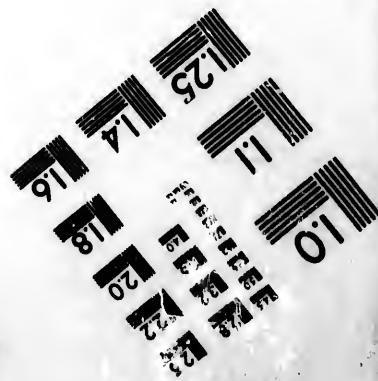
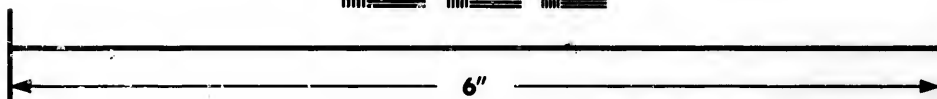
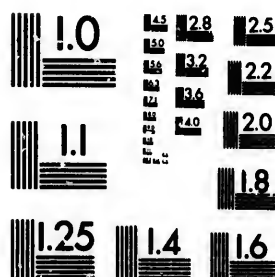


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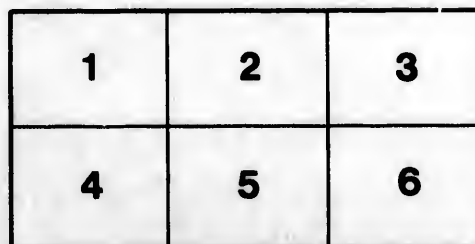
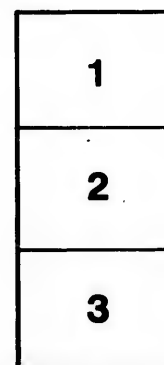
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REMARKS

ON THE

PRESENT INSUFFICIENT LIGHTING OF THE CITY OF MONTREAL,

AND THE NECESSITY FOR AN

APPLICATION TO THE LEGISLATURE, BY THE CITIZENS, FOR
POWER TO ESTABLISH

A NEW MONTREAL GAS-LIGHT COMPANY,

TO BE ENTITLED

THE MONTREAL GAS CONSUMERS' COMPANY.

MONTREAL:

PRINTED AT THE MONTREAL HERALD OFFICE.

No. 23, St. GABRIEL STREET.

1846.

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No fact has become of greater public notoriety than that when defects and abuses in establishments, formed ostensibly for the public good, have become subjects of general complaint and deprecation, a crisis has arrived, which demands public investigation and reform.

This observation will be seen as a sufficient foundation for the statement of facts, and for the observations which form the subject of the matter contained in the following pages, arising from the present inefficient and expensive method of lighting the City of Montreal, which has been for some time a just cause of general complaint and reprobation.

Public spirited individuals are now applying to the Legislature for powers to establish a new Company, in order to effect a speedy and efficient reform in this abuse of municipal accommodation ; and it will require the assistance of united effort, in order to carry out their patriotic designs.

The partial and very inefficient manner in which the city is at present lighted—the very bad quality of the gas furnished—the inefficient means by which it is supplied, and the exorbitant charges made for it by the present Company—are all such undeniable facts of daily notoriety, it is presumed a reference to them, and the demonstration of the entire practicability of supplying the city, in a short space of time, with more abundant, purer and cheaper light, contained in the observations which follow will be sufficient to stimulate every citizen to peruse and circulate them, and to bring forward his influence in support of their exertions.

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R E M A R K S

ON THE PRESENT INSUFFICIENT LIGHTING OF THE CITY OF MONTREAL.

THE remarkable and extensive improvements, which, of late years, have distinguished many of the older cities and towns of Great Britain and the United States, and, still more remarkably, those of modern date, which have had the advantage of the experience gained by their trial of such as are the most useful and necessary, have tended to promote, to a very great extent, the health, comfort, and safety of their population; besides employing a more than usual number of the labouring poor, and calling into existence and exercise the new and important discoveries of science and art, which astonish, while they benefit, mankind; and, instead of such improvements entailing, as was often feared, unsupportable burdens upon municipal funds, and so depreciating the value of property, they have invariably, under economical and judicious management, been found, in a manner beyond all previous and probable calculation, to augment the revenues of corporate bodies, and to add several hundreds per cent. to the value of all contiguous property.

It is but necessary to refer to the widening of streets and the formation of squares, together with those of public gardens, fountains, &c., and the more regular plan and division of them, in laying out towns lately enlarged or called into existence—the more ample supply of wholesome water, wherever it could be effected—the establishment and employment of an efficient and well organized police force, and last, but not least, that of lighting, by means of carburetted hydrogen gas, extracted from bituminous coal, their shops, houses, and streets, to prove the manifest advantages derived from their introduction and the very extensive improvement they have been the means of effecting in social and domestic economy and comfort.

So apparent and beneficial have been the results, which flow from the introduction of these, now indispensable arrangements into all enlightened communities, it has become a matter for surprise that they were not much sooner considered and introduced. The reason may be stated as that which, generally, retards improvement of every description in a community, especially if the subject be of a novel or scientific character ;—the length of time requisite to bring the majority to a clear perception and apprehension of the advantages to be derived therefrom, and the interest they have in it. Where, however, a sufficient length of time has transpired for testing new discoveries, and ascertaining their value and advantages, there can be no necessity for delay in their adoption, or for the prosecution of those improvements, which are imperatively demanded by regard to the public weal. Great were the complaints and long continued, of the narrowness and curvature of public roads and streets, of bad roads and pavings, and much the opposition which M'Adam and other introducers of improvements in them, experienced from various quarters, but these are now undergoing extensive alteration and improvement, and no sooner is a new town, city, or village, planned, than well graded streets and roads are as speedily as possible provided. It was at one time dangerous for the inhabitants of towns and cities to be abroad in the streets and roads after dark, in consequence of the number of highway robbers and pickpockets, owing mainly to the want of a sufficient and properly organized constabulary force, but, wherever a Police force is now organized and appointed, on the system by which London has become so secure,—the lives and properties of citizens are in a state of safety. The tardiness and expensiveness of travelling, especially in commercial communities, was long felt as a clog upon the wheels of business, and a drawback from public prosperity ; but the adaptation of the powers of steam to the purposes of land and water traffic, have so amazingly altered the means of conveyance, as to advance the interests of all those who have embraced the advantages they offer, to an almost indefinite extent, so that, districts and localities, destitute of them, now feel very sensibly their deficiencies, and are hastening to become possessed of these elements of their neighbours' prosperity. Long and loud were the complaints arising from the population of cities, on account of the inconveniences experienced, when they were lighted only with oil lamps and burn-

ers, which, in addition to the feeble light they afforded naturally, were often still further rendered obscure, and sometimes extinguished altogether, by fogs and storms, and by the bad quality of the oil used or other circumstances of a similar description. No sooner was the effort made to light from the use of gas, than its evident superiority led to the general employment of it, and now, there is scarcely a small town, or even village, in England, that has not its houses and streets illuminated by this most superior method, still further improved by its purification, and the more successful arrangements and manipulations, which, now characterize its manufacture.

