

1889



Second

Annual

❧ MESSAGE ❧

OF THE

Hon. August Grassmann,

❧MAYOR❧

OF THE CITY OF HOBOKEN, N. J.

THE EVENING NEWS PRINT, 8-12 HUDSON PLACE.

—SECOND ANNUAL MESSAGE—

—«OF THE»—

Hon. August Grassmann,

MAYOR OF THE CITY OF HOBOKEN.

MAYOR'S OFFICE,
HOBOKEN, N. J., May 6, 1889. }

To the Council of the City of Hoboken:

GENTLEMEN:—Another year has rolled by and our official acts during the same are now a part of history.

One of the most prominent members of your honorable body, as well as longest in service, whose voice and face was familiar to everyone, has by the will of a Divine Providence been removed from our midst and will never be with us again.

The sad bereavement which the family and the city at large have sustained thereby have been suitably and fittingly expressed in the resolutions of condolence adopted by your honorable body.

The unanimity of the representatives of the different political parties in nominating and endorsing me again for the office of Mayor have met with the most hearty approval of the public in general, and I take this occasion of publicly tendering my sincere thanks to our citizens who have unanimously re-elected me to the highest office within their gift, with the firm resolve to do my best to merit their approbation and esteem for the future in the same manner as I have enjoyed it in the past.

I, therefore, have the honor and privilege of addressing you again, and in my second annual message discuss such matters as are of importance to the government of our city, and in connection therewith make such recommendations becoming our progressive age and a desire to improve the public service. In performing this duty I am confronted with the pleasant fact that the Common Council, with the exception of one member, is mainly composed of men of ripe experience in the city's business, who will encounter little or no difficulties in the dispatch of public business.

We, therefore, enter upon the discharge of our respective duties under the most favorable circumstances, and with a fixed determination to perform the same without fear or favor, aided by our former experience, whereby we will be enabled to avoid errors in the future, we cannot fail to merit and receive the approval of the public in general.

LITIGATION.

The city is comparatively free from any new litigation of any moment since the last message, and such suits as were then pending have been pushed towards completion with all possible energy consistent with prudent management. The amounts involved in those litiga-

ions are so large that the defendants have defended on technical legal points which call for the intervention of appellate courts for settlement, and in that manner entail great delays which cannot be prevented. The McMahon bond case is an instance of this, and the Murphy bond case is another. In the former case the referee rendered judgment in favor of the city and against the bondsmen, but immediately the latter appealed to the Supreme Court, where the cases were argued last February but cannot be decided until June next. The Court will almost certainly confirm the judgment in favor of the city. The defendants then may appeal to the Court of Appeals, which is the last resort, and that court's determination will conclude the matter. If the Supreme Court decide in favor of the city it is quite likely that an appeal to the Court of Appeals will be practically useless, as the decision of the Supreme Court is seldom disturbed by that court, unless on some new or extraordinary question. The case against Murphy's bondsmen is also in the Supreme Court on demurrer. This case was fraught with legal difficulties from the fact that the Board of Water Commissioners never attempted to govern Murphy in his duties. The Corporation Attorney, therefore, had great difficulty in drawing the necessary legal documents to sustain the action against the sureties. And when the papers were drawn they were objected to immediately by counsel to the bondsmen. The matter came up before Justice Knapp for his decision, and he decided in favor of the correctness of the Corporation Attorney's pleadings. Counsel for the bondsmen then applied to the Supreme Court, and the matter will be again argued before that court in June.

The case of the Hackensack Water Company against the city was decided last month in favor of the Water Company. The case involved the claim of the company to recover \$28,000 for water supplied to the city, and the defence made was that the contract in question should have been made with the Water Commissioners and not with the Mayor and Council. As no defence was made against the company's right to claim for the water supplied, the Court decided that the city, without the aid of a Board of Water Commissioners, had a legal right to contract for water and was liable on its contract. The main question sought to be raised, viz.: whether the Board of Water Commissioners had any legal existence, was not squarely decided. The case, however, settles the right of the city to contract for water and to do all the business necessary to supply the people with water without the incubus of the Board of Water Commissioners.

