

# BOARD OF ASSISTANT ALDERMEN.

This Board met last night, pursuant to adjournment; Mr. Kearny in the chair and the following members present: Messrs. Rose, Lagan, Walker, Farrell, Breen, Barnes, Stringer, Pasley, Camp, Grandpré and Wynne.

The reading of the minutes was dispensed with.

The Treasurer's report for the week ending Saturday, 16th inst., shows receipts, \$1242 97; expenditures, \$11,634 71, and a balance on hand of \$1736 23, which was referred to the Finance Committee.

The Treasurer of the City Water Works files a statement for the week ending Saturday, 16th inst., which shows a cash balance from the 9th inst. of \$19,366 66; receipts, \$449 59, and a total of \$19,816 25, which was referred to the Water Works Committee.

A communication was received from the Street Commissioner in regard to the many complaints concerning the broken condition of the bridges. He called the attention of the Council to the necessity of taking some immediate steps to remedy the evil. He says the responsibility for this state of things rests with the chairman of the Finance Committee of the Board of Aldermen, who has persistently refused to approve any requisition made for materials for repairs. He tells the Council that those bridges will soon become impassable—many of them are wholly so now. In any event, he desires the responsibility for this lamentable negligence to rest where it properly belongs.

The communication gave rise to an animated discussion, in which Messrs. Pasley, Wynne, Barnes and Stringer participated. A member of the Finance Committee said that he, for one, "would sign no more requisitions until he knew where the money was to come from to pay for material."

No one could blame the Street Commissioner. He had done all he could. The blame rested with the Finance Committee. The Street Commissioner could do nothing without their approval.

Mr. Stringer wanted to know when the repairs were to be made, before he signed requisitions, and who were to make them. He had no confidence in the Street Commissioner in his official capacity. He was a clever gentleman, but not competent as an officer. This was the source of his objection to giving additional material for repairs.

Mr. Lagan thought this was no concern of the gentleman. Whether Mr. Murphy was competent or incompetent, had nothing to do with it. The bridges needed repairs, and it was the duty of the Finance Committee to furnish supplies. Their excuse was insufficient; it was a subterfuge, as shown by the Comptroller's report.

Mr. Stringer denounced that report as *a lie* from beginning to end. He was not opposed to repairs, but he would sign his name to no requisition the Street Commissioner might send up.

The report was received and laid over subject to call.

A communication was received from the City Attorney in reference to the right of the city to use the Bayou St. John for drainage purposes, in which he alleges that the right was unquestioned under the Spanish and French Governments, and that the peculiar franchises conferred on the Orleans Navigation Company was one of aggressive legislation, unwarranted in law or equity. But he cites a decision of the Supreme Court, rendered in 1852, in which this precise question was determined, and which declares that the city, by draining into the Bayou St. John, violates no right of the Orleans Navigation Company. Subsequently an act of the Legislature was procured negating the right of the city to drain into the bayou, and by reason of this act a compromise was effected, in which the city agreed to pay \$25,000 for the right. He considers this compromise as exceedingly ill-advised, as the Carondelet Canal had no right to exact it, that peculiar right having perished with the Orleans Navigation Company. Nor can any navigable streams be alienated to individual purposes; and this bayou is navigable and a public highway. He therefore concludes that the demand of the Carondelet Canal Company should be resisted. It was ordered that the report be received and printed.

A message was received from the Mayor inclosing copies of a correspondence between the Commissioners of the Consolidated Debt and the late Fiscal Agent, relating to the payment of interest upon coupons due on the consolidated and railroad debt, in which Mr. Leighton states that there are funds deposited in the Southern Bank for this purpose. Referred to Finance Committee.

The Mayor vetoed the resolution authorizing the adjudication of a contract for repairing the wharves. He thinks the great expense of such an undertaking and the present financial condition of the city does not justify such a measure. By general consent the message laid over until the next meeting to await a full Board. It is designed to pass it over the veto.

Mr. Stringer resigned his position as member of the Water Works Committee, and Mr. Barnes was appointed in his stead; subsequently the acceptance of Mr. Stringer's resignation was reconsidered and the subject laid over until next meeting.

The Board then adjourned.