

22. *Mr. Hall.*] Could you favour us with the prices for the last ten years after looking up your own account sales?—I will try to let you have that information. There is another point I would like to refer to. The price of land has risen very much. Correspondingly rents of runs have risen, but I do not think that is a factor in the price of produce on those runs. I think the high price of land will be the ruin of individual farmers, but I do not think it makes the consumer give a penny more for anything. The prices are governed by outside factors.

JAMES WILLIAM TIMLIN, Accountant, City Electric Light Department, examined on oath. (No. 33.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What are you by occupation?—I am accountant of the Electric Power and Lighting Department of the Dunedin City Corporation. I have a statement from the Town Clerk relative to the price of gas. I will speak with regard to the electric-light supply. Price of gas per 1,000 cub. ft., net, Dunedin: 1876, 12s. 6d.; 1877, 10s.; 1884, 9s.; 1885, 8s.; 1887, 7s. 6d.; 1889, 6s. 3d.; 1907, 5s. 10d.; 1908, 5s.

2. There has been no change in the price of gas since 1908?—That is so: 5s. per thousand feet is the net price after the discount has been allowed.

3. *Mr. Veitch.*] Have the wages of the staff increased since then?—The Corporation pay a minimum wage of 8s. 6d. a day.

4. *The Chairman.*] What was the wage ten years ago?—I could not state.

5. Five years ago?—It would be 1s. per hour then.

6. Are there many men on that minimum rate of 8s. 6d. per day?—Not a great many in the Electric Power and Lighting Department.

7. Fifty per cent.?—No, not that.

8. Have you any statistics about the electric light?—I came into the office about 3.30 this afternoon, and the Town Clerk asked me to look up a few consumers' accounts to get the prices paid for electric light for residential purposes. I picked out four consumers in Musselburgh—that is, St. Kilda—and I found that their average worked out for electric light, plus meter-rent, to £2 10s. 6d. per annum—about 4s. 2d. per month.

9. What is the meter-rent?—At present it is 10d. per month. That is included in the cost to the consumer I have given. I also took four consumers in South Dunedin. These are all five- and six-roomed houses I am giving. I found that their average, plus meter-rent, was £2 15s. 9d. per annum, which runs out at about 4s. 5d. a month. I took three consumers in Maori Hill, and they gave an average of £2 16s. 1d. per annum, about 4s. 8d. a month. Four consumers in North-east Valley average £2 8s. 11d. per annum, about 4s. a month. I took five consumers in Ravensbourne and their average came out at £2 18s. per annum, about 4s. 10d. per month. I worked out the average of the five lots of suburban consumers, and it came out at £2 13s. 5d. per annum, or 4s. 6d. a month.

10. *Mr. Fairbairn.*] How many lights would they have burning?—A man using 160 candle-power, and using the whole of his lamps five hours a day for thirty days, would consume 6s. 4d. worth. That is running absolutely to the maximum and practically wasting light.

11. Have you statistics with regard to gas?—No. I could make a comparison with regard to kerosene.

12. *Mr. Veitch.*] What would be the cost of fitting a residence with electric light, compared with putting in gas?—We reckon the cost at about £1 a point.

13. *The Chairman.*] Does it not make a big difference whether the house is a new one or an old one?—There is not a great deal of difference.

14. What would gas cost to put in?—About the same. We call a fitting with two branches one point.

15. It costs really £1 a light to put electric light in?—Yes.

16. Have you an estimate of what it actually costs to put electric light into a five-roomed house?—About £10, and that would put a point in the kitchen for ironing. Many of these consumers whose averages I have given iron with the light as well. It works out that the cost for ironing comes to about $\frac{1}{3}$ d. About twelve months ago we sent out about a hundred circulars asking consumers how they viewed the cost of electric light as compared with kerosene. We got back thirty replies, and in nearly every instance they stated that electric light was cheaper than kerosene.

17. *Mr. Macdonald.*] What profit are you making on gas?—I have not the gas balance-sheet.

18. Do you make a profit on electric light?—Yes. We have only been running about five years, and at present we are still behind, but next year we are down in the allocations for £1,000 to pay to the Municipal Department to the relief of rates in the general fund.

19. Could you send us a balance-sheet?—Yes, I will send you the general balance-sheet up to the 31st March, 1912.

20. *Mr. Veitch.*] Assuming that a city has neither gas nor electric light, which would cost more to instal right throughout the town—that is, generating-plant and everything?—I think it would cost more under our scheme, which is a high-tension scheme generated from water. We are just extending up to 6,000 horse-power, and the total cost will be about £369,000. We are giving far better rates for power than gas.

21. You are going to supply power?—Yes. Nearly all the industries here which used to be run by steam are now run by electric power. They find it far cheaper than coal for motive power. If it costs a man £10 to instal electric light in his house, it is not a great deal compared with installing kerosene. £3 is not a high price for a hanging kerosene-lamp, and 5 per cent. on £10 is only 10s. a year.

THOMAS JAMES MCCUTCHEON, Fish-hawker, examined on oath. (No. 34.)

1. *The Chairman.*] What is your occupation?—Fish-hawker. I wish to reply to some evidence given by one of the trawl-owners and one of the members of the Fishermen's Union. Dunedin has three supplies of fish—the line fishermen, the seine fishermen, and the trawlers. The prices