

SOME FIGURES IN WATER.

The Wonderful Growth of a Watertown Water Industry—How Hinds, Moffett & Co. Have prospered in Two Years.

But few people in this city realize the amount of business which is being transacted within the boundaries of Watertown, so quietly, so smoothly and so unobtrusively it is done. One concern especially, of which this article treats, has grown within a very short space of time so rapidly that it has become one of the leading contracting firms in the United States, and is pushing and broadening its sphere of action until it has already become a company of almost stupendous possibilities. The Times has no desire to speak in the sweetened tones usually known as "tally," in this regard, but the statement comes from a thorough investigation of the facts, made deliberately, calmly and with the idea of ascertaining the particulars of the business for the edification of its readers, because the public is always interested in the welfare and prosperity of home institutions.

Sanitary science has made rapid development in the past few years, and all the progress made has been marked by a more emphatic demand for a water supply for all considerable centres of population. The belief that public good health cannot be maintained in the absence of a supply of pure water, has become so widespread, that municipalities, all over the country, are agitating this subject, and an unusual amount of construction is going on in this department.

In addition to the importance of a water supply to the public health, it is equally important for fire purposes, and the highest state of efficiency in a fire department can be obtained by use of the modern methods of developing a high pressure through the mains and hydrants. From the lack of convenient water under pressure, the losses from fires in many eastern, and most western towns, during the past ten years, would have paid for a first-class system of water-works, and the saving in insurance in many places is of itself sufficient to fully offset the payments made for fire services.

HOW IT CAME ABOUT.

In January, 1883, the contracting and civil engineering firm of F. A. Hinds & Co. was re-organized, and the following gentlemen began business under the name of Hinds, Moffett & Co.: Frank A. Hinds, John F. Moffett, H. C. Hodgkins and J. V. Clark. Mr. Hinds was a civil and hydraulic engineer of many years' experience; Mr. Moffett was a gentleman of more than ordinary business capabilities; Messrs. Hodgkins and Clark were civil engineers of conceded ability, and thus equipped with talent, which for the object in view, was greater than is usually found thus grouped, Hinds, Moffett & Co. started forth in a business comparatively new.

It had already become an acknowledged fact in the smaller towns of northern New York that each needed some system of water-works or water supply. Hampered by law and by want of finances, the result could not be obtained. Conflagrations of a greater or less extent came, laughed at the puny fire apparatus, and burned themselves out in the smoke of hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of property. Hinds, Moffett & Co. saw the moral, while others wondered what would next burn. They saw the other branches of railroad, bridge and tunnel contracting filled, and immediately said to these towns and others like them in the state, "We will build your water-works' system and pay for it for a yearly hydrant rental." Some were ready at once, but others took time to think it over.

THE PLAN.

The plan is simple, but effective. Hinds, Moffett & Co., through their representative, visit a village or town and make careful observations regarding the possible water supply. The waters from different sources near the place are tested by their own chemist and the purest and best is selected. A company is formed of a few of the leading capitalists of the place, who act in concert with the firm. Bonds are issued and sold, stock is taken, and almost voluntarily the works are placed in position. Of the works it is unnecessary to speak at length. Where nature and location admit, the modified gravity system is used in connection with some of the many almost perfect duplex condensing pumps now manufactured. These pumps are so regulated in all cases, as to give direct pressure on the mains when necessary, and the electrical gate patented lately by Mr. Hinds, makes it possible to bring this pressure to bear at the moment it is needed, a slight indentation of a button placed in some central location being all that is required. Of the manner of workmanship, it is not needful to speak. The places which are already enjoying the benefits of the works bear ample testimony in this regard.

A BIT OF HISTORY.

In 1883 Hinds, Moffett & Co. obtained their first contract from the village of Canandaigua. In 1884 the work was begun and rapidly completed, ten miles of pipe, ranging from 14 to 4 inches in size being laid, the pumps put in and the system accepted after the first test at a price of \$122,000. During the same season a company of capitalists was organized at Cortland, and a system was introduced there embracing seven miles of pipe and costing \$190,000.

From this point business began to extend, although during 1884 no contracts were made out of the state, though franchises that year were secured at Fulton, Penn Yan, Adams, Fairport and Clyde.

Early in the spring of 1885 contracts were made with Oswego Falls and Greenwich, then Sandy Hill, Waterford, Cambridge, Homer, Syracuse and Waterloo fell into line. Then Chippewa Falls and Menomonee, Wis., and Newark, O., were added, and at the time of the reporter's visit to the firm, Camden, Oneida county, had just been added to the list.

