Interview with W. Earl Weller, Director, Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research 2/15/40

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Mr. Eastman had an excellent memory, but Mr. Weller remembered an occasion (in 1924) when it almost failed. Mr. Eastman called at the then office of the Rochester Bureau of Municipal Research on the third floor of the Astma Building, 25 Exchange Street, to discuss some matter related with the campaign for City Manager. Mr. Weller had been working on an organization chart of city government as it was and as it would be if the suggestions of the Bureau for a City Manager Plan were adopted. Mr. Eastman stopped to examine the chart, and Mr. Weller took the opportunity to ask him for his photograph. He readily consented, yet four or five weeks passed before Mr. Weller received the photograph. At their next meeting, Mr. Eastman inquired "Did you get the picture?" Mr. Weller thanked him and said he had received it. Mr. Eastman said "I'm sorry it was so long in coming but when you asked me for it I wrote a note and put it in my pocket—and then I forgot what the note meant. I kept taking it out and for a long time I couldn't decipher it. "When I did, I sent you the picture."

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Mr. Eastman, who was chairman, listened and then said "Gentlemen,
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A committee was appointed consisting of Mr. Weller, Mr. James
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Mr. Eastman was conservative in many ways, but he was enthusiastic about Proportional Representation at a time when it was considered a "radical" idea. When the Bureau of Municipal Research drew up a city charter in 1924, Mr. Eastman favored writing "Proportional Representation" into it. He ceased his advocacy of "P.R." only after Mr. Weller prepared a memorandum which expressed the opinion that it would be contrary to the laws of New York State. The memorandum was approved by Dr. Howard Lee MeBean, professor of Political Science at Columbia University, New York City.

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July 13, 1940

Mr. G. W. Solbert
Eastman Kodak Company
Rochester, New York

Dear Mr. Solbert:

I am returning the notes that Mr. Nicholson made of our interview concerning some of my personal experiences with Mr. Eastman. I have made two corrections in the text. Outside of these corrections I have only the general criticism that there is much too much "Weller" in it. If the material is used I hope the references to me can be reduced by something approaching the percentage that Proctor and Gamble claim for the purity of their Ivory soap.

In accordance with your letter if any other worth while reminiscences occur to me, it will be a pleasure to jot them down and send to you.

Very truly yours,

W. Earl Weller

Weller, W. Earl
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