

Mr. Jennings Replies to Mr. Booth

Lengthy Discussion of Various Phases of the Administration of the City Government

Editor The Daily Item:

I hope you will pardon me for trespassing upon your space again to reply to the article of Mr. Booth in your issue of last Friday.

Mr. Booth has referred to four separate matters in his letter:

1. The Jail matter.
2. City improvements.
3. Hard surface roads.
4. City funds.

I will reply to these in their order, and in doing so I will only use facts and will not draw on my imagination. I stated in my former letter that the \$25,000 jail fund was on deposit in the National Bank of Sumter, bearing interest at the rate of 4 per cent. This fact has not been disproved, but Mr. Booth attempts to explain. Now let's see what his explanation is. He states the interest is paid quarterly, but it is at 4 per cent, which makes very little difference in paying interest quarterly and annually; so that for all practical purposes this money is deposited at a rate of 4 per cent.

Mr. Booth says the jail was not built because they found that it would cost about \$60,000, when they only had \$25,000. It does seem that the jail commission should have found this out before the county borrowed the \$25,000 because the act provides that the money is to be borrowed as needed to pay the architects and contractors. So it seems to me that the jail commission should have found out they could not build the jail with \$25,000 and so notified the county board of commissioners before this \$25,000 was borrowed. He states the bank loaned the money at 3-4 per cent interest, and you could not expect the bank to voluntarily increase the rate to the county to 8 per cent.

The minutes of the county board show the National Bank of Sumter on March 7, 1916, loaned the county \$25,000 at 3 1/2 per cent for 30 days. It was stated this was done until the notes could be floated in New York for the \$25,000. I have no doubt but that the notes were payable to the National Bank of Sumter but were sold to some banking institution in New York, and that the National Bank of Sumter has not been carrying this loan and did not carry it until the notes were paid.

This loan was to be paid back \$5,000 in one year, \$5,000 in two years, \$7,000 in three years and \$8,000 in four years, and it all has been paid back for more than a year; \$5,000 of which has been paid back for more than four years, \$5,000 for more than three years, \$7,000 for more than two years, and \$8,000 for more than one year, and was paid back out of money collected by way of taxes from the people, and certainly this money was worth at least 8 per cent to the people who paid it. If the jail commission had first found out that the jail could not be built for \$25,000 and so notified the county board of commissioners, then it would not have been necessary to have borrowed this money, and if it had not been borrowed it would not have been necessary to collect the taxes to pay it back. However, the legislature at its succeeding session made provision for the county board of commissioners to raise whatever was necessary to build the jail, and this was done in 1917, and it is now 1921 and we have no jail yet.

Even if the county did borrow the money for part of the time at 4 3/4 per cent, that was no reason why the National Bank of Sumter should have it at 4 per cent when at the same time that bank and the other banks in the city of Sumter were paying 5 per cent on time deposits. Suppose the money had been given to the county? Would that be any reason why any particular bank should have it free of interest?

I have never stated the county could get 8 per cent interest on money deposited in the bank, but I did state the money was worth 8 per cent to the people, and I still say that it is. As a matter of fact, I am satisfied most of them now would like to have it even at a cost of 20 per cent, because they cannot get any at any rate.

Mr. Booth states that he has under advisement the transfer of these funds to the Peoples' Bank if that bank would pay 8 per cent interest. This shows he must have control of the fund, and if so, they way has he not for the past five years negotiated with some other bank or banks to ascertain if they would pay a greater rate than 4 per cent. Why wait until the jail matter was brought up?

He states the loss to the county by reason of the money bearing only 4 per cent interest is only a little over \$500. If the money had not been collected from the people by way of taxes it would have been worth 8 per cent to them, and figured on this basis and taking into consideration the time the money was borrowed at 4 3/4 per cent, the people have actually lost for five years \$2,892.82, almost \$3,000, and yet Mr. Booth says he is conserving the taxpayers' interest. If this fund had originally been put in bank out of the tax money instead of the county borrowing at 4 3/4 per cent, the people would have lost around \$6,000, but I want to be perfectly fair and during the time the county had the money borrowed at 4 3/4 per cent they would only lose the difference between the two rates, but as soon as the money was repaid from taxes, then the people, out of whom it was collected, were losing the difference between 4 per cent and 8 per cent.

