of the available area, the revenue from which is already more than sufficient to cover the annual amortization charges.

The creation of a free flowing traffic artery in the market district has long been recognized as necessary both from the standpoint of traffic fluidity and the protection of the city's investment in Faneuil Hall and Quincy Market. The Dock square improvement represented an investment of $2,500,000 and its benefits are today acknowledged by every person.
TRAFFIC PROBLEM CALLS FOR COURAGE

I cannot agree with the viewpoint of the police commissioner that vexatious, expensive traffic congestion in the high value retail section of Boston can be relieved by additional traffic officers or the adoption of laws to regulate automobile traffic. The problem created by the increase in persons and vehicles on the narrow downtown streets of Boston is impossible to cure by sugar-coated palliatives; a major surgical operation is necessary and it is for the people of Boston to determine whether they have the courage, vision, vitality and willingness to expend the money necessary for the performing of the operation.

CITES PROVINCE STREET AS EXAMPLE

Contrary to the prevailing opinion, municipal money invested in street widenings, provided they are conducted honestly and in the interests of the taxpayers and after most thorough study, are invariably an asset and rarely a liability. In no particular instance is this more strongly emphasized than in the case of Province street, long recognized as one of Boston’s serious fire hazards and upon which no expenditure had been made for new construction in a period of three-quarters of a century.

Province street has been transformed from a dirty, disreputable and dilapidated alley to a broad, inviting and wholesome thoroughfare upon which structures have already been created from which a return is derived more than three times in excess of the annual amortization charge. The widening of Province street might have been long delayed were it not for the courage and confidence of the officials of the Boston Five Cents Savings Bank who, when those agencies responsible for the tightening of the swaddling clothes of the infant Boston were exhausting every conceivable legal and other method to prevent the consummation of the project, after a conference with me agreed to accept $60,000 less in payment for the bank property to be taken by the city than the property was assessed for.

MUST SAFEGUARD LIFE

The solution of the traffic problem is almost equal in importance to the municipality and its people as the question of a Greater Boston, and is so interrelated with the commercial and industrial development of Boston that it must be settled and settled speedily for the best interests of all.

The question of relief from traffic congestion is but one of the problems. Another equally important problem, but invariably disregarded, is the question of public safety. There is a limit to what a municipality can expend for public parks and yet for the protection of the lives and limbs of the children of the city something should be done at once.
In this country, during the past three years, there were more persons killed by automobiles than there were United States soldiers killed during the entire period of the world war, and casualties during the past year exceeded, in number, all those suffered by the American forces. Twenty-seven thousand five hundred persons were killed and 800,000 were seriously injured during the past year in the United States.

ECONOMIC LOSS TOTALS MILLIONS

Because there has been no spectacular presentation of these facts, the American public has not yet awakened to the tremendous problem which it faces in reducing these figures. The economic loss involved runs into millions of dollars, embracing doctors’ and hospital expenses, loss of wages and damages to property.

Of all the accidental deaths occurring during the past year, 30 per cent. were the result of automobile accidents. While accidental deaths from all causes increased 3 per cent. during the year, automobile deaths increased 6 1-3 per cent., and the figures are mounting rapidly each year. Latest figures from the most important states predict a greater increase this year than ever before.

RIGHT HERE IN BOSTON

Let us examine the Boston situation. During 1928 we had 119 deaths and 3200 persons seriously injured, two deaths and 60 seriously injured every week. The figures for 1929 are far from encouraging. We have had 82 deaths and are now entering upon the most dangerous period of the year.

Insurance rates are based upon natural expectancy of losses and during recent years have been applied to specific areas. A reduction in the number of automobile accidents would mean a proportionate reduction in insurance rates. This economic feature must not be overlooked.

