

THE PETITIONERS' STATEMENT
IN FAVOR OF
THE KINGSTON WATER BILL.

(HOUSE BILL No. 271.)

THE undersigned, members of the committee chosen by the citizens of the town of Kingston, at a town meeting duly called to petition the Legislature for a bill authorizing the town to erect a system of water works, feeling that the statements made in an *anonymous circular*, entitled "The Kingston Water Bill: Reasons Why It Should Not Become A Law," are in the main erroneous and calculated to convey a wrong impression, respectfully invite your attention to the following statement:

The town has a population of about 1500, of which number about 1200 (estimated) dwell in the village where it is proposed to establish the water works. While there is an abundance of pure water in this section, yet it is not now available for use either for fire or domestic purposes. Over a large portion of this territory it is necessary to dig to a depth of eighty feet to reach water through wells. 283 tenements and 109 stables are on the line of the proposed works, and of this number of tenements (283) not more than five are now vacant, and in our opinion 225 of them will take water within two years from the establishment of the works at an average rate of \$12 per tenement. As above said, three-fourths of the population dwell in the water district, and the citizens outside do not oppose, but *favor* the proposed works, believing their property will be increased in value by its introduction.

The *anonymous circular* states that one hundred and thirty-five voters have signed a remonstrance; if so, we believe a large number of them did so by reason of misrepresentations made to them; for instance, that the expense would be \$100,000, and many other statements of this kind, when as a matter of fact a reputable company will furnish bonds to erect the necessary works for \$40,000.

Regarding the expense, we believe the only statement in said *anonymous circular* which is founded upon fact or entitled to consideration is that which says the bill authorizes an expenditure of \$50,000, and the issuing of bonds bearing interest at six per cent.

Assuming that the outside limit of \$50,000 expended (as above stated the works can be built for \$40,000) for the first year, there would be required for interest at four per cent.

(an offer to take the bonds at that rate has already been made by a savings bank), \$2,000 00
For contribution to Sinking Fund, 1,650 00

And we have a total expense of \$3,650 00

This sum would diminish yearly by reason of the principal being yearly decreased through contributions to Sinking Fund. There will be no expense for maintenance, the source of supply being a mill privilege, with mills thereon, which will yield a revenue sufficient to operate the water works, and we believe the works will be self-sustaining in less than five years, while the town will have the advantage and security of a water supply for fire purposes. (The plan being to erect forty hydrants for use of the town, capable of throwing water to an elevation of 113 feet from the highest point in the territory, and 187 feet from the lowest point). To-day the town is utterly destitute of any means for the extinguishment of fires, having no engines because there is no water accessible. This fact alone, in our opinion, warrants the granting of the bill petitioned for.

The *anonymous* circular would lead one to infer that "The Kingston Aqueduct Association," already furnished, and was ready to furnish, water to all who desired, and at rates unparalleled for cheapness. As a matter of fact this Association can only supply fifty-six families (which number are now supplied, and a large proportion of whom are petitioners). The water is supplied through a lead pipe one and one-fourth inches in diameter, and in no house can be carried above the cellar, it being necessary to pump it therefrom. Furthermore, the rights of this Association are all secured by the bill.* The *anonymous* circular says: "More than enough voters remonstrate to defeat the measure at a town meeting." If that is so we are willing to abide the result, and only ask the Legislature for an opportunity to bring the matter before a town meeting.

The *anonymous* circular tells only a portion of the facts regarding the town meetings in the past. At the meeting held Jan. 31, 1885, "to see what action the town will take to supply the inhabitants with water for fire, domestic and other purposes," after a discussion of two hours' duration, by a vote of one hundred and twenty in favor, and twenty-seven opposed, your committee were appointed to petition for the legislation now under consideration (the town meeting being the largest ever held in Kingston). Later, at the annual meeting held Mar. 30, 1885, it having been rumored that the Committee on Water Supply were to report against the petition without any preparatory work being done by the petitioners, a vote was taken (not "after the remonstrants had departed," as stated in the *anonymous* circular, but in the very midst of the meeting), resulting in one hundred and nineteen votes in favor, and fifty-eight opposed to the legislation petitioned for (more than the necessary two-thirds vote thus being obtained). The town has a valuation of \$2,010.259, and a tax rate of \$4.40 per \$1000, the wildest estimate for the first year, namely, an increase of twenty-five per cent in the tax rate would give only \$5.50 per \$1000, which we submit is not high nor burdensome, and we believe the bill should be granted this

* See Section 9, House Doc. 271.

year, because if adopted by the citizens, unusual facilities are now offered of erecting the works at a low cost, *e. g.*, low rate of money (4 per cent), cheapness of iron and labor.

Regarding the question of sewerage, while the sandy soil of the locality leads us to think that no system of sewerage will be necessary at present, should it become desirable to adopt a system, no town in Massachusetts is more favorably situated, having four rivers, none of which are now or ever can be a source of water supply, running across the district and emptying into Plymouth Harbor.

And finally we desire this bill to pass, because we believe a system of water works will operate to increase the value of property in the town, will possibly tempt capital to locate in our midst and will in every way promote our material prosperity. To-day new residents shun us by reason of the scarcity of water; our property is unprotected from fire, and we cannot compete with other towns, whose other natural advantages are inferior to ours.

All we ask is an opportunity to vote upon the question of a water supply for Kingston in open town meeting.

Two hundred and five voters of Kingston this day petition the Honorable Senate to reconsider the vote of Thursday, April 30, referring House Bill No. 271 to the next Legislature.

H. K. KEITH,
GREEN EVANS,
LEANDER COLE,
STEPHEN HOLMES,
JAMES L. HALL,

} *Committee chosen by Town to
petition Legislature for a system
of Water works.*

KINGSTON, May 4, 1885.