

APPRAISAL OF WATER WORKS

Board Organized and Promptly Begins Inspection of Plant.

STRIKE SERIOUS SNAG ON THE FIRST DAY

Company Insists City Must Take All or None of Its Property, While City May Not Wish to Do So.

Within a very few minutes after the board of waterworks appraisers convened yesterday afternoon it became apparent that there will be a number of obstacles to overcome before the city of Omaha owns and operates the waterworks plant now owned and operated by the Omaha Water company. That it will not own the plant during the present year has already been settled in the negative.

The first and most important matter of difference which appeared was the question of whether the city will, or can, or must buy the plant as a whole as it exists today, or whether it will, or can, or must buy simply that part of it within the city limits of the city of Omaha and such parts of the plant outside such limits—pumping station and supply main—as are necessary to the operation of the part within the city limits.

Miss I. France was selected and agreed to act as stenographer of the board, and full reports of all proceedings and of all findings will be made.

City Attorney Wright outlined the ideas of the city regarding the work to be done and the manner of doing it, which, he said, did not altogether agree with the ideas of the appraisers for the company. He first emphasized the point that the appraising board is not simply a court, but a board of experts appointed to make its own examination of the plant while it might be proper and advisable to take some testimony in order to be of secondary importance and simply advisory, the board not being bound by it in making its findings of value, but by its own examination. As the board is composed of experts there would be no occasion for hearing expert testimony, and no such testimony should be heard.

What the City Wants.

Questions were likely to arise, Attorney Wright continued, as to the extent of the purchase by the city, what it had a right to purchase and what it would be obligated to purchase. Possibly the city might want only that part of the plant within the city limits and parts necessary to operate such part, and possibly the company would be willing to sell only such parts of the plant. But to make the appraisement of force and effect under any contingency he insisted that the report of the appraisers be made in detail in this way: First, the Omaha plant by itself; second, the plant or property in outside cities and villages; third, the value of the complete plant. So far as possible the report should also be in detail as to the different classes of tangible property inside and outside the city; if it had any additional value as a "going plant" or there was value in the plant as a whole, this also should be in detail and separate from the tangible property. The city, he concluded, expects to pay a fair price and does not expect to beat the company, but it also wants to pay only what should be paid.

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For politeness sake, laugh behind your hat. But it was amusing, the way the excursion gentlemen were received at the den of Ak-Sar-Ben. How eagerly they ventured into the simple looking mysteries, how innocent they were and how surprised. But a pint of good, cool beer taken internally is a drug to cure all evils of the system resulting from the reduction to the 30-cent basis, and the sandwich of wholesome ham and baker's bread, while it may not be applied as a counter irritant in the manner of the mustard plaster, is yet a useful thing.

The travelers were from the lines of the Union Pacific from as far as Beatrice and Grand Island. There were during the ceremonies speeches. Edward Hall of Elkhorn, the man with a weak voice and a strong intellect, led off with the diplomatic words of courtesy and great respect. Following him came Charles Witte, who is largely the kind of talker that his name implies. Then there was Lyle Abbott, an ambitious juggler of words, who presents the fifth clause of the enactment either from the left end or the right. He also spoke.

Baldert, the caterer, was the first man on the program to be by the centurions, as a mark of respect, showed a hot time. Then Charles Witte of Elkhorn, which by its representation is easily the largest of the dependent cities, did a round or two, as did also C. A. Wheeler of Omaha. M. L. Hancock and F. C. Colby, both of Waterloo, were quite set up by their reception, and others also received special attention.

Some Who Were Present.

The following is a list of the strangely complacent fellows who thought that they could steam into the stronghold of Ak-Sar-Ben and without turning a hair make a monkey of the awful mysteries and say: "Oh fudge!" to the centurions of Samson. There was the making of a monkey and the saying of "Oh fudge!" by the centurions of Samson. The ambitious travelers to do with it. Also is appended a list of the towns whose such presumption dishonors: M. M. Emmons, Portland, Ore.; E. Jenkins, Los Angeles, Cal.; L. Van Camp, Sheridan, Wyo.; Dr. Robert Hill, Ispewich, S. D.; H. N. Kirby, Cincinnati, O.; C. S. Bush, St. Louis, Mo.; John Berg, Appleton, Wis.; G. F. Kendall, Brookline, Mass.; Martin Chah, C. M. Talcott, J. B. Bonner, Chicago; and John Hynes, Rock Island, Ill.; Charles Bobly, Silver Creek; B. J. Rickle, Breda; William Smith, Delancey; F. Clarke, Henry Pot,erson, A. B. Corman, and William Ball, the last five from Red Oak and all from Iowa; and those following from Nebraska: B. B. Hopkins, Lincoln; H. J. Bloss, Wymore; A. J. Craven, F. A. Shoup, North Platte; G. H. Wood, Louisville; W. J. Stewart, Bertrand; A. Zlotky, Fremont; W. H. Schmitt, Harvard; E. P. Hanson, Craig; O. J. Van Dyke, Shelton; R. Kombrink and Father Delfosse, Central City; F. H. Clark, W. C. Willis and W. L. Beebe, Valley; A. E. Langdon, Henry Niece, P. Morgan and H. A. Sanders, Papillion; H. B. Walcott, H. H. Roper, G. L. Hines, W. J. Mack, Louisa, Hancock, Smith Brown, D. Compton and F. C. Colby, Waterloo; H. Milke, J. Gregerson, B. B. Baldwin, A. C. Witte, C. C. Holling, G. H. Goodhart, J. Zinfalt, Otto Palmberg, F. Bull, George Witte, Charles Witte, John Aye, Ed Hall, H. Dalby and H. Bruhn, all of Elkhorn.

Appraisers Out Inspecting.

No time whatever was lost by the members of the board, all of whom have as appraisers of the water works of a number of cities and therefore familiar with the work. Yesterday the members at 1 o'clock took carriages and proceeded to inspect the Burt street pumping station, the original plant put in twenty years ago, and which has since been kept in commission as an emergency pumping station, and the Walnut Hill reservoir. On this trip they also got a general idea of the topography of the city, a matter of considerable importance in their work.

President Woodbury, who is accompanied by his son, L. D. Woodbury, stated to a Bee representative that there is no hostility whatever on the part of the company to the present move, and that all the assistance possible will be given the appraising board in its work. The company has nothing "up its sleeve," but is acting in good faith, he continued, and expects the city will take advantage of its rights under the original contract ordinance to secure the water supply for the city. The company, on the other hand, proposes to comply with the provisions of the same contract ordinance, insulating on all of its rights under it and not disputing any of the rights given the city by it. The company, of course, expects to be paid for the water it supplies, and the city, he believed, desires to get as good a price as possible for its property and the city desires to buy it as low as possible, the same as individuals when selling and buying. But in this case neither the city or the company has anything to lose. The city, he concluded, expects to pay a fair price and does not expect to beat the company, but it also wants to pay only what should be paid.

Position of Water Company.

Judge Woolworth, representing the company, said he did not agree with Mr. Wright on a number of points, several of which were not yet settled. The matter of testimony could be settled when the witnesses were offered and could not be settled now. The board could decide if testimony was irrelevant and throw it out, but as parties interested in the water supply, he believed, he believed, some expert testimony would be desirable. Judge Woolworth then told of the site of Minnuea station, which he declared the one and only available place