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Author: Philadelphia (Pa.). Councils. Watering Committee.

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Concerning contracts made with the city of Philadelphia to construct steam engines for the water works.
Signed on p. 3: John Vallance, J. Worrell, Wm. Dalzell, Sam. Wetherill, Benjamin Say.
Last page blank.

References:

Shaw & Shoemaker 1147
Rink, E. Technical Americana, 2927

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**Philadelphia. Joint Committee on Memorial of
Nicholas J. Roosevelt.**

[Philadelphia, 1801.] 3 pp.

PPAmP copy.

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The Committee of the Corporation of the
City of Philadelphia

REPORT.

on Nicholas J. Roosevelt's remonstrance, relative
to the Steam Engines contracted to
erect to supply Phil.^a with water

The joint Committee, to whom was referred the Memorial and remonstrance of Nicholas J. Roosevelt, of the State of New-York, having met together, divers times upon the important subject embraced by the said Memorial, and deliberately considered the same, assisted by the information of the Superintendant of the Water Works and several other persons, think it necessary to be explicit, and to state in detail, such facts and observations, as arose out of the subject during the deliberations thereon; and, therefore, offer the following report, *viz.*

1st. That the said Nicholas J. Roosevelt states, "that he is an actual loser on the undertaking, to the extent of more than forty seven thousand dollars:" This your committee cannot accede to, as no vouchers to satisfy them has ever been produced; indeed it appears, that N. J. Roosevelt could not ascertain this fact himself, which may be seen by the deposition of Charles Slouctenger, dated 19th June 1801, in which he says, "that "the trunk in which he packed the accounts and vouchers, to prove the expence incurred by N. J. Roosevelt, "in building the two steam Engines, had been broken "open, and many of the papers lost, and others defaced "so as to render it impossible to make any accurate statement of the expences therefrom.] Minutes of the "watering committee, July 6th 1801] when the works "were delivered, says the memorialist, no official objections were made by the corporation, and your memorialist does firmly contend that they were completely finished," which assertion does not appear to your committee to be correct, or in accordance with the proceedings of the watering committee, who on the 2d of July 1801, directed their chairman to write a letter to N.

J. Roosevelt, demanding of him the erection of the other Boiler immediately, and informing him, that unless he forthwith proceeds to erect the same, this committee will employ suitable persons to perform this work, and charge the expences thereof to his account." It appears that on the next day, the 3d, the chairman performed his duty; and an answer was received thereto from N. J. Roosevelt, dated 12th of same month, "stating that it was his intention to apply part of the sum which might be allowed him, in consequence of his petition for reimbursement of his loss by his contract for erecting the engines, in erection of the two Boilers, and two larger working barrels, but at present he is not able to say whether he can do it or not; and that if the committee employ hands for the purpose, he would like to see such plans as may be proposed, and to know the expence by contract that is demanded." [Minutes of the Watering Committee, July 20th. 1801.]

The memorialist further says, that it is not within his knowlege, that any doubt or difficulty had been suggested, with regard to the regular supply of water; but your committee can state with confidence, that the quantum of water specified in the contract has never been furnished, nor the delivery uniformly regular and constant.

The memorialist also says, "that had he been permitted to take possession of the Center-House works, he would have performed his contract relative as to his supply of water from that engine, with equal diligence and regularity." This declaration does not appear to be consistent with a letter addressed by N. J. Roosevelt, to the watering committee of June 8th, 1801; in which he says, that he was determined to discharge such of his hands as were not immediately required for attending the engine, providing the corporation will order the money to be paid for that purpose, that he will retain only such as are necessary to work the engines, whom; he hopes the corporation will be willing to pay weekly, (on his account) until he can raise independent resources, that it is not his intention to ask further aid, than what will be required to maintain the Engines, which request appears to have been complied with by the said commit-

tee and, has been the uniform practice ever since.—The memorialist further says, “That it was with the utmost “astonishment that he has lately heard, his demand for “maintaining the lower Engine refused by the watering “committee, and a claim exhibited on account of the “Centre Engine, of upwards of thirty thousand dol- “lars.” In answer to this part of the memorial, your committee are informed, that the watering committee has invariably entertained doubts of N. J. Roosevelt’s having legal possession of the Lower Engine works; and again, if they were disposed to allow his demand, yet the corporation have considerable sums due to them by said Roosevelt; that the accounts have never been settled between the parties, and that the watering committee would have no objection to allow every reasonable demand, and come to a just and final settlement, provided he would agree to pay the balance due the corporation, which sum appears to your committee to be between five and six thousand dollars.

As to the proposal of submitting the whole subject of the controversy to a reference, your committee are impressed with an opinion that the tenor of the contract is clear and explicit, that the corporation; have completely fulfilled their part of the engagement, and that in consequence, they cannot have any thing to refer.

Upon the whole, your committee are clearly of opinion, that the said memorial is incorrect in general; that it is truly indelicate, and that it exhibits language of a threatening nature, unless the demand, which your committee conceives unjust and unreasonable, is complied with.

But if, after all, the memorialist should bring suit against the corporation, or cause a suspension of the supply of water, we trust they will meet him with that firmness and decision, which a cause so just and excellent in its nature most certainly deserves.

JOHN VALLANCE.

J. WORRELL.

WM. DALZELL.

SAM. WETHERILL.

BENJAMIN SAY.