SOME FIGURES.

This year, also, an extension of three miles of pipe to the Cortland system has been made. During 1885, in spite of a lively recently established and healthy competition, nine systems have been put in, incorporating 75 miles of pipe and 613 of the Laidlaw, the Eddy, the Holyoke or the Cincinnati hydrants, and aggregating a contract price of \$1,351,000. This enormous business has all been directed and controlled from the home office in this city.

It will be seen that Hinds, Moffett & Co. rank among the foremost industries of northern New York, and carry on a business of such magnitude that its details are surprising even to the thoughtful business men of the city.

SOMEWHAT MORE IN DETAIL.

Hearing these figures in response to a few casual questions, the reporter evinced a deeper interest in the matter, and asked one of the gentlemen of the firm to explain more in detail the manner in which the first steps were taken for the introduction of a system into a town.

"Well," he said, "after getting samples of the water as at first suggested, they are subjected to a thorough analysis by our own chemist for our own information. After having become satisfied as to the purity and wholesomeness of the water, the analysis is offered to the authorities of the towns and if it is not accepted we are willing to have it go into the hands of the state board of health, as has often been the case, and the analysis has proven to be correct. We then make two propositions to the authorities:

"First—To construct works for a certain number of miles, supplied with a certain number of hydrants to be kept in order and well supplied, the corporation agreeing to pay a certain annual rental therefor, the village at definite periods holding the right to acquire title to the works by appraisal.

"Second—If not desirable for the village to pay an annual hydrant rental and it is preferable for it to construct its own works, then the firm is willing to do the work on the most approved plans, giving the system the benefit of our experience. These works in no way differ from the systems put in for ourselves.

"In furnishing water supply for cities and towns, it is usual to adopt one of two methods for supplying the necessary funds. The municipalities themselves build, and make their water system a part of their public works, supplying the needed funds by issuing a water loan, or a contract is made with a water company, which assumes all the risk of construction and supply, in consideration of a payment, by the city or town, of an annual sum for fire service. The first method of supply has some advantages, as to giving the municipality the control of the water, yet the latter method is often by far the best.

"As to the matter of cost,—it is a well-known fact that the cost of all public works is always much greater than the cost of similar work conducted by individual enterprise. In addition to the fact that a corporation owned by individuals can erect works more economically than a municipality, is the important fact that they can and do maintain their works at a much lower rate of expense."

"As a low cost of plant and small expense to maintain service are both essential to the earning of a dividend on a water company stock, it follows that the owners of the stock will use more care, in relation to these two items, than is customary to be exercised in handling municipal affairs. It will be found upon investigation that in most cases a water company renders as good service as can be given by a municipality under similar conditions, for less money, and at a positive saving to the city or town so supplied."

AS TO RESERVOIRS.

"Do you construct reservoirs, also, in connection with your system?" asked the interviewer.

"In cases where there is sufficient elevation, or where nature admits," was the reply, "we construct a masonry reservoir for the modified gravity system, but where the elevation is not sufficient we erect an iron water tower, which we procure from one of the well-known firms of Riter & Connelly, Pittsburg, Pa., the Sharon Boiler works, Sharon, Pa., or Shickle, Harris & Howard, of St. Louis, Mo., who all make first class towers. The height of the tower depends entirely on the elevation required to give the desired pressure on the mains."

BONDS AS COLLATERAL.

"But you spoke a moment ago of bonds; what did you mean regarding that question?" asked the reporter.

"In looking up the water supply for a town," said the gentleman, "Hinds, Moffett & Co. are dependent for the contract price of the works on a certain amount of bonds issued by the water-works company, to pay a portion of the construction price, hence it is very largely to our advantage to look closely into the prosperity of the town in which we propose to construct the works, and also into the sources of supply and know that these bonds are beyond question."

"This comparatively new form of security, i. e., these water-works companies' bonds, meets with great favor as a source of investment, especially in the east, where Hinds, Moffett & Co. have disposed of all their shares for the present year from whence they have had numerous applications for bonds on their work to be constructed next year."

RATES TO CONSUMERS.

"How about your rates to consumers?" was next asked.

"We always make it a point," was the answer, "that the rates to private consumers shall not exceed the rates charged by private or public companies, in the same state, who furnish water in villages similarly situated, and supplied in a like manner."

THE HOME OFFICE.

