

THE WATER PRESSURE,

Superintendent Jones of the Water Company Presents Some Facts.

To the Public:

For the last eighteen years the National Waterworks company, under its contract with Kansas City, has been furnishing fire protection and during all that time it has been the often expressed opinion of our fire chief and his assistants and also of the visiting firemen that the fire protection of this city was unsurpassed in the entire country. Recently litigation has commenced between the company and the city and now all at once the cry goes up after every fire that the water pressure is inadequate.

The chief is now calling for fire engines, when it is a singular fact that at some of the recent fires at which it is said there was insufficient pressure, the engines already owned by the city were not called into use, but the fires were handled by the hose from the fire hydrants alone. How much of this talk is from the chief I do not know, but certain it is that the people ought to understand the motive inspiring these statements. The purpose is to manufacture evidence to be used in the pending litigation. The pressure now is just as good, if not better, than it has been for eighteen years. We are aware of the disposition at this time to carefully watch the actions of the company, hence the effort is constant to keep the machinery in the very best possible working order.

It is a significant fact that insurance rates have not been increased, nor have any complaints reached the company from the insurance men as to the fire protection afforded. I would further venture the prediction that no cisterns will be built. An excuse is wanted to divert the money collected for hydrant rentals to the purchase of fire engines. The purpose of that is well understood. As the city is arbitrarily withholding by rent rentals, those in charge are haunted with the fear that the company would reciprocally withhold fire pressure. To provide against this emergency the clamor is gotten up to justify the large expenditure for steamers.

If this senseless talk is kept up much longer the opportunity will be afforded to every dishonest, bankrupt and unprincipled owner of unproductive buildings to sell their property to the insurance companies. The water company as the owner of larger interests in Kansas City than any other corporation or individual, can but feel that such methods will work incalculable injury to the city, and that investments can not reasonably be expected under such circumstances.

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To counteract this danger, I would assure the public that the fire protection in this city was never better than at the present time. The water company is furnishing the same pressure it has always furnished, and it has no doubt of collecting for such service the compensation named in the contract. If the taxes paid by the people for this purpose are diverted to other use, then simply a double burden is caused without any excuse for it. I write this letter to make known the fact that the National Waterworks company is fully discharging its contract obligations with the city, and no amount of manufactured testimony will be of avail in deciding the issues involved in this litigation. Sooner or later the purpose of this talk will be made apparent.

I have before me Chief Hale's official report of April, 1892, in which he says: "Our water system is one of the best in the United States, as has been proved by its past record." He gives the losses for the eleven years from 1881 to 1891 inclusive as \$2,580,725 upon property insured for \$18,580,047, an average annual loss of only \$282,000. What other city can make such a showing!

I notice that a water main recently burst in Jersey City, and that 1,500 inmates of establishments there, convicts, paupers and lunatics, were without advice, and a water brigade had to be sent to draw a water supply from wells. The city of Chattanooga has a water famine. In Chicago, Milwaukee and other places there is trouble with water supply. Brooklyn today is threatened with a water famine. Two main pipes burst yesterday. The Hildewood reservoir is nearly empty. It seldom used to get along with an amount of water yesterday that averaged a gallon to the family. I also notice the destruction of the Calumet ship in Chicago last night, lost \$200,000. And so it is in other places of the water famine. The fact appears to have been proved in fact. But we are in Kansas City in that we have not yet had to resort to such expedients to furnish water for our