

Vide "GEELONG ADVERTISER", 4th. May, 1901.

The Electric Light Supply.

A Successful Opening Ceremony.

Forty six years ago Geelong rejoiced at the advent of gas. Last night Geelong enthusiastically welcomed the appearance of electric light. The change of illuminating power from oil lamps to gas in the early days was a wonderful event, but with the marvellous inventions of a truly wonderful age, the old time wonders sank into oblivion. An electricity put to almost incredible uses by such men as Edison is rapidly becoming the marvel of the age.

Geelong owes the establishment of an electric lighting station almost wholly to a syndicate formed in February, 1896, by Messrs. Hendy Leary & Co. and J.A. Dawson for the express purpose of enabling Mr. Dawson to visit England and to form a Company to include Geelong and other towns. The latter proceeded to England, but various delays of an unavoidable nature occurred, among them the sending to Australia of an expert Engineer to report on the whole scheme. Finally the Electric Light & Traction Company of Australia Limited was formed, and early in 1899 arrangements were completed for the supply of electricity to Geelong.

An Order-in-Council was passed by the Government giving permission to the Company to supply electricity to the Town and Boroughs for a period of thirty years, and prior to the Councils interested giving permission to put down mains, etc. a commission was entrusted to Messrs. Hendy & Apter, Architects, to draw up plans and specifications for the erection of the station.

After considerable trouble and anxiety as to the best site for the station the present situation was chosen, and the Architects have erected a building which has generally been spoken of as up to date (anian?) and an ornament to the town.

The enterprise of the prime movers in the matter has been the means of bringing to the town, capital to the amount of £30,000 and electricians such as Mr. F.W. Clements, in the highest ranks of their profession. That gentleman, assisted by Mr. Dawson, made it his desire to supply a first class light to the town, and in that they have splendidly succeeded. A certain section of the community were very quick to say that the Company were slow in starting, but if, through rushing matters, any break down occurred, these people would be the first to cry out again.

As the result of careful testing and adjusting the machinery has been made to run very smoothly, and last evening the important function of inaugurating a permanent supply to the town was performed before a large and representative gathering of ladies and gentlemen. Most of the leading gentlemen of Geelong were present, and apologies were received for the absence of the Hons. T.C. Harwood, M.L.C., W. Gurr (Minister of Education), C.L. Andrews, J.F. Levien, and Sir John McIntyre M.L.A.

The majority of the guests came before the appointed hour to inspect the plant, and they were impressed with the massiveness and completeness of the whole generating system. The machinery etc. has been described already in these columns, but within the past week finishing touches have been put on. A fine railing, elegantly painted, has been placed around the switchboard, and the dynamos have been painted plus colour with yellow lines. Other parts of the have been coloured a light shade of blue, and everything is spotlessly clean.

Almost punctually at half past seven the Mayor Engineer, ascended the tiled platform of the switchboard, and the Mayoress, by a turn of the switch controlling the town supply, liberated the current, an arc lamp at the same time showing that the current had gone on its mission.

The appearance of the light was received with cheers, and Mayoresses Cairns (Newtown & Chilwell) and Bannister (Geelong West) then performed a similar function for their respective boroughs.

Mrs. Clements, wife of the General Manager of the Company, and Master Kelvin Dawson, switched on the current for the Villamanta Ward and East Geelong respectively. Mr. Dawson announced that the current was permanently available for Geelong, Geelong West and Newtown & Chilwell. The whole station was then thrown open for inspection, and the opportunity was largely availed of by the visitors. To dispense with the necessity of providing guides, directory cards were posted in conspicuous positions, and on every piece of machinery in the building was fixed a printed description of its use and power.

The engines were started by Mr. Hutchinson, the Engineer, and the dynamos were witnessed in working order. The ladies were provided with refreshments in the boiler room, which had been completely transformed by the use of flags, and Mr. F. Shepherd, the caterer, had a booth at which the gentlemen could meet for a social glass. The Management had arranged a short toast list, prior to which the Mayor thanked the Management for the enjoyable and instructive evening provided for the guests. The public were satisfied to see the Company in full swing, and they had come to the rescue of the Burgesses when schemes had been spoken of but not carried out. He complimented the Company on the expeditiousness shown in fixing up the plant and laying down the underground cables. The opening toast of His Majesty the King was loyally received. Mr. James Wighton submitted the "Parliament of Victoria". As far as he was personally concerned he could not see where the attractiveness of Parliamentary life came in. It was a good thing that all men did not think the same, and it was pleasing to see that Mr. Crouch, who though beaten at three former State elections had gained the honour of representing Corio.

