

COMMUNICATIONS

THE ELECTRIC LIGHT PROPOSITION

To the voters of Downers Grove:
In reply to the communication of T. H. Slusser that appeared in the last issue of the Reporter, asking that I, as village president, give you more information than is contained in the circular that I mailed you, setting forth the receipts and disbursements of our electric light and water plant for 1912 and an estimate of the expenses for the same work if we had the new equipment installed that the Board contemplates if you vote on October 18th to give us the bond issue that we ask.

I prepared the statement showing the receipts and disbursements from the village treasurer's annual report, \$411.81 was spent by the former board looking for a bond issue to rehabilitate the plant with steam. I deducted that from the total disbursements, and the balance, \$17,928.68, must be the cost of maintenance and operation, as no interest or depreciation was charged and no new equipment was purchased OR EXTENSION WORK done.

I did not check up the different items of expenditure and charge to any part of the plant, but I did check up the coal and labor and charged up the balance to repairs and supplies. I found that coal cost \$6,545.12 and labor \$5,917.60, leaving a balance of \$5,466.96 for other expenditures, the larger portion being for repairs to boilers and machinery.

The estimates as to expenses if an oil engine had been installed were furnished Trustee Kellogg by Mr. Beck, who represents the De La Vergne oil engine in Chicago, and was based on the use of 125,000 K. W. H. for pumping water.

This estimate was made by two engineers, who are members of the American Association of Mechanical Engineers.

The plant in 1912 produced 143,840 K. W. H. of current at the switchboard. 56,200 K. W. H. were used for street lighting, 87,640 K. W. H. for commercial circuit.

The village collector's books show that 53,551 K. W. H. were paid for by consumers, the balance, 34,989 K. W. H., was used for free lights, slow meters and line loss.

The free lights are located at the Village hall, collector's office, power plant, public library and the lights on the outside of the depot.

I caused meters to be installed a short time ago, and from their reading estimate that the free lights amounted in 1912 to 18,860 K. W. H. When you consider that some of our meters are slow we find our line loss is not above the average for good lines.

Our lines are in good condition; we do not need to rehabilitate them, but we do need to extend them. We have a number of applications on file for current that we do not feel justified in granting because of the condition of the plant.

As to the item of \$3,720 for labor, the estimate was for three men and a superintendent, the same as is used now. The saving in labor is 10c to 12c a ton for unloading coal and a coal passer or laborer; two were used during the winter months. One of the men employed now works four hours as engineer and six hours on the lines, and this is sufficient except after sleet storms or other emergencies. Oil engines of the heavier types do need attention, but not the constant attention of steam boilers and engines.

Mr. Beck informs me that both the De La Vergne and Diesel engines are water cooled, and engines of the size we propose use not less than 350 gallons of water an hour, which is circulated around the cylinders, keeping them cool, and insures their constant operation. This water is used to heat the plant in cold weather, and in hot weather passes through a cooling tower and is then pumped back to the engine to be used again. They guarantee constant operation so far as heating caused by operation is concerned.

As to fuel oil charges of \$1,200, this charge is based on 270,000 k. w. h. of current produced. All the makers of oil engines of the larger types that burn the cheaper fuel oils guarantee that a gallon of oil will produce from 9 to 10 k. w. h., depending on the load the engine pulls. If full load, it will be very near 10 k. w. h. Quotations on fuel oil are less than 4c per gallon f. o. b. Whiting, Ind. Oil tar is quoted at 3c per gallon f. o. b. Chicago.

As to insurance rates, I acknowledge I have not looked into that phase of the question, but I do not anticipate that there will be any change in rates, as it is well known to the Underwriters' Association that our present plant consists of worn-out equipment that is liable to go out of commission at any time and leave us without an auxiliary plant of any kind. And this condition has existed for years. Right now if our two remaining boilers should go out of commission the only water the village would have for any and all purposes would be that stored in the standpipes, not over 48 hours' supply if the people were economical.

I fully agree with Mr. Slusser that we ought to have two units, but to buy another 140 h. p. engine would cost \$10,000, and that is just that much more than we can raise by bond issue. Two 100 h. p. engines would cost \$2,000 more than the amount we propose to spend, and one 100 h. p. engine would not pull our peak load. So after mature deliberation it was thought best to buy the 140 h. p. engine, keep the two boilers that can be used, our

service pump and the steam power head on one shallow well (we have not used one of our shallow wells but little in three years), thus giving us a complete steam auxiliary. We have never had an auxiliary system before. I have a letter from the chief inspector of the Hartford Insurance Company (the company that insures our boilers and later condemned two of our boilers), to whom we have outlined our plans. He writes that if the boilers are laid up as he directs they would allow us to use them without inspection and without voiding our insurance. In that event it would take about an hour to fill the boilers and get up steam. But we do not anticipate that we should be called on to use them at all, as the board expects, if our plant earns the money we expect it to, to be able to buy a second oil engine from the profits of the plant.

