HINTS

TO

THE HONEST TAX PAYERS

OF THE

CITY OF BOSTON.

Fellow Citizens:—

Sufficient time having been afforded for deliberation, since the decision of the Long Pond question, the considerate part of the community now see that the City, under a mistaken impulse, have been hurried onward to acts that neither prudence nor economy can justify.

The Commissioners' Report, which was waited for with impatience, and from which all needed statistical information was expected, to enable the citizens to act understandingly, turns out to be a jejune affair, and wanting in some essential particulars requisite to the forming a correct opinion of the practicability of the Long Pond speculation. For definite statements on both points of inquiry, for which the Commissioners were chosen, we have given us very doubtful assumptions—or perhaps mere conjectural probabilities—or only a reference to former reports, which a change of circumstances have rendered nugatory. The subject to be investigated required, it was supposed, scientific engineers, and men of strict impartiality—and those appointed as Commissioners were presumed to be of this character. But what are the facts? Why—only one of them is a practical engineer—and he highly prepossessed in favor of Long Pond—and on all questions of practical skill, would be likely to control the other two—right or wrong—and his individual opinion in favor of a long job, might involve the City in a debt of millions of dollars.

Although there was the semblance of fairness in the selection of the Commissioners, it now appears to have been a one-sided manœuvre—and they were selected by the sticklers for this project, because they were its known advocates. Had there been only one of them of adverse views, the report would probably have been more replete with statistical correctness—the only basis on which the citizens expected to form their opinion. And had this been the case, the City would have been made acquainted with such facts as would have defeated the expectations of the Long Job Party, and satisfied every reflecting mind that Long Pond is by no means adapted to the wants and condition of the City. Although the Commissioners were restricted in their surveys, to only one source, they were not prohibited from making a comparative reference to a more auspicious operation. Other gentlemen, of superior skill in the science of civil engineering, differ in their opinions very widely from this report, both as relates to the outlay, and also to the doubtful character of the water after having been long retained upon muddy, or peat meadows—exposed to the heated rays of a summer's sun, when only from ten to thirty inches deep. An adventure susceptible of such hazards, we are under no necessity of adopting. And if its being a Long Job excites suspicion, the doubtful character of the water ought to excite alarm. Our City Council ought individually to understand this subject, in all its details, before they adopt a measure that will encumber every estate in the City. Young men, struggling industriously for a decent subsistence, and paying an annual tax on real estate of $30 or $40—will shortly, if this project goes on, be subjected to the payment of an annual tax of three times this amount,—and no sophistry of argument can refute this position—and nothing but a hood-wink upon the understanding can avert such a conclusion.

To show that economy, in money expenditures, constitutes no item in the Commissioners' report, just look at the extravagant provision they recommend to be made for a supply of water for a population of 250,000 inhabitants for this city,—equal to 28½ gallons daily, for each inhabitant—and to render it probable that such will be the necessity, they refer us to the records of consumption of the city of Philadelphia, knowing that very few persons here have the means of detecting the want of

analogy. It is sometimes the case that, in complicated machinery, there is a wheel within a wheel—it may be so here. It would seem highly incongruous to construct an aqueduct for seven millions of gallons of water per day, unless it can be first rendered probable that the wants of the city require it. Well, reference is made to Philadelphia, but the whole story is not told. There is a great want of analogy between the two cases, as appears by the Report of 1837, by Col. Baldwin, that the city of Philadelphia, in the year 1832, consumed daily, three million gallons of water, during the summer months, and two millions in the winter; the difference of one million being required for washing the streets—which being almost a dead level, a great amount of water is required to form a current in the gutters of sufficient strength to carry off the filth that accumulates; for it is the practice there, to throw all their waste water into the streets, and one million gallons of water is daily required to cleanse them. In addition to this, they have in that city, eleven hundred and eighty-four public and private baths, of which great use is made; and other great uses for water that we have not. Now these two items alone, which our Commissioners say nothing of, are equal to more than one half the consumption of water in this city. From the knowledge of this fact, it appears, that Boston requires but two thirds the quantity of water that a like population in Philadelphia require.