Mr. Crouch thanked the Company for the hearty reception of the toast. It was a great pleasure for him to be present to respond for the first time in Geelong to the toast of the Commonwealth Parliament. In the course of a brief address Mr. Crouch said that the census figures proved that Geelong was not as slow as it had been termed. Geelong was one of the few towns that showed an increase of population. He concluded by saying that anything he could do to advance the interests of Geelong would be done with pleasure.

Mr. F.J. Leary proposed the toast of the Municipalities of Geelong, and in the course of his remarks he referred to his connection with the electric lighting movement since its inception in 1896.

Suitable responses were made by the Mayors of Geelong and the two boroughs, Mayor Cairns stating that as far as the Town Council was concerned the Company would receive every consideration and fair play.

The toast of the evening, "Success to the Company in Geelong" was proposed by Mr. A.J. Arnott, City Electrical Engineer of Melbourne. What he has seen that afternoon had assured him that Geelong had got a good plant. He could speak with authority having recently visited about sixty lighting stations in all parts of the world. The plant at Geelong was up to date and similar to those in England and Scotland, low tension and direct volts. As a matter of fact a similar plant was now being set up in Melbourne. Knowing Messrs. Clements and Dawson he could say that Geelong would be supplied as well as any place in the world. He was interested in Geelong because some years ago he reported to the Town Council on the advisability of having an electric light supply. If they had got the light then it would not be such as they had now.

The appearance of the light was received with cheers, and Mayoresses Cairns (Newtown & Chilwell) and Bannister (Geelong West) then performed a similar function for their respective boroughs.

Mrs. Clements, wife of the General Manager of the Company, and Master Kelvin Dawson, switched on the current for the Villamanta Ward and East Geelong respectively. Mr. Dawson announced that the current was permanently available for Geelong, Geelong West and Newtown & Chilwell. The whole station was then thrown open for inspection, and the opportunity was largely availed of by the visitors. To dispense with the necessity of providing guides, directory cards were posted in conspicuous positions, and on every piece of machinery in the building was fixed a printed description of its use and power.

The engines were started by Mr. Hutchinson, the Engineer, and the dynamos were witnessed in working order. The ladies were provided with refreshments in the boiler room, which had been completely transformed by the use of flags, and Mr. F. Shepherd, the caterer, had a booth at which the gentlemen could meet for a social glass. The Management had arranged a short toast list, prior to which the Mayor thanked the Management for the enjoyable and instructive evening provided for the guests. The public were satisfied to see the Company in full swing, and they had come to the rescue of the Burgesses when schemes had been spoken of but not carried out. He complimented the Company on the expeditiousness shown in fixing up the plant and laying down the underground cables. The opening toast of His Majesty the King was loyally received. Mr. James Wighton submitted the "Parliament of Victoria". As far as he was personally concerned he could not see where the attractiveness of Parliamentary life came in. It was a good thing that all men did not think the same, and it was pleasing to see that Mr. Crouch, who though beaten at three former State elections had gained the honour of representing Corio.

Mr. Crouch thanked the Company for the hearty reception of the toast. It was a great pleasure for him to be present to respond for the first time in Geelong to the toast of the Commonwealth Parliament. In the course of a brief address Mr. Crouch said that the census figures proved that Geelong was not as slow as it had been termed. Geelong was one of the few towns that showed an increase of population. He concluded by saying that anything he could do to advance the interests of Geelong would be done with pleasure.

Mr. F.J. Leary proposed the toast of the Municipalities of Geelong, and in the course of his remarks he referred to his connection with the electric lighting movement since its inception in 1896.

Suitable responses were made by the Mayors of Geelong and the two boroughs, Mayor Cairns stating that as far as the Town Council was concerned the Company would receive every consideration and fair play.

The toast of the evening, "Success to the Company in Geelong" was proposed by Mr. A.J. Arnott, City Electrical Engineer of Melbourne. What he has seen that afternoon had assured him that Geelong had got a good plant. He could speak with authority having recently visited about sixty lighting stations in all parts of the world. The plant at Geelong was up to date and similar to those in England and Scotland, low tension and direct volts. As a matter of fact a similar plant was now being set up in Melbourne. Knowing Messrs. Clements and Dawson he could say that Geelong would be supplied as well as any place in the world. He was interested in Geelong because some years ago he reported to the Town Council on the advisability of having an electric light supply. If they had got the light then it would not be such as they had now.