

MORE STAR CHAMBER WORK.

The Board of Public Works Considers the Conduit Ordinance.

A Report Prepared Recommending the Passage of the Measure on Certain Conditions—Will Do Away With Only 250 Telephone Poles.

The board of public works met yesterday in special session to take action on the ordinance to give the telephone company a conduit franchise for the placing of its wires under ground. Like all the meetings of the board which concern matters of public interest it was of the star chamber character and the members refused to give out anything regarding the action taken in the matter.

The board, however, prepared a report recommending the passage of the ordinance if a general conduit for the reception of the city electric light plant could be devised, and the board expressed the opinion that the telephone and electric light wires could be carried in the same conduit.

On the subject of compensation to the city in consideration of the granting of the franchise the board rected the fact that the company is giving the city at present service which is worth in the market the sum of \$7,616.48, and which could not be furnished by the city for less than two-thirds that amount. The board thinks that the city should be furnished as now with free service for fire alarms, police telephones and city telephones in the various city offices, and should retain the right to use the conduit of the company for the electric light wires of the city's plant.

The report goes on to say that Chicago receives 3 per cent of the gross receipts of the companies granted similar privileges; Providence 1 1/2 per cent; Philadelphia gets free service such as this city gets now; Baltimore gets \$23 per mile for the first four miles of conduit and \$352 for each additional mile; New York reserves the space occupied by the conduits and receives a rental from it; Chicago in addition gets telephone and telegraph facilities and has a city conduit.

Referring to the effect of the granting of the franchise on the pole question, the report says that 250 poles will be abandoned by the company, leaving the following number of poles in the city: Fifteen hundred and fifty telephone poles, 2,900 electric light poles, 488 telegraph poles, 315 electric road companies' poles and 219 poles used by the other street railway companies in the city. This is a total of 5,555 poles.

The telephone company proposes to lay conduits as follows: On Wyandotte street from Fifth to Twelfth, 1,500 feet; on Sixth street from Broadway to Grand, 2,100 feet; on Eighth street from Broadway to Walnut, 1,800 feet; on Twelfth street from Broadway to Grand, 2,100 feet; a total of 7,500 feet. The ordinance gives the company the right to lay not less than one mile of conduit.

Electric Light Franchise.

Alderman Hunter yesterday filed with the city clerk an ordinance granting to the Kansas City Electrical Company the right to construct and operate an electric light plant in this city. The route of the proposed line begins at the intersection of Main street and the alley between Nineteenth and Twentieth streets and runs east in the alley to Woodland, thence south to the southern limits of the city, thence to Main street and north to the point of beginning.

The ordinance provides that the lights shall be furnished for \$6 per light per month and incandescent lights for \$2.50 per month per light, on city contracts. To private consumers the price is fixed for incandescent service at 1/4 of a cent per ampere hour, providing that the price per lamp shall be at least \$3 per light per month.

The company is given three months in which to begin work in good faith and one year in which to construct two miles of line and be ready to furnish light to the city and private consumers. The ordinance, if it passes the council, will not alter the electric light situation in the city, as the company will be prepared only to furnish lights in the southern portion of the city until an extension shall be made.

A Tax of \$5 for Each Pole.

President Tiernan, of the upper house, yesterday filed with the city clerk an ordinance to levy a tax of \$5 on each pole in the city which is used for the carrying of electricity. This includes all telephone, telegraph, electric light and electric road poles. President Tiernan said yesterday that if the council should pass the ordinance the city would derive a revenue of about \$20,000, unless the various companies affected should do away with a large proportion of their poles. The necessary balance, however, would be sufficient to raise a revenue nearly as large as that estimated, as allowances have been made for about 750 poles that might be dispensed with.

The Work Only Begun.

A private telegram received by Mayor Cowherd yesterday said that the bill submitting to a vote of the people the proposition to separate the city from the county had passed both branches of the legislature in the form of a concurrent resolution as an amendment to the constitution. It will require at least two years for the scheme to be carried out if the people vote in favor of the proposition. It will not come before the people till next spring and another year will be required to get it through the legislature again after the people have voted on it.