As to the item of \$287 for repairs, this figure was made by Mr. Beck and he bases his estimate from the experience of the users of his engine. The names of the users of oil engines that I wrote to for information were furnished me by the representatives of the De La Vergne and Diesel engines. I selected from their lists the people to whom I wrote. The reports I received from the users of the De La Vergne were to point favorable. The reports read no trouble of any kind or a little trouble with cracked heads or wrist pins. The reports from the municipalities using the Diesel were favorable, but from the public service companies they were very unfavorable. I drew the inference that they were trying to discourage municipal ownership of public utilities.

As to depreciation, Mr. Beck says an oil engine will not last as long as a steam engine, and that 6 per cent was plenty to take care of its depreciation. Mr. Slusser asks, "Is it not a fact that all of the users of oil engines you communicated with were located in the oil belt?" I will answer No. They were scattered. I will say that Illinois produced over 28,600,000 barrels of crude petroleum in 1912, the third state in production, California and Oklahoma only producing more oil. So we might say we are in the oil belt ourselves.

The September "Isolated Plant" gives a list of 21 oils that are suitable for oil engines, mineral, vegetable and animal oils. It also gives the annual report of the Camden, N. J., municipal electric plant for 1912. They operate an oil engine and are not in the oil belt. Receipts, \$9,198.19; operating and maintenance, \$4,543.42. They say the opposition that they had when the plant was installed several years ago had disappeared and that they were paying their interest and bonds before maturity out of the earnings of the plant. Their repairs were \$223.08 on all equipment.

I am informed that the C., B. & Q. is installing small oil engines to pump water where new equipment is needed. Four engines have been installed in the past three months.

The October "Review of Reviews" says the year 1912 saw internal combustion engines placed in ocean-going steamers. Their use was so successful that the British admiralty have decided to equip all of their new battleships with internal combustion oil engines, and it is expected that within a short time oil engines will displace steam engines in the navies of the world.

Now just a word of warning: If we are forced to sell we will pump our water with our old steam plant. It will require 1,100 tons of coal and the same help as the oil engine, \$3,720 plus repairs and supplies, and it can't help but show a deficit. Our street lights will cost about \$4,500, all to be paid from the general fund.

A. BACKUS.

By a Taxpayer.
Being financially interested, as a taxpayer, in the proposed bond issue for re-equipping the electric light plant, I wish to call the attention of other taxpayers to a few features of this proposed investment.

The proposition calls for the levying of a tax to collect from us \$26,000—\$18,000 for bonds and \$8,000 interest.

Our former village president stated that Mr. Copley assured the board that his company would make a minimum offer of \$20,000 for the plant, or rather, for a twenty-year franchise. Therefore, we have an equity of \$20,000 in the franchise. Add this amount to the new capital we are asked to invest and it totals up to \$46,000.

If we were to accept such a proposition it would be necessary for us to spend about \$5,000 in electrical apparatus to pump the water, after which we would be, at the lowest estimate, \$41,000 to the good—of which \$26,000 would remain in the pockets of the taxpayers and the balance would go into the village treasury. Another point for consideration is the fact that Mr. Copley agreed to give us a ten-cent rate, while the village trustees say that they could not reduce the present high rates for some time to come.

I ask any thinking man if there is any good reason why we should tie up over \$40,000 in an electric light plant when another corporation stands ready to do it for us, take all the risk of the business and give us cheaper service? Let us give some reliable company a twenty-year franchise and at the expiration of that time, if the residents of Downers Grove want to take over the business there will be nothing to prevent them. A twenty-year franchise will not tie the hands of a future generation.

This oil engine may be all right today, but I understand the manufacturer admits that when handled by the average operator it will be out of use in sixteen years, and the taxpayers

will then have to make another investment.

The demand for electrical current in this village is not sufficient to justify the operation of an independent plant. Looking backward at the record of the electric light and water plant, we see nothing to justify us in making a further investment in that direction. Ever since the electric light plant was installed it has been a constant trouble and burden. Why continue it when another is willing to take the burden off our hands and give the consumer cheaper and better service?

The entire argument in favor of this oil engine is based on the cost of crude oil, a product absolutely under the control of the Standard Oil Company—the daddy of all the corporations.

Crude oil was quoted a short time ago at 2½ cents and now the market price is over 4 cents. On account of the increasing demand for crude oil and for its by-products, there is bound to be a constant increase in its price, and it is not improbable that it will go so high that its use will become as expensive as coal. What will then happen to your plant?

