

THE CITY'S WATER SUPPLY.

The Commission on Water Supply for Middletown is now reporting to the City Council. The report is a long one, and it is not possible to give a full account of it here. It is, however, a most interesting one, and it is well worth reading.

The taxpayers of Middletown will meet at the Casino in special appropriation meeting, to-morrow evening, to vote on the question of authorizing the issue of \$75,000 of bonds for the construction of an additional or storage reservoir, to so increase the city's water supply as to make it sufficient for all present and prospective needs of the city.

The Water Commissioners will lay before the citizens at the meeting all information in their possession, which will enable the taxpayers to vote intelligently upon the proposition, but it may be well for us to give our readers, in advance of the meeting, such facts as we have been able to gather concerning the present condition of the water works and the reasons, which in the judgment of the Commissioners make it necessary to seek new sources of supply.

The Commissioners found when they attempted to start the pumps at the Shawangunk Kill, during the spring freshets in that stream, that the pipe leading from the pumps to the lake was in such bad condition that no water reached the lake and an examination of the pipe showed that it was in shockingly bad condition. This pipe, it will be remembered, was of wood and it was laid sixteen years ago. It has rotted in many places and is not worth repairing, and if the Shawangunk Kill is to be depended upon as a source of water supply it will be necessary to relay the entire length of pipe, and if it is relaid it should be with iron pipe. This would cost not less than \$40,000.

Mr. Isaac H. Clements, one of the Commissioners, said, this morning, in conversation on the subject, that, in his judgment the Shawangunk Kill extension was a most lamentable failure. Under the conditions imposed by the courts, when the injunction preventing the Water Commissioners from diverting the waters of the Kill, was dissolved, and after Middletown had paid the damages awarded the mill owners for the diversion of the waters of the stream, all that we got was the right to pump water when the stream was high. In other words, we could pump when water was plenty and Monbegan Lake was full, but could not take a drop in times of drought, when we really needed water to keep the lake full. Under these conditions, Mr. Clements said that it seemed to him the part of wisdom not to spend any more money on the Shawangunk Kill extension, but to count it as a bad investment, a most costly mistake, and abandoning it to seek elsewhere a source of supply that will increase that of Monbegan Lake, which is not, by any means, adequate to meeting the ever-growing needs of the city, for although as a result of the recent heavy rains, it is now very nearly full, the consumption of water is so great that it would be drawn down very rapidly should a dry spell come on.

The source of supply of which the Water

The source of supply of which the Water Commissioners propose to avail themselves, should the taxpayers of the city give their assent, is a water shed of about 500 acres in extent (the same area which now empties into Monhagan Lake) and which lies, as the crow flies, about a mile west of the present reservoir.

The proposed reservoir would take in part of what is known as the "Carey Farm" and part of adjacent properties. It would lie 58 feet above the present reservoir and although, in an air line, but a mile away, it would, owing to the topography of the country, take 1 1/2 miles of pipe to connect the two reservoirs. The new reservoir, according to the plans of the engineers, would have a capacity of 350,000,000 gallons, as against the present reservoir's capacity of 250,000,000 gallons. The waters which would be emptied into the proposed reservoir now find an outlet through the town of Wawayanda into what is commonly called the Millsburgh creek.

In order to construct the new reservoir two dams would be necessary, one which the Commissioners call the Carey dam, being 200 feet long and 11 feet high, the other which they call the Mapes dam, being 750 feet in length and 12 feet high.

The estimate of \$75,000 includes not only the cost of the land which would have to be taken for the proposed reservoir, and the cost of constructing the dams, but also the expense of removing the surface soil from the area to be flooded, which will make it certain that the water would be pure and clean and free from vegetation and other contamination.

There is no doubt that Middletown needs other sources of water supply and the judgment of the Commissioners, who have been at no little trouble and expense to investigate the subject in all its bearings and aspects, is that the proposed storage reservoir affords the best, cheapest, most efficient and most permanent solution of the problem, for it will assure to Middletown a water supply equal to all its needs for years to come.

The taxpayers run no risk of imposing burdens on themselves if they should authorize the issue of the additional bonds, for Middletown's water works have been more than self-sustaining for many years, even although the annual interest charge on account of the bonded indebtedness was very heavy on account of the high rate of interest.

The total indebtedness of the city on account of the water works is now \$136,000, and the annual interest charge is \$4,940. In July of last year, the last of the high rate bonds were refunded and the amount in the sinking fund was applied to the redemption of the debt. The effect of this payment was to reduce the bonded debt from \$153,000 to \$126,000. Of this sum \$100,000 bears interest at the rate of 3 1/2 per cent. and \$26,000 at 4 per cent.

During the past few years the water works have not only been self-supporting, but have earned an income sufficient to supply the Commissioners with funds for the extension of the mains, for making needed repairs, and for replacing very considerable sections of the old cement pipe with substantial iron pipe. The reduction in the interest charge, effected by the refunding of the bonds in July last, amounts to \$3,000, — considerably more than the interest on the proposed issue of bonds at 3, or even 3 1/2, per cent., so that if everything should remain as it now is, there would be no possibility of the taxpayers being called on to make good any deficiency. It is the fact, however, that the consumption of water is steadily on the increase, over 100 families having been granted permits for its use during the past year, and this steady increase in consumption means, of course, a corresponding increase in the revenues of the water board.

Middletown must have an abundant water supply. It must have enough not only for all present but also for all future needs. It should have such an abundant supply as to be able to furnish water at even less than nominal rates to any and every manufacturing establishment which its business may need it, no matter whether in small or large quantities.

The Water Commissioners have no doubt investigated this matter in all its bearings and they assert most emphatically that in their judgment the proposed storage reservoir is the best solution of the problem.