Mr. Booth states that the rate which the bank had to pay the federal reserve bank for at least four years of this time was less than the rate the bank paid the county, but Mr. Booth neglected to state the federal reserve bank required a balance to be kept, and even if that were true, still the banks in the city of

Sumter at the same time were paying other people 5 per cent on time deposits.

Mr. Booth states that the city's sinking fund was on deposit with the banks at 5 per cent, and I could be equally justly criticised for not getting a higher rate of interest when during some of this period the city was borrowing money at 8 per cent. If I could be equally justly criticised, then Mr. Booth should bear his proportion of the criticism because all of the sinking fund that is now in the banks was placed there while Mr. Booth was on city council, and his bank has had up until within the last 30 days a larger sum of this sinking fund than the Peoples' Bank has had. Therefore, you will see that when Mr. Booth criticises me for the sinking fund only bearing 5 per cent he neglects to tell you he is equally responsible for the rate of interest obtained. I never yet heard him make any complaint in council that the sinking fund should bear a higher rate of interest, and the city's funds have always been, since I have been mayor, handled entirely by the clerk, usually by the direction of city council, and not by one of its members.

Mr. Booth further knows that the law provides this sinking fund should be created and when so created should be held to retire the bonds at maturity, and that it would be unlawful for the city to withdraw these funds and use them for any other purpose: He neglected to state that, although he seems to know the law because he says I ought to know it is unlawful to use the jail fund for any other purposes. I never contended it should be used for any other purpose, but I did contend and do now contend if the funds were not to be used immediately for the building of the jail they should have been placed where the highest rate of interest could be obtained, because that is what we have done with the city's sinking fund. As a matter of fact, since May 1st we have obtained from all of the banks of the city of Sumter except one which has no part of this fund including the bank of which Mr. Booth is president, a rate of 6 per cent on the city's sinking fund. Has Mr. Booth obtained 6 per cent on the jail fund? No, he says he has it under advisement. I wonder how long he will keep it under advisement and keep the fund in the National Bank of Sumter at 4 per cent.

Mr. Booth says he is now contemplating and he supposes Mr. Rowland could agree, to award me the contract to build the jail at \$30,000. Everyone knows this answers no question and is purely puerile, and is about as puerile as many other statements made in Mr. Booth's communication. I did state that building material had gone down considerably. As a matter of fact, the same building brick that cost \$30 last year can now be bought for \$12.50. Cement and lime is down almost one-half. You can get brick laid for about one-half what you could a year ago, and all other material has gone down very considerably. The jail will be built mostly out of brick, cement and lime, and three of the principal materials which will be used in the jail have gone down practically half. Therefore, if the jail could be built for \$60,000 when material and labor were twice as high as it now is, certainly it could be built now for about one-half, but Mr. Booth has not stated whether the commission has got any recent estimates, but he says they have gotten two or three estimates since money was borrowed. He says I am the county attorney, and therefore, was derelict in my duty for not bringing this matter up and having it corrected. If Mr. Booth had taken the trouble to find out he would have ascertained the fact that I am only employed to advise the county board upon their request, and I have never yet suggested any opinion to the county board, and have only given them opinions when called upon. I have never attempted to interfere with their duties as commissioners, and I never expect to do so, because I am not employed for such purpose.

Mr. Booth admits the old jail is unsanitary, but he says when it comes to building a jail that will cost a great deal more than the legislative delegation contemplated and collecting this additional money out of the taxpayers, that as between the people that transgress the law and are therefore confined in this unsanitary building and the taxpayers his idea would be to conserve the taxpayers' interest as against the comfort and convenience of the law breakers, who by their own deliberate acts caused their misfortune of having to occupy the old jail.

