

The opponents of the Water Act have at length defined their position, by the issue of an Address, signed by a committee of sixteen. This committee is said to have been appointed at "a numerous meeting of citizens friendly to the object of introducing water into the city" (!) When or where this "numerous meeting" was held, we are not informed.

The opponents of the Water Act include several distinct parties, who have nothing in common except the wish to defeat that act. There is, first, the Jamaica Pond Aqueduct Company; second, the embryo Spot Pond Company; third, the friends of Charles River; fourth, the Middlesex Canal Company; fifth, the opponents of any water from any where.

But the ground taken in the address of the sixteen narrows down the controversy almost to a single point. Finding it in vain to stem the general current in favor of water, they admit that water is wanted and that water must be had. They admit "that the citizens are right in *insisting* upon having water from a foreign source, and that it should come from Long Pond rather than not come at all." They even go further, and admit that there are only three sources of supply, and three projects for bringing in the water, as to which there is still any open question. These sources of supply are Long Pond, Charles River, and Spot Pond; and the projects for bringing in the water are, an aqueduct from Long Pond; hydraulic work for pumping up the water of Charles River—both these at the expense of the city; or an aqueduct from Spot Pond, to be built by a private corporation. But the Water Act gives us a choice between Long Pond and Charles River; so that in asking us to vote against that act, the committee of sixteen, in fact, ask us to go for a private corporation and Spot Pond. How could Mr. Wilkins, the advocate of Charles River, sign an address, which substantially asks the voters to abandon Charles River, and go for Spot Pond? How could ex-Mayor Eliot sign an address in favor of a private corporation, when he has so often and so conclusively proved, in his water reports, that the supply of the city with water is a business which ought never to be trusted to a private corporation? How could any of the sixteen sign the report, when the vote of the citizens, which they allow to be conclusive in favor of introducing water from a foreign source, is equally conclusive in favor of introducing it, not by a private corporation, but by the city itself?

But since the opponents of the Water Act have fallen back on Spot Pond and a private corporation as the ground on which they choose to fight the decisive battle, that is the ground on which we are willing to meet them.

They pretend, in the first place, that the waters of Spot Pond are purer than those of Long Pond. Now there is not a chemist in the United States who will hazard his reputation (unless, indeed, he be paid very roundly for it) by giving a certificate that there is any such difference in purity between Spot Pond and Long Pond, as to be a matter of the slightest importance. Dr. Jackson expressly states "that the foreign matters in the Long Pond water, are in such small proportions as in no way to impair its healthfulness as a drink, nor will they prove injurious in washing clothing."

Next, they allege that Spot Pond can be brought in much cheaper than Long Pond. Spot Pond, in a dry year, produces by actual measurement, less than a million and a half of gallons daily; Long Pond will produce seven millions of gallons, or nearly four times as much. It is not very surprising, then, that Spot Pond can be brought in cheaper. But if the deficiency of Spot Pond be supplied by pumping up the balance from Mystic Pond, the expense of seven millions of gallons daily will be much greater, procured in that way, than if brought from Long Pond. This is shown conclusively in the Reports of the water commissioners for 1837 and 1838.

But the truth is, nobody knows what the cost would be of bringing in even the waters of Spot Pond alone. The committee make some handle of a statement of Cyrus Alger, Esq. that he "should be willing to contract to bring in the water of Spot Pond by iron pipe—*using the existing bridges*—and deliver it in a reservoir at South Boston, for \$500,000." This was a very safe offer for Mr. Alger, because he knew, as every body knows, that he could not be allowed to use the existing bridges. The navigation of Charles River must be kept open; and how Spot Pond is to be conveyed across it, is a question never yet determined. Long Pond has the great advantage of not being obliged to cross any such river. To carry the Croton water across Harlem River will cost upwards of a million of dollars; and nobody can say, at present, what the cost would be of getting Spot Pond across Charles River. Even as it is, the estimate of Mr. Alger includes only the contents of Spot Pond. To make up the quantity by pumping from Mystic Pond, to seven millions of gallons, would raise the cost even by Mr. Alger's estimate, above that of the Long Pond aqueduct.

This brings us to the grand decisive point. The committee of sixteen maintain that Spot Pond and Jamaica Pond combined, will yield two millions and a half gallons daily, and that is an ample supply for Boston for twenty years to come!

Now there is no proof whatever that these two Ponds will yield that amount. Jamaica Pond, at present, yields 200,000 gallons daily, and Spot Pond, as we have stated, by actual measurement, afforded from March 4, 1837, to March 1838, including the whole water which it received and discharged in the time, a daily average of less than a million and a half of gallons; making from the two ponds a daily supply of only 1,700,000 gallons. But the committee propose to increase the discharge from Spot Pond to two millions of gallons by raising the dam. Will raising the dam increase the annual quantity of water which runs into the pond? If so, the committee had better build a dam on Beacon Hill, at once, and save the expense of the aqueduct altogether. They propose, also, to increase the quantity from Jamaica Pond from 200,000 to 500,000 gallons, by similar means. That, however, would depend on the good pleasure of the aqueduct company, and who knows what they would do about it?

But in all this calculation, the committee have forgotten that we must have a source, not only capable of producing a certain *average* supply, but capable of producing the largest daily supply, at the very driest time. In those months when the ponds are lowest, the demand for water is greatest; in the very driest time, the most water will be needed. We cannot wait a week or a month in midsummer for Spot Pond to fill up; and, according to the testimony of Mr. Brimmer and others, in the very driest seasons there is no natural discharge from Spot Pond.

But even if Spot and Jamaica Ponds could produce the whole quantity which the committee allege, that quantity would be totally inadequate to the immediate wants of the inhabitants of Boston, and much more so to their wants twenty, or even ten years hence. This subject is placed in a very clear light, in the able pamphlet of Nathan Hale, Esq., just published. It appears from that pamphlet, (p. 19) that the supply to the city of Philadelphia alone, not including the suburbs, in the months of July, August,

and September, amounts to a daily average of upwards of five millions of gallons. In the cold months of January, February, and March, the average daily supply is only about half as great. The average daily supply for the whole year is about four millions of gallons.

Now the city of Boston, in population and wealth, is superior to the city of Philadelphia, without the suburbs; and not at all inferior to it in occasions for the use of water. Let us recollect, too, that the quantity to be provided is not an average quantity, but the greatest quantity ever wanted. Now, can it be pretended that Spot and Jamaica Ponds can supply our present wants; or looking forward even for ten years, that Long Pond will produce any too much?

We shall not dwell upon the inconveniences felt most severely in London, and in every city where the experiment has been tried, of putting the supply of water into the hands of private companies. This system inevitably degenerates into a monopoly, which leaves the citizens at the mercy of a company, whose interest and object it is to keep up the price of water so as to afford them the largest possible profit. In case of such a company, the citizens are taxed at the discretion of a corporation, to pay the cost of the aqueduct, with profits on capital and a premium for the risk of the investment. Apart from all other considerations, it is absolutely cheaper to bring in the water at the public expense, because then the citizens are sure to get it at cost.

Taking all these things into view, can any sincere friend of water hesitate a moment between the Water Act, and the committee's substitute for it? H.