

WATER SUPPLY.

Shall the City Go in Debt \$1,000,000?

A VARIETY OF ANSWERS.

Interviews With Representative Citizens on the Subject—The Question of a Good System of Sewerage Presented First Prominently—A General Expression of Opinion.

At the last meeting of the city council, it adopted a special report which instructed the city clerk to call a special election for November 19, to vote on the proposition to authorize the city to issue bonds in the sum of \$1,000,000 for the purpose of bringing in from Rock creek an ample supply of water. To sound public opinion on this important question, reporters of the Post-Intelligencer were detailed to interview citizens of all classes. These interviews are published.

Thomas E. Jones, member of the city council—The quality of the present water supply is very poor, but I am not decided to authorize the present time to go in debt \$1,000,000 for a better supply. The Spring Hill company has furnished an abundant quantity of water, but the quality is what I object to. I favor the scheme of the city owning its own water supply, but I am not fully satisfied that the time has come for the city to take hold of an undertaking which involves so great a sum of money.

Hon. J. J. McGilvra—I doubt very much if the time has come for the city to assume such a large debt. We are doing so much street work and improving so much indebtedness that I doubt the expediency of the city going in debt \$1,000,000 for water at the present time. We are going in debt fast enough, and had better be a little careful. Ultimately I shall favor such a scheme as is now proposed.

William Meylenbauer, the pioneer baker—Yes, I favor the scheme. It has got to come. The longer we wait the worse the quality of the present water supply becomes. As the country around the lake settles up the quality of the water will necessarily become more impure. I do not consider the present water supply fit to drink, but it is all right to put out first with the city money to take the water to the citizens, at a reasonable figure, and it might as well do it now, and let us all have the benefit of it. I don't think the sickness here to the use of Lake Washington water. Other cities own their waterworks, and why not Seattle?

M. J. Carkeek—I am in favor of the scheme, and the sooner it is done the better. A million dollars put into water-works by the city is money well invested.

I. N. Bigelow—While I believe that the city should own water-works, I am in favor of securing a good sewerage system first, and after we get that then let us go for water. If the proposition to go in debt \$1,000,000 for water at this time was submitted, I do not know how I should vote on the proposition.

John Haley, of the firm of Haley & Wright—If the proposition goes to a popular vote it will carry. I favor the scheme, provided the city owns the water supply, and the same principle that an individual or corporation would. Otherwise I oppose it. Some think if the city puts in the water, it will be a good thing. The city can no more afford to put in water works at a cost of \$1,000,000 and furnish free water than a private citizen can, but it can put in water works and furnish pure water at a reasonable figure to the citizens, and do a great public good.

Dr. E. L. Smith—No, I do not favor the scheme at this time. I think there is something we need worse. We ought to improve our sanitary condition first. We need to have the water and it will be a good thing after while. The works will not cost any more in a few years than now, and in the meantime we can improve our sanitary condition and fix up our streets, and when we get these things paid for, then let us go for water.

W. H. Shouley, ex-mayor of the city—Yes, sir, I am in favor of the proposition. I can't say why this is not as good a time as any to consider this question. The water supply should own the water supply. That is a settled proposition. Then why wait another five or ten years? If it will be a good thing to do in five years, why is it not a good thing now?

County Treasurer Pontius said he thought it a very good scheme and that he was very much in favor of it, not only for the reason that he approved of the idea of the city owning its own system, but also from a sanitary standpoint, as he thought that if the plan was carried out, the city would be supplied with a purer and more healthful water.

George B. Adair, president of the board of trade, said that he was emphatically in favor of the proposed change. "I am not sure," he said, "but I am in favor of the city owning and conducting the gas and water supply. Certainly private water companies are not running such an enterprise at a loss. Properly managed, the city water works would give us a better and cheaper service."

Colonel Haller argued that there would not only be a better service, but purer water at cheaper rates, but the city would be relieved of its present large expense for water. He stated that the same expense month regardless of whether or not there is a fire and without consideration of the amount used.

Fred E. Sander was just leaving for his residence on the street car and had not time to go into details, but said briefly that he was and had been an advocate of the idea of public ownership of the both gas and water works.

Z. C. Miles, though busy in his counting-room, spent some minutes in his opinion it was the best thing that the city could undertake. It would establish solidly to the city, and judging from his knowledge of the working of the system in other cities, it would prove a better and more reliable supply at cheaper rates. There would not be an insufficient supply in case of large fires, and instead of being a tax and a burden to the people, it would be a relief from the present high rates and would at the same time show itself to be a source of revenue to the city treasury.

