

PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
SECOND JOINT CONVENTION
OF THE
Board of Aldermen and Common Council.

CHAMBER OF THE COMMON COUNCIL,
Friday, May 18th, 1877—8 o'clock P. M. }

The Joint Convention met, pursuant to adjournment.

PRESENT :

His Honor, the Mayor, John Caven, in the chair, and the following members :

Aldermen Newcomb (president), Chandler, Coburn, Foster, Krug, McGill, and Stratford—7. Absent—Aldermen Snyder, Wallace, and Wiles—3.

Councilmen Bagby, Brown, Bugbee, Byram, Case, Cochran, Dill, Izor, Layman, Marsee, Morse, McGinty, Reading, Steinhauer, Stoner, Thomas, Tucker, Walker, Wood, Wright, A. L., and Wright, W. G.—21. Absent—Councilmen Pouder, Reed, and Watts—3.

His Honor, the Mayor, then addressed the Joint Convention as follows :

To the Common Council and Board of Aldermen of the City of Indianapolis:

The creation of a Board of Aldermen will involve, to some extent, a change in our municipal legislation and modes of transacting business. In many matters, the separate concurrent action of the two bodies is necessary, and in certain others, they meet in joint convention. Section 9 provides that "In such city all the powers and duties of the Common Council, as defined in previous acts of the General Assembly of the State of Indiana, shall be exercised by the joint action of the Common Council and the Board of Aldermen." Section 17 of the Charter provides: "It shall be the duty of the Mayor to recommend to the Common Council such measures as he deems for the public good." Under the change in the law, it is perhaps proper such recommendations should be made to this Joint Convention."

A code of rules for our joint government will be necessary; and for this purpose, committees have been appointed. These rules should prescribe the ordaining clause to ordinances.

The law provides that the Joint Convention may adjourn from time to time, but, if adjourned without day, makes no provision for reassembling. Vacancies might occur in some of your appointments, requiring you to reassemble; and hence it might well to adjourn to meet on call of your presiding officer or of some number of your members.

The act of February 13 provides that a city having a voting population of over 16,000 may fund so much of its indebtedness as may be outstanding May 1, 1877, and authorizes bonds to be issued for that purpose; and makes it the duty of the Common Council to cause a full and complete statement to be made of the bonds and warrants outstanding at that date. Orders drawn before the 1st of May are outstanding to the amount of \$278,345.32. The City Treasurer is paying cash on orders drawn since May 1. It is but justice to our creditors that steps should be promptly taken to fund their outstanding orders, and that the necessary bonds be prepared and sold.

The act of February 13, 1877, prohibits the Council from making any appropriation of money, unless, at the time of making such appropriation, the money is in the treasury with which to pay the same.

We are permitted to make temporary loans, in anticipation of the revenue of the current year, and not exceeding two-thirds of the amount of the city tax duplicate for the preceding year, payable out of said revenues and within the current year. The total for 1876 was \$683,155 for general purposes; so that it will be legal to borrow, temporarily, two-thirds of this amount, or \$455,000. It will be necessary to borrow at least \$225,000; and if an arrange-

ment could be made to obtain what is wanted each month, it would be a great saving of interest. As soon as the finance committee can ascertain what amount may probably be wanted, it might be well to advertise for a loan, and thus test the temper of the market.

Our appraisement for 1875 was \$69,251,749, and the levy for general purposes \$1.19, making a total levy of \$824,096. Receipts from all sources except loans, \$749,209.51. Expenses for general purposes, \$722,665.54.

For 1876, the appraisement was \$60,456,201, and the levy for general purposes \$1.13, making a total of \$683,155, and the actual expense for general purposes was \$603,243.23.

Should the appraisement this year be as high as last (in round numbers \$60,000,000), and the highest levy allowed by law, 90-100, this would make a total of \$540,000. Allowing, however, for a somewhat reduced appraisement and delinquencies, we could not safely rely upon an income of more than \$500,000.

The Clerk's report will show the amounts of warrants drawn for the last year to be \$779,971.31. The following items therein are not chargeable to the general fund as expenses, viz.:

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|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| School fund | \$27,723 41 |
| Sinking fund. | 27,355 85 |
| Orders reissued..... | 14,190 93 |
| Home of Friendless Women..... | 1,337 65 |
| Temporary loan warrants..... | 95,000 00 |
| Percentage for 1875-6 | 11,100 24 |
| Total | <u>\$176,728 08</u> |

making the actual expense chargeable to general fund \$603,243.23.

