

The Union will doubtless contain a report of the Water Works Meeting, held at the Mayor's office last evening. May I be permitted to call attention to a few unconnected facts pertinent to the occasion, which would not find a place in such report?

This Water Works Company, was chartered *fourteen years ago*. At the rate of progress (!) made thus far, the city may be supplied with water from Hemlock Lake at about the time of the final conflagration—*but not before.*

A few citizens who have contributed most largely to the expense of the water pipes and reservoirs in State and contiguous streets, recently conferred together with a view to procuring water from some other source than Hemlock Lake—deeming that enterprise utterly impracticable because of its enormous costliness. While that matter was under advisement, with the knowledge of the Engineer of the Water Works Co., he having been consulted upon it, up comes the project of renewing the old contract and pledging the city's patronage to the Hemlock Lake enterprise. That had been commended to the public when the cost would have been not more than one-half the expense of constructing the works at present; and our citizens could not be induced to take the stock. But if the contract be renewed *no other works can be constructed*; and the only effect of the contract would be to render it certain that during the term of the contract *no general supply of water will be obtained from any source whatever.*

— The meeting, it was perfectly apparent, was called for the specific and only purpose of advising the Common Council to renew the contract. Hence it was called at the office of the Mayor, himself a Director of the Company. Instead of a general call upon citizens interested, a printed circular was distributed by the Company's Engineer. And the composition of the meeting showed that due care had been taken to have a majority in favor of such instructions as would best subvert the Company's purposes. The idea that the Common Council should assume that such a meeting represents the interests and wishes of the public is palpably absurd.

— The estimates submitted furnish a rare curiosity. One of the speakers representing the contract interest set down the cost of the works complete at about \$600,000. Another, for the purpose of legitimating a claim for an increase of pay from the city, assumed that the figure should be \$800,000, on which he thought the city should pay three per cent. The Engineer was understood to assent to the substantial correctness of this estimate. The Speaker was confident that the stock would pay ten per cent. on this capital. But in order to reach that result, he counted the income from hotels, manufacturing establishments, livery stables, &c., twice over! A little later in the discussion the Secretary was called upon for figures. He read a letter from a heavy concern engaged in making iron pipe, from which it appeared that the iron pipe alone required by the Company would cost *eight hundred and ninety-five thousand dollars* at Camden, opposite Philadelphia! That is, \$90,000 more than the estimated cost of the whole works up to that point in the proceedings of the meeting!

But the pipes are intended to bring the water only *half the distance* from Hemlock Lake. To this \$90,000 for pipe is to be added the expense of bringing the water the other half of the distance; of all the hydrants required; of constructing one or more reservoirs; of transporting the pipes from Philadelphia and distributing them through city and country; of laying the pipes, engineering, oversawing, making dams, buying land for reservoir, &c., &c.

The earnings of the Company being a *fleet sum*, and assuming that they will reach the highest figures of the imaginative cyphers, they would fall somewhat below ten per cent. on the actual cost!

The Secretary—who has been laboring many years to secure the adoption of wooden pipe or penstock logs in place of iron for such purposes, estimated their cost at \$615,000. It is fair to presume that in his anxiety to work in penstock logs, he has made his figures very much smaller than the result would justify.

As to the basis of the estimates:—the engineer stated that the statistics gathered from other cities prove one dollar a head for the whole population to be a fair estimate for the earnings of the Company, in addition to what may be realized by contracts with the City and County. But it should be considered that none of the cities from which these statistics are drawn have a population so scattered as ours. That one fact destroys the value of the statistics in our case. A given length of main would not reach *one-half* as many dwellings in Rochester as in New York, Brooklyn, Albany, Buffalo or any other large city. A corresponding deduction should be made in the estimates upon which the action of this private meeting was based. The revenues of our City Railroads have come short of the anticipations of the owners for the same reason.

—A remark was made by the presiding Director as if it were a part of a pre-arranged programme, that in case we get water a wealthy Buffalonian would make Rochester his home. But that wealthy gentleman will be very apt to look at the tax as well as the water question. Our city tax is now over five per cent. on the valuation. Subtract all that relates to the war, directly or indirectly, and add what the city must pay to assure the Hemlock Lake project together with accruing debt for over-draws and ever increasing expenses in every department, and no man can figure our present taxes down below present rates, the aggregate valuation remaining the same. Will such a prospect induce the wealthy classes to migrate hither? Would even Hemlock water overcome their aversion to such a rate of taxation?

—It was alleged that we are committing "a moral crime" by not supplying the city with water—the specification being that the lives of children are sacrificed thereby! But no statistics were submitted on this point. Nor can it be proved that the mortality among children is greater here than in cities supplied with water works.

Finally: Although there is reason to fear that the Aldermen have been pre-committed to the renewal of this contract, there is certainly ground for hope that they will not act hastily in this matter; and especially that they will not regard a meeting of persons selected by the party in interest and held at the office of one of the Directors, for the purpose of influencing their official action, as representing the Public nor as speaking in behalf of public interests. *There can be no good reason for renewing this old contract now.* If, on due consideration, it be deemed best to renew it, nothing can be lost by waiting a fortnight, a month, or several months. In fifteen years the Company has not raised a dollar towards constructing the proposed works. There can be no possible urgency as regards public interests, so great as to necessitate action on the subject this very night.

A CITIZEN.