Again: In order to fortify the argument for the long job project, we are gravely told that Boston, awhile hence, will contain a population of 250,000 inhabitants; meaning, probably, all the dwellers here, and all who do business here and dwell in the suburbs—for the old peninsula can never accommodate double its present number, unless the seventy-five acres of land in the Common is appropriated for dwellings, and the spirit of emigration is vetoed.

Again: To give color and force to the long job argument, it is recommended that each of these 250,000 souls must have a daily supply of 28½ gallons of water, amounting, in the whole, to seven millions gallons. Those who believe this will go for the long job. In the British navy, one gallon of water a day, is the allowance for an officer. Seven millions a day, will give about 300,000 gallons every hour in the twenty-four. The

long job party are certainly entitled to the credit of perseverance, if to nothing else—but why is it so? May it not be owing to some occult lateral influence that would cajole the city out of millions, to swell its own coffers a few thousand?

Except by a gratuitous analogy, it has never yet been shown that Boston, for culinary and domestic purposes, consumes per day, even two million gallons—why then contract an outlay for seven millions?—When the excess outlay, for the surplus five million gallons will, for fifty years to come, be almost entirely unproductive of profit? The ability of the City to borrow the money, even at low interest, is no argument in its favor.

Because the population of the City has twice doubled in fifty years, and almost every vacant lot in the City is occupied, does it therefore follow, as the Commissioners infer, that it can twice double the next fifty years? The presumption is too absurd to need refutation. The occupancy of whole streets, is rapidly changing from dwellings to shops and warehouses.

From all that appears, then, the Long Pond project is not needed for the City; yet we will notice another item in the congruity of our prudent Commissioners. Before they entered upon their tour of service, it was strongly *conjectured* by our worthy Mayor, and some others of the long job party, that the contemplated expenditure must not, nor would, exceed two million of dollars—because those who saw "a dollar to be of the size of a cart wheel," would clamor at the expense;—and especially as aggregates would supersede the necessity of details, the latter might be omitted. Accordingly we see the water rights on Concord river, and two factories in Lowell, and Long Pond, and Middlesex Canal, all estimated at only $110,000, the same as they were estimated seven years ago, notwithstanding large additions of buildings, and valuable machinery have been since made thereto—and Mr. Knight has also secured the refusal of the peat meadows that may be wanted to enlarge Long Pond into a reservoir. The peat, however, can be removed, if necessary. And the Commissioners tell us that "lest the peat should injure the water, it may be a question whether it must not be removed." But how many acres there are, or how many yards deep it is, or how much would be the cost of excavation and removal, we are not informed—peat is sometimes fifteen feet deep. On Concord river there are a number

of valuable establishments, and the operatives there employed, have depended upon the farms in that region for their food, and the farmer has found there, a market for his produce—and those who live in the vicinity of the Canal, transport on its waters their heavy articles of stones, wood, timber, &c. and all claim a joint interest in Long Pond waters, which feed the canal; and should any one trench on their rights a dollar's worth, it would by them be quickly magnified to the size of a "cart wheel." And in the county of Worcester, where justice will be amply awarded no doubt, to those who suffer loss by any heterogeneous circumlocution of the long job sticklers, and the majesty of individual rights will be protected.

Having thus made a conjectural acquisition of the mass of the property wanted, our Commissioners deem it inexpedient to waste time in computing the damages that high embankments, and deep cuttings across farms, between Long Pond and Corey's hill, a distance of 16 miles, might amount to, or the extra expense of underground obstructions, such as rocks, ledges, quick sands, bogs, and the like. These are mere make-weights, to be used or not, as circumstances might require. But by way of making crooked things appear straight, the Commissioners tell us, "the supply of water for the City, for the domestic purposes of the inhabitants, *(and for feeding steam engines,)* it is presumed will be regarded by the legislature of the State as one of those public objects, which justify the taking of private property at a valuation to be determined, when not adjusted by agreement with the parties, in such manner as shall be provided by law." And just by way of intercepting all interrogatories, they tell us that "in the present state of ownership of Concord river, the estimate of the claims of the several parties presents a complicated question." The probability, therefore, that we shall have long litigations, if we go on with this wild project, is not to be doubted. In addition to the large items enumerated above, that the Commissioners omitted in their estimate of $2,118,000, there are yet other large items both in Boston and at and about the Pond, which I omit, but which are indispensable to the completion of the enterprise, and which, if added to the $2,118,000, would greatly enlarge the amount.