Another case of more importance is that of Stuart vs. the city, involving the right of a sub-contractor or material man to place a lien on the public bath for non payment of money due on the contract. This case involves simply a question of law, and will be decided by Court this term, as I believe, in favor of the city.

There are three other cases—Stretch vs. the city and Goestrup vs. the city—involving the right of property owners to damages arising from a change of grade of Adams street. The plaintiffs in these cases will recover something for damages to be fixed by a referee. The expense incident to these grade suits will hereafter be done away with, by reason of an act of the Legislature, which the Corporation Attorney had passed, enabling the Board of Commissioners of Assessments to estimate damages as well as benefits on all future city improvements.

The River street opening was another important litigation, which is now practically disposed of. It involved the right of the city to condemn the land between First and Second streets on River street, for the purpose of connecting upper and lower River street. This was an improvement which had to come sooner or later, and the sooner the better, as it involved to a great extent the future development of the river frontage of the city and encouraged steamship companies to locate here by reason of the easy access to the river it would afford.

Commissioners had to be appointed by the Court to assess the damages to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and Justice Knapp appointed three honorable men—Messrs. Hardenbergh, Fuller and Bray—to make the assessment. They awarded the Railroad Company \$44,750 as the value of land and buildings taken and incidental damages suffered by the improvement. This will be assessed, according to law, on the property benefitted specially, to the extent of the benefits, and the excess will be assessed on the city at large.

The question of riparian rights fronting the Hudson Square Park arose during the last year, and resulted in the passage of an act by the present House of Assembly enabling the city to obtain a grant of the State right to lands under water fronting public squares. When this act passes the city will be in a position to obtain a grant from the Riparian Commissioners of land under water fronting Hudson Square, and will thus be enabled to consent to the making of a roadway below the present sea wall, so as to connect lower River street at Fourth street with whatever

thoroughfare may be constructed above Fifth street.

In this way the park can be kept intact and at the same time the river frontage north of Fourth street will be opened to development. River frontage about New York city proper is now in exclusive use, and steamship companies and warehouse people desiring proper facilities will seek this city for their business if the proper conveniences and facilities can be supplied. The river front below Fourth street is now occupied, and with the opening of the street between First and Second streets and a roadway below the present sea wall to connect the upper portion of the city water front with the lower part, and also the upper and lower ferries, it requires no discussion to see at once that the future of Hoboken can in this way be rapidly developed. Shipping interests will be encouraged to locate here, which in turn give employment to our working population, give additional importance to our status as a city, add to its wealth and by reason of the improvements increase the taxable valuable of real estate on the river front, which now is assessed as ordinary real estate only. The influx of commerce and commercial agencies have made New York and Jersey City of first importance, and there is no reason to apprehend that the same causes will not produce the same results in our case.

The case of Flaherty vs. Hoboken is one which arose on the contract for the improvement of Garden street, between Sixth and Seventh streets. The work was claimed by residents on the line to be so badly done that the city was obliged to have it taken up and made over again and charge the work against Flaherty's account. He refused to acknowledge the defective work, and brought suit to recover the full balance due on his contract. The Court will have to determine the matter. There are other litigations involving small matters, which are of no particular public interest.

Our Corporation Attorney's statement in regard to the city's lawsuits is very interesting and should be carefully read by all. His reference to the suit of the Hackensack Water Company against the city clearly demonstrates to my mind the fact that the Board of Water Commissioners now is a useless appendage to our city government. It has outlived its usefulness, and at the next session of our legislature proper steps should be taken to abolish it. Proper arrangements might be made with the water company to collect its own bills, or else impose this duty upon the collector of revenue.

I furthermore suggest to the Board of Water

Commissioners the propriety of sending the bills to the consumers in the same manner as the tax bills are sent out by the collector; the more speedy payment of bills when sent will readily compensate for the slight increase in the collection expense.