No doubt the Board of Trustees are sincere and honest in the proposition they have submitted, but we may, also honestly, question the wisdom of their plan. It is too much of a gamble and the chances are all against us. Let us look at this proposition straight and decide it on its merits, regardless of the fact that the Board of Trustees recommends it.

The simple proposition is, do we or do we not want to invest over \$40,000 in an electric light plant? That's the proposition and all of it.

If we were cut off from a source of supply we might be compelled to do so, but the Public Service Company and the Copley concern are both willing to serve us at a lower rate and relieve us from the burdens and risk.

Some members of the Board are influenced in their action on this proposition by the belief that a majority of the voters are opposed to selling the plant to a private corporation, but they have evidently overlooked the fact that oil engines require oil and the Standard Oil Company makes the price for the oil.

Oct. 8, 1913.
Mr. C. H. Staats, Editor the "Reporter."

Dear Sir: I wish to take advantage of your kind invitation to use the columns of your paper in making a few remarks on the electric light and water question that will soon be before the voters of this village to settle. It has been brought to a point where we will have to spend some money and rehabilitate the village plant, or sell out and let somebody else have the privilege of serving us and incidentally pocketing some of our good money for this.

I took my office of village trustee a year ago this last April, and at that time this same question was in an unsettled state. Being a new member it took some time to become acquainted with the conditions of the light and water department, and not being a member of the regular committee having charge of this department I did not get the close insight to these affairs that I might otherwise have had, but there was one thing that the lighting service was falling rapidly and operating expenses were a fright.

Conditions became so bad that we had to do something, and since the voters had previously turned down the proposition to sell, the board half-heartedly took up the matter of looking toward the rehabilitation of the plant with steam power. The services of an expert engineering firm were employed to go over the plant and make a report as to what would be necessary to put our plant in first-class shape, and the estimated cost of the same. In due time the report was made and submitted with the result that we learned very little that we did not already know, but it did put this knowledge in concrete form, gave us a report that could be put before the voters with the feeling that it was the views of an expert and would be given corresponding credence by the taxpayers.

All this time we were constantly having trouble with our boilers, which I assume was due to the ignorance of the one in charge, and all the time we were hearing that the plant was in a positively dangerous condition, liable to blow up at any time; but since Mr. Wilburn has been back on the job as superintendent these rumors have magically disappeared and we have since been getting very good service, and I am informed by a business man in a neighboring town that it is better than theirs, which is supplied by a public service corporation, one that would likely be a bidder for our plant should we be forced to sell.

The sum and substance of the above expert report was that it would take about \$17,000 to properly rehabilitate our plant and we were in a position where if the voters did sanction a bond issue for this work that we could only legally raise \$12,500 or only about two-thirds of the amount needed.

Since the people had formally voted unfavorably on the proposition to sell, we, in the necessity of the situation, put it up to them to vote on the proposition of issuing bonds for the rehabilitation of the plant. This proposition was defeated by a margin of only five votes and I was one who voted with the majority only because I thought it would be foolish to try to rehabilitate with two-thirds of the necessary amount.

About this time the third rail people got after us and wanted to make a contract to bring the current over from their lines in Lombard and put it on our switchboard here at a low

rate, we still to own our equipment and tend to the local distribution. This proposition of buying, provided we could contract at a suitable rate, I favored; but lately, when we wish to take their proposition up with them again our village clerk reports that they do not answer his communications. Can you surmise why? This would leave us only two bidders for our franchise should we have to sell now and who knows how long before one of these might withdraw, then how much competition would we have for our franchise?

Our attention was attracted this last summer to the marvelous reports of the operating efficiency and economy of oil engines. Very few people have heard of this type of oil engines. They are somewhat like the ordinary gasoline or kerosene engine without the complicated ignition and carburetion system of these. In the oil engine the oil is discharged as a spray into the explosion chamber where, instead of by a spark, it is exploded by the compression of the revolving piston head.

These engines are of very recent introduction in this country, the first I understand, being exhibited at the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. The originals were from Germany, where they have been used for some years; the type which the board favors is the invention of an Italian.

Mr. C. H. Dicke, our fellow townsman, has one of the earlier types of the De La Vergne engine that he has had for about ten years, and he is an enthusiastic booster of our installing one for village purposes. Mr. Dicke's seventeen-year-old son installed his and ran it. In fact, Mr. Dicke says the engine runs on the minimum of fuel cost and operating expense, and requires very little attention.

