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Letter: C.S. Palmer to Ida M. Tarbell, August 6, 1914

Palmer, C.S.

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C. S. PALMER,
CITY CLERK.
F. D. ASH,
DEPUTY.



CLERK'S OFFICE

Duluth, Minn. Aug. 6, 1914.

Relies

Ida M. Tarbell, c/o American Magazine,
381 Fourth Avenue,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Madam:

I am in receipt of your inquiry of the 4th inst., regarding winter work for the unemployed in the City of Duluth. Replying thereto, shortly after the holiday season last winter, various causes operated to fill the city with a considerable number of unemployed men. The situation was brought to the attention of the City Commissioners, but they were unable to afford any relief in the way of use of city funds. It was then determined to test the system of sewer construction during the winter, and about the first of February work was begun.

Our experience shows that there is practically no difference in cost by constructing sewers by day labor in winter, and doing the work by contract in summer.

Approximately one mile of sewer construction was completed before the first of June. Employment was given to all the men who applied for the same, provided they were able to work. The city could not employ cripples or men just out of the hospital, or inefficient, because the people whose property was benefited by the construction of the sewer had to pay for the same by special assessment, and it would hardly have been fair to assess them for charity. Men were paid the regular rate of wages, according to the city scale, twenty-five cents per hour, eight hours work.

I understand from the Commissioner of Public Works that he is well satisfied with the results obtained and will continue sewer construction during the winter months again this year, on a larger scale.

Trusting this will prove satisfactory, and if not, will be glad to answer any specific questions, which may occur to you.

Yours truly,

C. S. Palmer
City Clerk.