I further recommend that you request the Board of Water Commissioners to regulate the office hours of their clerical force so as to correspond with those of the other offices in the city hall. The time for opening and closing our public offices should be uniform, always bearing in mind that the officers are there for the public, and not vice versa.

Our corporation attorney has not been able to furnish us with a revised copy of our charter and ordinances, which work the council ordered to be prepared last spring, and for which the necessary appropriation was made by the last Board of Tax Commissioners. This is not to be construed as a dereliction of duty by our able corporation attorney, who being overwhelmed with professional work, had to assign this work to one of his assistants who, on account of sickness, has been unable to proceed with the same. The speedy completion of this work is, however, a matter of great importance to our city officers, who are continually in the dark in regard to existing laws and ordinances. I would recommend to push this work with all due diligence, and that the corporation attorney in case of the prolonged sickness of his assistant, be requested to engage the services of some competent person to complete the same, under his immediate supervision, within a reasonable time.

POLICE DEPARTMENT.

Our police department compares favorably with that of any other city of its size. Its chief and principal officers are men long in service and of ripe experience; who have all the qualifications necessary to maintain, for the department under their care, its reputation for excellency and efficiency, especially when in this work they receive the undivided support of the Board of Police Commissioners.

However, it cannot be denied that there are men in our department, who, if rumors are correct, ought not to be there. To purify the force from this objectionable element will largely depend upon the support which we receive from the public at large, who often lack the courage to come forward and make proper complaints when witnessing a breach of discipline or a violation of the rules of the department, and thus enable the chief and his aids to make proper charges before the Board of Police Commissioners, that the offenders may be brought to justice.

During the past year frequent complaint

from tradesmen of our city and elsewhere, have been received against members of the department for not paying their honest debts, even after allowing them a very reasonable time to settle the same. This must be stopped, as the action of a few of the men casts a stain on the honor and reputation of the whole force. Most of the men perhaps would not have received the credit, which they have so shamefully abused, if they were not members of our police force, and thus be considered a safe risk, on account of their steady positions. I deem it the bounden duty of the Board of Police Commissioners to protect our tradespeople in their just claims, and render every assistance in their collections, by adopting such measures as will compel such delinquents to liquidate their legal obligations, or run the risk of being dismissed from the department in case of refusal to agree to a reasonable settlement.

I am of the opinion that without an increase in our force, it would be practicable and feasible to maintain a sub-station in the uptown district. Said portion of our city is rapidly building up, and the travel on the Fourteenth street ferry is steadily increasing. If an officer is compelled to make an arrest in said district he has to bring his prisoner down to the City Hall station, which at least requires half an hour and perhaps more, while his post is in the meantime unprotected. It has been suggested to procure a patrol wagon, but I do not think it to be of as much benefit as the erection of a sub-station, more especially as the lot for the same can be obtained without any cost to the city.

I again call your attention to the matter of conveying prisoners and tramps to the county jail and other institutions. The President of the N. H. C. R. R. Co. has repeatedly protested against the transportation of the same on their elevated and surface roads, as it is very objectionable to other passengers.

The city now owns five horses for the use of the fire department. By purchasing a suitable wagon, the teams and drivers could be alternately employed to convey these persons to the jail or other county institutions. Such trips would provide a daily healthy exercise for the animals and drivers, and could be so arranged as not to be detrimental to an efficient fire service.

POOR.

On account of the rapid growth of our city, it is impossible for the Overseer of the Poor to investigate personally the circumstances of all applicants for charity. For this reason many applications for relief are granted that upon proper investigation would prove fraudulent,

and should therefore have been refused. In order to enable the Overseer of the Poor to administer the duties of his office with greater efficiency for the benefit of the deserving poor, I would recommend [to the Board of Police Commissioners to detail for duty, with the Overseer of the Poor, so many of the officers now detailed to doorman duty, and such of the officers who are on the pension list and physically incapable, as he may deem necessary for his assistance, in order to enable him to investigate properly all applications for relief.

I also wish to remind our Board of Tax Commissioners that with the increase of our population the applicants for relief grow more numerous, and that therefore it will be necessary in the future to increase the appropriation for the poor in proper proportion to the growth of our population, especially as the expense for the interment of deceased paupers is also taken out of said fund.

