

# BUSINESS MEN FOR TWO PHONES AND GOOD ROADS

Complimentary Luncheon at Rock Island Club Last Night Is Well Attended.

## CITY'S NEEDS DISCUSSED

Many Are Heard Regarding Two Matters up for Consideration—Harmony Prevails.

"That the city of Rock Island needs the Home Automatic Telephone company, and should improve its roads to the country," was the consensus of opinion expressed last night when the Rock Island business men enjoyed a complimentary luncheon and a business session at the Rock Island club. Arrangements had been made for a hundred at the meeting and every ticket apparently was used and the result was a fine gathering of representative men, well qualified to discuss the city's needs. The program, excepting some entertainment by E. J. Stackhouse, who read in his charming manner a number of poems, consisted of brief talks by members of the organization who desired to be heard on the two subjects before the meeting—telephones and good roads.

### TALK GOOD ROADS.

H. A. Clevenstine, president of the association presided. He opened the meeting with a report on the rapid progress which the organization has made since its recent reorganization and emphasized the need for frequent "get together meetings," at which the city's best interests can be discussed and harmony promoted. The general discussion was then opened.

W. B. McIntyre reviewed the movement for good roads and expressed a belief that the time is not far distant when Rock Island will boast of the best thoroughfares in the country. He also advised the promotion of harmony in the conducting of city affairs.

H. S. Cable spoke at length on the need for better roads and said that in his opinion there is no need for improving the city and having fine things, big institutions and good stores here, if no provision is made for allowing outsiders to come in to make use of them. "Good roads," said Mr. Cable, "are more important than the average man realizes. Good roads increase the business and importance of a city because people go where they can travel with the least trouble." He also discussed the proposed "ocean to ocean" highway and delivered an invitation to Rock Islanders to

attend a meeting at the Commercial club in Davenport this evening at which time plans will be formulated for making the tri-cities a link in the cross country highway.

### NEED FOR COMPETITION.

The telephone problem was brought up by Secretary G. H. Kingsbury, who read the ordinance which is to be submitted to the voters Dec. 10 at a special election.

Hon. F. L. S. McCabe, one of the promoters of the Automatic company, explained the intentions and the purposes of the new corporation. The new company, he said, will give better service than is accorded now and the competition will result in better work on the part of the Bell people so that the city in the long run will get the phone service that it is entitled to—the best there is.

W. H. Carpenter in a brief talk contended that the Bell company will raise its rates if the present phone ordinance granting a franchise to the new company is voted down and he advocated the two phone plan. J. T. Shields, F. J. Hodges, Ralph Lutten, F. A. Rockwell and J. L. Vernon all spoke in favor of the automatic phone and advocated the granting of a franchise.

M. H. Sexton in an emphatic talk disagreed with the others and opposed the grant on the grounds that it would mean the tearing up of much of the newly laid paving. He also discussed the apparent lack of harmony among the city commissioners and made some comparisons between their actions and the manner in which the Moline commission is doing business.

### NOT TO TOUCH PAVING.

Mayor H. M. Schriver followed Mr. Sexton and was non-committal regarding the advisability of again having two telephones in the city, but promised that in any case there will be no tearing up of newly laid paving.

He took the Bell people to task for their poor service afforded generally. W. H. Thoms and E. B. Krebs opposed the granting of a new phone franchise on the grounds that the improved service which such action would bring would be more than offset by the added expense and inconvenience of having two lines.

A feature of the evening was a valedictory concert. Another "get together meeting" will be held in December.

### Tomorrow Services at Y. M. C. A.

Tomorrow noon at the Y. M. C. A. rooms, at 12-25, there will be a prayer meeting conducted by E. B. McKown. The topic will be "Thanksgiving." All men are invited to drop in for the few minutes of prayer and discussion.

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# ACT RESCINDED AT HOT SESSION OF COMMISSION

Council Not to Shift Responsibility to People in Waterworks Problem.

## CITIZENS ARE HEARD

Commissioners Rudgren and Reynolds Remain Unmovable in Face of Many Protests.

In a stormy session, punctuated by heated flashes of repartee on the part of the mayor, the commissioners and representative citizens who had assembled to voice their sentiments in regard to the waterworks question, and during the course of which the lie was passed between Commissioner M. T. Rudgren and Captain W. A. Rosenfield, the commission of the city of Rock Island yesterday afternoon voted to rescind its previous action, referring the question of creating the office of "superintendent of waterworks and filtration" to a vote of the people at the special phone election of Dec. 10, and skirmish No. 1 was won by the mayor, Commissioners Bear and Hart and the Fifty Thousand club.