Let's see whether Mr. Booth is as careful about conserving the interest of the taxpayers when by so doing it affects the interest of the institutions in which he is interested as he is when by conserving the taxpayers' interest he is at the same time conserving his own interest as a taxpayer. If this additional money was raised by taxes to build the jail, then Mr. Booth would have to pay his proportionate part of the taxes. If the bank of which Mr. Booth is president paid a greater rate than 4 per cent interest on the jail fund, then it would lessen the dividends of the bank, but if Mr. Booth was so solicitous about the interest of the taxpayers, and if he was more solicitous about the interest of the taxpayers, and if he was more solicitous about the interest of the taxpayers than he was about the interest of the bank, then it does seem as if he would not have waited so long to take under advisement the matter of trying to get additional interest on the jail fund. I am simply giving the facts and it is for the people to judge how solicitous Mr. Booth is for the taxpayers, when it conflicts with the institution with which he is connected.

Mr. Booth admits that the old jail is unsanitary, but says as between the people confined therein and the taxpayers it is his idea to conserve the interest of the taxpayers. It is often the case that people are confined in the jail charged with crime, but when they are tried they are found to be innocent, yet under Mr.

Booth's idea and on account of saving the taxpayers a little money, they should be kept in an unsanitary jail and perhaps contract some disease which may cause their death. As for my part, I would be willing to pay my proportionate part of the additional taxes that are necessary to build a sanitary jail in which to confine human beings, even though they be guilty of the crime of which they are charged. Christ said He came to call the sinners and not the righteous to repentance. Perhaps Mr. Booth forgets that Paul, the Apostle, was confined in a jail, but it is to be hoped he was not put in an unsanitary jail which was kept and maintained on account of some one having some idea about conserving the peoples' taxes, like Mr. Booth says he has. I may be wrong, but a human being to me is a human being, although he has wandered away from the paths of rectitude, and although he has committed crime yet his health should not be jeopardized because he has so wandered.

Mr. Booth says some people remind him very much of a kid with 25c to spend, he cannot rest until he has found some candy or toy store in order to get rid of his wealth. Of course, he is referring to me in this instance, but I would like to remind him of the fact that when I am spending the twenty-five cents of other taxpayers in public improvements I am likewise spending my own twenty-five cents along with the others, and I am not keeping any in any institution of which I am president, and the twenty-five cents of the public and all of the candy going into the institution.

Mr. Booth says the jail will be built in due time. It is to be hoped it will, but what he means by "due time" I do not know, as it has been over five years and the due time has not expired. If we believe in the Bible Judgment Day will surely come in due time, and if Mr. Booth manages the jail proposition in the future as he has in the past when Gabriel's trumpet shall sound and both the quick and the dead shall come forth, the prisoners then confined in the jail in Sumter county will have to meet their Maker coming forth from the old unsanitary jail.

Mr. Booth next discusses city improvements, and he states: "Mr. Jennings takes great pride in imagining he is the pioneer in all improvements of every nature in the city and county, but as a matter of fact, these improvements began before he was ever heard of in public life." I do not think Mr. Booth can find any one who would say they had ever heard me say or ever seen anything which I have written in which I claimed in the slightest degree that I was responsible for any of the city's improvements or enterprises. I have always left that to be passed upon by other people. But I am at least proud to say that I was not a member of the commission that built the sewerage system. Mr. Booth seems to take pride in stating that he was a member, but I think if I had been a member of that commission I would be glad if the people would forget the fact, as I would like to remind Mr. Booth that about one year after the sewer line was completed on Salem Avenue it went to pieces and cost the city more than \$17,000 to rebuild it, and this sewer line was built by the commission of which Mr. Booth was a member. Not only did it go to pieces on Salem Avenue but several places in the eastern part of the city, that cost the city several more thousand dollars to replace. I am at least glad that this kind of job was not a part of the improvements made after I was heard of in public life. Perhaps Mr. Booth has forgotten, although he seems to have a vivid recollection as to who suggested at the first meeting of council the question of paving the streets, that the first campaign I made for mayor under the old commission form of government I stated if elected I would see that Main street was paved if the city had to be bonded to do it. I was elected, the city was bonded and Main street was paved. Did Mr. Rowland suggest this at the first council meeting? My recollection is Mr. Rowland was not even a member of this council; he was elected some two or four years later. It is a fact, however, before I was taken down with typhoid fever in 1917 city council had agreed to pave Liberty street to the city limits on the west and to pave the sidewalks to the city limits, and to pave the street with asphalt, just like the balance of Liberty street is paved from Wright street on. While I was down with typhoid fever council changed this and left off the sidewalks and changed the kind of pavement, and everybody knows the kind of street we have on the end of West Liberty. When I got up from typhoid fever and after I found out about the change and before the street was built I protested and had it so noted on the minutes. Perhaps this was done to conserve the interest of the taxpayers, but now we see what kind of street we have out there and no sidewalks.

