

## WATER WORKS IMPROVEMENTS.

### MR. McALPINE'S REPLY TO MESSRS. COOKE & PLUNKETT'S PAMPHLET.

The following letter has been received by the Water Committee in reply to Cooke & Plunkett's pamphlet :—

ALBANY, FEB. 9th, 1870.

To J. W. McGauvran, Esq., Chairman of the Water Committee.

SIR,—On the 29th of January, I addressed you a letter, in part reply to a Resolution of your Committee passed on the 17th ult., and to a pamphlet which had also been forwarded to me, entitled "Observations upon the report of Mr. McAlpine, etc," and then stated that I would avail myself of the permission given by that resolution to reply to the material points contained in the pamphlet.

The resolution was in these words:

"Resolved,—That a copy of Messrs. Cooke & Plunkett's pamphlet on your report of the Water Works of this city, be transmitted to you, in order to enable you to answer statements therein made, if you think proper to do so."

In my previous letter, I stated that I would reply to any particular points that you or any of the members of the Committee desired, as I was at loss to understand how far you wished me to extend my examination of the pamphlet.

I also stated that the pamphlet seemed to be a voluntary act, and was not prepared in answer to any formal request of the Committee, or, as I inferred, from that of any of the members thereof, and it bears upon its face none of the evidences of a public document.

The chief significance which it has with me is the reference of it to me by a vote of the Committee, and in the absence of any further expression of your wishes I am compelled to regard it as emanating from the disappointed authors of a crude and ill-digested scheme which I was forced to report against.

My respect for your honourable body requires that I shall give it more attention than would otherwise be expected or required from me.

If this scheme had been presented to a Board of respectable hydraulic engineers without any *quasi* endorsement, such as your original resolution gave to it, and it had to

be considered in comparison with the other plans which had been suggested, it would have been summarily disposed of.

At your special request, I devoted considerable space in my report to show why this plan was inferior to any of the others, and I then avoided any expression of my opinions in regard to its feasibility.

In a general way, the pamphlet asserts that my report is one of generalities, avoiding figures, and, especially, estimates of the cost of the several plans; that my calculations are erroneous and in conflict with each other, and with those made by other engineers; and that my opinions in regard to the practical questions involved—in regard to frazil, wheels and steam engines, are valueless, and that I am biased against their scheme.

I pass by the use of unprofessional language, as merely indicating the taste of the writer, and not material to the subject, so far as the Committee is concerned. In answer to these general allegations and the minor ones in the pamphlet, it may be said that they are actually contradicted by the authors, or by the published opinion of Messrs. Shanly, Keefer, and Francis, or are self-evident even to unprofessional persons.

After reading the pamphlet and reviewing the whole subject, I now deliberately state that I entertain the same opinions; upon the several subjects alluded to, precisely as I have heretofore expressed them in my report of Oct. 21st, 1869.

On page 16 of the pamphlet, the authors condemn their own scheme so effectually, that, if their opinions have any value; they have attempted to foist upon the city a plan involving *three times the outlay* that would be required "for the next twenty years." They say, "If the quality of the water at present furnished is satisfactory to the Council and citizens, then we say that the required quantity can be supplied for the next twenty years, for less than one-third the cost of any system of water power whatever."

But the above opinion is in direct antagonism with that of all the engineers who have examined the subject, such as Messrs. Keefer, Shanly, Francis and Lesage.

All of these gentlemen, as well as myself, have had, at least, equal advantages in obtaining all of the information in regard to