Ex-Gov. E. P. Ferry, vice-president of the Puget Sound National bank, was seen at his office and asked for his opinion from a financial standpoint. Mr. Ferry commenced by showing statistics of the cost of water systems in 21 of the largest cities in the United States. The works are owned by the city in every case but two. The largest cost of plant was in New York city, \$17,000,000, and the smallest cost was in New Orleans, \$2,000,000; the average cost was roughly a little over \$9,000,000. Judging from these figures, Mr. Ferry thought that the estimate for \$1,000,000 would be insufficient. Then again, placing the amount of pipe necessary to lay mains throughout the city at 50 miles, its cost, together with the labor required, would amount to a large figure, not included in the engineer's report.

"Do you think the revenue from water rates would be sufficient to meet the interest on the bonds?" he was asked. "I have not given the subject enough consideration and thought to speak decidedly, but I should not think it would be if the rates were charged. I think it would be doubtful if bonds to the amount of \$1,000,000 can be negotiated. If capital-

ists could have the assurance that these bonds would be the only ones issued it would be a easier matter. Many cities that have placed a large amount of bonds have got into an almost bankrupt condition. "Do you favor the ownership of waterworks by the city?" "Most assuredly I do. I don't think it is necessary to have that condition of affairs now. The existing companies supply our needs very fairly. Many other things are more needful at present; there are streets to be graded, a city police station and jail, and a court house. In three or four years' time there will be many more graded streets and consequently a system could then probably be self-sustaining. There will then be more graded streets and I think that from this reason the cost of the plant would be even less than now. Briefly, I am in favor of city ownership of the water system, but under the circumstances, not at present."

C. H. Hanford—I am in favor of the city having a sufficient supply of the best water and an adequate system. I have a strong impression, however, that the best water we will ever get will be from Lake Washington and that a good system can be put in for a good deal less money than the city is talking about. I do not think it advisable to incur an indebtedness of \$1,000,000 or more for a water system when we need other improvements so badly.

W. T. Hannon—I am in favor of good water and good sewerage, but let us have a thorough sewerage system before we undertake the water scheme. I would not favor incurring any such a debt as is proposed for such a purpose at this time.

W. E. Ledgerwood—I doubt the expediency of entering into such a gigantic scheme as this, with the heavy taxes we have already to pay. We ought to do and have water works as soon as we can, but there are other crying needs to be supplied first. I think the city should not in the meantime grant so many franchises to water companies that when the time comes, when it will be in shape to put in a water system, the field will be filled with competitors and the streets filled up with other mains.

J. Furth—I dislike to say anything on the question, as I am interested in the company at present, regulating the water supply, and my statements might possibly be considered biased by some. Apart, however, from my personal interest, I do not think the city is able to bear the expense of a new system at present. The water works are many of them, and the city is not in a position to pay for them. The city is growing rapidly, and the streets are being filled up with other mains.

H. Hershberg, of Hershberg & Co.—I think the quality of the water now supplied decidedly requires improvement. I myself have been obliged to drink it by medical authority, and some steps should be taken to improve it. I am in favor of taxpayers only voting on this matter. If an improvement is to be made, it should go to the expense at this time, as I have not had sufficient leisure to examine the question thoroughly. The step is a serious one and should be taken cautiously.

Mr. B. Gatzert—While I am connected with the Spring Hill Water Company, I am of the opinion, wholly devoid of personal interest, that it is premature for the city to take the project in hand now. It is certain to cost more than \$1,000,000, and say it only cost that amount, we have sewerage to improve, streets to grade, and a city hall to build. An increased taxation is bound to interfere with the city's growth more or less. Take, for instance, a tax on the city of 7 per cent. money where 7 per cent. is considered a good return. If the taxes are 4 per cent—and they are 3 per cent now—such a firm could not do business, but would be obliged to seek another field, and so on with other pursuits that are mentioned. Some may claim that the income derived from water rent and that saved on hydrants would pay the interest on the bonds, but they overlook a very important fact. New extensions will be continually made—in fact must be made to meet the demand as the city grows, and, as the water supply of the latter is referred to. Where, then, is the interest to come from? It must come from the pockets of the taxpayers.

Thos. W. Prosch—I think it inadvisable, particularly in view of the large debt which the school district is contracting. They will run the city in debt amounting to \$300,000, and the special issue of bonds for \$1,000,000 more. Now if you add to these debts another million we may, to draw it mildly, be very much embarrassed to meet our interest account.