### FIGHT STARTS EARLY.

The fight began immediately after the clerk had finished the reading of the minutes when Mayor Schriver announced that a body of citizens was present for the purpose of discussing the waterworks question. B. D. Connelly, who had been appointed spokesman for the Fifty Thousand club, together with Hon. William Jackson, Hon. William McEniry and E. H. Guyer, arose to present a set of resolutions in behalf of the citizens, when Commissioner Reynolds offered for adoption a resolution, deferring the discussion of the waterworks question until next Tuesday evening, his contention being that all of the people were anxious to engage in the discussion, and that the holding of the meeting in the afternoon prevented such a course. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Rudgren, and when remarks were called for Mr. Connelly proceeded with the reading of the paper. He had read but a few paragraphs, when Commissioner Reynolds again interrupted saying: "Mr. Mayor, there is a motion before the house and should be acted upon before Mr. Connelly enters upon a general discussion of the ordinance."

### TWO ARE UNMOVABLE.

Commissioners Rudgren and Reynolds held their ground firmly throughout the entire affair, and refused to budge one inch, and it was only after Commissioner Hart had come over to the other side that the motion to rescind was carried by a vote of three to two.

Commissioner Reynolds explained his position in plain, manly and straightforward manner, and had the courage to follow his convictions. He acted the gentleman throughout, but the same cannot be said of Commissioner Rudgren, who went straight up in the air, and was saucy, impudent and vindictive. He acted the part of an overgrown school boy and was a great disappointment to his former friends.

### RUDGREN MAKES ATTACK.

In backing his stand, Commissioner Rudgren accused the Arena of slandering him and then turning his attack on Captain Walter A. Rosenfield. "As to the alleged statement of Walter Rosenfield, stating that I am a candidate for mayor, I wish to state that it is a lie. Furthermore, as to E. H. Guyer's statement that if we do not do as we are requested, that we ought to be recalled, I am willing to go before the people at any time, subject to a vote as to their preference, along with the other commissioners, and I will venture to say that my name would not be at the bottom of the list either."

After Commissioner Reynolds had expressed his views, Mr. Rosenfield took the floor and addressing Mr. Rudgren said: "I have no fault to find with Mr. Reynolds' statement, but I do object to the epithet liar, which Mr. Rudgren has applied to me. No gentleman would use such language. Previous to this time I have always cherished the highest respect for Mr. Rudgren, but I am free to confess that my views have changed."

### CITIZENS HEARD FROM.

Immediately after the reading of the resolutions by Mr. Connelly, various citizens were heard from. Captain W. A. Rosenfield was the first. He claimed that the submitting of the question to the people at the special election was illegal and stated that if there was to be a referendum on every public question, the commissioners could be readily dispensed with.

Dr. Joseph De Silva dwelt upon the importance of pure water to the city, and claimed that whether or not the matter was submitted to the people, to the people. He accused the commissioners of attempting to shift the responsibility on the people, who were not as familiar with the proposition as the men at the head of the municipality. He urged action on the part of the commission and felt sure the people would stand back of such action. He made a plea for a continuance of the progress which has been made under L. I. Birdsall's regime and pleaded that the high standard which had been attained should be maintained.

E. H. Guyer said: "There is no question but what the waterworks plant needs a competent man at its head. The commissioners were elected to manage the city affairs in all details, and the proposed referendum is a shifting of responsibility and a dodging of the issue. I ask you to rescind your action."

I. S. White said: "The commission is competent to care for this proposition but show a desire to shift responsibility and not to perform the duties for which you were elected. The rich and poor man alike will benefit by good water. It is just as reasonable to expect that a referendum

should be called when it is desired to purchase a horse or some fire hose for the city, as to use it in this case. It is a question of the city's reputation."

### DRAWN COMPARISON.

M. H. Sexton said: "Before the commission form of government was introduced in Rock Island the people were not asked to vote when a new filter was installed, nor when various other improvements were made. Why now? It appears to me that the commissioners are quarreling among themselves. It is time that you commissioners understand this matter. If this quarreling does not stop, you will kill the commission form of government. In no other city is there so much dissatisfaction with the system as in Rock Island."

### TOO MANY ELECTIONS.

Hon. William Jackson said: "You commissioners are responsible for the health of the people. This is no time for prejudice. You pledged yourselves to the people that you were competent to perform your duties, and if you were not competent, you should not have been candidates. You pledged yourselves as being competent and we expect you to keep your pledges. The waterworks is most important. It has suffered in the past because of the lack of a competent man at its head. You commissioners are brought into contact with it daily and are able to judge what is needed, better than the great mass of the people. There are too many elections in the city. We are stirred up all the time. It is injurious. It is time for the people to stop this incessant struggle and get down to business. Do not humiliate the people you represent by confessing to your incompetency in this matter, by submitting it to a referendum."