The example of the Mother Country, in municipal and public improvements, has been nobly followed by the Colonists, under her sovereignty, throughout the world, and been productive of the most beneficial effects, in advancing their interests and securing their comfort and accommodation ; and although it is to be regretted in some places the progress is comparatively slow, yet, as a more enlightened, patriotic, and energetic rivalry is developed, it is confidently anticipated that, the day is not far distant when the most remote Provinces of the British Empire will outvie each other in the prosecution of internal improvements and the advancement of civilization. Canada has, of late, put forth her energies for the possession of these advantages, and yields to no part of the British Empire in a desire and a determination to bring out all her resources, for the accomplishment of this desirable object. As becomes the capital of the Province, Montreal is engaging energetically in the work of improvement, and has already effected much, to arrest the attention and excite the surprise of the stranger and the emigrant, as a pledge of what she still further designs to effect ; but, notwithstanding the rapid improvement which has been made in various departments of the city of Montreal, it has been a general subject of complaint, amongst its inhabitants, that, the light provided for their accommodation was—on so small and partial a scale—of such bad quality, and withal supplied at so exorbitant a charge, as to be of less utility, and greater cost, than the light provided before its introduction. The subject has necessarily engaged the attention and efforts of the public for some time, and private individuals, through the press, as well as the Corporation of the city, have done much to bring it before the public in all its bearings, as well as to remedy the evil. Owing, however, to the misrepresentations which have

been made, and to the unwillingness of the present Gas Company, on whom rests the onus of providing abundant, impartial, and cheap light, to listen to the terms which have been proposed to them, or to alter their policy ; it has become the imperative duty of those individuals, who deeply feel the injustice done to their fellow-citizens, and the injuries sustained by their interests, in permitting the complaints so long and so loudly uttered to remain unattended to, and the grievances of those who suffer in consequence, unredressed, to bring the whole subject in a tangible form before the public once more ; and to prompt them to apply to the Provincial Legislature for powers to effect the formation of a new Company, which shall be bound to place the supply of light on such a footing as to secure the public interests and increase the municipal revenue ; being fully convinced of their disposition to facilitate legislation for the improvement of the city of Montreal, especially when that legislation does not interfere with the interests of other portions of the Province. In order to do this they have deemed it necessary to state the circumstances which have occurred, and to collect into one view, the correspondence, which has been carried on, with all the information they have been able to collect from different quarters, and, they feel convinced, no candid individual will hesitate, after an attentive perusal of it, to draw the conclusion that such an application, as the one intended, has become imperatively called for, by the circumstances of the case, and absolutely necessary for the promotion of the public welfare. Before, however, doing so, they beg to premise that, in undertaking this act of public duty, they are influenced by no selfish motive or vindictive feeling ; that their only motive is the public good, and their only complaint the paucity of light, the bad quality of what is afforded, and the—in their opinion—exorbitant and extravagant rate charged for it, entailing upon the city and its inhabitants, in addition to the other evils consequent upon it, an unnecessary and expensive burden.

The inconveniences formerly caused by the irregular and unsatisfactory manner in which the city was at first lighted, naturally created a feeling of satisfaction at the introduction of what promised to be a great public improvement, and an anticipation was formed that the city would, thenceforward, be lighted on an abundant and regular system of supply—a hope clearly expressed by the exertions of those, who now appeal to the public to assist in obtaining

a Charter, and in obtaining for it public support, so that the establishment of the present Gas Company was hailed with confidence, as the commencement of better days, and as an advanced movement in anticipation of municipal reform, and the shares were, consequently, soon taken up. Owing, however, to a want of knowledge in the parties to whom its management was entrusted, and a want of liberality, on their parts, in employing those who did, great and irreparable errors were committed, which have prevented the Public from reaping those advantages they justly expected, and the consequences of which, now remain as a barrier in the way of their providing for themselves the benefits of which they ought, ere this, to have been in full possession, unless the Legislature shall speedily exercise their authority to emancipate their constituents from the fetters by which they are bound, and afford to those, who have the disposition and ability, the power to supply the city with a good, sufficient and clear artificial light. The fall of a portion of the Works during their erection, and other circumstances of a similar nature, so clearly indicated the incapacity and inability of the Managers to the shareholders as to alarm a considerable number of them, and dispose them to sell their shares, which were, in a measure sacrificed, to be transferred to those, who now may be said to monopolise the whole concern—the shares being, by this procedure, placed in the hands of a few individuals. From this ruinous policy, the most injurious consequences have resulted to the public; the erroneous plans upon which the Works were constructed—the mains laid, and the whole economy of the concern arranged, have prevented them from realizing, and do now prevent, those advantages to which they are entitled by the formation of a Public Company, for the purposes intended; while the exorbitant rates charged enrich the few individuals into whose hands it has fallen, and who, have, in fact, monopolized it, at the expense and to the detriment of the community.

The dissatisfaction of the public, arising from these circumstances, has been gaining strength, and frequently been expressed, but, as yet, with no beneficial results; a hope has indeed been for some time cherished that the Gas Company would, themselves, feel condemned, by the expressions of discontent which continually were being poured into their ears; and, for their own interest as well as honour, (waiving all consideration of the public weal) have taken

steps to satisfy the demands of the public, or come forward with some proposition which should meet the exigency of the case. That hope, however, has, through an obstinate adherence to their present line of policy, entirely died away, and the inhabitants see no prospect of relief, but in the establishment of a new Company, which shall be bound by engagements, that ought to have governed the action of the present Oligarchy. The complaints which filled the mouth of every inhabitant, but those directly or indirectly benefitted or enriched by the monopoly, at length found vent in applications to the City Council, last year, and were, by them, promptly referred to a Committee for consideration,—a notice of which is thus given by the *Montreal Herald* of March 11th, 1845:—"Since the advent of the present City Councillors to power, matters of no light importance to the welfare of the citizens have come up, which the absorbing nature of Parliamentary affairs has prevented us from noticing editorially. Some of these, such as the purchase of the Water Works, have been decided upon, but others are still open to discussion. The principal of these (and it is one scarcely second to the Water question in its merits) is the supply of Gas.