From items of expenses last year, perhaps the following may be omitted this year:

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|---|--------------------|
| Interest on orders reissued | \$ 744 40 |
| Lighting and extinguishing gas lamps..... | 1,836 78 |
| Gas fixtures..... | 972 82 |
| Gravel roads..... | 4,375 00 |
| Levee..... | 10,154 75 |
| Refunding sewer assessments | 3,695 02 |
| Total | <u>\$21,778 77</u> |

All the remaining items of expense last year cost \$582,464.66, and must be provided for this year; and, to bring them within a \$500,000 income, would require a reduction of 14 17-100 per cent.

The interest on the funded debt last year was \$103,014.50. The interest will be increased by funding our floating debt of about \$278,345.32, say \$14.

000; and interest on temporary loans \$8,000; making a total interest account of \$125,000.

Gas and water cost, last year, \$108,432.73; and if they cost the same as last year, these three items—interest, gas and water—will cost \$233,432.73.

If the gas and water can not be reduced, and the reduction must come entirely off the other items, then we will have left \$266,567.27, to cover the same items which cost last year \$371,019.43, requiring a reduction on them of 28 16-100 per cent. from last year.

If the water and gas can be reduced with the other items, then we will have \$375,000, to meet what cost last year \$474,000, and will require a reduction of 23 per cent.

It will be seen that the reduction of 10 per cent., on which the Council has acted in fixing salaries and pay, will not be sufficient. As, however, we will have some income from other sources than taxation, it might be safe to reduce everything 20 per cent., and that we reconsider the salary ordinance, and begin at the beginning, and make this reduction all along the line. It may not be very agreeable to some; but it is not a matter of taste, but of business and financial necessity.

Spending an income of \$500,000 per year would make a monthly average of \$41,666. We had in the treasury May 15th, \$278,248.30; so that the money on hand should be sufficient for six months.

The average number of policemen to the population in twenty-seven of the largest cities in the United States is one to 757.

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|---|-------|
| New York has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 410 |
| Philadelphia has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 600 |
| Chicago has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 669 |
| Cincinnati has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 909 |
| St. Louis has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 772 |
| San Francisco has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 1,352 |
| Hartford has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 1,111 |
| Worcester, Mass., has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 1,500 |
| Estimating our population at 100,000, we have 1 policeman to..... | 1,666 |
| Estimating our population at 85,000 we have 1 policeman to..... | 1,416 |
| London has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 389 |
| Paris has 1 policeman to a population of..... | 287 |

In proportion to territory—

- New York has 64 policemen to the square mile.
- Philadelphia has 20 policemen to the square mile.
- Chicago has 14 policemen to the square mile.
- Brooklyn has 30 policemen to the square mile.
- St. Louis has 19 policemen to the square mile.
- Indianapolis has 5 policemen to the square mile.

and our policemen have to watch, on an average, a street front of ten miles in length.

The city has continuing contracts for some years, requiring the payment of large sums. The city government is the creature of the legislature; and that power may amend or change our charter. Should that body, in the exercise of that superior power, make it impossible for the city to comply with its contracts, so limiting the income it may collect, that after paying other expenses usual and indispensably necessary for maintaining a city government, the city would be without means to wholly or partially comply with such contracts, and such second party insist upon performance, what then would the courts hold? The resources of the city, to meet her liabilities, are raised by taxation. The city is a creature of the legislature. The legislature can limit the amount to be raised, and have. The city, then, being such creature, and the legislature having such power, and having exercised it, where do the consequences fall? Is a party contracting with the city bound by such fact, and is it a part of the legal effect of the contract, when entered into, that such second party holds his contract subject to the contingency of a change in the charter by the legislature? Would it be held that the legislature, having made a change in the powers of such city, impairing or destroying her ability by legal process to comply with such contract, must the other contracting party accept the consequences of an impaired or destroyed contract; or would it be held that such contract was a vested right, protected by the constitution, and beyond the power of the legislature to impair, and hold the law limiting taxation to be so far invalid, and compel the levy of an additional tax, or render judgments against the city, and sell our property?