I was exceedingly anxious indeed at the last campaign to have Mr. Booth run for the office of mayor, and let the people determine which policy they would prefer, a policy like that of Mr. Booth of conserving the interest of the taxpayers or a policy of spending the taxes and improving the city and making it a more beautiful and better place in which to live. Sometime before the election Mr. Booth came to me and stated several strong business men had been to him to get him to run for mayor; that both he and I had strong friends and should both run it might create some strife and would not be for the best interest of the city, and that he had another plan to suggest. I asked him what it was and he said for both to stand aside and put in a third party, he at the time suggesting the third party. I told him I was not trying to hold on to the office of mayor longer as it took up a great deal of my time, but I knew of the various causes which had been held at which they were trying to bring him out for mayor and at which they were out feeling his chances, and that he could go back and tell them for me that I was

now in the race to the finish and to trot him or any other candidate out and I would meet them on election day. This is the last I have ever heard of Mr. Booth's candidacy for mayor. His political feet either must have become frozen or paralyzed. Sometime ago I heard that some of the soreheads were going to call a mass meeting to condemn the expenditure of money in the building of the ice and light plant. I stated to the party who gave me this information to tell them to call their meeting and all I desire would be to give me the same time on my side as all of the soreheads had on their side, and when the meeting was over I thought the people would know more about the electric light and ice plant and more about who the soreheads were; but the mass meeting seems to have gone the same route as Mr. Booth's candidacy for mayor took.

I am sorry indeed that Mr. Booth did not make the race in order that his policies might be passed upon by the public. The last night Mr. Booth was on council council had up the question as to whether it was wise to buy a new fire apparatus. Mr. McCallum and I determined that it was, but Mr. Booth thought it was not, and because Mr. McCallum and I did not consider that his judgment and vote should be counted for more than both of ours he resigned from council and thereby deprived the taxpayers of their wonderful protector; but I am glad to say the electric light plant which we had under construction then has been completed, even without the aid of the counsel, advice and judgment of Mr. Booth. He is a comparatively young man yet, and still has time in which to test his policies before the people.

The next issue discussed by Mr. Booth is the hard surface roads, and he states: "He (referring to me) promised 125 miles of roads when they advocated good roads before the people; only asked for a bond issue of two and a-half million dollars to build these 125 miles of road, and further gave assurance that the bond would not bear interest greater than 5 or 5 1/2 per cent. Now would it be keeping faith with the people to attempt to build roads at anything like this cost when the aggregate would run to more than four million dollars when you figure the cost of concrete bridges that would have to be built."