As our city is yet without a hospital of its own, and as no wealthy resident of our community has yet seen fit and proper to erect for himself or herself an everlasting monument in the hearts of their fellow citizens, grander and nobler than monuments of granite or metal that may be erected over their tomb, by founding a hospital, with a proper endowment for its maintenance, I would respectfully recommend that a sufficient sum be appropriated for the support and care of our sick poor in St. Mary's Hospital of our city. Said institution is always ready to take care of the city's sick, and ever since its existence has been a great benefit to us.

STREETS.

Our streets are in a fair way of becoming models for other cities.

The plan adopted several years ago of gradually removing the cobblestone pavement and substituting Belgian blocks for the same, has worked very satisfactorily, and if continued we will in a few years have a uniform, durable and smooth pavement throughout the whole city.

The streets can thus be kept cleaner, and they will require very little money for repairs. Our Street Commissioner has made good use of the funds for street cleaning and repairing, and has kept our streets and highways, as far as the means on hand would permit, in a generally satisfactory condition.

I would recommend to cause the street sweeper owned by the city to be more frequently used on the improved pavement, as the use of it will save labor, and it can almost be run without any cost. We now own a horse for the hose wagon of No. 1 Engine

Company, and will perhaps also have one for No. 3 Engine, and as drivers or attendants for these horses will have to be employed, for whom we do not expect to have work enough in the fire service, I am of the opinion that drivers and horses could be used to advantage in propelling the street sweeper, and thus materially reduce the cost of keeping them for the use of the Fire Department exclusively.

The litigation in regard to River street is ended. The price of \$44,750 for the condemned property as awarded by the Commissioners appointed by Justice Knapp, has been paid to the representatives of the P. R. R. Co. and the same is now in possession of the city. The preliminary proceedings having been disposed of the work of opening this important highway will be commenced without any further delay.

Telegraph, telephone, electric light and messenger service poles are necessary evils, as we have no law to compel these companies to place their wires under ground. They should, however, be made to look as ornamental as is compatible with their usefulness by being well painted and kept free from advertising matter.

I am informed that the Western Union Telegraph Company is transgressing its privileges and trespasses upon the rights of other companies without their consent and that of the city authorities. This should be investigated, and if true, the company should be required to respect our laws and ordinances, as well as the rights of other companies.

The New Jersey Junction Railroad Co. is, by ordinance, required to maintain safety gates at the First street crossing, as well as at the crossing of Willow avenue and Seventeenth street.

The gates at First street have been removed for some time and have not been replaced by others.

At the Willow avenue crossing a couple of good sized toothpicks stand as safety gates at that place, but since the company has never made any use of them, I fail to see what good or safe purpose they serve. The same are so weak that I fail to see how a runaway horse could be stopped by coming in contact with such an apology for a gate.

The Corporation Attorney should be instructed to take proper steps to compel the company to protect these crossings in a proper manner.

In regard to the necessity of procuring street signs, to which I alluded in my last message, and to which I had occasion to refer again some time ago I observe that the proper steps

have been taken to that end. I trust that the contract will be awarded as soon as possible, and the signs, which should be plain and neat, be put up without delay.

NEW BUILDINGS.

The construction and erection of new buildings of all kinds during the past few years in our city is surprisingly large, and demonstrates more forcibly than anything else, that our city is growing fast. This is further proof of the assertion, based upon reliable statistics, that Hoboken's increase of population is proportionately greater than that of her sister city, New York. As a matter of information regarding the large number of buildings erected this year, our Street Commissioner reports that he has, during the year, collected about \$950.00 for sewer tapping fees. Five dollars is charged for every 25 feet of frontage for such purpose.

This sum is the largest that has so far been collected for this purpose by any Street Commissioner in any one year. These extensive improvements that so materially advance the valuation of our real estate and increase our taxable property are, however, not subject to any rules or regulations concerning their safety of construction or sanitary arrangements. Even if we had the laws, there is no officer in our employ competent to execute them. The greedy speculator is not checked when erecting his Buddensieck houses and mantraps regardless of the lives of those employed in building them, as well as of the people who are to live in them.

