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EUGENE, OREGON, OPERATES MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT AND WATERWORKS SUCCESSFULLY

EUGENE, Oregon, operates its own electric light plant and city waterworks. A strong fight was made against it but the people won out. The Eugene Register opposed the proposition at first but now after 21 months' operation The Register acknowledges that city ownership is a complete success and both waterworks and light plant are operated at a profit and the rates are low. Electric light sells in Eugene at 7 1/2 cents per kilowatt hour against 15 cents in Marshfield. The Times has not the figures of the water schedule but has sent for them and will publish them as soon as received.

The following editorial review of the water board's report appears in a recent issue of The Register.

The Eugene water and light plants, in the 21 months in which they have been in operation have taken in enough money to pay operating expenses, and have over \$32,000 left over to apply on the interest charge for the same period of about \$35,000. With the electrical department in the commercial field for but 11 of the 21 months, the report makes a good showing. Had the report been for the calendar year the earnings would probably have covered operation and interest, leaving only depreciation or sinking fund to be met.

The report of the water board, however, does not present the showing of the department in this way. It has to be deduced from the tables given. The report combines receipts and expenditures in the operating departments with expenditures for improvements paid from proceeds of bond issue. However the figures are there, except for the interest cost, which has to be computed.

On page 66 is the report of receipts and expenditures from which the citizen may learn these facts.

Revenues of the electrical department are \$39,661.75 and operating costs, excluding a small payment of \$1500 for interest, are \$20,608.55, leaving applicable to interest, \$19,053.16.

In the same way from the water revenues of \$56,069.59 should be deducted operating cost of \$42,263.84, leaving \$13,805.75 to apply on interest.

The total revenue above operating cost, then, is \$32,859.21. Since the tax levy of the city council provided for practically all of the interest, the water board expended for extensions of its service, water and electrical, some \$20,000, leaving about \$12,000 now in the board's hands.

The citizen who would gain a clear idea of the finances of the Eugene public utilities should begin his study of the water board's report at page 59. The tables that appear earlier in the booklet are purely hypothetical, used in figuring a new basis for charging for the water used by the city. The real reports required by the charter of the city, showing the true cost of the plant, the cost, operation and the condition of the department's finances are in the back of the report.

An unfortunate arrangement of headings makes the reports somewhat confusing, but if it is remembered that the report on page 60, with the little heading, corresponds to the report on page 63 with a big heading, one showing cost of the electric plant and the other the cost

of the water plant, it will be easy to co-ordinate the reports and arrive at definite knowledge as to the real cost of the public utilities.

Combining the two tables we find:

Construction cost of electric plant \$217,970.98
Extensions to date 66,305.04

Total cost electric plant \$284,276.02
Construction cost of water plant \$182,908.60
Extensions to date 44,091.40

Total cost of water plant \$227,000.00
Total cost electric plant \$284,276.02

Total cost water and light plant \$511,276.02

In other words the city owns utilities of an estimated cost of \$511,276.02, against which there are outstanding \$442,000.00 of bonds and \$57,970.98 of general fund warrants, or a total of \$449,970.98.

The second tables for the electric plant, page 61 and for the water plant, page 64, show the cost of operation and repeat the figures for costs of extensions found in the respective previous table. The only change is that in the second table, in each instance, the items of supervision and engineering, and of general office, are divided between the main plant and the distributing systems in extension work.

The third table for each the electrical plant and the water plant, takes the figures of total cost from the first tables, and includes cash received and balances this with the obligations of the department.

It will be noted in the report on the cost of the water system, that nearly half of the present value is listed as non-productive. The pipe fittings, steam pump that has been displaced by the new centrifugal pump, are useless and subject to sale. The high pressure reservoir, is non-operating in the sense of being drawn upon every day, but it is in constant use as a source of supply for fire use. The real estate items include the Skinner's butte, the greater portion of which should be park property, a small tract across the river from the pumping station on which the well is located, and the site of the pumping station.

A footnote appearing twice on page 62 and also on other pages, speaking of excessive charges, refers to the difference between the amount actually paid for the canal and the estimated cost had the original contractor finished his work. The footnote is useless and confusing, because the condition is that a certain amount was paid for the building of the canal, and it cannot be "wished" away. Neither is the excess cost, due to delay, confined to the canal. Machinery was stored a year at Springfield, and lumber for the flume was damaged by the weather, also due to the delay. Any number of items in the cost may have been larger than they should have been, but that does not change the amount that was actually paid.