"It is agreed on all hands that the photogenic quality of the present article is of an exceedingly inferior kind, and it seems also to be received as a truth *consensu hominum*, that, although coals are frequently as cheap here as in London, and seldom over 20 per cent. dearer, yet, the price of the manufactured article is 200 per cent. higher than that of London, and 300 per cent. above that of numerous towns in Britain.

"From these two undoubted truths—the bad quality and high price of the article—a strong prejudice exists in the public mind against the present monopolists, and a strong feeling is becoming general among all classes, to do better for themselves, if they can. It will be fresh in the memory of all the tax payers in Montreal, that the Light Committee of the Corporation have had, at various times, great difficulty in keeping the Gas Company honest, with regard to the supply to the street lamps, and that, one season the Company was obliged to submit to a serious deduction on account of the many deficiencies which had been detected. The sum was no less than £500, and it was to the determined vigilance and personal exertions of Mr. John Mathewson—then a member of the Committee—that the public were indebted for that saving. The

present Committee have also had their "trials", and are likely to continue to have them, and so may their "successors in all time coming", if they continue dealing with the present Company. But it is not very probable that this will be the case.

"Our readers will have observed in the last report of the Corporation proceedings, that Mr. Mathewson, although no longer a member, is still devoting a portion of his attention to the lighting of the city. He has been corresponding with parties in England on the subject, the result of which deserves to be known to every man who pays a dollar to the city funds, and we, therefore, give it as it appears in the following letters:—

"To His Worship the Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens, of the City of Montreal;

"GENTLEMEN,—Feeling a deep interest in the affairs of this city, and having had my attention directed to the difficulties the Corporation have had, from time to time, with the Gas Company, in arranging the terms upon which they would agree to light the city lamps, &c., I would beg to submit for your information the enclosed letter, which I have received from Thomas Edge, Esq., of London, one of the most extensive Gas Work proprietors in England.

"I may mention that, when I visited England in 1841, I was a member of the Light Committee, and being interested in the improvements then going on in the city, I embraced the opportunity of obtaining from Mr. Edge, all the information I could on the subject of Gas. I received several valuable plans and documents from him, including a schedule of the principal Gas Companies in England—the capital employed in each—the average cost of coal—the price charged for street lamps—and per 1,000 cubic feet of Gas, as well as the Dividends declared annually, which schedule, I handed to the Mayor (Hon. Peter McGill), for the use of the Corporation. Mr. Edge also furnished me with several patterns of cast iron lamp-posts, from which those now in use in this city were selected.

"The Light Committee of the Council, at the period I was a member thereof, recommended the establishment of Gas Works for the city, with a view to supplying the public lamps, the Committee having been unable to effect a satisfactory arrangement with the Montreal Gas Company.

"At the instance of the present Mayor I wrote Mr. Edge to ascertain on 'what terms he would be disposed to erect Gas Works in Montreal.' The answer of that gentleman, herewith submitted, shews that he is prepared to do so—a circumstance that I conceive to be highly advantageous to the City.

"I would respectfully submit the proposition of Mr. Edge, to the serious and favourable consideration of the Council.

"I have the honor to be, Gentlemen,

"Your obedient and humble servant,

"(Signed)

JOHN MATHEWSON.

"Montreal, February 28, 1845.

(COPY.)

{ GAS LIGHT OFFICE,
Great Peter Street, Westminster,
18th January, 1845.

SIR,—I am in receipt of your letter of the 27th ultimo, relative to the charges of the Gas Company of your city. Coals, at 25s. per chaldron, would be about 20s. per ton, which is about what the cost is in London, and the Gas Companies

charge 7s. per 1000 feet and pay a good dividend. Your street lamps also being charged at £6 per annum for twenty-one nights per month, is exorbitant—£4 4s. would be ample. I am not an advocate for opposition, but the public should be protected by the authorities against imposition; if, therefore, the Gas Company will not be content with fair charges, I would recommend the Corporation, to erect Gas Works of their own, and to apply the profits toward the public expenditure for paving and other improvements. I feel assured they could supply the private consumers at 12s. per 1000 feet, and the public lights at £4 4s., and, at the same time, derive considerable surplus profits after paying interest for the capital expended, which could be applied as before stated, to the public benefit. If the authorities entertain such a project, I shall be happy to carry their views into effect. The works at two entire towns, and half of two other towns, belong to me, and the Gas is supplied at 10s. per 1000 cubic feet—the street lamps in proportion. I shall be most happy to erect Works in your city for the Corporation, on their engaging to pay me 6 per cent. upon the outlay for the erection, until they pay off the principal, which should be fixed at some definite period—say 7 or 14 years. The Corporation would find the profits arising from such an undertaking, to go a great way towards defraying their public expenditure.

I remain,

Dear Sir,

Your's, very respectfully,

(Signed)

To John Mathewson, Esq.

THOMAS EDGE.

"The letter of Mr. Edge is worthy of every attention and consideration. He is a gentleman of large experience in Gas, and his ability to perform what he undertakes, is, according to our information, not to be doubted, neither apparently is his will.

"There are many reasons for desiring to see such an establishment in the hands of the Corporation, rather than in those of a private company. In the first place, there cannot exist a doubt of the scheme paying handsomely; and, in the second place, every individual citizen would derive a benefit from the surplus revenue, because it would go into the general fund and contribute to defray charges now met by taxes.