Old and dilapidated buildings not worth repairing, which should be condemned and torn down for public safety, threaten to crush the pedestrian, unless the Council invest the Street Commissioner with authority to remove the same.

For these and other reasons, I earnestly recommend the appointment of a competent and able person as a Building Inspector. While I have no desire to recommend the creation of new and useless offices, I am satisfied that the public will agree with me in this case. I believe an act of the Legislature, as well as our city charter, give you ample power to appoint a building inspector and define his duties by ordinance.

The present ordinance enacted to provide against the erection of frame buildings in certain sections of our city is insufficient and defective. The same has on several occasions been tested before the Recorder and the cases were decided against the city.

If any good is to be accomplished for our city by such an ordinance it will be well to repeal the present one and substitute one that

will stand the test of law when properly applied. For the preservation of our handsome City Hall, I recommend that the same be repaired where required, and the outside well painted.

The approaches to the lower section of our city by way of the river will, during the coming year, be adorned with several new and imposing buildings.

The new depot of the D., L. & W. Railroad, the new offices of the Hoboken Land and Improvement Co., as well as our new Post Office, when finished, will captivate the eye of the stranger who visits our city and at once create a good impression.

The means of communication between here and New York are constantly improving. As evidence of which I refer you to the palatial new ferryboat "Bergen," which will soon be put in service, and which may justly be termed the flagship of the company's fleet of ferryboats. In the construction of this boat a new departure has been taken, and the same is pronounced a grand success.

I take the liberty of suggesting to the Hoboken Land and Improvement Co. another new departure, and that is to agree to a voluntary reduction of the passenger ferriage during certain hours of the day, as an additional inducement for the working classes to settle down in Hoboken, instead of going elsewhere, which new departure, I am satisfied, would also be a grand success.

MILITIA.

The Second Regiment of our National Guard is held in high esteem by our citizens, who seem to take a lively interest in the growth and welfare of this popular organization, for whenever it appears in public under the command of its gallant Colonel and his Staff, our citizen soldiers are the observed of all observers.

HEALTH.

The city's health during the year, under the supervision of our vigilant City Physician, has been as good as it can be expected, when we consider the fact that notwithstanding the rapid growth of our city, the whole burden of this department rests upon one city physician only.

We have had no epidemics of any kind and our death rate compares favorably with other cities.

The opening of the public bath during the summer, which was extensively patronized by both sexes, has been a great help to improve our sanitary condition, especially among the poorer classes.

The law governing public health, as now in force in this city and by the County Board of

Health, is insufficient for our present wants on account of lack of authority. The Councilmanic Committee on Health is a mere sham, and their only agent is the City Physician, whose powers are limited.

We have the power to establish a local board of health, yet I do not see why we should do so and gradually drift into the board system of other cities, who have not profited thereby, when our Common Council is amply able to take care of such matters if invested with the necessary powers for such purpose. It would likewise be better if our city had two physicians instead of one, which could be done without much expense to the city by dividing the present salary between two and have the medicine furnished by the city.

SEWERS.

Our city is being gradually supplied with the necessary system of sewers, without which no city can be expected to be healthy. This practice should be encouraged whenever a lawful petition is presented.

The ordinance prohibiting the building of box sewers is a good one, as the same are not durable and practicable, and therefore more expensive to the property owners. I am also of the opinion that the use of drain pipe sewers should be discontinued, as a brick sewer is the only safe and proper sewer, which can also be properly cleaned when necessary, but which is very difficult with a pipe sewer.

I also call your attention to that portion of the Ravine road sewer, located in Hoboken, which I am informed is in bad repair and will require your prompt attention.

PARKS.

Our parks are the pride of our city and during the pleasant season they are largely patronized by all classes. I would recommend the purchase of more benches for both, as the seating accommodations at present are limited.

