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PURE WATER!

The Discussion on the Question on Tuesday Night.

An Able Presentation of the Case by Messrs Williams and Strang and Dr Holmes and Others—Pure Water Guaranteed.

There was a large turn out of ratepayers on Tuesday evening to hear the waterworks question discussed at the special meeting of the council.

Mayor Seager, in taking the chair and opening the meeting, said that recently there had been much discussion on the street and the council had been severely attacted by the press in regard to the intake pipe that was now being run to the harbor. It would have been more patriotic if the council had been approached in a milder spirit, and if the advice which was now so freely given had been offered at an earlier date. Some three weeks ago notice was given of the intention to run the intake pipe from the harbor, and nothing had been said against it until the last week, when street corner discussion and the attacks by the press had been made. The action of the council was based upon the advice of the engineer, and was not a new scheme. At the time of changing the plan from East-st., to the harbor, so that the idea of forcing rather than lifting the water would be adopted the possibility of being compelled to go to the lake for fire purposes was mooted, and no objection was raised in any quarter. The engineer had gone so far as to say that even if we ran the pipes out into the lake it would still be wise to have an intake pipe from the harbor for fear of breakage in the main pipe. The council had all along acted in the best interests of the town, according to their judgment, and as far as he was concerned, he had resolutely done the same. He then read a letter from engineer Chipman in which that gentleman sneered at the objections to the proposed intake pipe and said they were purely sentimental. Continuing, the Mayor said that the intake pipe would only be used as a last resort. In the past fifteen years no fire had occurred which would have called it into requisition. Three fire streams were required by underwriters to reduce the present insurance rate, and the wells would only stand two. At first he had strongly doubted the necessity for the intake pipe, but the saving to be effected in the reduction of insurance had determined him in favor of the scheme. The insurance companies would make no reduction unless we had the intake pipe to fall back upon for fire purposes, and another reason why it was required was because it was needed by the condensing engines.

Mr J M Sheppard then came foreward and was satisfied with the scheme. He gave the council some taffy, and said he would willingly take all risks so far as the harbor water was concerned, but thought as there were some people who objected, water for fire purposes could be obtained from the Hawley well. He deprecated the attacks on the council by the press.

Mr Joseph Williams was loudly called for, and commenced by referring to Engineer Chipman's remarks in regard to sentiment being a factor in the present agitation, sentiment was a factor in a great many things.

Mr Strang—Sentiment rules the world.

Mr Williams—Yes, sentiment is a great power. Sentiment with many people causes allegiance to Great Britian; sentiment hinders many from feelings of annexation to the States, and favors the belief in Canada's independence; and sentiment would lessen the number of watertakers if this scheme was persisted in. (Hear, hear.) The mayor had stated that in the past fifteen years he knew of no fire that would necessitate filling the mains with harbor-water; but in making that statement the fire at the Summer Hotel and that adjoining Armstrong's factory, where the wind had fortunately veered in both cases, when the water supply was exhausted, had surely been overlooked. And there were other cases that could be recalled by some present, which did not occur to his mind. Then, again, to make the test which was called for by Section 10 of the contract where four streams would have to be pumped from inch and a quarter nozzles for a long period, before the works were taken off the contractor's hands, would necessitate the filling of the pipes with harbor water, so that the mains would be polluted before the water as used for domestic purposes. Section also laid down that a heavy output of water should be made for the first month, which if carried out would require the pumping of harbor water through the intake pipe. It had been stated by some that those who opposed the running of the intake pipe to the harbor were not in favor of a sufficient supply of water for fire protection, but that was not the case. We want a full supply for fire purposes, but we want a pure supply for health purposes first. (Hear, hear.) The principal reasons advanced in favor of the waterworks at the public meeting held to discuss the question last year, was that by the system advocated we would obtain pure water. If we failed in obtaining pure water we failed in the primary object of the original waterworks scheme. (Hear, hear.) The pool into which the intake pipe ran was a liquid cemetery for dead cats, dogs, rats and other animals. In addition to that there were regularly droppings into the harbor, which further detracted from the purity of the water. Animalculæ bred disease, and all the flushing in the world would not entirely free the pipes from these impurities if the harbor water once passed through them. A single germ would get into the system so that there was no way of getting rid of it except by the most drastic physicking or death. He had obtained an analysis of the water obtained ten feet from the mouth of the intake pipe, which was of necessity purer than that at the mouth of the pipe, and which had been analysed by Mr S. P. Halls, B.A., chemical teacher of the Goderich high school which showed it to be most foul. Some years ago a water test was accidentally brought about in London. Two companies were supplying a part of the city with water; one company obtained its supply further up the stream than the other. An epidemic broke out and in a short period 4,000 people died. The medical men looked into the case and discovered that whereas 30 died in every 1,000 of those who obtained their water supply up the stream, 130 out of every 1,000 of watertakers down the stream succumbed. There were three good reasons why we should not attach the intake pipe to our domestic system: It would be injurious to health; it would be unpleasant to use; it would be calamitous financially. I do not say that we are going to use this water for domestic purposes, nor do I say that the pipes cannot be flushed out, but there is a possibility that the water would be used, and it is also a question whether the flushing of the pipes will thoroughly remove the deleterious matter. Continuing, he contended that it would be impossible to get the water into the houses, if the terms of the contract were complied with, without first using the harbor water under existing circumstances.