"On the first point, we need only remark that, this city has increased 50 per cent. during the last fifteen years, notwithstanding the many political and accidental causes, which tended to retard it. But now that the country has settled down into a rational state of quiescence—now that Montreal has been made the Seat of Government—and that the vast interior commerce of the country has been opened up to her—not to speak of Railroads in contemplation to the sea coast—who will be bold enough to assign limits to her trade, or to her extent or population in the course of fifteen years more? Why, last summer over 500 new dwelling houses were erected, and who has been able to obtain an abatement of rent? Suppose

that each of these new houses accommodates eight individuals, we have over 4000 added to the population since last year! We do not hesitate to say that Montreal at this moment, contains 50,000 inhabitants, and that, in 1860, it will number 90,000, unless something extraordinary should occur in the interim. Now, are the present Gas Works capable of supplying the demand that ought to be made upon them in 1860? General opinion is very much at fault if they are; for it is the belief of every one who now complains and swears against the Company, that one of the very causes of the defective light, apart from the quality of the Gas, is the small size of the pipes, and the impossibility of any amount of pressure at the works being able to overcome this radical defect. Whether the belief be well founded or not, it is generally entertained. At any rate, it is an indisputable fact, that if the Gas is lit in a private office before the shops and streets are lighted, the supply is about what it ought to be, and that, subsequently, it is not.

"If the present Company were, therefore, to attempt to do justice to Montreal—as it will be—they cannot do it without constructing the works anew, and it is likely they would not undertake that until after the public should have been complaining for years. Of this we have had very solid proof in the fact that, the Corporation of the city and individual consumers, *have actually been complaining for years*, without any improvement being made. New Gas Works must, therefore, in our opinion, be necessarily required, whoever may undertake the erection of them. Why not undertake them at once? As to their paying, there cannot be a shade of doubt, for if we shall suppose that the old speculation and the new one were to have no more customers conjointly than the old has singly, and that those customers paid the same rate, general belief is again awfully at fault, if no more than 6 per cent., on the gross outlay, would be realized, after paying all expenses. The opposition would certainly give a better article, and so far consumers would gain even if they were still sweated in the price."

The *Transcript* remarks, in reference to the same subject, a day or two after :—

"We are very glad to find that, the new Municipal body are turning their attention towards the more satisfactory supply of the city with gas, and that they have now before them a proposition, which, if adopted, as we trust it may be, will put a stop to the

abominable monopoly enjoyed by the Montreal Gas Company. We know no subject which more directly interests every citizen than this one, nor any, respecting which, a stronger feeling exists. The present company has been, for years, carrying on a system of extortion, which has been severely felt by those who have been compelled to have recourse to them. Relying on the circumstance of their being the only company, they have established rates unheard of any where else. Although coals are generally as cheap here as in London, the price charged to the gas consumer is 200 per cent higher than in the English Metropolis, and 300 per cent. above that of numerous towns in Britain. Nor is it the price alone that is complained of; their practice is as illiberal and extortionate as their prices. They seem to imagine, that they have the whole Community in their power and can do just what they like. Their dealings with the Corporation have been more like the peddling of a Jew orangeman than the fair open dealings of a Public Company, and it is the same with every body else. Indeed to such an extent has the thing gone, that a number of the most respectable tradesmen have relinquished the use of gas altogether, sooner than have anything to do with them. Such being the case, we rejoice that a way has been pointed out to get the city out of their clutches, without any risk, and with the certainty of an immense saving to the whole community. By the copy of a letter, which we give below, it will be seen, that, a Gentleman of experience and property at home, offers to construct Gas Works in Montreal on terms infinitely more advantageous than any which the city could make with the present monopolizing Company. By the payment of 6 per cent. per annum on the outlay, and with the cost of management, the Corporation would be enabled to supply the citizens with gas at a third less than they now pay, and derive a revenue to the city besides. They would also have the advantage of new works, with all the modern improvements, whilst it is notorious that the present works are on the most miserable scale, and quite insufficient to supply the city properly.

“Under these circumstances, we think there is very little doubt of what the Corporation ought to do. That they cannot deal with the present company has been shown, and, even if they could, it is a question whether it would be wise to do so. Our own opinion (and we are satisfied it is that of the community at large) is, that,

they should immediately put themselves in communication with Mr. Edge, and so enable the citizens to have the advantage of good gas at a reasonable rate."

The *Courier* and *Gazette* also, at the same time with other papers in the city, made some very sensible, extended and appropriate remarks to the same purport, which it would make the extracts too lengthened here to quote.

The *Herald* subsequently published, on the 10th April, the following Report of the Committee, appointed by the Corporation, to investigate and report on the subject:—

REPORT 4.—"From the Light Committee, that they had given their serious consideration to the letter of Jno. Mathewson, Esquire, and the letters from Thomas Edge, Esquire, of London, with which it was accompanied.—Referred to the Committee on the 1st March.

"The Committee were fully satisfied if the liberal proposition of Mr. Edge were acceded to, and Gas Works erected under the superintendence of that enterprising gentleman, in the Western, or, indeed, any other section of the city, Gas could be supplied to the citizens of Montreal at a rate not exceeding 15s. per 1000 feet, and that, the profits arising to the city, from furnishing the article at that rate, would materially contribute towards defraying the expence of the public lamps.

"The Committee, from experience of the impracticability of effecting any satisfactory arrangements with the Montreal Gas Company, were confirmed in the opinion expressed in a former report of their predecessors in office, dated the 24th of April, 1844, as to the necessity of Gas Works being established by the city; and, in addition to the reasons therein set forth, were satisfied, from the statements and offer of Mr. Edge, that it would prove advantageous to the citizens generally, and be, likewise, a source of profit to the Council.

"The Committee, in consequence, recommended that measures should forthwith be adopted, to establish Gas Works in the city, by arrangement with Mr. Edge, or such other means as the Council might deem most advisable: and that Corporation Bonds or Debentures may be issued for the funds required to establish the Works with the express understanding, however, that the Works only should be hypothecated for payment of the bonds or debentures, so to be issued. The Report was ordered to be taken into consideration at the next meeting of the Council."

This Report was, in consequence, attentively considered by the the Council, and the subject was, by them, referred to a Sub-Com-

mittee, who were empowered to wait upon the Gas Company, examine into the value of their Establishment, and negotiate with them for the purchase of their concern, conceiving that the management of it by the Corporation, would more fully ensure to the inhabitants those advantages which the Company were expected to afford. The Report of that Sub-Committee is thus made, in the *Herald* of the 17th July, 1845.

"Alderman Holmes, as Chairman of the Committee appointed to negotiate with the Gas Company for the purchase of their works, submitted the following report at the last meeting of the City Council, held on Friday, 11th instant, which was ordered for consideration at the next meeting.