Hudson Square Park is now adorned with a handsome soldiers' monument which has been erected by our generous citizens in memory of our patriotic heroes of the late war, under the auspices of our enterprising EVENING NEWS.

The unveiling took place under imposing ceremonies on Decoration Day, and was attended by Governor R. S. Green, General Sherman, and other distinguished persons, as well as a multitude of people such as was never seen in our city before, and will ever be remembered by all who witnessed the same.

I again direct attention to the bad condition of the walks in the lower section of this park, which render said portion almost unfit for public use.

The park keepers are under no control. It would therefore be well to amend the ordinance defining their duties and require them to report to some one when going on or off duty.

SCHOOLS.

At no time in the history of our city have the public schools occupied a higher plane, either in management or efficient results than at the present time. The greatest drawback to their success is want of room, resulting in the overcrowding of class rooms beyond their capacity, interfering with the best educational results, and at the same time endangering the health of pupils and teachers. About 300 children have been dismissed for want of room. The pressure is felt in the district north of Eighth street more than in any other part of the city. That neighborhood is being built up rapidly, and the new houses are mostly filled by newcomers. They cannot understand why the city does not furnish school rooms for their children. Their complaints are very loud and very reasonable. At the present time over 300 children are attending only half sessions of the schools. Parents naturally object to this and with good reason. The city should be as energetic as possible in supplying more school room. The new school should be east of Willow avenue and north of Tenth street. A suitable site for the same has been offered and accepted by the council, free of cost, for which liberal gift the Hoboken Land and Improvement Company is entitled to our profound thanks. As the donation of the land will materially reduce the cost of erecting this new school I recommend prompt action to accomplish the same.

School No. 5 still remains unfinished. The city should see that the sidewalks are flagged, the front stoop rearranged and an iron railing put up. The building is being defaced, and will soon be in a very unsightly and damaged condition unless this is attended to. During the last year the principal was sick and absent for the greater part of the term, his pay was discontinued and a considerable amount saved, which has been used to complete the interior of the building.

During the last two years insufficient appropriations compelled the Board of Education to discontinue both the evening and normal schools; both are necessities, and should be started again as soon as possible. It must be admitted by everyone that these schools are as much a part of our public school system as the day schools. The success of our institutions, the life of the nation, is largely dependent on the condition of the public schools. We should see to it then that no false ideas of economy be permitted to interfere with their requirements.

The estimates for their maintenance should be sufficiently large to meet their necessities. This the fair name of our city demands; this the citizens expect.

The German language is taught in our schools in the two highest classes of the grammar department and in the three classes of the high school (altogether sixteen classes) by two teachers, the principal of this department and one assistant teacher. This glaring disproportion of figures between the number of classes and teachers employed for their instruction must be obvious to everyone. The manual of the Board of Education very properly refers to this branch of education as follows: The German language is recognized as an important factor in our system of education, not only on account of its being valuable to our scholars, in the social and business relations of life, but also furnishing an opportunity for the study and comparison of the same subject in two languages. Among modern languages there is no other one that can be studied by our children with greater profit. Our scholars of English parentage may not become German linguists, but they may, from the conversational method of teaching it, acquire sufficient knowledge to meet the ordinary wants of business. To promote this branch of our studies, and in order to increase its usefulness, the same should be extended to the third classes of the grammar department, in order to make it more efficient and of practical value.

To accomplish this it is obvious that the number of German teachers must be increased, but this can be done without any great increase of the expenses required to run this department by the appointment of monitresses, of whom we have several, who are perfectly able to teach the first rudiments of the German language, under the supervision of the German principal.

The industrial education, as a co ordinate branch of our school system, is a marked success, and should be continued, for which purpose I recommend that a suitable appropriation be made.

As an improvement in the business management of the Board of Education, I recommend by proper ordinance to discontinue the practice of electing the Clerk of the Board from among the members. This may have worked well in the past, when we had fewer schools and fewer teachers and consequently little or no business to transact for the Clerk, but does not suit our present wants. The Clerk of the Board, in order to meet the requirements of our business men and others having business to transact with the schools, should be furnished with an office, which should be kept open daily during business hours, and as a

member who is engaged in business in New York during the day can not be expected to give up a good situation for \$400 per year to attend the business of the Board, you will at once observe how difficult it will be to inaugurate this reform in the public service when the old custom is adhered to. With a slight increase of the salary now paid there will be no trouble in securing a competent man for the position.