The Mayor said the work would be guaranteed by a company in which they had every confidence, and the council was willing to accept that guaranty.

Mr Strang was of opinion that we had no guarantee that the harbor water would not be used, and the possibility of getting filth through the pipes would deter people from taking the water. The mischief might be done in half an hour. He agreed with Mr Williams' presentation of the case, and emphasized a number of the points made by that gentleman. Owing to the crevices and jointures it was an impossibility to so flush the pipes that deleterious matter would not remain in the pipes. Mr Chipman had not said, and dared not say that the pipes could be thoroughly flushed out. What we wanted was pure water, and that we should have, after so great an expense had been incurred. Health was the first consideration, and after that a reduction in fire insurance was in order. (Hear, hear.) How did we know that in the case of fire, and under the excitement incident to it, that a workman might not let in the harbor water without the knowledge of the public? He admitted that the present action was taken at perhaps a late hour, but it was better late than never, when human life was involved. He was not sure that, if the council persisted in the work, the Provincial Board of Health had not power to step in and stop it.

Dr Holmes thought it would be impossible to flush the pipes out so that diseased matter and germs would not adhere. The harbor water, as had been explained, was undoubtedly polluted, and that fact alone was sufficient why it should not be allowed into the water mains. He suggested that the fire supply be obtained from the Hawley well, and if that could not be done, a well should be sunk to the lower strata sufficiently deep to draw from the mineral spring, care being taken to sink the well at a sufficient distance from the existing well, that the water in them would not be impregnated with the mineral water.

The Mayor—The water in the existing wells for domestic purposes would be contaminated.

Dr Holmes—Why doesn't the Hawley well contaminate the existing wells? (Hear, hear.)

Mr Williams here said that the putting in of the intake pipe was premature. The council should have waited to see how the water in the wells already sunk would hold out. In case of fire the water taken from taps in the houses would have to be replaced, and the foul water would have to fill the vacuum. To use an Irishism, the plea advanced that the pipes being full of pure water would keep free of the foul, was "powerful wake." (Loud Laughter.)

The Mayor—The engineer says so.

Mr Humber attacked the press for the articles drawing attention to this matter, and made special reference to one of the articles. After he had "done up" the press to his own satisfaction, he turned his attention to the question under discussion, we had sufficient water in the existing wells for domestic and ordinary fire purposes, and he did not believe the intake pipe would be used except in an extreme case. He then stated that it would take four wells like the Hawley well to supply the quantity of water required in addition to the existing wells to supply satisfactory fire protection. We required the harbor water for our condensers, even if it never was used for fire purposes.

Dr Holmes—Did I understand you to say that we would not require any water except from the wells, for ordinary fires?

Mr Humber—Yes.

Dr Holmes—Then what do you mean by saying that four additional wells of the capacity of the Hawley well would not give enough water? (Hear, hear.)

