

**THAT CONFERENCE
WITH MR. SCRANTON**
BOARD OF TRADE COMMITTEE
MAKES ITS REPORT.

Another Session of the City's Most Prominent Deliberative Body in Which Water Rates Are Discussed to the Exclusion of Almost Every Other Question—Lengthy Statement Submitted for Acceptance as the Sentiment of the Board on the Water Question.

Water was again the burden of the board of trade's discussion at its regular meeting last night. A report was received from the special committee appointed to confer with President Scranton, of the Gas and Water company, in which was told what the conference accomplished, or, to be exact, what occurred there; a resolution was presented ratifying at length the sentiments of water rate resolution of the last meeting, and ordered printed for distribution and future consideration, and some interesting remarks were made by prominent members regarding the all absorbing topic.

Incidentally a resolution was adopted pledging support to the new Delaware Valley and Kingston railroad, officers were nominated for the ensuing year and the handsome and substantial compliment was paid Secretary Atherton of granting him an unexpected and unexpected increase in salary.

The report of the special committee on water rates was prefaced with a statement from its chairman, James H. Torrey, that the committee felt constrained to confine itself wholly within the limits prescribed for it by the resolution under which it was created, namely: "To confer with Mr. Scranton with a view of securing a lower and uniform rate for manufacturers, and to report upon the legal status of the water company." The report of the committee was as follows:

COMMITTEE REPORT.

To the Board of Trade.
The undersigned committee appointed at the last meeting of the board with instructions to wait upon Mr. W. W. Scranton, president of the Scranton Gas and Water company, with reference to the substance of the resolution adopted at the last meeting, respectfully report:

That by appointment, a majority of the committee waited upon Mr. Scranton at the office of the Scranton Gas and Water company, on Friday, Dec. 5. The committee submitted to Mr. Scranton the resolutions of the board, and in accordance with the instructions of the board, suggested to him that the Scranton Gas and Water company should make a uniform and lower meter rate to manufacturers. The committee stated that in their opinion and in that of the board the company would lose nothing by such reduction in the rates, the loss to manufacturers would necessarily lead to a greater increase in domestic use of water.

President Keller then announced that the secretary had a statement to read concerning the water question. Secretary Atherton read as follows:

MATTER OF WATER RATES.

Notwithstanding all that has been said and written recently, relating to the water rates to manufacturers in this city, and notwithstanding all that may be said in the future, relative to this important question, the Scranton board of trade contends, and hereby reaffirms, that the water rates to manufacturers in the city of Scranton are too high, and that the rates of the Scranton Gas and Water company are inequitable. This statement can be substantiated by an abundance of good and reliable evidence.

The future of Scranton, and of the Scranton Gas and Water company, depends upon the industrial growth of the city. Its industries should be developed in this point. In order to do this, we should be placed in a position where we can compete with any city in the country, especially in the East. We believe that a five cent cut uniform rate to manufacturers would be fair and satisfactory. We therefore ask the Scranton Gas and Water company to make such a rate, believing that by so doing they will materially advance the interest of the city. We believe that should there be less than the much-talked-of four per cent, C) profit or revenue, then the water rates to manufacturers under the five cent rate, the loss would be more than made up on the domestic rates. The water rates for which we believe are commensurate with the services rendered.

At our November meeting this question was ably discussed by a number of our most prominent and respected citizens, men who have been eminently successful in both business and professional careers. The sentiment of the water rates to manufacturers was unanimous. It was stated in general terms that water for steam purposes cost about as much as fuel in certain establishments. This statement, while possibly made to emphasize the fact of the high water rates, was absolutely true, and can be proven.

SOME COMPARISONS.

Following is a statement from the books of the Scranton Bedding company, which needs no comment on our part:

PREPARED BY REQUEST.
Yearly rate previous to putting in meter, \$1.00 per thousand, \$6.75 Meter rate October, 1899, with no steam used in heating building, \$21.25 (Put down well on premises.)

Meter rate November, 1899, with building heated by steam, requiring (estimated) one-fourth more water than October. Well in use \$5.00

FOR CHRISTMAS PRESENTS.

Fine Umbrellas

Endless variety of Handles, Tied Oaks, Natural Crooks, Sterling Silver, Etc., in Taffeta, Puritan, Gloria and Fine Twill Silk. Great variety of

**Pocket Books,
Card Cases, Shopping Bags,
Boston Bags in Seal Alligator,
Morocco, Russia Leather,
Etc., Etc.**

**MEARS & HAGEN, 415-417
Lackawanna Ave.**

NEW ROAD ENDORSED.

The resolution on the new road was unanimously adopted. It read as follows:

Whereas the securing of a lower

and Water company, Mr. Torrey went on to say, is too large and complex a subject to be made the matter of a written report. In line with the opinions expressed at the last meeting by some of the city's most eminent legal minds, he, however, would say, that it is quite safe to accept that the company has not an exclusive franchise, and that its rates are subject to the supervision of the courts as to their reasonableness, according to the capital involved.

A motion by Colonel F. L. Hitchcock to receive and file the report and discharge the committee, with the thanks of the board, was provocative of a lengthy discussion as to whether or not it was becoming to discharge the committee at this time. The motion was finally agreed to, Mr. Dale and Mr. Lansing both spoke in favor of discharging the committee, believing it had fulfilled the task to which it was assigned.

Mr. Dale took occasion to say the committee was very courteously received by Mr. Scranton and that they found him not only ready to discuss the matter but prepared, but inclined to go into a detailed discussion of the water question, which, of course, the committee was not prepared to do, even though such was within the scope of its authority. Mr. Dale created a laugh by quoting "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth" and paraphrasing it: "Behold, what a tendency to rush into print and what a lot of letters a little water doth provoke."

THEY ARE EXPERIMENTAL.

Mr. Lansing added that Mr. Scranton had mentioned that the present rates were in a way experimental and that relative changes would not be definitely determined until about April 1.

Mr. Stelle thought the committee should be continued. To discharge it at this time, he believed, would be a confession that the board was too ready to give up the campaign it had launched.

Colonel Hitchcock thought differently. The committee has carried out the work given it and was now without a mission unless the board felt like directing it to take up some other feature of the question—municipal ownership, for instance.

"Mr. Scranton is to be recommended," Colonel Hitchcock continued, "for the magnificent work he has done, but still there is a question as to whether or not the city would not profit more from the ownership of its own water supply."

Considering the present condition of our city government that is the last thing we would want to do just now.

The time may come though when we may have a decent city control, and the consideration of the question may be desirable for the future if not for the present."

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We believe that inasmuch as Mr. Scranton has more financial interest by far in the growth of the city than any member of the board of trade, that he should meet us more than half-way, and by co-operating with the board of trade, place our city beyond all possibility of retrogression when the anthracite coal strike comes.

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