

Home rule sought by Socialists in 1913

Home rule was the primary objective of the Bloomington Socialist Party platform in 1913 as stated in the Bloomington *Telephone* of Sept. 2, 1913. Of particular importance was the public ownership of all utilities — "light, heat and power plants, ice plants, rail yards, telephone systems . . ." Furthermore, no future franchises would be permitted that did not have a provision for eventual government takeover.

A second item on the Socialist Party's agenda for Bloomington was "the abolition of the contract system on public work and the direct employment by the municipality under civil service rules." In a related provision, the platform asked for the city council's authority to "establish wages and hours of labor distinctly better in every case than those prevailing in private enterprise."

There is in the platform an implication that some slight of hand had



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occurred in the assessment and taxation of local property. Specifically, the document said, "We demand: The assessment at its true value of all property, including the large amounts now held exempt."

Public health came in for its share of the socialist sentiment reflected in the platform. "We demand that the maintenance of public health be made a public service rendered to all the people as freely as is now the use of the streets."

In the area of education, the schools would offer free text books and act as free public medical clinics. **see Looking back, Back page**