Mr Humber—Oh, I meant that the condensers could not be supplied and fire protection served by less than four wells of the volume coming from the Hawley well.

Mr Radcliffe had been governed in his action by the engineers. It had been said that the pipes could not be flushed, but Mr Chipman said they could, and he ought to know.

Mr Strang—Nobody said the pipes could not be flushed; what we contend is that the pipes cannot be thoroughly cleansed from impurities by flushing. (Applause.)

The Mayor said that ice had been taken from the harbor, and asked Dr Holmes if he considered that had affected the deathrate of the town.

Dr Holmes—The temperature had the effect of materially improving the water, as the pure water stayed on top and was thus more easily frozen. It would be hard to determine the effect on the deathrate through partaking of ice, but it was probable that the rate would be increased if the ice was impure.

Mr Horton believed it would be well for the council to proceed no further in the direction of depending upon the harbor water for a fire protective supply. Public opinion was evidently against the scheme. The general impression was that some other system of supply should be obtained. It was a mistake to go further with the intake pipe as a means of supply until the four wells were thoroughly tested.

Mr Campbell spoke in favor of the intake scheme. The matter had been carefully considered at every stage, and the council had acted in the interest of the public, and on the advise of the engineer. The talk about danger to health lurking in the harbor water was all nonsense. He was not afraid of microbes, and was willing to take the water. The conduct of the press was highly censurable, particularly in one case. The council had been subjected to a series of uncalled for attacks from that source, and the last article was a disgrace to the paper that published it, and would have a tendency to hinder people from coming to live in the town and possibly drive people away.

Mr McGillicuddy was next called upon, and stated that he had come to report the meeting and not to speak, but as the press had been censured severly for its action, and by men whose ability to act as censors he much doubted, he would make a few remarks. So far as the newspaper which he controlled was concerned, he could truthfully say that no serious attacks had been made on the council this year. True, last year and the preceding one articles had appeared egging them on to do something to cover the promises that had been given at every municipal election for years back, and failing to make good. This waterworks scheme had long been used as the hobby horse to ride into the council, and my intention was to make the members put life into the thing. This year every latitude had been given the council. They had got all the rope they wanted, and if the intake scheme was adopted, they would have succeeded in hanging themselves.

Mr M G Cameron—I rise to a point of order, Mr Chairman. This council cannot sit and hear itself attacked in in this manner.

Mayor Seagar—I certainly must call the speaker to order. If this thing is persisted in he must not be allowed to proceed. The speaker must keep to the question.

Mr McGillicuddy—All right, I'll keep to the question; but, gentlemen, it is very singular that the chairman could complacently listen to the uncalled for attacks on the press by previous speakers who were not in order without doing his duty, and is now so anxious to have me keep to the question. Continuing, he said that he had in the article which had been referred to attacked a policy and not individuals—measures not men—and he defied any one present to say that the article was not called for. The fact that so large a number of ratepayers was present at this meeting, which had not been advertised in regular form, proved that the people of the town were of opinion that the question was of vital importance to themselves and families. The further fact that the town council had called a halt, so far as the intake pipe scheme was concerned, also showed that they were aware that public opinion was against them.

Members of the council in chorus—No; we have not halted.

Mr McGillicuddy—Oh, yes, you have; if you were dead sure of the business, and intended to go through with it, why did you hesitate last meeting-night; and why is the meeting tonight? (Applause.) He continued by saying that the arguments advanced by Messrs. Williams and Strang and by Dr Holmes had not been answered by members of the council or engineer. In addition to that, he was in a position to state that the members of the waterworks committee were not a unit on the scheme, and that two members out of the five opposed the harbor intake as long as they possibly could.

Mr Campbell—That is not so; I know it is not so.

Mr McGillicuddy—Now, Campbell, who's got the floor—you or I? (Laughter.)

Mr Campbell began to harangue the audience amid cries of "Sit down, Campbell," "you're out of order," &c., The chairman arose, and Mr McGillicuddy took his seat, Mr Campbell still standing and gesticulating.