These questions may, and perhaps must, arise.

To bring our expenses within our income will require a reduction all along the line of 20 per cent., as compared with last year. From this conclusion there is no escape. Our interest can not be decreased below a sum certain. Our gas and water are furnished by contract, and absorb large sums, and it is essential they should share in the reduction; for it will be found, after reducing salaries and the pay of firemen and policemen, and reducing the fire, police, and street-cleaning departments to the lowest points of an appearance of efficiency, we will not yet be within our income.

The obligations of the city should be held by every official, and, indeed, by every citizen, as high as his own personal credit. But when the higher power which makes and unmakes us has rendered it impossible, we are compelled to meet the question, not as optional, but as a necessity. It may be that parties who have contracted with the city, realizing the difficulties, would am-

icably agree upon such modification of their contracts as we can comply with.

Our police force has been shown to be only about one-half the average of the large cities of the country, in proportion to population, and from one-twelfth to one-fourth in proportion to territory. To reduce the fire department below the point of efficiency, leaving the city to the hazard of a great conflagration, is, to say the least, a very doubtful economy.

Yet the question must be met—expenses must be reduced; and the question is, Where and what? It will require labor and thought; yet the fact exists all the time—it simply must be done. We must live within our income; and that is greatly reduced.

The law limiting the increase of permanent city debt is most salutary. We have read of the enormous debts of other cities, and wonder the alarm was not sounded long ago. The matter is of such great importance that it should not be left to the control of the legislature, but an amendment to the constitution should be made, prohibiting cities from creating debts beyond some very moderate amount, and easily borne.

I would recommend that the Council hold its sessions one week and the Board the other. It will lighten the labors of the Clerk, perhaps saving a deputy, and reducing the expenses of printing and lights, and our business be as well done as if we both held weekly meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN CAVEN,

Mayor.

On motion of Alderman Stratford, the Mayor's Address was received, and ordered to be printed in the Proceedings of the Second Joint Convention.

Councilman A. L. Wright offered the following motion, which was adopted :

Moved, That the record of the proceedings of the First Joint Convention of the Board of Aldermen and Common Council, held May 11, 1877, be so corrected as to show the election of the Fire Board and Board of Police.

The omission indicated by preceding motion is as follows :

For Board of Police—Councilman Brown nominated Councilman Joseph W. Bugbee; Councilmen Steinhauer nominated Councilman Marcus L. Brown; and Alderman Foster nominated Alderman William D. Wiles.

No further nominations being made, a ballot was then had; which resulted as follows: Councilman Bugbee received 32 votes, Councilman Brown received 31 votes, and Alderman Wiles received 31 votes.

Councilmen Joseph W. Bugbee and Marcus L. Brown and Alderman William D. Wiles having received all the votes cast, they were declared duly elected as the Board of Police for the ensuing year.

For Fire Board—Councilman Izor nominated Councilman John L. Case; Councilman Stoner nominated Alderman Robert S. Foster; and Councilman A. L. Wright nominated Councilman James T. Layman.

No further nominations being made, a ballot was then had; which resulted as follows: Councilman Case received 31 votes, Alderman Foster received 31 votes, and Councilman Layman received 31 votes.

Councilman John L. Case, Alderman Robert S. Foster, and Councilman James T. Layman having received all the votes cast, they were declared duly elected as the Fire Board for the ensuing year.

The Chair then announced that nominations for the offices of Market Master at East Market, Market Master at West Market, and Superintendent of City Hospital were in order.

Councilman Marsee moved to postpone the election of the Market Masters for two weeks from to-night.

Councilman Morse moved to lay Councilman Marsee's motion on the table; which motion was lost.

Councilman Marsee's motion was then adopted.

On motion of Councilman Walker, the election of Superintendent of City Hospital was postponed for two weeks from to-night.

On motion of Councilman Byram, it was ordered that when this Joint Convention adjourn, it adjourn to meet on Friday evening, June 1, 1877, at 8 o'clock.

On motion of Alderman McGill, the Second Joint Convention of the Board of Aldermen and Common Council then adjourned.

JOHN CAVEN, Mayor,
Chairman of Joint Convention.

Attest :

BENJ. C. WRIGHT, City Clerk.