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THE ENGINEERING INSTITUTE DISCUSSES HYDRO PROBLEMS

Rumors That Water Supply Might Not Be Sufficient Are Dealt With—Mr. Kirby Confirms Estimate That Rates to Consumers Could Be Cut in Two—The Matter of Distribution.

Considerable new light was thrown on the subject of the hydro-electric development project and the problems of local distribution at the regular meeting of the St. John branch of the Engineering Institute of Canada, which was held last evening in the Orange Hall, Germain street, with the chairman, P. P. Vaughan, presiding. The meeting was devoted to a consideration of hydro matters and valuable contributions to the discussion were made by Herbert Phillips, C. C. Kirby, C. O. Foss and the other speakers. An interesting feature of the meeting was the manner in which several rumors which have been circulated about the city, notably the story that there would not be sufficient water to make the power dependable, were dealt with. Independent figures presented by Mr. Kirby, who confirmed the estimate that by economical distribution the current could be delivered the consumers at less than half the present rates also formed an interesting feature of the discussion. In his address, Mr. Phillips told of rumors in circulation in regard to lack of water at Musquash. This was a serious statement. It was not conceivable, he said, that reliable data was not examined by the engineers before the project was undertaken. The engineers had proper data that had been gathered by the waterways branch of the department of the interior and there was no doubt but that it was reliable. The Leppard was gauged for a four-year period and the Musquash for one year. Both gauges had checked closely, considering the difference in the size of the valleys. They could expect 270 cubic second feet per minute the year around. The figure of 180 had been adopted by the engineers to be conservative. Another argument raised was that the power was dear because of construction at peak prices. This argument should not appeal to any engineer. Some prices might have been high, but an error of judgment by the engineers or contractors could have had a much greater effect. The St. John price of 1.2 cents per k.w.h. was not very high, as compared with Ontario prices of .75 cents. Engineers had advised the city to get out from under. This was not warranted. The citizens paid \$260,000 to the company in 1920 for 12,000,000 k.w.h. The speaker figured that the city could distribute 15,000,000 k.w.h. at a total cost of \$280,000 to the citizens. He was safe in saying that the price to the consumer could be reduced at least one-half of the present rates. C. C. Kirby started a technical discussion on the water available and it was shown by C. O. Foss that there were 2,250,000,000 cubic feet of storage, with storage facilities not nearly exhausted.

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placed the figure at \$75,000 in order to be on the safe side. Mr. Foss also said that the price of 1.02 cents per k.w.h. to the city might be lower. The commission had said that the price would not exceed that figure. In reply to G. N. Hatfield, Mr. Weston said that the office of the commission was open at all times to the public and the engineers would be pleased to show any figures on the water available or anything else they wanted to see. And if any one wanted to inspect the dams he would take them there. Mr. Foss said that the office belonged to the public and contracts and everything else were available.

New Office to City

In reply to a question if the commission had made a new offer to the city, Mr. Foss said that the city had not taken all the power available would be sold along the line to Moncton and the remaining 5,000,000 k.w.h. would be sold to the city. Mr. Foss asserted that if the power company got any it would have to get it through the city. Mr. McLellan said that the city might not take any power. In that case the commission could not refuse to sell to the company.

Mr. Kirby agreed with this and said that the commission could not discriminate against the company. Mr. McLellan said that the only thing to be done was for the city to take all the power

and then sell the required amount to the city. That would be the only safe way. If the company got, say, 10,000,000 k.w.h., it would be in a position to fight the city for business.

It was moved by Mr. Waring, seconded by Mr. Hatfield, and unanimously carried that a vote of thanks be extended to those who had taken part in the discussion and for the information received. The chairman, in a fitting manner, tendered the vote to those who had spoken.

Mr. Kirby's Figures

It was figured out by Mr. Kirby that the city could pay \$183,000 to the power commission for the power and distribute 8,500,000 k.w.h. at an average rate of 3.78 cents, including all charges and taxes paid by the company to the city. If more than this amount was distributed the price would be proportionately reduced. The present average cost was more than eight cents per k.w.h. This price would have to be divided into power and light and a lower rate given to power users and the rate slightly increased to light users. This would make cheap power available.

The question of the city distributing the power was one of policy, Mr. Kirby said. He read a lengthy and enlightening paper in regard to the position of the power company and described what would happen if the city took over the power. The company would lose by such action, and if the company delivered it the citizens would suffer. He suggested that the company be reorganized, its capital cut in half, a public director placed in control by the city, the company to distribute the power, the price to be as low as possible. There could be a reduction of rates under these conditions.