The footnote on page 65, giving the excess cost of the plant as \$109,605.00, includes, in addition to the items of non-operating property, listed on page 63, also the item of \$4881.84 which is the excess of the council's estimate of value greater than the water board's estimate.

The table on page 66 purports to be a statement of cash receipts and disbursements, but includes in its balances on hand items of accounts

receivable, which are credits and not cash. Most likely the explanation is that the word "revenues" received, means cash received plus a few thousands still uncollected.

Really the most confusing table is that on page 67, where receipts and expenditures are jumbled together. A clearer statement of the same report:

Balance on hand per report of July 1, 1912... \$13,059.59
Water and electric revenues deposited with treasurer (receipts)... 30,465.78
Other earnings from bond funds 288.36

Total receipts \$43,803.73

Warrants drawn on current fund during period \$30,218.80

Interest on lighting bonds due April 1, 1912... 750.00

Interest on lighting bonds due October 1, 1912... 750.00

Total expenditures ... \$31,718.80

Total receipts \$43,803.73

Total expenditures \$31,718.80

Balance this report ... \$12,084.93

In the same way it should be indicated under the report of the water, power and light fund that the warrants drawn, plus earnings from bonds (accrued interest paid by the buyers) should be taken from the previous balance.

The criticism is only on the matter of form. The members of the water board, being familiar with the work being done, understand the meaning of the reports, but the average citizen who has no way of knowing the details of the public utilities management, needs to have his reports in simplest form.

The apparent discrepancy between the amount paid for electrical energy, page 64, and the revenues of the electrical department, page 66, is due to the fact that the city power is not used exclusively in the pumping plant until some time after the water board began operation of the plants.

It will be noted too, that the financial statement on page 67, covers only about six months, probably to December 10, like the rest of the reports (no date is given) while the detail reports of expenditures cover 21 months. Comparison is not possible, therefore.

A number of interesting facts can be drawn from the tables, especially the one on page 66.

This table, for example, shows that the electrical department in the 11 months it had been doing a commercial business, had collected \$19,390.37, while the operating cost for 21 months, detailed on page 61, and excluding the small interest payment, was \$20,608.55. In other words, the electrical department, with the handicap of free power for water pumping, for 21 months, and no commercial revenues for ten, came within \$1200 of paying its running expenses, excluding interest and sinking fund.

The item of supervision and engineering expense, and the item of general office expense, has been divided among the different departments until each has but a small charge, but in the aggregate, the supervision cost the combined plants \$7483.05, while office expense was \$7903.75, or \$16,386.80 for the 21 months. During the same time the labor at the plants cost \$9691.41.

If you have anything to sell, rent, trade, or want help, try a Want Ad.

SENATOR LANE'S GIRL AN ORATOR

Oregon Senator's Child Delivers Socialist Talks on Street Corners.

PORTLAND, Or., April 17.—Mrs. Nina Lane McBride, daughter of United States Senator Lane, of Oregon, who, with her husband recently returned from New Orleans where both were delegates to the "Hobo" convention, has today resumed her work here as a Socialist orator.

Mounted on a soapbox on one of the prominent streets, Mrs. McBride spoke to an audience of several hundred, pleading with them to awaken to the fact that they were in the midst of a great class struggle.

"Here, you fellows with the white collars; you fellows who have got places to sleep tonight—it's you I want to buy our literature, to read, to think, to wake up. If you don't awaken to the fact that there is a class struggle in society and take your place on the right side in that struggle, the time will come when your stomachs will be empty and flap against your backbone. But you won't know what to do, except to look for another master to work for, so that you may be fed from part of the product of your own toil."

Dressed in a blue tailored suit and a neat tongue hat, Mrs. McBride made a decided hit with her audience.

In conclusion, she said: "I have no more use for a reformer or a prohibitionist than I have for a person that is religious. What I want is to see thinkers—men who know where they are economically. The pulpit, the magazines and the daily papers are all trying to teach you to be contented. I want you to wake up."

Have your job printing done at The Times office.

SCIENTIST TO STAY DEATH

Might Be All Right With Some—Wrong With Others.

LONDON, April 17.—That radium can restore the hardened arteries of middle aged persons to a healthy condition and so prolong life was the claim made by Dr. Saubermann of Berlin in a lecture here before the Roentgen society.

The apparatus which will manufacture this "elixir of youth" consists of an earthenware receptacle containing a minute amount of radium, which is placed at the bottom of a glass bottle. The bottle is filled with water. In time the water becomes charged with radium emanations.

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GEO. WESTSTEAD, Trustee.

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