"To the Mayor, Aldermen, and Citizens of the City of Montreal :

"The Special Committee, to which was referred the Report of the Light Committee, dated April, 1845, beg leave to report :—

"That, having entered upon the investigation, they find, in the first place, that the proprietors of the Gas Works, have expended, in the existing establishment, a sum of money exceeding £24,000—but, your Committee is of opinion that Works, of equal capacity, might now be completed at a cost of not much over £15,000 actual outlay—even allowing for the advance in so important an article in such works as iron, the value of which is now considerably advanced.

"The great disparity between the alleged cost of the existing Works, and what your Committee consider a similar establishment might now be formed—a difference of full £10,000 arises, it is believed from the failure, in some instances of the plans of construction first pursued, misapplication and distraction of material, burning out of retorts, and replacing what was found insufficient, in the first attempts, and general inexperience in adapting, to the locality and climate, the arrangements necessary for the introduction of works of so extensive and novel a character, &c. &c."

The remaining part of the Report being too long for insertion, and containing abstract matter of discussion, on which great difference of opinion exists, is omitted; we may, however, introduce the conclusion, which, after recommending a sum of money to be paid the Gas Company, for their ill-planned, badly constructed, and expensively faulty Works, observes :—"Should the Gas Company refuse the offer, herein suggested, it would still be well to seek the permission hinted at, from the Legislature, for the accomplishment of the object under consideration, and, forthwith, to open correspondence with Mr. Edge, and the adoption of such arrangements as would secure the services of that gentleman and the carrying out of the scheme suggested, through Mr. Mathewson, or such other as would secure more extensively, and at fair and moderate terms, (a

return equivalent to 6 per cent. per annum) on his outlay of Works, which would secure to the inhabitants of the city, the escape from the consequences of a monopoly."

An offer was subsequently made, by the Corporation, of the sum recommended by the Committee, but refused by the Gas Company. Before this was done, however, many and weighty objections were made in some of the newspapers to the Corporation expending so large an amount upon so comparatively useless a concern, and a Requisition, signed by upwards of one hundred most respectable individuals, was presented for calling a public meeting on the subject; which, however, for reasons not as yet explained, was not attended to, and the question remains to the present in entire "*statu quo*"—excepting that, the complaints become louder, the dissatisfaction greater, the necessity for a new Company more urgent, and the Gas Works just as they were. That these rest on a sufficient foundation may without difficulty be shown, not only from the consideration that, the City of Montreal is furnished with every material for constructing sufficient and suitable Gas Works, and for using as cheap ingredients as any other large city on this continent, and, consequently, of providing it at as low a cost as others, but, from a reference to the lighting of cities in England, and elsewhere, and the rate charged where the cost of coal is the same—and to this the reader's attention is particularly requested, as it will at once enable him to see the immense advantages which would accrue, not only to the inhabitants individually, but collectively, in the augmentation of the city revenue, and that, it remains with themselves, and an enlightened Legislature, to adopt instant and vigorous measures of relief.

It has been seen, from Mr. Edge's letter to Mr. Mathewson, that, from coals at 25s. currency per chaldron, gas can be made, to good profit, at 7s. per 1000 feet, and the street lamps charged at £/ 4s. currency each, per annum; but the Gas Company in Montreal charge 25s. per 1000 feet, and £6 for the street lamps—badly lighted for only twenty-one nights per month—with coals at from 25s. to 30s. per chaldron. That it may be seen they themselves are aware of its being exorbitant, and fear some action on the part of the public to overthrow their monopoly, it may be stated, that, they felt obliged to address Mr. Edge, after the publication of his letter, and to make statements of their own, with a view to neutralize the application of the inhabitants; for Mr. Edge informed an

individual of this city, that they had addressed a letter to him, stating, amongst other matter, several reasons for their exorbitant charges. Mr. Edge, however, in a letter to Mr. Mathewson, dated 17th June, after referring to these, as immaterial to the consideration of the main charge of complaint, states, with reference to their letter; "It does not alter my views of the advantages to be derived from the erection of new Works—the question is, have you a large field for an enlarged consumption of Gas? If so, I feel assured my statement would be borne out. The Montreal Gas Company, like most persons, do not see that, their profits would be greater, in the aggregate, by lowering the price, from the increased consumption—it is proved so in every instance in this country, and I have found it so in towns belonging to myself.—I first charged 15s. per 1000—I then reduced it to 12s., which occasioned a much larger consumption and gave me a larger profit on the whole,—the rental at the reduced rate having very soon far exceeded what it was before the reduction. I have now reduced it to 10s. and the same effect has been produced. The apparatus and workmen being more fully employed, the Gas is made cheaper."

This, Mr. Edge states, it was his intention when writing to them by that mail to explain and enforce, when he would shew them, that the reasons, they had alledged to him, did not apply to the case—and that, there were no good or sufficient causes for their exorbitant charges or the non extension of their supply.

In corroboration of these views, and the important information obtained from Mr. Edge, on the experience of making Gas near London, where coals are dear, the public may, with benefit, be referred to the former and present charges for Gas in Liverpool, and Manchester (where evils similar to those of which complaint is now made in Montreal, existed, until the people, by establishing rival companies, and examining for themselves into the matter, obtained a salutary reform) to demonstrate the evil of a high rate of charge and the benefits which have resulted to the companies and the public, from a reduction in it—a reduction which has led to the almost universal use of Gas as a better, and more economical light, than any other, the use of which have almost every where, in those towns, been discontinued, in consequence.

The following is an extract from the *Cambridge Advertiser* of the 29th January, 1845, which was published in one of the Montreal

papers "for the benefit of the Corporation Light Committee and of the Gas consuming citizens of Montreal."