Speaking for the Citizens' Committee, Mr. Phillips said that there was no particular animosity against the company, but public utilities became necessities by use and to provide these was the work of the government. He believed that it was wrong for private rights to control necessities, especially when the government had originally promoted the proposition. He asked if the company would accept Mr. Kirby's proposition. Mr. Kirby replied that no deal would be possible with the company until the city council had passed a resolution to take the power. Then the company could be brought to terms.

Mr. Waring said that it was the same question that arose in connection with the Portland power plant.

In reply to questions about the condition of the dams, Mr. Weston said that there were twenty-two dams and all were "O. K." except two of these. In one there was a slight seepage through the concrete. The contractor had offered to repair this but the engineers wanted to let it alone to see what the action of the winter on it would be. There was another, a hardwood dam, with which there had been trouble, but it had been completely repaired. Out of twenty-two dams this was not a serious matter.

DUKE OF YORK TO WED LADY MASHLEY

(Canadian Press Despatch.)

Toronto, Jan. 19.—A Mail and Empire cable from London says: At the wedding of Princess Mary and Viscount Lascelles next month the announcement will be made of the engagement of the

Duke of York to Lady Mary Ashley, daughter of Lady Staffordshire, who is lady in waiting to the Queen, persons in high standing at the court say.

FOUR LIFE MEMBERSHIPS

The Missionary Aid Society of the Tabernacle Baptist church met last evening with Mrs. R. D. Coggin in the chair. After the opening devotions a duet was sung by the little Misses Gladys and Doris Patterson. Rev. A. L. Tedford followed with a reading and the remainder of the programme was as follows: Exercise, Miss Nellie Owen, Miss S. Lunn, Miss A. Armstrong, Miss Florence Allon, reading, Miss Mary Owens; "India," by Rev. Mr. Tedford; solo, Peter Murray; reading, Miss L. Fletcher. Four members were given life membership certificates. They were Mrs. H. Litus, Mrs. Bertha Patterson, Miss Nellie Owens, Miss L. Young. Refreshments were served at the close by Mrs. T. Owens and Mrs. Gray.

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INQUEST ON DEATH AT PENITENTIARY

Dorchester, Jan. 19.—The death of a prisoner named John White at the maritime penitentiary on Monday, was made the subject of enquiry by a coroner's jury. The prisoner, who was about twenty-eight years old, belonged to Picton (N. S.), and was brought to the penitentiary last year to serve a four years' sentence. He had been ill about a week and the jury after hearing evidence, including the medical testimony of Dr. A. R. Myers, of Moncton, found that the man's death was due to natural causes.

About forty members of the Dominion Lodge, L. O. G. T., No. 445, attended the annual sleigh drive on Wednesday evening and went out to Torryburn. On returning to the Lodge Hall in Murray street refreshments were served by an able committee under the convener'ship of Mrs. T. B. Brown, assisted by Mrs. B. L. Kirkpatrick, Mrs. Cunningham and Mrs. Jones. Games were indulged in afterwards and the evening very pleasantly spent. The members of the sleigh committee were George Kelly and Ernest Chapman.

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TRISCUIT is the Shredded Wheat cracker—a real whole wheat toast—and is eaten with butter or soft cheese.

MUTT AND JEFF—JEFF GETS A BIG LOAD OFF HIS MIND

By "BUD" FISHER

JEFF AND I ARE IN SORT FOR THE WINTER, TAKING CARE OF THIS CIRCUS MENAGERIE AND GETTING PAID FOR IT IS LIKE GETTING MONEY FROM HOME.

JEFF, YOU LOOK WORRIED. WHAT'S THE MATTER?

OH MUTT, SOMEBODY POISONED THE LAUGHING HYENAS LAST NIGHT AND I'M AFRAID TO TELL THE BOSS!

IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT BUT YOU MUST TELL HIM! BREAK THE NEWS GENTLY AND YOU'LL FIND HELL TAKES ALL RIGHT.

O'DEAR, O'DEAR!

EXCUSE ME, BOSS, BUT YOU KNOW THOSE LAUGHING HYENAS?

YES, WHAT ABOUT THEM?

WELL, BELIEVE ME THEY AIN'T GOT ANYTHING TO LAUGH AT THIS MORNING.