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CITY OF BOSTON.

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE

ON

WATER

November 24, 1845.

The Joint Standing Committee on Water, to whom was referred a communication from James C. Odiorne, George Odiorne, and Thomas Odiorne, proprietors of Spot Pond, proposing to sell said Pond to the City, and to surrender a charter, held by them, granting the privilege of conducting the

waters of the same into the City for distribution; —and to whom was also referred various petitions in favor of, and others against, accepting said proposition; and also the petition of Samuel T. Armstrong and others, praying the City to subscribe for one-third part of the stock of the Spot Pond Corporation, beg leave to

REPORT:

That, immediately after the reference of these subjects, the Committee, for the purpose of arriving at a proper conclusion, asked of the City Council, full powers in the premises. This request was granted, in the following order, passed by both Boards of the City Council.

"*Ordered*, That the Joint Standing Committee on Water, be authorised and instructed to take such measures as, in their judgment, may be necessary to enable the City Government to decide as to the expediency of accepting the proposition of the proprietors of Spot Pond, to sell said Pond to the City, for the distribution of its water therein."

This order was adopted by the Board of Aldermen, June 9th, and on the 12th of the same month, the Committee held their first meeting. After a full and free discussion of the subjects referred to them, the Committee unanimously adopted, as the basis of future action, the subjoined resolutions, viz:—

"*Resolved*, That, to enable the Committee to make a clear and satisfactory report upon the various subjects referred to them for consideration, it is expedient to act upon the following propositions.

1st. How much water is it desirable to introduce into the City, for distribution, from a foreign source?

2nd. To ascertain the daily flow of water, in gallons, at the outlets of Spot and Long Ponds, and over the dam of Charles River at Watertown, during the months of July, August and September next.

3rd. How much will be the probable cost of introducing the waters of Spot Pond, Long Pond, and Charles River, respectively, into the City, and delivering the same into suitable reservoirs for distribution?

Resolved, That, for the purposes of the foregoing resolution, it is expedient to appoint two impartial Engineers from abroad, to carry the same into effect, and report thereupon."

Immediately upon the passage of these resolutions, measures were taken by the Committee, to obtain competent men from abroad, to act as Commissioners and Engineers in carrying forward the proposed investigations; and they succeeded in securing the services of John B. Jervis, Esq., Chief Engineer of the Croton Waterworks, New York, and Professor Walter R. Johnson, of Philadelphia. These gentlemen entered upon their duties in the latter part of June, and have continued them to the present time.

The first proposition which came before the Committee, and the principal one upon which their action was based, was that of the proprietors of Spot Pond, to sell said Pond to the City for the sum of sixty thousand dollars ($60,000) and surrender a charter, held by them, authorising the introduction of the waters of the same into the City for distribution.

The Committee did not feel competent, with the information then in their possession, to decide upon a question of so much importance; and accordingly, after obtaining the necessary powers, they instituted an examination in order to determine, as nearly as possible, the comparative cost of introducing the waters of said Spot Pond, of Long Pond, and of Charles River, so that a satisfactory conclusion upon the whole subject might be arrived at.

The next topic referred, was the petition of Samuel T. Armstrong and others, to have the City subscribe for one-third part of the stock of the Spot Pond Corporation. The Committee, to come at a proper conclusion in respect to this proposition, found the same examination necessary as in the case already mentioned. They thought it expedient, therefore, to delay its consideration until the results of the investigation should be known. The Commissioners were clothed with full powers to make such examinations as they might deem necessary to enable them to make a satisfactory and reliable report; and they were requested, after the termination of their labors, to express, in the conclusion of their report, an opinion as to the most eligible source to which the City could resort for a full supply of pure and wholesome water.

The Commissioners have concluded their labors, and the results have been submitted in a report to your Committee. In view of the facts ascertained by the investigations of the Commissioners, the Committee are induced, after a full consideration of the subject, to recommend that the City Government reject the proposition of the proprietors of Spot Pond, to sell said pond to the City.

These facts are substantially as follows:—

1st. That Spot Pond does not now, and will not hereafter—by any plan which can be adopted—furnish a sufficient daily supply of water for the present population of Boston.

2nd. That the cost of introducing into, and distributing throughout the City, the 1,500,000 gallons—the average daily supply of water from Spot Pond—is so great, compared with that of introducing 7,500,000 gallons, per day, from Long Pond—that the latter is considered the more desirable source.

The Committee do not now propose, to discuss these points—but they would refer the Council to the able report of the Commissioners, for the arguments and reasons sustaining the conclusions at which they have arrived.

In relation to the petition of Samuel T. Armstrong and others, that the City will subscribe for one-third part of the stock of the Spot Pond Corporation, the Committee urge the same reasons against complying therewith, which induce them to recommend the rejection of the proposition to purchase said Pond—with this additional reason, viz.:—That it is inexpedient, in their opinion, for the City to engage in any enterprise as a partner in a joint stock company. And especially in an undertaking of so much importance, as that of furnishing a supply of pure water to its citizens, it should, in its own corporate capacity, accomplish the work.

In justice to their own feelings, the Committee cannot close this report without bearing testimony to the competent manner in which the Commissioners, Messrs. Jervis and Johnson, have discharged the arduous duties assigned to them.

The Committee, in conclusion, recommend the adoption of the resolutions hereto annexed.

WILLIAM POPE,
SAMUEL S. PERKINS,
LORING NORCROSS,
JAMES WHITING,
THOMAS B. CURTIS,
JOSEPH BRADLEE,
JAMES HAYWARD.

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to accept the proposition of the proprietors of Spot Pond, to sell said pond to the City, for the distribution of its waters therein.

Resolved, That it is inexpedient to comply with the proposition of Samuel T. Armstrong and others, that the City subscribe to one-third part of the stock of the Spot Pond Corporation.