

PROGRESSIVE TAURANGA, HYDRO-ELECTRIC INSTALLATION

Lights Switched on in Streets by Ex-Mayor.

In spite of the rain on Saturday evening there was a large gathering of the public at the electricity substation, Wharf Street West, at seven o'clock for the purpose of witnessing the ceremony of switching on the electric light. Amongst those present were His, Worship the Mayor, Mr C.de E. Macmillan, Councillors Castaing, Green, Whiting, Messrs Shearman (town clerk), Mr H. R. Climie, B.Sc., A.M.I.C.E, A.M.I.E.E. (junior member of the firm of Messrs Climie and Son), Mr B. C. Robbins (President of the Chamber of Commerce), Mr J. C. Adams (Chamber of Commerce), and many other prominent citizens. A number of ladies were also included in the gathering.

The Mayor said that on account of the rain he had decided that the speeches in connection with the ceremony would be delivered from the balcony of the Star Hotel. He referred to the prominent part taken by Mr B; C. Bobbins, ex-Mayor, in connection with the electricity scheme and said but for his efforts Tauranga would still be without an electric light service. He, therefore, had great pleasure in calling upon Mr Robbins to turn on the electric light.—(Applause).

Mr Robbins, in response to the Mayor's invitation, dexterously handled three of the switches in the substation and set the numerous street lights throughout the Borough in operation, amidst ringing cheers from the assemblage.

Wending their way up the slippery road from the sub-station the gathering moved off to the triangle opposite the Star Hotel. Hundreds of others were astir in the streets to show their interest and appreciation in the latest enterprise of the Municipality, and in less than ten minutes a crowd of many hundreds were congregated in the vicinity of "The Star."

A great burst of cheering greeted the Mayor as he stepped on to the eastern balcony of the hotel. Mr Macmillan said the function was in no sense a celebration in connection with the introduction of the electricity service into Tauranga. The Council intended to hold a bigger function, and had invited the Parliamentary representative and members of outside local bodies to be

present. The Council, however, had decided, as they were embarking on a commercial enterprise, that as soon as everything was in order, in compliance with the requirements of the Public Works Department, that the electric light should be turned on and utilised. Accordingly he had asked Mr Robbins to perform that ceremony, as it was through the strenuous efforts of Mr Bobbins that electric light aid power had been installed in Tauranga.— (Cheers). The late Council had also given valuable assistance, and they now had a very good scheme. The Council had made the reticulation as complete as possible and with very little extra expenditure considerably more energy could be generated at the headworks. When they had Mr Herries, and he hoped other Parliamentaries, with them, they would have a gala day, which would include a visit to the headworks, and the public were invited to take part in those festivities. He could assure them that the Council did not intend to hide its light under a bushel. Mr Macmillan then called on Mr Robbins to say a few words.

The sponsor of the scheme, Mr Robbing, was received with great acclamation as he came forward, He regarded it as a graceful act and a compliment to him that the Mayor and Council had asked him to turn on the light that night and he desired to thank them. The Mayor had said it was due to his (the speaker's) energy that the electric light had been installed, but honour to whom honour was due was a right and proper thing. When the municipal improvement schemes were mooted the first person to suggest the establishment of electric light for the thorough was Cr Castaing. He (Mr Robbins) did not view the proposal with particular favour at that time. He was not sure that it would be a financial success, but after procuring information regarding electric light in other towns he decided to place the question before the ratepayers. Up to a fortnight before the date of the poll he would not have given sixpence for the chance of carrying the loan, but the information that was forthcoming was convincing and the poll was carried by a majority of nearly three to one. The original scheme only provided for reticulating the Borough from Brown Street to Fourth Avenue, but the whole Borough from the Spit to the southern boundary, and even beyond, was now reticulated.

Mr Robbins continuing congratulated Mr Climie on the success he had made of the scheme. ' A large number of people considered that the estimates had been exceeded but they had only been exceeded in one instance, and that was in the tunnelling work. Mr Climie, in making his estimate for the tunnelling, based it on the cost for such work in other parts of New Zealand, which ran from 11s to 16s per yard, and he placed his estimate on the higher,

figures. The rock, how-ever, at Omanawa resisted blasting to a marvellous extent, and the estimates were exceeded for that particular work

The late Council had also decided to increase the utility of the head works, which could now develop 900 horse power. They were getting to the fullest extent full value for the money expended and he was prepared to make a prophecy that the electricity department will prove one of the finest paying propositions in the municipality. They were making a good start with the scheme and already twenty-seven (houses and shops were connected with the system.

Many other towns had made a commencement with from one to twelve customers. One factory had already installed the electric power, and the owner was more than pleased—he was proud of the results. Messrs Sanford, Ltd., proprietors of the Fishcuring Works, had also entered into a contract for the purchase of a large motor for their works. He was absolutely positive and confident that if the electricity department were worked on commercial lines, with due regard to economy, that in the course of twelve months or two years there would be a very handsome revenue from it.

The results in the streets they could see for themselves, and he had come to the conclusion that it was a wise thing that Cr Castaing had conceived the idea of electric light for Tauranga. — (Cheers). Mr Robbins thanked the Mayor and Council for their invitation to turn on the light and expressed a hope that the works would go on and on exactly in the same ratio as he was confident that our town would increase in prosperity. He then called for three cheers for “Our Electric Light Works,” which were heartily and lustily given by the crowd.

Cr Castaing was called upon for a few words. He then thanked Mr Robbins for the tribute paid to his inspiration and said he always regarded the electric light scheme as a sound proposition for Tauranga. He strongly upheld the policy of improving the town, so that it should retain its position as the capital of the Bay of Plenty. He concluded by wishing the electric light scheme good luck.—(Applause).

The Mayor thanked the public for their attendance, and the gathering then dispersed, the general opinion being that the new enterprise was one that would make for the progress of the town in a marked degree.

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

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