I do not know where Mr. Booth got his information as to what I advocated before the people, but I do know that Mr. Booth did not take interest enough in the good roads proposition to attend a single campaign meeting which was held in the county, and I do not think he attended the one which was held in the city of Sumter. Had he been present he never would have made the above statement. I did not promise 125 miles of road, nor did I promise the rate of interest would be 5 or 5 1/2 per cent; but, on the contrary, I told the people 125 miles could not be built for two and a-half million dollars, and as a matter of fact, suggested to the legislative delegation three and a half million, nor did I tell them the bonds could be sold for 5 per cent or 5 1/2 per cent because I did not know, but I did tell the people that as far as my vote was concerned this two and a half million dollars would be spent in equal proportions on all of the roads of the proposed system; that is to say, I told the people if this money would only build 100 miles of hard surface roads then the same number of miles would be built on each road that was a part of the system leading from the city of Sumter. Mr. Belsler attended some of these meetings, Mr. Davis some, Mr. J. H. Clifton some, Mr. S. A. Harvin some, Mr. J. B. Britton some, Mr. J. F. Bland some, and Mr. Stanyarne Burrows some, and a great many people attended all of them, and I am satisfied Mr. Booth cannot find a single person among any of them who can say I promised the people any such thing as he states in his article that I did, and I state most emphatically I made no such promise.

I will further state that when we held the first meeting I think it was the question came up as to how the money should be expended on the roads, and I stated at this meeting in the presence of Mr. Booth the promises which I had made to the people, and I stated them just as they are stated above, and Mr. Booth took the position that if one road was 20 miles in length and another only 10, and if there was not money enough to pave all the roads to the county limits, then the 20 mile road should have twice the paving as the ten mile road. I then stated and contended that the board should stand by the pledges made to the people that the same mileage would be built on each road, and there was a stiff argument up in which Mr. Booth took the opposite view from me, and I am satisfied every member of the board will bear me out in this; and how Mr. Booth can now say I promised 125 miles with two and a-half million dollars I cannot understand.

Not only did I not make this promise, but the legislative delegation met with our board and agreed in writing, in order to complete this system of 125 miles, to satisfy everybody by building each road to the county line, they signed a written agreement agreeing to pass an act giving the board the power to issue what additional bonds might be necessary to build this system. Why did not Mr. Booth then say something about my having promised the 125 miles of good roads for the two and a half million dollars? I am mentioning this to keep the record straight. Mr. Booth's recollection does not seem to be as good a out this matter as it was about his recollecting that Mr. Rowland at the first meeting of council suggested the paving of the streets. Who does it appear now was trying to keep good faith with the people? I promised them equal mileage on every road; I have been trying to do that; Mr. Booth did not take enough interest to attend a meeting and did not know what was promised, and he advocated putting more miles on some roads than on others. I did not state we could sell the bonds for 5 or 5 1/2 per cent, and I am now willing to sell the bonds and pay 6

per cent and build the roads. Mr. Booth voted to sell them at 5 3/4 per cent, therefore if I had promised the people either 5 or 5 1/2 per cent, and it would be breaking good faith to pay 6 per cent, then I would like to know of Mr. Booth whether it would not be breaking good faith to pay 5 3/4 per cent? So if I have broken any good faith and if he feels bound by the promises I made to the people, or that the other people who spoke made, then he should not have voted to pay 5 3/4 for money. So all his good faith proposition is nothing more than propaganda against going on and building the good roads. He states in his article it will cost \$3.00 a square yard. Several contracts have been let recently in other parts of the State and in North Carolina, and on country roads at that, for \$2.73 a square yard, which would make the roads cost between \$23,000 and \$30,000 a mile, depending, of course, upon the extent of the grading, and we have very little grading in this county.

Yes, Mr. Booth says the roads will be built in due time. All I have to say about this is his due time may run in the roads case just like it is in the oil case. I am willing to go on and spend my 25 cents and at the same time spend other peoples' 25 cents, but I am willing for them to have their proportionate share of the candy, and I will not take their 25 cents and put it in the bank of which I am president at a lower rate of interest than the other banks are paying for like deposits.

Mr. Booth cannot get away from the idea that the city paid \$1.35 per yard or streets that will now cost from \$2.50 to \$3.00 per yard. At the time he city paved the streets there was very little work going on of this character. Since then and now it has increased many times and I have no idea we will ever build streets that cheaply again, and we will be riding in the old roads we have, that is, future generations will, perhaps until Judgment Day, should Mr. Booth's views obtain.

I believe in progress and not in standing still, and I am always willing to pay my proportionate part, but if I try to conserve my taxes I will at the same time try to conserve other peoples'.