The mayor stated that he had at first been opposed to the scheme, but his scruples had been overcome by the arguments advanced, and the committee was a unit, in that no one voted against the matter when it came up.

Mr McGillicuddy and Mr McLean arose, and the former said, "Never mind, Mr McLean, I'll explain the matter," He then said that there was a difference of opinion even on the waterworks committee of five. Two opposed the scheme as long as opposition was of value, and he believed were still opposed to the scheme; he referred to Messrs McLean and Morton, and defied any one to prove the contrary of what he stated. (Hear, hear.) It had been said that it would be no trouble to thoroughly cleanse the pipes by flushing, and he instanced the case of Sherbourne st., Toronto, mentioned in the *World* on Friday last, where repeated and unsuccessful efforts had been made to blow out the secretions in the pipes for years past, and the waterworks authorities were now thinking of taking up the old mains and putting in a new set. That was his answer to those who believed in flushing. The ice question had been attended to by Dr. Holmes, and he would only supplement what had been said by stating that regular diets of ice were not common in Goderich. Ninety-nine one-hundreths of the ice used in the town never went into the systems of the people, but went to the refrigerators, ice boxes, packing houses, etc., and even those at the council board who used ice internally put enough ardent spirits into it to kill the microbes. (Laughter.) The claim had been put forward that the intake pipe would enable us to get better fire insurance rates, but what would it benefit if the insurance rates were lessened and the undertaker's bills increased. (Hear, hear.) He had no quarrel with the individual members of the council, but he was decidedly opposed to their policy on the intake from the harbor. The members of the council and their families were as liable to disease and death from pestilential water as anyone else, and he believed they would eventually see the terrible risk that would be run if harbor water were allowed into the mains. Others who had favored the harbor scheme in the light of the present discussion would, he thought, be favorably impressed and change their views—with the exception of Mr Campbell. Nothing would have any effect upon him—not even microbes. (Laughter.) The council had probably acted to the best of their judgment, but the judgment was not sound and in the public interest. He did not now assail them for lack of honesty or for a want of desire to do right, but for a want of knowledge and a lack of judgment. It was time that they were awakened to this fact; it was time the public was awakened; it required a strong measure to accomplish this awakening, and it was with that intention the article on the waterworks had appeared in last week's SIGNAL. It had had the desired effect, and now, if the council would guarantee that no contaminated water by the intake pipe would be allowed into the domestic or fire protective service of this town, he would be satisfied that the council were honestly endeavoring to work in the best interests of the town.

Mr Mitchell was the next speaker, and opened by saying that if they were not surfeited on the newspaper question he would say a few words. What had appeared in the *Star* had been called for, and he had no inclination or desire to go back on the record. The place where the intake pipe was laid to was the filthiest pool that could possibly be imagined. His first knowledge of the place was years ago when it was a recepticle for the entrails of fish, dead dogs, cats, and what not, and since this discussion had begun many had been found saying, "I've a horse buried there," "I've a cow buried there," and so on. In addition to this lay out of "macadamized fishguts" every vessel that came into the harbor left filthy pollutions in the harbor. Any one who would take the trouble to go there when the Beatty boats, especially the Empire, called, would be satisfied of the truthfulness of this statement. If that foul water once got into the pipes they could never be thoroughly cleansed. It was understood that we were going to get a good and pure water supply, but so long as there was even a possibility of the intake pipe working water from the cesspool into the town service, he would not feel that faith had been kept with the town. He had no conception of the scheme until his attention was drawn to it by outsiders, but once it was brought to his notice, it did not take long for him to see that the harbor intake pipe for fire purposes would only prove a means of polluting the entire system. The talks on the street corners had been sneered at and the press had been assailed for doing its duty, as he honestly believed, but had it not been for these factors public discussion on this question would never have taken place.

Mr Geo Acheson had read the newspaper articles, and had seen nothing scurrilous or abusive in them. The article which had been most criticised was strongly written and had been the means of arresting public attention. The result had been the calling of this meeting at which the matter had been thoroughly discussed, and much valuable information given. Instead of being censured the press deserved the most hearty thanks of the ratepayers of the town for opening their eyes to the dangers that existed from the chances of using the harbor water. He believed the press had done well, and endorsed its course. (Hear, hear.)