Statistics show that one-third of the pedestrian accidents and deaths in this city involve children 7 years of age or under. Picture, if you will, a typical home somewhere in Boston. The family is composed of father, mother and daughter of tender years. The father is leaving for his work. He kisses his wife good-by, takes his daughter into his arms, kisses her, tells her to be a good girl and warns her particularly to be careful of automobiles while crossing the street on her way to and from school.

ALMOST DAILY EXPERIENCE

While he is busy with his daily tasks, a message is brought to him. He is told that he is needed at home as soon as possible. With dire forebodings in his mind and a heart sinking under a heavy load, he rushes home. A neighbor meets him at the door with the customary admonition to be brave.

He is certain that the worst has happened and yet he is hopeful. "He finds his wife hysterical, unable to talk coherently, merely repeating over and over again something that sounds like his daughter's name. A doctor appears from an adjoining room and, with professional auster-
ity, tells him that his daughter was struck by an automobile on her way home from school and was killed.

**FOR BETTER, SAFER STREETS**

This scene has been enacted many times, as there are many places in Boston where it is almost impossible for children to cross the street with any degree of safety. It is tragic to witness the extreme bewilderment of children and older persons trying to cross the street without protection of any description.

Accepted streets or unaccepted streets which have not been constructed and upon which houses in excess of many millions of dollars have been erected, are today quagmires during the winter and spring months and breeders of dust and pestilence during the summer months.

Yet these are the playgrounds of the children in certain sections of the city, and this condition should be remedied at once for the good of all.

**AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN'S PLAY**

An annual expenditure of $500,000 is insufficient to meet the requirements, and in my opinion this problem has been too long delayed. Provision could and should be made for the construction of smooth surface streets upon which homes have been erected, and where the city has failed to do its part. A survey could be conducted and regulations adopted which would provide that one in every five residential streets so reconstructed be utilized for play purposes exclusively during certain hours of the day, subject to rotation in each district.

The establishment of these play streets would, in a short period of years, add materially to the playground area of the city without additional expense to the taxpayers. It would relieve the mothers of the community, who are in a constant state of fear whenever their children are at play upon the streets, and would in addition result in a considerable reduction in the loss of life and limb to the children of the city and a material reduction in the cost of operating our hospital.
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The public demand that the government, federal, state and municipal, do more and more than has ever previously been done for public necessity and convenience represents an important problem in the administration of the varied communities comprising what should constitute a Greater Boston.

It is impossible to determine how this problem of the cost of government may be met without the establishment of a Greater Boston.

HUB'S ENVIABLE FINANCIAL STANDING

It is difficult even in a community as large as the city of Boston and presents a problem of major importance in communities that are smaller. The city of Boston has long enjoyed the highest financial reputation among American municipalities.

There is no city in America which enjoys a larger market for its securities and there are no municipal securities that enjoy a more ready sale than those of the city of Boston. The enviable position of Boston, and I speak of the municipality during my terms as mayor, in the matter of tax rate, as contrasted with other large American cities and the cities large and small of Massachusetts itself, is of interest.

FORTUNATE IN LOW TAX RATE

Despite the expenditure of nearly $3,500,000 from 1922 to 1925 for the maintenance of the contributory pension system, with county obligations borne entirely by the city of Boston, and a metropolitan tax system, the major portion of which is borne by the city of Boston, it was possible in each of the four years of my first administration to establish the third lowest tax rate of any Massachusetts city.
The burden of the cost of city government bears most heavily upon the rent payer, due to the prevailing custom of property owners apportioning rentals on the basis of assessment of values and taxation of premises.

The astonishing feature in connection with the administration of the affairs of Boston lies in a greatly increased cost of administration of affairs under the so-called Good Government mayors of the city with a resulting increase in taxation levied upon every home owner and an increase in rental to every family whether they live in a single family, two-family, three-family house or otherwise.

COMPARES MAYORALTY RECORDS

Exception has been taken to the slogan which some good friends of mine contributed at their own personal expense and have seen fit to use on billboard advertising, namely, "Boston Needs Curley"; yet a contrast of the Curley administrations and the administrations of those citizens who have been elected with Good Government endorsement emphasizes the truth of this slogan.