The last proposition Mr. Booth discussed was the city funds in the Peoples Bank. He states that between October 29th and May 1, 1921, the combined deposits of the other banks was \$91,000, and in the same period the Peoples' Bank \$549,000, and the Peoples Bank was used during these months for the clerk and treasurer's checking account, and that the custom of city council in the assignment of duties of various members of council for a number of years had been that one member was more particularly in charge of the water works, one in charge of the street department and the fire department, etc., and that the matter of finances and the legal end of the city's affairs was left with the mayor. All I had to do with the financial end of it was that I was instructed to find out where we could borrow money when we needed it. Then the matter was brought up before council, and council authorized the borrowing of the money, and I would sign the note, along with the clerk, and turn the note over to him and I had no more to do with the loan. Since I have been mayor we have had as clerks, Messrs. C. M. Hurst, J. M. Blanding, E. H. Rhame and W. Brunson. If Mr. Booth can furnish the proof that I ever suggested to any of them in the slightest way to deposit a single dollar in the Peoples Bank or to favor it in any other way, then I will donate to a charitable institution the sum of five thousand dollars. As a matter of fact, I have always voted in city council for the city's money to be deposited in equal proportions in all of the banks in the city of Sumter, and if Mr. Booth can furnish any proof I have ever taken any other position at any time, then I will likewise donate the five thousand dollars. Perhaps Mr. Booth is judging me by what he would have done had he been in charge of the city's finances.

On one occasion Mr. Booth asked me if I had any corn for sale. I told him I had. He said he would like to buy some. I asked him for what, and he said for the city. I told him under circumstances I would sell the city corn or anything else while I was mayor, even though they paid me the market price for it. He said I was foolish if I had corn to sell and wanted to sell not to sell it to the city.

On another occasion when we were calling for bids for the city's stablemanure Mr. Booth suggested that I put in a bid. I told him under no circumstances would I do so, because I would not be both buyer and seller, because council was representing the city, and if we sold the manure or anything else ourselves or bought it from the city we would be both buyer and seller.

Mr. Booth was in charge of the street department, and was empowered to purchase supplies for same, such as mules, wagons, harness, feed and other articles which were needed, and some considerable time after Mr. Booth was in charge of this department it came to my attention that Mr. Booth was and had been buying from the Booth-Boyle Live Stock Co., of which he was president, and in which he owned 13-30 of the capital stock, such supplies for the city as that company handled. When this matter came to my attention I brought it up in council meeting, and stated in substance that it was not only improper for Mr. Booth to buy from the Booth-Boyle Live Stock Co., of which he was president and owned a large part of the stock, but that it was a violation of the law, and that I intended to state on the record that I was opposed to the city buying anything from the Booth-Boyle Live Stock Co., because Mr. Booth held 13-30 of the stock, I held 2-30 of the stock and Mr. Rowland 1-30; whereupon it was agreed by the entire council that in the future nothing would be purchased from the Booth-Boyle Live Stock Co., and it was so noted on the minutes of city council of that day.

I stated at the time I was satisfied Mr. Booth's company sold to the city through Mr. Booth just as cheap, if not cheaper, than he could purchase it from any other company, as my recollection is Mr. Booth stated it was

furnished to the city at practically cost, but I stated that did not alter the case because it was in violation of the law and then it did not look good to purchase from a company in which all of council held stock, and was not fair to other people in the business, and the entire council, including Mr. Booth, agreed it should not be done in the future, as Mr. Booth remarked in his letter, "people in glass houses should not throw stones." So I do not think after I brought this up more than five years ago that I would have tried to influence the clerk to favor the Peoples Bank, of which I was president and held stock, with the city's deposits.