Prosecuting Attorney Ronald—As an "old hand" opinion, I should say, unhesitatingly, that it would be very unwise for the city to incur the debt at this time. I shall oppose it.

Mr. J. B. McDougall, manager of the house of Toklat, in connection with the city at present has an assessed valuation of \$10,000,000 in round numbers. The city is now in debt \$1,000,000, which is over 2 1/2 per cent. per cent. however, that the percentage does not exceed 2 per cent. for the sake of keeping the figure below the minimum, and the sum paid yearly by property-holders in the city is \$200,000. Now the question arises, is the city able to place bonds for \$1,000,000 as given in the engineer's report is sure to swell to \$1,500,000 annually, and supposing only half the bonds are issued, the city would be paying for the water supply the necessary capital for conducting operations, it will take two years to complete the work. In the meantime \$45,000 per year, or \$90,000 in two years, will have been paid without any benefit being derived by the city. Why not have the Spring Hill company's works, as we understand the charter gives the city the privilege of purchasing them at any time within 10 years. The Spring Hill company will be willing to take bonds, and this means the city indebtedness cannot be increased by more than \$300,000. In our opinion, the right way out of this question should be confined to property owners, as they must bear the expense and take their chance with the future of the city. Just now it seems to us that a proper regard for an improved sewerage and renovation of the city front is far more pressing than the question of water supply. It was only the other day that a prominent merchant from St. Paul said to us: "I have not any great interest respecting its progress and prosperity, but would like to see a better system of sewerage established." Excessive taxes at the present time, when the city is young and expanding, will nip its growth, as intending purchasers of property and those who are engaged in fishing business houses will not come in where taxes are too high.

Mr. Singerman of the firm coincided with Mr. McDougall's views.

C. A. Wright of the firm of Haley & Wright, think that while it would be too great an expense for the city at present, some measures ought to be taken for the improvement of the existing water supply. Houses on top of the hill have scarcely any pressure on the water, which has to be moved, and is almost stagnant. The health of the city is an important factor to consider, and better water can be

asily had by the works now operating. If only it were filtered, this city would be a better place than most. Many cities that have placed a large amount of bonds have got into an almost bankrupt condition.

L. A. Treen, of Treen & Raymond, considered that at the present time the burden would be too great for taxpayers to go on, and the proposition asked for in the report would not meet the requirements two years from now, when a further call would be made on the manager of the plant.

J. E. Chibberg, manager of the house of J. Chibberg & Son, thought a better system than that prevailing should be established. If for nothing else, to protect city property from the ravages of fire, "the city ought to have a schoolhouse," said he, "because of a defective water supply, and the two in process of building ought surely to be protected from a similar fate. The \$1,000,000 loan amounts to nothing when compared with the losses which the city would suffer by a large fire when sufficient water supply. It seems to me that the income derived from the water, together with the sum now in use, would almost pay the interest on the loan. Yes, by all means let the city go ahead and erect and own a system of waterworks."

J. A. Ballarston & Co. say that the city should control the water supply, and that the matter can better be taken hold of now than later, when the plant could not be purchased as cheaply as at present. The firm is of the opinion that the system, if established at all, should be constructed so as to meet the requirements of more than 100,000 inhabitants.

Davies & Co. were next seen, and Mr. G. Davies informed the reporter that the water works against the measure. The report is uncertain as to the amount necessary to construct the works, said Mr. Davies, "and, if correct, it is a large sum for the city to spend at the present time. The city is growing rapidly, and we can let better in two years or so what the street needs will be, as well as a fitted monetarily to bear the expense."

J. F. Raymond, of Treen & Raymond, is in favor of a thoroughly efficient system, not only for the present needs but for all future needs. Seattle, provided an arrangement can be made whereby the sum borrowed can be paid in 20 or 30 years. The creation of a sinking fund, so to speak, to pay interest and principal over a 20 or 30 years period, was in his opinion the only equitable way to carry out the plan. Then, if the city later on and reap the benefit of an elaborate water system, then the water supply, which is fitted monetarily to bear the expense."

Capt. J. A. Hatfield is impressed that the city should be careful at the present time in contracting more debts. The new schools will be a heavy burden, and this expenditure should be met before any further considerable debts are incurred. He thinks the present water system is efficient, if the quality of water was improved, which can be done by proper attention to filtering.

G. H. Heilbronn—I haven't given the matter much thought, but it appeared to me when I first heard of the proposition that it was premature. I think that if we bond the city at the present time, that it should be for the purpose of equate sewerage system. Then in two or three years, if necessary, we could float water bonds.