FIRE DEPARTMENT.

This very important branch of our city government is gradually nearing perfection and will eventually resolve itself into a paid department.

A new steamer and new hose wagon, with the necessary horses and attendants for the same, have during the year been added to the equipments of this department. We now own five horses and three steam engines. The old engine of No. 1 Company is now stored, as it is practically useless. I would recommend that the same be given in exchange for a new one, which could be given to No. 3 Engine Company, while the steamer now used by this company could be assigned to Engine Company No. 4 as a reserve engine, as said company is still doing duty with a hose carriage.

The Chief Engineer, in his report to me, recommends the following: That a hose tender drawn by a horse is needed by No. 3 Engine Company, as a steamer is practically useless without a tender. For Hook and Ladder Company No. 2 he recommends the purchase of a new truck, with all the latest improvements, which will necessitate the purchase of another team of horses, and also the appointment of a driver.

Our representatives in the Assembly, Hon. Lawrence Fagan and Hon. John P. Feeney, inform me that an act has been passed during the last session authorizing cities to sell engine houses where a change of locality is desirable, and the building of new ones in other and more suitable sections of our city. We should avail ourselves of the provisions of this act without delay.

It is further recommended to appropriate \$500 for the purchase of new fire hose.

The compensation paid for the tolling of the bells during the funeral of a deceased member is \$3.00. This I deem excessive for half an hour's work. \$2.00 I deem good pay for the same, and is all that your honorable body should allow for such service.

Plumbing and carpenter jobs that are frequently gotten up to provide work for members or their friends, who are out of employment, should be reduced to work actually

necessary, and performed in an economical and business-like manner.

I would recommend to the Board of Tax Commissioners to remember the widows and orphans of our deceased firemen by appropriating annually a moderate sum to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund of the department to enable the trustees of said fund to provide properly for the survivors of those who, in the discharge of their duty, are ever ready to risk health and life for the benefit of their fellow-men.

While our active and efficient Chief Engineer, in the discharge of his duty, was pursuing the even tenor of his way, and did not think that as such he required watching, some of our city officers and a number of our citizens thought differently, and he was accordingly "watched." However, as no dutiful officer objects to having his career watched by the people, whose servant he is, our esteemed head of the department did not object in the least to such proceedings, but rather liked it. He is unselfish enough to admit that there are others with him who deserved to be equally "watched" and honored in recognition of faithful service.

HOBOKEN CEMETERY.

The city of the dead—the last resting place of the weary traveler—is in a very satisfactory condition.

By personally attending the regular meetings held by the Board of Trustees, under whose management the cemetery is placed, I am satisfied that during the past year its affairs have been managed in a business like manner, satisfactory to all who have any business to transact with its officers.

Many improvements have been made during the year, such as paving, sewers and new avenues laid out. Three private vaults have been built.

Mrs. M. B. Stevens has bought eleven lots, and has had the same provided with a handsome enclosure.

The financial condition, according to the Secretary's report to the Council, is as follows:

May 1, 1888, balance in hands of City Treasurer.....	\$13,389 40
Receipts during the year for the sale of lots and graves to April 1, 1889.	\$5,236 38
Total expenses for the year.....	4,200 17

Leaving a cash balance in the hands of the City Treasurer of.....	\$14,425 61
---	-------------

As the fund now in the hands of the City Treasurer is not put out on interest, I recom-

mend that the same be properly invested for the benefit of the cemetery.

FINANCES.

The financial condition of our city is excellent. The taxes are well paid up. Nearly 93 per cent. of the levy of last year has been received by our Collector of Revenue, which amount is apportioned to the several wards as follows:

First Ward.....	\$123,187 29
Second Ward.....	144,096 40
Third Ward.....	129,604 76
Fourth Ward.....	43,083 36

This is a good argument in favor of the reduction of the eight per cent. which we are by law required to raise in excess of the annual tax levy, to provide for any deficiency in the collection of the same.