The home office of Hinds, Moffett & Co. is pleasantly located at No. 5 Public Square, occupying the entire second floor. The front room is occupied as the business office and here two stenographers are kept busy. The next room is made into private offices for the firm, while in the rear apartments are found the drafting-room, the "blue print room" and the chemist's domain. In these offices all the legal papers, ordinances, contracts, mortgages, bonds, plans, estimates, etc., are made, and a vast correspondence is promptly attended to by means of the ready shorthand and type writers. Five draughtsmen, a bookkeeper, the chemist and two office boys find plenty to do here, besides the engineers and superintendents, as well as the men under them, who are now employed by Hinds, Moffett & Co.

A NEW IDEA.

Ever on the alert to the possibilities which surround them, Hinds, Moffett & Co. have conceived a new idea, and that is to open a plumbing establishment in each city or village where they have constructed water-works. The shops will be conducted in the interest of the water-works companies, and the firm making almost daily such heavy purchases as it does in order to carry on its present business, is enabled to buy plumbing goods at a figure much below that paid by ordinary dealers, and in this way the revenue of the water companies will be materially increased by consumers who take advantage of the reduced rates thus offered, to make connections with the mains and put in the water.

AN EXCELLENT RECORD.

Aside from the argument in favor of a private water company and against the management of such systems by a municipality, the fruits of which are often seen in Watertown, Hinds, Moffett & Co. have to sustain and perpetuate their business, a record for promptness, energy and thoroughness, which is a sufficient guarantee. Of the many contracts which they have already performed, not one has been rejected after its completion nor have they been asked to make a second test before their patrons became satisfied with the work. The Times readers have been made familiar with the system and its results at Adams, and it is only fair to say that similar result have been obtained through every other system introduced by Hinds, Moffett & Co.

A \$30,680 Fire.

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES.
SYRACUSE, Nov. 30.—The largest fire that ever visited the village of Savannah broke out at three o'clock this morning. Three dry goods stores, two groceries, one saloon, a harness store, the public hall, a bakery, a hardware shop and two barns were consumed. Seven families were burned out. The loss is upwards of \$30,680.

LATER.

A later dispatch gives the loss at \$30,680 insurance as far as learned \$4,000.

A Large Deer.

CORRESPONDENCE OF THE TIMES.
POINT PENINSULA, Nov. 30.—E. D. Moore, W. C. Angell and F. Herriott, of this place, have returned from the Big Woods with three deer, one buck weighing 254 pounds, one of the heaviest deer ever killed in Herkimer county. While in the woods near Whitehall, the party learned of a hunter being killed, his companion mistaking him for a deer, and shooting him.

FATHER McWILLIAMS TAKES IT BACK.
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES.

KINGSTON, ONT., Nov. 30.—Father McWilliams, Riel's spiritual confessor, publicly revokes that sentence of his letter to the governor general in reference to Riel's execution, which in effect, charges his excellency and the ministers with murdering an insane man. He confesses he wrote the letter hurriedly and while carried away by natural sympathy for the condemned man.

Navigation Notes.

At Detroit the schooner Unadilla is reported engaged for wheat to Buffalo at 3½ cents, to be held at consignee's option, free out. The D. G. Fort goes to Ogdensburg at 6 cents, and the W. H. Rounds, Hoken and Charger to Oswego at 5½ cents.

A dispatch from Cleveland, Tuesday night, said: "The barge Col. Brackett was sold by the United States marshal this forenoon to satisfy claims against her for about \$800. But few vessel men attended, and she was sold at the low price of \$525. C. M. Jenkins, of An Salle, Mich., was the purchaser. The schooner Gerrit Smith was libeled a few days ago. On Tuesday it was discovered that she was already in the hands of a receiver appointed by the United States court, and she was released."

TO THE CITIZENS OF WATERTOWN AND VICINITY.

Wednesday morning, Nov. 19th, a fire broke out in our store which destroyed nearly the whole front, also damaged a great deal of our stock by water and smoke. Saturday of the same week all the adjustments for insurance were made. Tuesday, Nov. 24th, we opened for business. So great was the crowd that we were compelled to lock our doors two hours each day, which had to be done during the whole week, in order to give the employees time for their meals. As the whole interior of the store has to be renovated, we will continue our special sale which we will do for the next twenty days. Before the fire we had bought largely of holiday goods which were at the depot waiting for delivery. We will open them and have them ready for sale in about three days. Please call daily for bargains, as all can not be seen at one time.

Look for the boarded up front.

BUSH, BELL & ROTH.