

ADVERTISEMENTS

of the all-purpose household rate

of the

MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPT.

TOWN OF READING

MASSACHUSETTS

1929

An Experiment in Advertising

During 1929 the Municipal Light Department of the Town of Reading, Massachusetts, conducted an advertising campaign to induce an increase in the use of electricity in the lights and in the small household appliances of residences already connected to its distribution system. This statement must be construed exactly to appreciate the unique object of the campaign.

It was not a campaign to secure additional residential customers. They come without urging. It was not a campaign to cause residential customers to buy more electrical appliances and thereby increase their consumption. Such campaigns are usual, they have been conducted for years, and such advertising was done by this Department coincidentally with the campaign hereinafter described.

This campaign departed from the customary practice of advertising the appliances which somebody else makes and sells. It advertised directly the electricity which was made and sold by the Department itself. Its object was to induce an increased use of electricity by those households which were already lighted electrically and were already generally equipped with small electrical appliances.

The occasion for this venture or experiment in advertising is outlined in the following paragraphs.

On the first of September 1928 the Department had established a new domestic rate for electricity. The new rate offered to every household, without restriction, the opportunity to secure electricity at a step rate which went as low as 2.7 cents. During the course of the advertising campaign in 1929 a 1.8 cent step was added to the rate.*

The result of this exceptionally low rate would have been a reduction in the income of the Department unless the sale of electricity could be substantially increased.

A small increase in the sale of electricity was expected from the operation of three causes. The first is the well established tendency of households which have lights and small appliances only, to increase slowly, year by year, the use of electricity. The second is the gradual increase in the number of customers due to the growth of the town. The third is the sale of a comparatively few large-current-consuming devices such as ranges and water heaters.

But the rate of increase due to these three causes would be too slow for the income requirements of 1929. In spite of the fact that the town has enjoyed a very favorable rate for years, in spite of the fact that the town is growing stead-

*This change in rate explains an apparent inconsistency in the advertisements submitted, if they are viewed as a whole. No attempt was made in this series to feature the change in rate. That was done in the course of the regular advertising by the Department.

ily, and in spite of the fact that there has been for years a high per-capita sale of large-current-consuming devices, an analysis showed that eighty per cent of the customers were using only a minimum amount of electricity. Eighty per cent were using electricity as a necessity instead of treating it as a convenience.

It was apparent therefore that if a substantial increase in the sale of electricity was to be secured, some way must be found to increase the use of electricity in the lights and small appliances of the eighty per cent who have neither the means nor the occasion to buy high priced ranges or other large-current-consuming devices.

The principal difficulty to be overcome in advocating the increased use of electricity by the mass of residential customers is the indifference of the public to the subject, especially to the consideration of electric rates. The public attitude is that rates are low and gradually becoming lower, that anyone can easily afford to pay for the small amount of electricity he has become accustomed to use, and that any subsequent reductions in rates will result merely in a saving of a few cents a month.

After contriving to secure the public attention and interest, the principal difficulty to be overcome is the lifelong habit, occasioned by the high rates of a generation ago, of treating electricity as a necessity rather than as a convenience; the habit of "saving electricity"; the habit of turning the lights out as soon as "they are not needed"—a habit that is much easier to keep than it is to break.

The object of the advertising campaign was therefore to arouse an interest in the new schedule of household rates and in the possibilities which cheap electricity affords, and to make a beginning at the long task of breaking the habit of "saving electricity."

On account of the various types and classes which make up the mass of the electric customers, comprising as they do the entire population, it was decided to secure attention by appealing to one trait which all possess—the sense of humor. A series of humorous advertisements was planned in which the nature of the humor was to vary according to different tastes, ranging from the obvious to the subtle, and combining both as far as possible in single advertisements.

In view of the influence which is exerted by the young upon the conduct of the home, and in view of the fact that those of high school age will have homes of their own in a few years, it was planned to aim the advertisements at the minds of those of adolescent years.

The habit of "saving electricity" was to be attacked by the most potent means—that of ridicule; thereby not only making a direct attack by the printed page, but also putting into the mouths of the young and impressionable a sententious criticism of such habits of their elders as they would inevitably observe.