The village board, with the exception of Mr. Haller, made a trip to Menasha, Wisconsin, in the early part of September to inspect the municipal plant there, where they used oil engines. The laws of Wisconsin are such that a municipality must make a very detailed report of their operations of the public utilities to the proper state board each year, so that at Menasha we not only had the opportunity to inspect the physical plant but were privileged to go deeply into the light and water accounts, and with such results that we have been thoroughly converted to the oil engine idea. Below I am giving some figures from their published reports that makes mighty interesting study.

Annual Report of March 28, 1913.

Revenue, electric light receipts	\$10,049.67
Revenue, water department	8,944.10
Operating Expenses.	
Electric—	
Operating labor at plant	\$1,291.50
Fuel oil	1,945.50
Lubricating oil	306.74
Maintenance of power plant equipment	135.68
Power plant supplies and repairs	262.54
Meter inspection and repairs	146.92
Labor trimming and repairing street lamps	346.00
Supplies and repairs street lamps	399.05
Labor reading meters	62.50
Office salary	175.04
Office supplies	41.16
Law expense	37.35
Engineering expense	59.87
Fire insurance	13.50
	\$5,223.35
Water—	
Operating labor at plant	\$ 861.00
Fuel oil	496.37
Lubricating oil	76.68
Maintenance of equipment	90.45
Power plant supplies and repairs	175.02
Water main repairs	27.25
Meter and service repairs	122.64
Labor meter reading	37.50
Office salaries	116.68
Office supplies	10.29
Fire insurance	9.00
	\$2,012.88

(To be continued in next week's issue.)

Respectfully submitted,
JASON LITTLEFORD.

NOT ONLY IN DOWNERS GROVE.

Similar Cases Occur Daily in This Vicinity.

Not only here in Downers Grove, but in our neighboring towns, the same good story is heard. An encouraging instance from Naperville is given here, and will be read by all with great interest.

Andrew E. Wehrli, 164 Center street, Naperville, Ill., says: "There was a dull, nagging ache in the small of my back and lameness and soreness across my loins that prevented me from stooping or lifting. When I exerted myself in any way, I had sharp pains throughout my body. The kidney secretions also annoyed me by their frequency and proved that my kidneys were at fault. Doan's Kidney Pills strengthened my system and removed the aches and pains."

For sale by all dealers. Price, 50 cents. Foster-Milburn Co., Buffalo, New York, sole agents for the United States.

Remember the name—Doan's—and take no other.

Financial Acumen.
Milligan—"If I be after laying security aqul ter what I take away, will yer thrust me till next wake?" Sands (the grocer)—"Certainly." Milligan—"Will, thin, sell me two av thim hams, an' kape wam av thim till I come agin."—Puck.

Motiograph Theatre

SATURDAY, OCT. 11.

"A GENTLEMAN OF FASHION" (Vitagraph).—John Bunny plays as a plumber who, once a week, goes forth as a "gentleman of fashion." Flora Finch plays as a very romantic spinster of great wealth. They meet. He thinks her a shop girl and she thinks that he is what he appears to be. The situation is cleverly carried on and makes a very amusing offering. Frances Cook is the authoress and George Baker the producer. The audience seemed to enjoy it much and there was hearty laughter.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15.

The Younger Generation.—When Michael Riley, a poor laborer, unexpectedly fell heir to two thousand dollars he did not spend it in riotous living. Instead, he decided to use it to give his daughter Maggie an education. So Maggie was packed off to a fashionable boarding school, while her heartbroken mother wept, and her

father puffed at his empty pipe. Maggie was a charming young girl, so John Boyd fell in love with her. He was the son of the mayor of the town where Maggie went to school. He was a rich young man, an influential young man, and withal, a nice young man. So the principal of the school had no hesitation in asking him to give away the diplomas on commencement day.

Afterwards, at the commencement dance, he asked her to marry him. Maggie was on the point of accepting him, when suddenly she remembered. Who was she that she should marry this young aristocrat? She temporized and bade him come to her home for his final answer.

Boyd came to the Riley home and met Maggie's uncouth parents. The rude surroundings and the reek of her father's pipe were too much for him, and he turned away disillusioned. As he walked down the street, however, he suddenly realized that all the joy and happiness were going out of his life forever, and so he turned back and told Maggie that she was the only person who had ever really mattered anyway.

Love's Song.
Love's song is all the sweeter if a man is able to reach the high notes of the wage scale.—Buffalo Express.

Your Sunday Dinner

The eternal question. Let us help you settle it in the easiest way. Our Prime Roast Beef, Pork Roast, Leg of Lamb, and Spring Chicken is fine, young and tender. Call us by phone or leave your order at the store.

On and after October 1 this store will close at 7:15 p. m., except on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

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For their benefit we have inserted in each Directory a page of information about Telephone Service. This information is necessarily condensed. All the interesting and useful intelligence on the subject would fill volumes.

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