

GAS WORKS TO BE SOLD PUBLIC AUCTION ON WEDNESDAY

First Sale of Kind In New Zealand - History of Enterprise In Tauranga

The Tauranga Gas Co., Ltd's plant and equipment at Grey Street will be sold by public auction on Wednesday. The auctioneer (Mr R. Cobbe) states that this is the first gas works in New Zealand to be sold by auction.

The works closed down Monday; August 10, 1942. As a result of a meeting of shareholders and creditors of the Tauranga Gas Co., Ltd., on Tuesday evening, April 21, 1942, it was decided in view of the financial position of the company, to proceed to voluntary liquidation.

On May 13, last year, 168 of the 280 consumers of gas in the Borough sent a petition to the Tauranga Borough Council asking the council to endeavour to keep the works functioning. As a result the council decided on the recommendation of the Finance Committee to send a deputation to Wellington to try and obtain Government assistance. The main object of the petition was to keep the gas works going until equipment was obtained to replace the equipment used by gas consumers.

A decision to make an offer of £ 1000 for the gas works and to keep it in operation until such time as it was possible for the gas consumers to change over to electricity was made by the Borough Council at a meeting on Wednesday, June, 10, when a deputation representing the professional and business users of gas waited on the council. The deputation stressed the seriousness of the position with which they would be faced if the gas works closed down. Mr D. Ivory, a member, of the deputation, stated that when the gas works was going into liquidation about 12 years before, a few businessmen got together and managed to keep the works functioning. Mr F. N. Christian, another member of the deputation, said that the gas works would be made to pay if run by the' Borough Council.

A hitch occurred in connection with the proposal of the council to purchase the assets of the company, the council's offer being turned down. It was decided by the council at a special meeting held on Friday, June 19, that it could not increase its offer to £1300 the sum asked for by the Public Trustee.

Early in 1908, numerous proposals for lighting the borough were considered by the Tauranga Borough Council before it was finally decided to permit Messrs Keene and Reid to erect a gas works.

When the council held a special meeting- on Monday, January 6, 1908, the proposals were received. The Radium Gas Engineering Co., Wellington, offered to light the borough by private enterprise or for the municipality. The Shepard Acetylene Gas Engineering Co., Wellington, offered a scheme for lighting the town with acetylene.

At a meeting held a week later the council further discussed the two proposals for lighting the borough with gas, received from Messrs Keene and Reid (Wellington), and Mr Suggate (Auckland). The meeting adjourned, until Tuesday evening when it was decided that the Council adopt the recommendation moved by Mr. H. Southey the night before. The recommendation was: That the offer of Messrs Keene and Reid for gas works etc., as amended be accepted by the council, subject to the contract being approved by the solicitor, as in terms of correspondence, provided and £ 50 be paid as deposit.

On Wednesday, September 23, Messrs Keene and Reid advised the Borough Council that they had accepted the tender of Gibbons Bros., Dudley, England, for the supply of equipment for the gas works and mains complete for Tauranga.

The works were opened at 3 p.m., on Tuesday, August 17, 1909, when the late Rev. Canon Jordan (then mayor of Tauranga) turned on the permanent supply of gas to the town.

In spite of many vicissitudes the company flourished and before the works were bought by the Tauranga Gas Co. Ltd., in 1927, the company was run by the Keene family. The new company which started off with a capital of £ 4000 in £1 shares, owned the works until it went into liquidation on Tuesday, April 21, 1942.

(Searchable PDF version prepared by David Hyde - pseudonym 'David de la Hyde')

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 New Zealand Licence (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 NZ).