This was the plan, but the experiment became so interesting and the scheme proved to be so adaptable that there were sundry departures. The appliance sales division asked for the assistance of this lighter touch (33-42). The office management used it to answer inquiries or complaints of a general nature (15-23), and it was used to call attention to certain aspects of the service (3,33). But whatever might be the subject, the task of clothing the new rate with a popular interest was never neglected.

There are two weekly newspapers which contain the local news of the area which is supplied with electricity by the Department, and they are generally read. It was thought that adequate variety and persistence would result from fifty "messages" a year. Therefore a fixed space and position was taken in each paper for a year.

The appropriation for this experiment, was \$1000. This represented only the cost of the space and the plate maker's charges. Those interested in the experiment designed the advertisements, wrote the texts, and as informality of appearance was desired to increase the departure from the conventional public utility advertising, they could and did do the necessary draughting.

During the year the sale of electricity increased over 20 per cent and the income increased over 10 per cent. About half of the increase can be accounted for by the three causes mentioned in the preceding pages. As to the rest, there is no way of determining how much is attributable to the advertising and how much is due to the unusually low rate in itself.

But insofar as arousing public interest is concerned, the series was a complete success. The comments and inquiries showed that the number of people who were reached, the liveliness of response, and the range of ages affected—youngsters looking for them as "funnies" and gray-beards looking for them as one of the pranks of the younger generation—exceeded expectations.

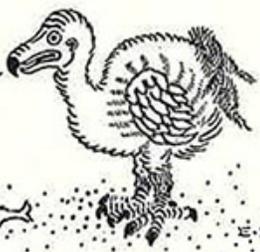
More could not be expected, so firmly fixed is the bad habit of "saving electricity." But the response to this year's advertising leads to the belief that a repetition of the series in ensuing years will eventually drive home the idea which they express.

MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

Arthur G. Sias, Manager.



PUT OUT
THAT
LIGHT!

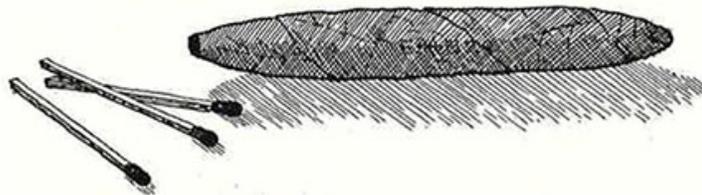


THE VOICE OF THE PAST!

THE DODO IS EXTINCT, BUT SOME DODO IDEAS REMAIN.

"PUT OUT THAT LIGHT! YOU CAN FEEL YOUR WAY THROUGH THIS CAVE IN THE DARK!" WAS WELL ENOUGH IN THE DAYS OF THE STONE AXE AND THE DINOSAURUS. BUT IN THESE DAYS WHEN A 15 WATT LAMP WILL BURN 24 HOURS FOR 1 CENT AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT —IF YOU DEVELOP THAT "PUT OUT THE LIGHT" COMPLEX—

FORGET IT!

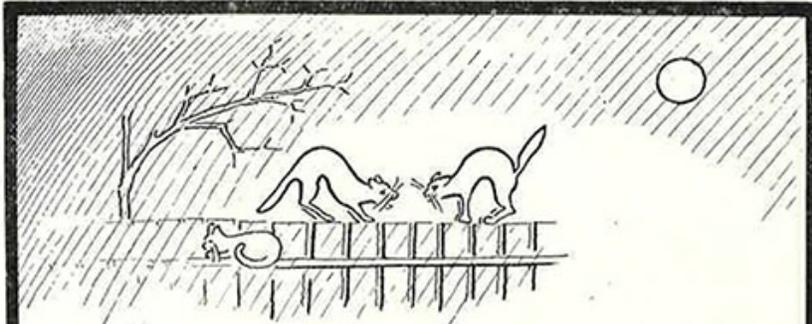


LIGHT UP!

IT IS ONLY A TEN CENT CIGAR, BUT
CONSIDER WHAT IT REPRESENTS!