### CONTRARY TO LAW.

William McEniry said: "It is time to eliminate all this contention and restore confidence in our public officials. If the commissioners follow the law they will do no wrong, and the law in this case forbids the submitting of this matter at a special election." City Attorney J. F. Witter was then called upon and he agreed in a measured way with the lawyers who had previously spoken, as to the non-legality of the proposed step. He stated that although he could find nothing in the law permitting such a referendum, there was also nothing forbidding it. He maintained that it resolved itself into a question of whether or not the city had the right to spend the money to print the ballots, and stated that in his opinion it had not.

### RUDGREN TAKES FLOOR.

Commissioner Rudgren then took the floor in defense of his stand, and addressed the chair as follows: "Mr. Mayor: I feel that I am as deeply interested as any man in the city in the success of all departments in the city government and in the waterworks department as much as any other department except the street department and this exception only because of my interest in that of which I have personal charge."

I have voted my convictions on the question of creating the office of superintendent of the waterworks and of filtration and am prepared to take the personal consequences of my vote whatever they may be. We have had in charge of the filtration plant, Mr. Birdsall, who came here well recommended. Mr. Birdsall stated 'time and again that the water was pure and that statement has carefully been given widespread publicity. If that statement is true, then what need have we except to employ a chemist in Mr. Birdsall's place? If it be false then a thorough investigation is needed. I am and I know Mr. Rudgren is in favor of obtaining a pure water supply and it is unjust to us to represent us as holding otherwise."

I believe we have men in this community who are competent to act as superintendents of the waterworks. I have nothing against Mr. Sharp, who seems to be a fine man, but we have men here who are qualified to manage the waterworks and as Mr. Rudgren has pointed out, Mr. Sharp is not under the law eligible to the office. I feel that the real question before us now is not the change in the ordinance itself but the question shall the people

of this city be given the opportunity to vote on the creation of this new office. Not a part of the people not 100 or 200 of the people, but the whole people should have a chance to be heard in the matter. We have resolved to give them this opportunity at a time when the submission of the question will cost practically nothing and less than 20 days will be needed to get this vote. I see that Mr. McEniry does not like the referendum. That is a law that the public has been asking for and it is a part of the commission law. Mr. Jackson says that we are having too many elections, too much disorder and discontent. How many elections have we had under the commission law? We have had one on the liquor question, and two on the telephone matters. No one can deny that it was proper that these elections be held under the law as it now stands. Another election has been made necessary by a telephone company, a corporation which is seeking a franchise and by a majority vote of this council we have decided to take advantage of the opportunity to submit to the people a question in the decision of which they should have a voice. For this we have been criticized by the members of the organization present here today. It has been said here that we are trespassing the telephone company unfairly by placing another question upon the ballot and thus obscuring the issue. The telephone company is seeking a valuable franchise from the people. If their proposition is a good one for Rock Island they have nothing to fear from a large vote being brought out. If, on the other hand, it is bad, it should be defeated and the fact that they are to pay one-half of the expenses of the election gives them no right to the exclusive use of the ballot.

An attempt is being made by the Fifty Thousand club to get us to rescind our action in submitting the waterworks ordinance to the people. I am informed through the press and through other sources that threats have been made that those of us who are responsible for the action taken will be recalled if we do not back down. I consider that an attempt to influence the vote of a commissioner by threat of a recall is as outrageous as an attempt to influence his vote by a bribe and is as dangerous to public morals. What is the reason for this menace, this threat of a recall? Are not the people of this city fit to govern themselves? Are you afraid that

the people are not capable of deciding what is for their own good? Is there a body of men in this community who are so wise, so powerful, and so far seeing that they can determine for us what the people shall be allowed to vote upon and what they shall not be allowed to vote upon. There are hundreds of men in the Rock Island Plow shops and other large factories who, by reason of their knowledge of mechanics, are as well fitted to pass on the ordinance in question as are you gentlemen here present today. What right have you to say that these men should not be allowed to vote. You say they will be influenced by passion and prejudice. When they go into the election booth and mark their ballots they will be as cool and unprejudiced as any man here. Are not these men whose labor has built up this city and whose labor maintains this city as fit to vote on this question as you or I? I do not believe the time has come in this or any other American community when the theory that the people at large are unfit to vote will be tolerated.

As the attacks made upon us by Mr. Rosenfield, Mr. Guyer and others who accuse us of playing petty politics and say that Mr. Rudgren and I are both

(Continued on Page Thirteen.)

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