"A correspondent of *Eddowe's Journal*, complaining of the high price of Gas in Shrewsbury, furnishes the following statement of increased profits following a reduction in the price of Gas.—'The Manchester Gas Company have continued to increase their gains, in proportion to the reduction of their charges, and the present, and probable future, state of their works, demonstrate, what few persons are now-a-days disposed to gainsay, namely, that low charges, for any article of general consumption, seldom fail to increase the profits of the vendor. The works—now the largest in the world—were first commenced in 1817, and, in that year supplied the public with Gas at the rate of 15s. per 1000 cubic feet. The prices have, however, been almost annually lowered, so that, at the present time, the smallest consumer only pays 6s. per 1000 feet and the largest only 5s. The following table of the relative charges and profits of this Company for a series of years, illustrates the fact that, the low prices secure large gains.

				s.	d.					£
Charge per 1000 feet in 1833	-	-	10	6		Profit	-	-	8,292	
Do do 1834	-	-	10	3		do	-	-	10,191	
Do do 1835	-	-	10	0		do	-	-	13,519	
Do do 1836	-	-	9	0		do	-	-	16,916	
Do do 1837	-	-	8	6		do	-	-	18,712	
Do do 1838	-	-	8	0		do	-	-	19,376	
Do do 1839	-	-	7	6		do	-	-	24,658	
Do do 1840	-	-	7	0		do	-	-	24,738	
Do do 1841	-	-	7	0		do	-	-	29,693	
Do do 1844	-	-	5	9		do	-	-	31,716	

So much then for the fallacy of high prices being indispensable to large profits.

By a reference to the very important address of the late Mayor of Manchester, to the Council, detailing the reforms and improvements in that Borough, during the preceding seven years, consequent upon the obtaining a charter, we shall, under the head of "Gas Committee," find the following additional information on the subject:—

"The next Committee, to whose proceedings I shall briefly advert, is, the Gas Committee. The 'Act for transferring to the Mayor, Aldermen, and Burgesses of Manchester, the powers and property vested in the Commissioners for cleansing, lighting, watching, and regulating the town of Manchester,' received the Royal assent, on the 9th May, 1843. Shortly after the passing of that Act, viz., on the 27th June, 1843, the Gas Committee of the Council was appointed. It will be recollected that, soon after the appointment of that Committee, the subject of the exclusive appropriation of the services of the late Mr. Wrae, to the management of the Gas Works, was brought under the consideration of the Council, in the discussion of the report of the Select Committee, 'appointed to consider what arrangements had been made, and what further steps it was necessary to take, to complete the arrangements required for satisfactorily conducting the business of the Township of Manchester, in connection with, and having regard to, the arrangements made for the transaction of the general business of the Corporation.

"The report of that Committee was made to the Council, on the 30th October, 1843, and a resolution was then adopted, appointing Mr. Wrae the Superintendent and Manager of the Gas establishment, and requesting him to devote the whole of his time thereto.

"The results, exhibited in the table of the Appendix, will show the wisdom of that measure, and I am sanguine enough to hope that, under the present supervision and management of the works, (notwithstanding the frequent reductions in the price of gas,) large additional funds, applicable to the improvement and embellishment of the town of Manchester, will continue to be provided; and that, for many years yet to come, the increase may be steadily progressive.

"The Lamp department was transferred by the Commissioners of Police to the Town Council, in June, 1843, at which time there were, within the Township of Manchester 3,148 lights. There are, at present, within the Township, 3,270 lights. The Lamp Committee pay the Gas Committee for each light 43s. per annum. The lamps are lighted 326 nights, yearly, and burn, on the average, 9 hours each night. Each lamplighter has the care of 80 lamps. There are 52 servants, at an expense of £540 per annum.

The increase in the consumption of Gas is thus, incidentally mentioned, by one of the Manchester papers, evincing the near connexion of an enlarged consumption with a reduction in the rate of charge:—

"One of the most remarkable instances of progressive improvement, in itself, is afforded by the fertile source of many of the local improvements already noticed—the Gas establishment. We cannot better exhibit its extraordinary advance in efficiency and value, than by placing in juxta position some of the principal elements of its condition, in the years 1838 and 1845, an interval of seven years:—

	1838.	1845.
Quantity of Gas produced in feet. . .	164,678,300	305,526,800
Price of Gas per 1000 feet cubic feet . .	8s.	6s.
Gross amount of Rental.	£51,657	£74,171
Surplus for Improvement Fund	£19,376	£31,850
Value of the Works.	£181,872	£211,906
Mortgage Debt	£100,000	£67,100

From a Report of the Liverpool Company, a further corroboration of Mr. Edge's statement of the increase in the consumption, concurring with a reduction in the price, will be exhibited:—

"The profits of the year ending 20th June, 1845, exceed those of the preceding, by £212 18s. This fact, when considered in connexion with the reduction in the price of Gas, on the 1st April, 1844, from 7s. to 6s., and the further reduction to 5s. on the 1st April in this year, affords a gratifying proof of the prosperity of the Company.

"These reductions in price, while they have not affected prejudicially the interests of the proprietors, have greatly contributed to the advantage of the consumers, have enabled a large portion of the tenants of the Company to increase the number of their "burners," and have induced many other persons (not previously tenants) to avail themselves of Gas light. The net increase of tenants in the year is 1855. Your Committee having in the last month ascertained the state of their accounts, on the 30th June, and, not apprehending, from

the results of previous reductions, that the revenue of the Company, for the current year, would be very seriously diminished, if the price of 4s. 6d. per 1000 feet, fixed to commence on the 1st January next, took effect from the 1st July last, resolved upon making this reduction from that day."

The Liverpool Gas Works were established about the same time as the Manchester, and for some time were the cause of great complaints by the inhabitants, though never to any thing like the extent, or on the grounds urged against the Montreal Works—they having been principally made in reference to the price charged. An Oil Gas Company was at length established, which, however, was shortly after altered, their Works being replaced by Coal Gas Works, which were substituted for those originally erected—the result has been a great reduction in the charge for Gas, and a manifest improvement in the quality of the article. An effort has been made for the amalgamation of the Companies, which, with the result, is thus referred to in the *Montreal Herald* of the 24th May, 1845.