We will now consider the *reservoir* to be made by the enlargement of the pond. The Commissioners having no confi-

dence in the natural sufficiency of the pond for a supply, recommend its enlargement, by means of raising the dam at the outlet, so as to flow the meadows above, and by this means to save the water that rains in the wet seasons, to make up the deficiency of the summer months. That this is practicable there is no doubt; but will not the remedy be worse than the disease? for the Commissioners tell us that there are peat meadows, liable to impart both a bad taste and a bad color to the water, as has been before alluded to. Of the extent of those meadows, or the depth of peat, we are not told: but we know that water soon becomes stagnant upon meadows of any kind. We are not informed whether these meadows do not also contain many acres of muddy swamps, inhabited by filthy poisonous reptiles, that emit a slimy exuberance, not very congenial to health; or whether covered with rotten wood, and decayed vegetable matter. On all these important points, the citizens are left to mere conjecture. To adventure upon such an extravagant enterprise without first knowing what effect would be produced upon the water by any of the above mentioned circumstances, would be injudicious; and to make a fair experiment, would require the whole control of the pond for at least one year.

It now appears that the outlay reported by the Commissioners does not cover anything like the amount the aqueduct would cost; and that its magnitude is upon a scale of calculation at least four times greater than the wants of the city require. What then is next to be done? As we are in great doubt what the quality of the water might be, we are not ready to apply to the Legislature for a grant—nor ready to enter upon negotiations for the water rights—or for materials for the aqueduct—or for rights of passage across farms—or to decide whether to expend *four millions* of dollars for water, when it is very apparent *one million* is amply enough. The number of bricks alone fall but little short of thirty millions.

It is well known that great unfairness was practised at our late city meetings, and that most people were disgusted with the new mode of treating subjects of discussion in Faneuil Hall—and the obscure manner of presenting the water question to the people, many of whom, not understanding the question, voted contrary to their intentions, and are now dissatisfied—

and above all, the unfairness in the distribution of the ballots. Such indeed was the irregularity throughout the whole history of transactions on the water question, that no criterion of opinion has been obtained. Would it therefore be wise to embarrass the City treasury with a debt, more than twice the amount of its present incumbrance, under such a state of excitement against the contemplated project? If the sale of the Canal is a paramount object with its owners, it would be better for the City to give them $50,000 as a quietus, if the City make no farther use of it, than to accept it gratis, as a sine qua non to the construction of such a useless incumbrance to the City, as would be this aqueduct.

The Commissioners intimate the necessity of a large Reservoir on Beacon hill, without which, the inhabitants in that vicinity cannot be speedily supplied with water—and yet they point to no spot where such a reservoir can be constructed, to answer the purpose—nor is there any such spot to be procured. The like difficulty occurs with regard to Copp's hill—and a reservoir on Fort hill would be too small to supply more than the immediate neighborhood. If, then, Corey's hill is too distant, without the aid of those reservoirs, and we have no where to locate them, the inhabitants residing upon the high lands of our city cannot be accommodated. But Spot Pond, being twenty-four feet higher than Corey's hill, would amply supply the highest dwellings in Boston, without the aid, or expense of reservoirs. No one doubts that peat meadow water would do for STEAM ENGINES—but this use of water ought only to be a subordinate one—and we are under no necessity of going to Long Pond for this purpose. So far from it, if we would encourage the population of our city, we should resist every operation that would perpetuate an exorbitant taxation.

It is very desirable that the city should have pure water from the country, speedily, and it is very apparent that we cannot obtain it from Long Pond. If there were no other obstacles in the way of success, but what may arise from opposition of the inhabitants near those waters, who must be ousted of their domicils and water rights—this would occasion great delay, or cost a mint of money to quiet them.

If you can be reconciled to an aqueduct capable of supplying three million gallons daily of the purest water, look to Spot

Pond. Two million gallons per day would furnish one hundred gallons daily to every family. This quantity it is *certain* that Spot Pond will yield, and this in addition to the supply from Jamaica Pond, will be sufficient for all the wants of the city for very many years to come.

Unite then with a private company to bring in the waters of Spot Pond, let the City subscribe for a portion of the stock, and within one year the water may be distributed in Boston.

TEMPERANCE.