The establishment of the Second National Bank has proved a great financial benefit to our city.

Prior to the establishment of the new bank the city received no interest from the First National Bank except on daily balances exceeding \$30,000. Owing to our peculiar financial condition we very seldom had more than that amount to our credit, hence we received little or no interest.

The competition of the Second National Bank for a share of the city business has resulted in a mutual agreement between the city and both banks to allow us interest at the rate of three per cent. on all daily balances exceeding \$5,000.

On that account we have to our credit in the First National Bank on accrued interest, \$1,074.84, in the Second National Bank, \$810.92. Total interest paid on temporary loans, etc., amounts to \$1,015.86. Surplus on interest account \$869.90, so that we are fortunate in receiving considerably more money for interest on balances than we are required to pay on temporary loans, etc. As these favorable results are mainly due to the establishment of a second bank, the enterprising projectors of the same deserve the thanks of our community and are entitled to a fair share of its patronage.

The Collector further reports the pleasant fact that the assessments for the repaving of certain streets during the past year, as ordered by the council under a legislative act previously referred to, have all been paid, which proves conclusively that the method employed is popular with the property owners and meets their hearty approval.

STREET LIGHTS.

Our electric light system is very satisfactory and should be extended by the reduction of the gas lamps wherever practicable.

MISCELLANEOUS.

The disregard for legislative enactments or a misconception of the same by our several Boards of Tax Commissioners have, during the past year and previously, seriously embarrassed the Mayor and Council in the management of the financial business of the city. I would suggest that said Board request the attendance of the corporation attorney and comptroller at its sessions, to give their opinions and information which will aid the Tax Commissioners in their difficult task and enable them to avoid the repetition of previous errors.

By a recent act of the legislature approved by the Governor, the terms of office for the Mayor and City Treasurer have been made two year terms, commencing with the new term of the present incumbents. This is a change for the better, which has been desired by our citizens for several years, but always failed to pass for some reason or another.

The Hon. W. D. Edwards in the Senate, and the Hon. Lawrence Fagan and the Hon. John P. Feeney in the House, are entitled to our recognition for their efforts to carry out the will of their constituents.

The timely discovery of the extended forgeries perpetrated by William C. Mausell, an employee in the city clerk's office, had fairly startled our community. He pleaded guilty to the several indictments found against him and now awaits his sentence. The forgeries, as far as have been ascertained will result in no financial loss to the city. We have every reason to congratulate ourselves upon having received a cheap lesson and should try to profit by it in protecting our financial system with additional safeguards if possible. I would, among other things, recommend the adoption of proper rules and regulations for the better government of the city clerk's office. The responsibilities and duties of the City Clerk and Assistant City Clerk other than those prescribed in our charter should be more clearly defined, so that in all cases the responsibility can be placed where it belongs. The use of stamps of every description purporting to be the signature of any city officer under your control should be strictly prohibited. The same are dangerous when accessible to other persons except the owner, as has been proven in the case referred to. No receipts for money paid to any city officer should be valid except the same is countersigned by the comptroller.

CONCLUSION.

In the foregoing, I have briefly, yet fully, reviewed the city's condition. I have endeavored to point out the weak spots, and offer

some sound recommendations as a remedy for the same. In the expenditure of the public funds let us be guided by a wise economy and sound business principles. The officers that you are about to appoint your agents in the different branches of the public service should be selected for their fitness and capability so that in the discharge of their official duties they will reflect credit upon the appointing power.

In conclusion, I desire to extend my sincere

thanks to the members of your honorable body and all my associate officers for their official courtesy and uniform kindness with which I have been treated upon all occasions. Hoping for a continuation of the harmony of our official relations, and with the assurance of my hearty co-operation in all your lawful undertakings, I have the honor to be

Yours Respectfully,

AUGUST GRASSMANN,

Mayor.