"If the Montreal Gas Company have all their expenses paid by the Corporation of the city, and realize only 14 per cent. on their capital, charging £1 5s. per 1000 feet for Gas, what must be the rate of profit to the Companies of Liverpool, which have bound themselves to exact only 4s. 6d. for the same quality? The information in the following paragraph is from the *Liverpool Mercury* of the 18th ultimo:—

"THE GUARDIAN GAS BILL.—The Committees of the House of Commons, after hearing several more witnesses, came to a resolution, recommending an amalgamation of the two existing Companies, on terms advantageous to the public as most likely to attain the objects of the promoters, and the Committee adjourned to Monday to afford time for consideration. On re-assembling, a written reply from the deputations of the two existing Gas Companies was read. The following are the most material passages:—"The deputations are at present of opinion, that the principle of amalgamation can be best carried out for the benefit of the public, by the municipal authorities of the town becoming the purchasers of the existing Companies, and that a Legislative amalgamation upon any other principle can only be of very limited benefit, and that, in fact, the greater part of that benefit can be secured by arrangement between the Companies." The deputations have also considered the possibility of a very early further reduction in the price of Gas to all consumers, and they cannot lose sight of the fact which has been proved to the Committee, that the price of 5s. per 1000 cubic feet adopted on the 1st instant, is a losing price on the present consumption; still, in order to meet any question of reduction of price, and to prevent that ultimate detriment to the consumer and the public generally which would arise from the introduction of a third Company, on the principle of competition; and to meet the objections of the Corporation, the Commissioners for Paving and Sewerage, and the Water Companies to a third Gas Company, as expressed in their several petitions, the deputations are willing,

and now pledge their Companies, to reduce the price on the 1st January next, to 4s. 6d. per 1000 cubic feet." After a good deal of discussion, the promoters declined calling any more evidence, the Chairman announced that the preamble had not been proved, and explained the terms of the arrangement, which are substantially these: That the two Companies deliver in to the Corporation of Liverpool, to be placed on their records, to fix the *maximum* price of Gas at 4s. 6d. from and after the 1st January 1846, and also, to carry out the terms embodied in the paper, handed in and signed by the two Chairmen of the Companies."

"The citizens of Montreal have exhibited either a wonderful degree of generosity or a plentiful lack of enterprize, in submitting to the extortionate rates of Gas, squeezed out of them by the Gas Company. But we trust that the Corporation will, ere long, be in a situation to make a move in the matter, which will save the public from their being generous against their wills, and remove from them the charge of want of enterprize."

This trust, it has been shewn, in the preceding quotations and remarks, proved ultimately fallacious; and it yet remains for the inhabitants to exhibit that, whether the Corporation have a disposition or enterprise to interfere in the matter or not, *they* know their own interest, and have sufficient enterprise and energy to support it, let the opposition to their wishes be ever so secret or violent.

It has been clearly shewn, also, from the experience of Gas Companies now in successful operation, that, Gas of a superior quality can be manufactured, even here, where coals are at a comparatively high price, and supplied at a cost, upwards of 200 per cent. below the rate now charged, and that, a reduction in the price, would be followed by an amazing increase in the consumption, and, consequently, in the income derived from it: indeed, it might fairly be assumed that, this increase would be quadrupled in Montreal, where the suburbs are as yet without light. Places of public worship and large public and private establishments are, in consequence of the present high charge, lighted with oil, and other substances, although all are taxed for its supply.

A correspondent in the *Montreal Herald*, in reference to the Report of the Liverpool Gas Committee, already quoted, very justly remarked on this subject—"Here it will be perceived that, every succeeding reduction in price, has been followed by increased profits to the Company, and the inhabitants of Liverpool now have abundance of Gas, at 4s. 6d. per 1000 feet—not such Gas as the Montreal Gas Company supplies, but an article, properly manufac-

tured and purified. In Manchester, the community are supplied with Gas, at 4s. per 1000 feet, and, even at that low price, the Corporation, after paying all expenses, derived a *nett revenue of £31,000 sterling in 1845.*" Why the Montreal Gas Company should not, like others, see it to be their interest to enlarge their establishment, increase the quantity of their manufacture, and reduce their rate of charge, is a question, at present, enveloped in an obscurity their own darkness has created—to the public, who see things through clearer glasses, generally, than monopolists, the matter is sufficiently clear, and only requires some master hand bold enough in undertaking the business, to step out and develop. Let them, however, take another draw of this Gas light telescope, and they will perceive it in a still clearer light by another focus. The number of Gas lights, is, from 376 to 378, at a charge for each of £6 per annum. The price of coal varies from 3½ to 6 dollars per chaldron, and the chaldron of coals produces about 1½ of a chaldron of coke, which is in demand at 8 dollars the chaldron. The capital of the Gas Company is £25,000, and, it is believed, that the interest of the capital, and the expenditure of the establishment, are covered by the revenue derived from these city lights, so that, what is derived from the *citizens* for Gas, for private use, is clear profit—in fact this calculation falls short of the real circumstances, for the Corporation pay the Gas Company upwards of £2,200, which, at the rate of 6 per centum, exceeds £700 more than the interest upon the Company's capital."

It may be that want of capital, or some monetary entanglements, have so entwined and perplexed the question, that the way is not clear for any present improvement. But, should this be the case, as might be expected, naturally to arise, from original defects and subsequent bad management, and, still more, from an unwillingness to follow the example of prosperous Companies, in reducing the price and increasing the quantity, it becomes one of the most cogent reason: why the inhabitants and the Corporation, should forthwith take the matter in hand themselves, and do that, for the city, which the Company have failed to do.

Nothing, certainly, would be easier than for the inhabitants to organize a Consumer's Company, as the citizens of Dublin, on the authority of the "*Nation*," have done, in which, the Corporation shall

hold the greatest portion of shares, and, from which, a very large revenue would be derived, in aid of the municipal funds—thus, giving, to the inhabitants, the benefit of more abundant and cheaper light, and to the city, an increase of income.

It will be perceived that, in Manchester, the borough has the entire possession and management of the Gas Works, and of the lamps; while, in Liverpool the manufacture and supply are under the sole control of the two companies, and the provision of the Lamps, and the expence of lighting them, is borne by the Commissioners of Lamps, Watch, &c., in order to prevent the Companies from lighting and extinguishing the lamps at unseasonable hours. The plan adopted in Dublin, it will be seen, partakes of both these advantages and would, probably, suit the circumstances of the population of Montreal, better than any other, provided its management were under a sufficiently responsible Board.

An attempt has been made to shew that, the present Company are compelled to charge an exorbitant price, because of the loss they sustain from the imperfection of their works, and, it was stated that they realized but a small proportion of the amount charged, as profit, on this account; but this argument will appear, at once, in favour of the establishment of a new company, and of an entire alteration in the mode of supply, rather than of a longer continuance of the old; for, if a large proportion of the price, charged to the consumer, is lost to the Company, it must be quite apparent that, the loss is borne by him, instead of having, as he ought, a very considerable additional quantity of light. The argument is similar to that of a Milkman, who should say to a customer, "I cannot afford you more milk this morning, or at a lower price, tho' my neighbors may, for I do not think it worth my while to send my cow to grass, and she has an unlucky trick of kicking most of it over, when she has given it."

