

PERTH BILL POSTPONED.

TOWN CANNOT PURCHASE ELECTRIC PLANT.

Opposition Company Successful in Its Fight—Conmee Act Used as Lever to Force Purchase of Waterworks.

The Private Bills Committee of the Legislature, by a vote of 28 to 11, yesterday voted to postpone for a year the bill of the town of Perth providing for the purchase by the municipality of the Perth Electric Works. The representatives of the town then asked permission to withdraw the bill.

The Canadian Electric and Water Power Company, which operates the waterworks and an incandescent lighting system, renewed its opposition to the bill. Mr. D'Arcy Scott contended that if the town were allowed to enter into competition with it the company would be ruined.

Squeezing the Town.

Mayor J. A. Stewart of Perth said the Canadian Electric Company was endeavoring to use the leverage of the Conmee act to compel the town to purchase the waterworks. If the company would sell the incandescent plant alone the town was prepared to buy, but the company did not want to sell it. The company had been unable to supply the town with all the incandescent lighting required, and had to turn the lights off at 10.30 every night. The company which the town wanted to buy was an older one than that which was opposing the bill.

Mr. W. B. McMurrich, K.C., for the Bank of Ottawa, objected to the passing of the bill, as it might affect the security held by them.

Town Solicitor Allen said that at the time the bank took the security the company was not operating the electric light plant; it had the waterworks alone. As to ruining the company, it would not be in any worse position than it was now.

Mr. Conmee—The municipality might reduce the price for lights to less than cost.

Mr. Allen—Fix the price of the lights in the bill.

Hon. Mr. Gibson—I don't think there would be any competition at all.

Town Willing to Purchase.

Mayor Stewart—The corporation is quite willing that it shall be limited to arc lighting for commercial purposes and for the lighting by incandescent lights of the municipal buildings.

Mr. Gibson—Would you be willing to confine your arc lighting to the streets and public halls?

Mr. Stewart—No.

Mr. Conmee—Cannot you use the poles and wires of the Canadian Electric Company?

Mr. Stewart—The wires of the two companies are on all the streets. We have purchased those of one company.

Mr. Crawford—They are buying all they can be reasonably expected to buy.

Mr. Matheson—The Council is willing to submit a by-law to the people for the purchase of the whole plant of the opposing company, including the waterworks, for \$100,000, but they want \$115,000.

Mr. Matheson moved that the bill pass, limiting the town to the arc system for commercial purposes and the use of the incandescent system in the municipal buildings.

Mr. A. G. MacKay moved in amendment that the matter be left over for a year.

Record of the Vote.

The vote was as follows:—

Yeas—Messrs. Barber, Carscallen (Hamilton), Carscallen (Lennox), Conmee, Davidson, Dickenson, Fox, Foy, Gallagher, Gibson, Graham, Guibord, Hislop, Hoyle, Joynt, Mahaffy, Morrison, Munro, McKay, Pardo, Preston (Brant), Reid, Russell, Smith (Peel), Stock, Truax, Tucker, Willoughby—28.

Nays—Messrs. Beck, Brown, Caldwell, Crawford, Duff, Jessop, Lee, Little (Cardwell), Matheson, Richardson, St. John—11.

The bill was then withdrawn.

Trenton's Debt Consolidated.

The Peterboro' bill to give a free site to the lock works, and fixing their assessment at \$12,000, was reported.

The bill to consolidate the debt of the town of Trenton was also reported, after the clause providing \$10,000 for cement sidewalks had been eliminated.

The bills confirming an agreement between the G.T.R. and the town of Barrie, and respecting the town of Orillia also went through.

Consideration of the bill of the Toronto Consumers' Gas Company was deferred until Tuesday next at the request of Mr. A. B. Aylesworth, K.C.