FOR THE PRICE OF THAT CABBAGE YOU
CAN OPERATE AN ELECTRIC IRON ALL DAY,
OR YOU CAN KEEP YOUR PORCH LIGHT GOING
EVERY EVENING FOR A MONTH, OR YOU CAN
BURN A 15-WATT LAMP ALL NIGHT FOR A
MONTH AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT,
OR YOU CAN MAKE 264 SLICES OF TOAST -

SOME SMOKE!



ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT SOMEONE IN THE ELECTRIC PLANT IS ON DUTY-AT THE OTHER END OF YOUR TELEPHONE.

ALL THROUGH THE NIGHT THE STREET LAMPS BURN STEADILY, BRINGING TO DESERTED STREETS THE PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND PROTECTION WHICH LIGHT AFFORDS.

ALL THROUGH THE SILENT HOUSE THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT ENABLES YOU TO AFFORD INDIVIDUAL CONVENIENCE AND PROTECTION-

ALL THROUGH THE LIGHT



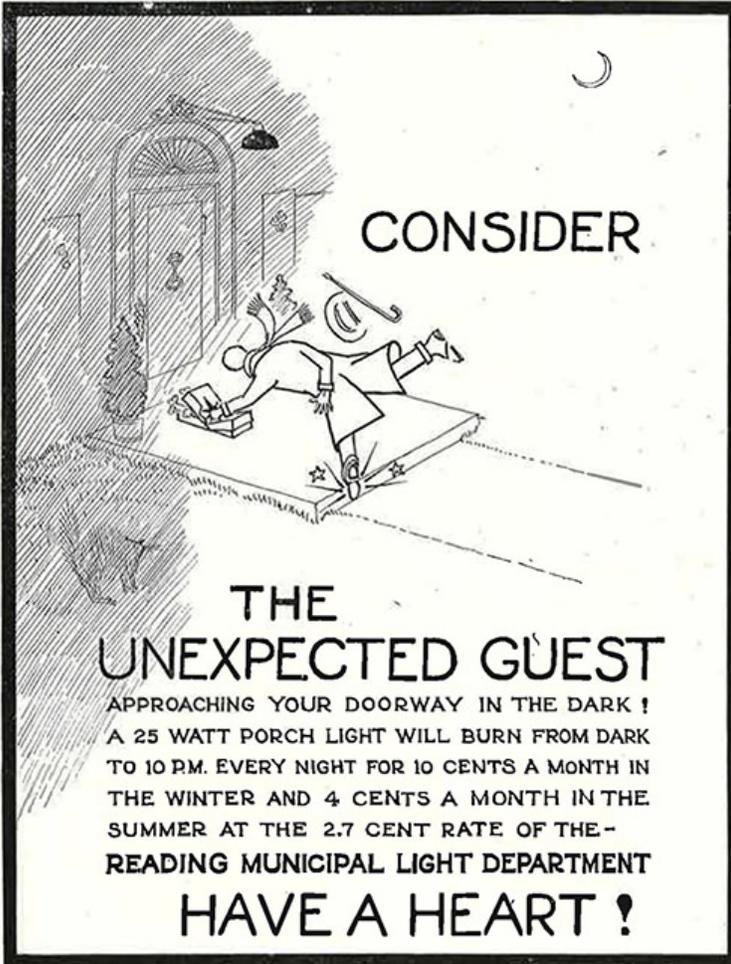
IT'S THE YAP THAT COUNTS!

IT DOESN'T TAKE A MAN EATING HOUND TO MAKE A WATCHDOG. EVEN FLUFFY WILL WARN OFF INTRUDERS AT NIGHT IF HE HAS FLEAS ENOUGH TO KEEP HIM AWAKE.

LIKEWISE JUST A LITTLE 10 WATT LAMP BURNING ALL NIGHT IN THE HALLWAY WILL KEEP INTRUDERS OUT. (BURGLARS DON'T THRIVE ON PUBLICITY), AND THE LIGHT DOESN'T BRING IN ANY FLEAS.