A good deal of unnecessary discussion, it will be remembered, by all who have had an eye to the Gas, and who have not been blinded, either by its sudden flickerings and collapses, or the more overpowering glare of its abundance, at one time took place, respecting the charge made for it, from which it might have been inferred that no actual measurement was made of the supply, and that, it was as generously and bountifully supplied almost, as the vital air, or oozed

out as sparingly as drops of blood. It will be in their recollection, that, in reference to the charge of £60 for Gas to the City Hospital for 20 jets, which burn till 9 o'clock, and those used after that are only allowed to give the faintest glimmer of light, respecting which, the Governors have, from time to time, complained, without redress, an attempt was made by them to prove, that they only charged at the rate of 25s. per 1000 cubic feet, although it is notorious there was no meter placed to ascertain the amount, or to check the consumption, which, making a fair calculation on the quantity charged for (how ascertained is at present a mystery) will be found to amount to more than 50s. per 1000 cubic feet on the measurement by a proper meter. They will remember also, that, an attempt was made to impress the public with the idea, that, owing to the difference between the use of meters, the Company scarce knew what was consumed, and, that they were continually imposed upon, in that way, to an incalculable amount; they will remember, too, what a smile this provoked, at the expence of the Company at the time, and how the ability of their management was developed, by a charge made upon a supposed quantity, as ascertained by counting the burners employed, and afterwards corrected, by being conformed to the measurement by a dry meter, which reduced the quantity by two thirds. It is well known, to all acquainted with the subject, that some difficulty occurred to the first English Companies, in ascertaining the exact quantities consumed, and in preventing fraud in the calculations by meter,—but, that this has been long since obviated, thro' the patent meters now in use, which, open to the inspection of the Company's servants, afford a complete check to both parties, so that, such puerile excuses for high charges and losses are fully met by the indisputable circumstance, that, with the English meters at present used, the Company ought to know, to a single cubic foot, how much is consumed, and how much lost, and the correct reasons for it.

It is quite possible, where so gross an injustice is being perpetrated, as that of taxing the property in the city for lights, from which the proprietors derive no benefit. particularly in the suburbs, that this, and every other similar effort, to obtain a reform in this department of municipal management, may be neutralized and rendered abortive by an influence and opposition which is not less sure, because it is unseen; but, this consequence is certain, that the rea-

sons for it will become daily more important and pressing, and the power which prevents it being realized, more and more apparent ; while the consummation, though retarded for a while, will finally, in despite of every obstacle, be realized, and the inhabitants of Montreal obtain a new Gas Company which shall benefit them, whether connected with the Corporation or not, and put into its proper position the one established under the Act of 8th William 4th, cap. 18.

An effort has been made to frighten the rate payers and Corporation from their propriety, by endeavouring to make them believe that a very large additional burden would be entailed, through the laying down of mains for a new Company, which would become requisite ; but it has never been told them that the present ones would require, if used for an additional supply of Gas, to be taken up and replaced by large ones, and be opened continually in order to lay the lateral branches on whichever side of the street the lights might be placed, and that, as the Corporation have now purchased the Water Works, and in order to give the inhabitants an additional supply of water, must soon take up the greater part of the paving to lay down new pipes for that purpose, they could at the same time lay down new Gas Pipes, and the expense of opening and closing the streets would not be increased, while all future disturbance of the paving, would be replaced, and the expense born by the Gas Company, provided a clause were inserted in the Bill, requiring this from them.

While adverting to the change which has taken place in the management of the Water Works, we may incidentally, without swelling these remarks to an inconvenient length, in connexion with this subject, observe, that the daily inconvenience which is being experienced, through the want of an abundant supply of pure water (the present being from the muddy drains and filth of the city, instead of being drawn by a proper Acqueduct, from the purer higher water up the river), would be remedied, to the great accommodation of all concerned, and so as to prevent any injury to the streets, if, at the time that the Corporation laid down their Water Pipes, they were to construct a barrel drain, the lower part of stone and the upper of brick, of sufficient dimensions, say five feet in height, which, while it should sufficiently drain the city, should

also be provided with stone shelves built into the sides of the drain to bear the Gas and Water Pipes, and to which, by means of eyes, access could at all times be had by the workmen for examination and repairs; in the execution of such a plan, doubtless the Gas Companies would see it to be their interest to bear a part of the expense, in order to escape the cost and inconvenience attendant upon frequent excavations. This plan has been adopted in several cities of Europe with beneficial results. While on this subject, in anticipation of what may further be published respecting it, and for which ample materials are in store, we may remark, that when the Works were taken by the Corporation, a larger supply, at a cheaper rate, was confidently expected by those who viewed it in the light of Municipal Improvement; but a very serious disappointment has been experienced in witnessing a slight advance in the rate, with a continued paucity of supply; while a more moderate charge might, beneficially to all parties, be made, and a more abundant supply afforded, both for consumption and fires, if the Corporation acted upon the principle which has governed the Corporations and Gas Companies of Liverpool and Manchester, in the instances before referred to, and the Corporation of New York, in the introduction of the Croton River Water. The Corporation Water Works tenants, at present, number about one thousand, contributing to the Revenue of the City about £6,000; and it is not hazarding truth to say, that they might with improved arrangements supply 2000 additional ones, if the rate were reduced, and probably a still greater number, provided sufficient means were employed to establish Works that would bring purer water, in greater abundance, at a reduction of 50 per cent., to a Reservoir sufficiently high to distribute it, by its own pressure, to all parts of the City, and to keep the Tanks at all times full in the event of fire. A very slight inspection of the case will demonstrate, that if the Corporation Revenue is £6,000 from 1000 Tenants, a reduction and improvement which would increase the number to 3000, should swell the Income to £18,000, while a reduction of 50 per cent. would, in fact, increase it to £3,000 more than it is at present.

It is presumed, however, in conclusion, that the public are too much alive to their own interests, to allow any of the "*ruses de guerre*" referred to, to alarm them, or to turn them from their pur-

pose of having better, more abundant, and cheaper Gas in the city of Montreal, by requiring its Gas Company and Corporation, to illustrate the motto of the Liverpool Gas Light Company, and "*Ex fumo dare lucem*," or, to accomplish this absolutely necessary reform themselves.

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