Daniel Jones—I'm for it. Half the people who come to Seattle from other parts of the country inquire first of all about the water supply.

E. B. Rundlett—in my estimation we need good sewerage above everything else at the present time. We need it so badly that we ought to spend any large amount of money for any other purpose until we get a thorough sewerage system.

H. H. Dearborn—I think it is entirely wrong to put any such a proposition before the people to decide by ballot. There is of course a large element here who have no money interest in the city, and who do not care whether they vote away other people's money or not. I think the proposition is a very foolish one. It is not only foolish, but it is not fair to the citizens of Seattle who invested capital in water works when they were needed so badly. I think we might better pass ordinances for the improvement of some of our business streets, which would not cost the city anything. Here is a chance for the city to do a public benefit, and \$100,000 spent in that direction now will count for more than \$100,000 a few years hence. Boston has spent the latter sum, and it doesn't show much either, because they waited until the city was built before they commenced widening the streets. Then the next step was to start a sewerage system and extend it as rapidly as we can. Then when we get sewerage and a means of disposing of the water and the city in a good sanitary condition, we can talk about water works.

Judge J. P. Hoyt, manager of Dexter Horton & Co.'s bank, said: "Yes, it can be done. There is a question about the legal authority of such proceeding. An act passed by congress prohibits increasing an indebtedness of over 1 per cent. on any public value, and the amount proposed would be from 12 to 20 per cent. If the business can be done legally, Mr. Jones is in favor of attending to it immediately, as it will take at least two years to get the system in working condition, and as the minimum, and if they are not taken soon private enterprise will get them all cornered and will cause a large expense to the city."

W. A. Harrington of the firm of Harrington & Smith said, decidedly, that he was not in favor of the city increasing its debt.

George M. Bowman—Yes, I think the time has come for the city to own the water supply. I know of my own personal knowledge that the Rock creek water is the purest to be found in the territory. It is fit for domestic purposes, and the supply is inexhaustible. With it the city could flush sewers, put out fires and run machinery to light the city, and it would see the old company squeezed out, but would favor buying their mains at a reasonable price.

T. H. Gann—I put the first money into the city owning the water supply, and our plan was to bring in water from Cedar river. This was changed after I withdrew from the company. I am in favor of the city borrowing \$1,000,000 on its credit to furnish an abundant supply of fresh water to the citizens.

D. E. Purie, member of the city council—Of course I favor the scheme, but there will never be a better time than the present to incur this indebtedness. Money put into water works is like money put into real estate. You get something for it. The work can never be done any cheaper, and I say let us have the water.

Captain J. C. Floyd—I favor the plan of the city owning the water works, but I think a million dollars is more money than would be required to furnish the necessary supply. We all expect to see Seattle become a great city, and all great cities should own their water supply.

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NOTICE OF SCHOOL ELECTION. NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT ON Saturday, November 3, 1888, at Brown's pavilion on Second street, between Spring and Seneca streets, in School District No. 1 (1), in the city of Seattle, King county, Washington Territory, a school election will be held for the election of five (5) school directors for said School District No. 1. Two for one year, two for two years and one for three years; also for the election of a school clerk for the ensuing year. The polls will open at one (1) p. m., and continue open till seven (7) p. m. Dated at Seattle, W. T., Oct. 25, 1888. T. J. MINOR, W. H. HUGHES, J. M. PRINCE, Directors of School District No. 1. M. A. HAYTHORN, Clerk of said School District.

REGULAR MEETING OF WASHINGTON A. C. Camp No. 1, Patriotic Order Sons of America, every Saturday at 7:30 p. m., in their hall in Opera House. Ladies and gentlemen invited to call and examine our stock and prices. 113 Commercial Street, Seattle, W. T.

THE MARYLAND TOWING & SHIP CO. has a large stock of all kinds of machinery, tools, and other goods, and is prepared to do all kinds of work. Office hours, 10 a. m. to 5 p. m., 7 to 9 p. m. N. B.—Persons unable to visit as may be treated at their homes by correspondence.

ALFRED HOLMAN, President. C. T. CONOVER, Secretary.

THE CHILD SUFFERED. The mother ran. No remedy was used. Before morning the poor little sufferer was dead. Moral: Ask for Dr. Acker's English Remedy at once. For sale by A. B. Stewart, druggist.

ALFRED HOLMAN, President. C. T. CONOVER, Secretary.

ALFRED HOLMAN, President. C. T.