Mayor Seager was glad this discussion had taken place. Most of the speeches were good, and valuable information had been elicited. He was sorry this information had not been obtained before. If the gentlemen who had spoken here tonight had come to the council and placed their case as it had been placed tonight they would have received kind treatment and consideration. The council were endeavoring to work in the best interests of the town, and if approached in a respectful manner would not have failed to give heed to advice, but they did not like to be called criminals and scoundrels when they were endeavoring to do their best in an honest and honorable way, according to their beliefs. He believed this meeting would result in good after all, and he was of opinion that the public could rely that no water from the harbor would be allowed to enter the town mains. (Hear, hear.)

Moved by Mr Johnston, seconded by Mr Radcliffe, that the council do now adjourn. Carried.

The following letter was sent to Mayor Seager on Tuesday afternoon by Dr Taylor, Medical health officer, but owing to the excitement incident to the discussion at the meeting, it was overlooked by his worship and not brought before the meeting:

To the Mayor and Council of Goderich:

MR. MAYOR AND GENTLEMEN,—I had intended to be present at the special meeting to be held this evening, but have been unfortunately prevented. I take this opportunity of putting myself on record so that my views on the question of the water supply of the town would be definitely known. I have every reason to believe that the procuring of the fire supply from the harbor as at present contemplated would be highly injurious to the sanitation of the town and would be exceedingly injurious to the health of the people. I believe it is the duty of medical men to do what they can to prevent disease, and then if preventive measures fail, to put forth the best remedial efforts. We are told "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure," and I am of the firm opinion that members of the council have now in their power an opportunity of making a move, even at a late hour, which will redound to their credit and the best interest of the town. Hoping that a proper effort will be made to prevent what I believe would be a calamitous undertaking so far as the health of the people of Goderich is concerned, I remain, your most obedient servant, ALEX. TAYLOR.

REMINISCENSES.

Fifty Years Ago in the Town of Goderich.

Episodes of the Olden Time—How Justice was Dealt Out Years Ago—How an Old Resident Got in a Box.

No. I.

Following is the first of an interesting series of letters about the olden time, from the pen our townsman, Mr Thos Kydd:

To the Editor of THE SIGNAL.

DEAR SIR,—During the last few years I have been repeatedly urged by friends—yourself amongst others—to write a story of the olden times in Goderich, especially during the time of the rebellion, but as at the ever-recurring Christmas time, we have such a surfeit of personal-trumpet-blowing from over a baker's dozen of our neighbors having axes to grind, that I have ever felt an utter repugnance to meddle with any subject wherein I feel the use of the *ego* often unavoidable in my endeavors to make myself easily understood. Recent circumstances and others daily occurring have, however, induced me to change my mind, and having also other matters besides the above named to refer to, I have resolved to try it at all hazards; and to begin at the beginning: I left Guelph, where I had spent the winter, on the second Monday of February, 1834, in company with several others, all strangers to each other, but having four teams with us and after six day's laborious journeying—often shouldering a fence rail by way of a change—and yet more often still literally "putting our shoulders to the wheel"—arrived in Goderich about nine o'clock on Saturday evening, when to my astonishment I heard more Gælic spoken in "Judge" Reed's bar room, the Goderich Hotel, now in the lake, than I had ever heard in my life before, a party of Scotch Highlanders from Zorra having just arrived under contract with the Canada Company to cut some hundreds of cords of wood for their steamboat, the keel of which had just been laid some days before, although she was not launched until the following spring. There were two incidents which occurred to me on that journey which, trifling as they were, have never been forgotten. The first at Sebach's tavern, twelve miles this side of Stratford, where I was sent to sleep between two large feather beds so fully stuffed that they would not come near the neck nor shoulders, and although the winter was gone the weather was cold, and the position was so new to me I could get little or no sleep the whole night. If there had only been a fourth of the feathers in them I could have wished for nothing better. The other happened at Van Egmond's, where we arrived late. The house was full and no bed to be got. The old Colonel, however, kindly prepared a shake-down for me on the top of a table, but I could not help wondering for what reason he placed small tin dishes and pewter plates filled with water under the feet. Had he not done so, however, I should most assuredly have been off the table top before midnight, for I had fully company enough as it was. In what hereafter follows I may not be always literally correct nor the incidents given with exact truthfulness and proper consecutive order, for it is a long time ago, but I guarantee that all shall be sufficiently near correct in every particular to answer every purpose for which they are written, viz:

AS A REMINDER OF OLDEN TIMES,

as I shall neither willingly exaggerate nor strain or pervert facts for the sake of effect. At the time of which I now write West street from about the post office, that is to be, down to near the Park House was a continuous crossway of the roughest description with an open ditch some six feet wide on each side of it, and generally well filled with stagnant water containing a full choir of vocal musicians, ever ready to entertain our summer visitors; and for those desirous of a more sombre and sonorous style of music there was a full band of double-bass voices kept at the harbor who invariably commenced their labors at daybreak, on a key fit to be heard a mile off. Some two or three years before this time the Company and the few business men of the place had entered into an agreement with "Judge" Reed to carry the mail to Galt once a week and to pay him twenty cents extra for each letter; as to papers I am not aware that there was any arrangement whatever. He kept his office in the tavern until 1835, when he resigned it in favor of his son-in-law, John Reilly, and removed the post office to the small log house now opposite the St. Andrew's ward school, where I once paid him $1.20 from a single letter from Scotland, and went nearly to the knees in the swamp in going for it.

THE COURT OF REQUESTS,

—the forerunner of the Division Court—was composed of two or more magistrates. It so happened that there were just six J. P.s in this neighborhood, and that three of them were officials of the Canada Company, so that if one of a pair of litigants was known to be in any way a "Company" man he could pretty certainly count on having half the bench in his favor while that the other half if not decidedly in opposition, were more apt to lean that way than to be strictly neutral, and unseemly wrangles were not entirely strangers upon the seat of justice. The court was for some time held at "Judge" Reed's, but was afterwards moved to a small frame house of one room just on the spot where the mayor's office now stands, and there "Daw" Don, the clerk kept bachelor hall, having as furniture one bunk, two benches, one table and some chairs. The last meeting of this court at which I was present had such a ludicrous winding up, as not to be forgotten; for no sooner was the door opened than the room filled, and the seats were seized upon by parties from a distance, the bunk being of course packed to its fullest extent. The court was duly opened with Squire Prior in the chair. Business, however, had not proceeded far when the occupants of the bunk began to fidget, look round at each other, and they simultaneously jumped to their feet. There was a disturbance in the bunk. The chairman began to storm without knowing what at. The clerk looked chopfallen, but sprang forward and opened the bunk and out walked John Galt in a stew of perspiration, and panting for breath; he had spent the night with his friend Don, and rather than get up in time for the court chose to be hooked up in the bunk. He was at once arraigned for contempt of court, fined in a "treat" to all present, and the court adjourned to Bob Ellis's—the Colborne hotel—where after imbibing sundry rounds of whisky punch, a condiment in the concoction of which Bob was held to be proficient, the judicial business of the day was then and there brought to a conclusion. But even that was no solitary case of the kind in these days, nor near so bad as what I witnessed in Stratford just about the same time when on my return from Toronto I came within sight of the Shakespeare hotel, there burst from its doors an excited crowd of people—just like the swarming of a beehive—followed by two J. Pa., equally excited, the one the agent of the Upper Canada Bank as also of the Canada Company, holding his broken spectacles over his head with one hand and protecting himself as best he could with the other; the second J. P., one of the leading merchants—who afterwards joined a wholesale business in Toronto—was also defending himself and—assisted by a six-foot green-islander as constable—doing his best to protect the senior magistrate.

THOMAS KYDD.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

BRAND NEW.—We have just added more new type to our already well assorted plant, which makes our facilities for turning out suitable work still more complete. Our four presses give us a printing capacity of 75,000 impressions per day, at THE SIGNAL.