As a matter of fact, I do not think the Peoples Bank has been favored by any of the clerks. I understand from Mr. Brunson, and I only ascertained this fact within the last 30 days, that the Peoples Bank had been used by him as a checking account, and that if he had \$500,000 deposited in all of the banks and wanted to draw the \$500,000, he would send out a check on the Peoples Bank for the \$500,000 and draw a check on each of the other banks and deposit them in the Peoples Bank, and by this method all the deposits that went through the other banks would likewise go through the Peoples Bank, and this is how it is shown that the Peoples Bank had this large deposit referred to by Mr. Booth. As a matter of fact, in October, the time Mr. Booth refers to, the city had an overdraft at the Peoples Bank of something over \$4600. Mr. Booth seems to be quite interested as to the deposits going into the various banks while at the same time he claims to be interested in the interest of the taxpayers.

Sometime around August the city sold to the various banks some of its bonds, and the city made an agreement with the banks that while they held the bonds they would be exempted from taxes. Mr. Booth's bank purchased some of these bonds, but disposed of them before the taxes became due, and the other banks did likewise. Having done so, they were not entitled to have them exempted from taxes, or to have the amount paid for the bonds exempted from taxes, but after the bonds were sold and before the taxes became due, I took it up with city council and suggested it would be nothing but fair to allow the banks 8 per cent for the money which they had paid for the bonds, or rather, the difference between 6 and 8 per cent, as the bonds had drawn a rate of 6 per cent interest. To this council agreed. Subsequently a committee representing some of the banks and the cashier representing Mr. Booth's bank came before city council insisting that the banks should be exempted from taxes to the extent of the bonds they had purchased. I took the position that the banks ought to be satisfied with 8 per cent, as that was all they could have loaned the money for had they not purchased the bonds for the banks, and having sold the bonds prior to the time taxes were due were not entitled to the exemption and especially as the city had not had the money more than 4 months. However, a majority of council thought otherwise, and this resulted in Mr. Booth's bank getting interest at a rate of approximately 13 per cent for the money which it had paid for the bonds. Does this look like protecting the interest of the taxpayers or the interest of the bank? The Peoples Bank declined this exemption and only accepted interest at 8 per cent.

Mr. Booth further states that Messrs. Raffield and McCallum suggested at the last council meeting a change in the city deposits. This matter was not mentioned at the last council meeting until I brought up the matter of the unequal disposition of the sinking fund, and then there was something said by Mr. Raffield about having heard that the Peoples Bank was being favored with the city deposits; and the clerk explained he had been using the Peoples Bank as a checking account and that the city had not been in sufficient funds at any time for the deposits to be worth anything at any bank, and the Peoples Bank had not been favored. My recollection is this was all that was said about the matter, and Mr. Booth says this was an injustice to the other banks. If the banks had been just to the city as the city has been to the banks in the last 12 months then council would not have had so much trouble in raising funds with which to complete the electric light plant.

After all of the bonds had been sold by the banks which they had purchased and the city did not owe the banks a single dollar the clerk was sent to each bank to request them to loan the city \$5,000, as it was in need of funds, and I told the clerk to inform the other banks if the other banks would lend the city \$5,000 each the Peoples Bank would do likewise. The clerk returned stating each of the banks said they had no funds to lend the city. That is the kind of justice the city got, but I was fortunate enough in making arrangements in New York to get all the money the city needed; yet Mr. Booth is complaining about what he calls injustice, and cites as an instance the deposits which passed through the Peoples Bank in the method heretofore explained. But he has warned you in advance in his article not to pay any attention to the explanation. He must have known the explanation would knock into smithereens his charges.

Just a few more words in reference to the sinking fund to which Mr. Booth referred. I am only referring to this again in order that you may see that if I were in control of the city's finances and used my official position to advance the interest of the Peoples Bank, then I was derelict in handling this sinking fund. This sinking fund has been accumulated for several years, being added to once each year; and on the first day of May 1921, it was deposited in the various banks as follows:

Commercial Bank & Trust Co.	\$ 9321.39
City National Bank	2417.77
Peoples Bank	4764.38
National Bank of South Carolina	16,456.95
National Bank of Sumter	4914.01

All of these banks were paying 5 per cent interest until May 1st when it was raised to 6 per cent. I knew nothing about how this sinking fund