

THE MUNICIPAL WATER PLANT.

In view of the discussion of municipal ownership of water works and electric light plants it might be interesting at this time to note the experience of the people of Gouverneur in its municipal water plant.

The first water works system was built in Gouverneur in the 'Sixties, and was owned and controlled by a private company. Some of the progressive and enterprising citizens who were financially able purchased stock and others agreed to contribute to the maintenance by agreeing to take water for domestic purposes. A pump was installed in a building located on one of the islands at the Main street bridge. In addition to the revenue received from the people a charge was made for each hydrant and the money was raised to pay for the same by direct taxation.

As Gouverneur increased in population the demand for water service was such that it could not be met by the private company. A foreign corporation offered to build a plant suitable to meet the demands of the village, if it were given a franchise. They were to charge the consumer on a meter basis a fixed price for each thousand gallons used, and the village was to pay a fixed price annually for each hydrant. Representatives of the company allowed that this plan would be a great saving to the tax payers and it would not be necessary to issue any bonds, or for the village to assume any indebtedness. The proposition was supported by some who were ready to believe that it would be an awful calamity to run in debt to the extent of \$60,000 to build a water system. The board of trustees made a study of the plans with the assistance of a competent engineer with the result that the Moffett, Hodgkin & Clark proposition was turned down, and the taxpayers voted the amount asked for to build a municipal water system.

Now look at the financial result. In 1890, \$60,000 in bonds were issued. They became due in 1910. During the twenty years extensions were made to the system and \$15,000 was placed in a sinking fund. This amount was paid on the indebtedness and a new issue of serial bonds were sold, \$2,000 to be paid each year on the principal. Thirty thousand dollars of this has already been paid, extensions have been made to the system, two new stand pipes have been erected, two one-hundred horse-power modern pumps, one with a direct electric motor, another with a gas engine, have recently been installed. Seven or eight years more will find the bonds paid, and Gouverneur will then own its water system free from any indebtedness.

During this term of years the water commissioners have been obliged to pay a good price for pumping the water, and the consumers have received as low a rate for service as is charged anywhere in this section of the state and have had all the water they desired to use in their homes, for their lawns and gardens. The village of Gouverneur has not paid one penny by direct taxation to retire the bonds which were issued by the village. These are facts, and this is history.

What of the future? If the village pumps the water at a large saving and with the entire system which at a low valuation is worth \$200,000, paid for, the rate to local consumers can be reduced at least one-half, and the water commissioners would then accumulate out of such revenues a sufficient fund which could be used at any time in a case of emergency.