During my first term as mayor, starting in January, 1914, the tax rate was $17.50 per thousand of valuation; the following year, $18; the third year, $17.80, and in the last year, $17.70, or an average of $17.75 per thousand of valuation during the four-year period.

UNDER GOOD GOVERNMENT REGIME

In 1918 the Good Government candidate for mayor assumed office and immediately the tax rate was increased from $17.70 per thousand of valuation during the last year of my administration to $21 per thousand during the first year of the Good Government administration, representing an increased burden of $6,000,000 imposed upon the taxpayers during the first year of the so-called Good Government administration.

The second year of the so-called Good Government administration saw a further increase of $2.40 per thousand, representing approximately $3,500,000 additional burden; and the third year of Good Government administration resulted in a further increase of 50 cents per thousand of valuation in the tax rate, representing a further burden of $2,500,000; while the last year of the Good Government administration showed a further increase of 60 cents per thousand, equivalent to $1,225,000 additional for the year, or a total during the four-year period of $13,225,000.

ERA OF EXCESSIVE RENTS

Unfortunately it is the common custom in a cursory examination of statistics to accept them at their face value without examination. Investigation in this case discloses the fact that the actual increased burden over the four-year period of Good Government administration was approximately $41,000,000, and this tremendous increase was responsible for such an increase in rents in Boston as to make necessary for the protection of the people the establishment of the rent and housing commission to act as arbitrator between the forced rapacity of landlords and the needs of the occupants of rented premises.
COMPARES CITY'S TAX RATES

The tax rate at the beginning of my first administration, you will observe, was $17.50 per thousand, and at the close of my four years was $17.70, an increase of 20 cents, which I beg you will contrast with the tax rate under my successor, the Good Government mayor, so-called, under whose first year the tax rate was $21.20, an increase of $3.50 above my last year, and during the last year of his term further increased to $24.70 per thousand, or a total of $7 greater during the last year of the Good Government mayor than during my last year; or an increase in the cost of conducting the activities of the city nearly half as great as the total cost during any year of my administration.

CITES HIS SECOND ADMINISTRATION

In 1922 I was returned to the office of mayor, finding the tax rate $24.70 per thousand, and with a full realization of the burden borne by the people of Boston as represented in the tax rate I made every possible endeavor to prevent a further increase, in striking contrast with the custom inaugurated by the Good Government representative of immediately jumping the tax rate to an exorbitant figure. The fact that the tax rate during the first three years of my second administration was maintained at the same figure of $24.70 per thousand that I found it upon entering the office may be traced largely to my insistence on economy, efficiency and honesty on the part of all officials charged with the administration of public affairs.

FORCED TO ADVANCE RATE

In the last year of my second administration the tremendous increase in the cost of government made necessary an advance in the tax rate to $26.70, the only increase of any appreciable amount during the entire eight years that I served the city as mayor and with a record during this entire time of the third lowest rate of any city in the entire commonwealth.

As a continuation of this tax story we now come to another Good Government administration at City Hall, succeeding my second term and which runs true to Good Government standards, again imposing tremendous burdens through increased taxation upon home owners and rent payers. It will be noted that the tax rate in the last year of my second administration was $26.70, or an average during my four-year term of $25.20, and that the total tax warrant in the last year was $50,000,000.

VITAL QUESTION FOR EVERYBODY

The tax rate during the first year of the succeeding or present Good Government administration was immediately jumped to $31.80 per thousand, an increase of $5.10 over the preceding year, namely, the last year of my administration as mayor; while the tax warrant was increased to over $60,000,000, representing an increase in one year of $10,000,000, or 20 per cent. of the total cost of government.

In the statistics as here set forth the vital question affecting every business man, home owner and rent payer is presented.

It is a complete answer to the question, "What Does Boston Need?"

(THE END)