IT ONLY COSTS $7\frac{1}{2}$ CENTS A MONTH TO BURN A 10 WATT LAMP FROM 10 P.M. TO 7 A.M. AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE-READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

TRY IT YOURSELF!



CONSIDER

**THE
UNEXPECTED GUEST**

APPROACHING YOUR DOORWAY IN THE DARK !
A 25 WATT PORCH LIGHT WILL BURN FROM DARK
TO 10 P.M. EVERY NIGHT FOR 10 CENTS A MONTH IN
THE WINTER AND 4 CENTS A MONTH IN THE
SUMMER AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE-
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

HAVE A HEART !



**MORE
TRUTH
THAN
POETRY !**

THERE WAS A MAN IN OUR TOWN
AND HE WAS WONDROUS WISE.
HE FELT HIS WAY IN THE DARK HALL
AND NEARLY LOST HIS EYES!

BUT WHEN HE FOUND HIS EYES WERE SAFE,
WITH ALL HIS MIGHT AND MAIN
HE SWORE HE'D SPANK THE ONE THAT PUT
THAT NIGHT LIGHT OUT AGAIN!

A 10 WATT NIGHT LIGHT COSTS ONLY 7½
CENTS A MONTH AT THE 2.7 CENTS RATE OF
THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT
AND IT'S WORTH LEARNING!

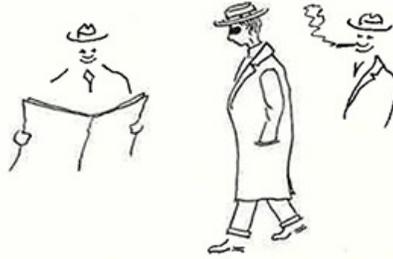


SELLING JUICE

IS THE BUSINESS OF THE ELECTRIC PLANT! LIKE SOME OTHER THINGS THAT ARE SOLD, YOU DON'T SEE IT, BUT WHEN IT IS SAFELY DELIVERED TO YOUR HOME-WOW! WHAT IT WILL DO!

AND IT DOESN'T COST MUCH TO GET ALL LIT UP. FOR THE PRICE OF A NEWSPAPER YOU CAN BURN FIVE 50 WATT LAMPS ALL THE EVENING AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

AAAH!



BELIEVE IT OR NOT

HE REALLY DID GET IT FROM A DOOR.

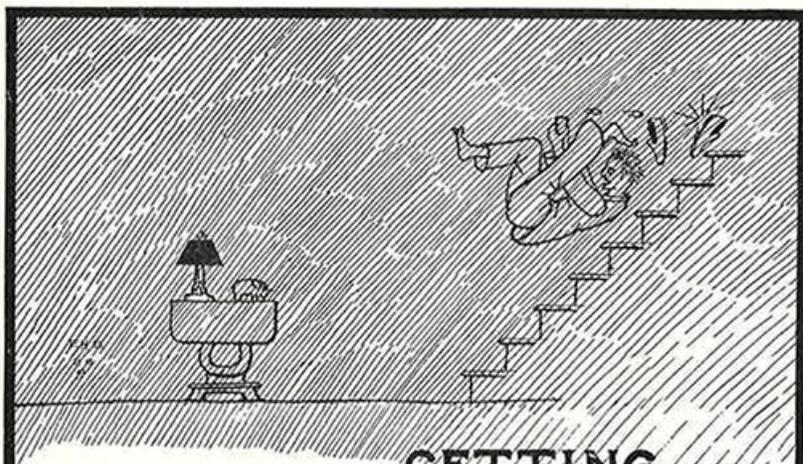
THE POOR THING!

-YOU SEE HE JUST WENT THROUGH THE KITCHEN IN THE DARK AND THE CELLAR DOOR WAS OPEN ETC. ETC.,-

-THE DARN FOOL! WHY DOESN'T HE LEAVE A LIGHT BURNING — SOMEWHERE?

-WELL, THERE IS SOMETHING IN THAT. A 50 WATT LAMP SOMEWHERE IN THE BACK OF THE HOUSE WILL BURN FROM 8 TO 10 EVERY EVENING FOR A MONTH AT A COST OF 8 CENTS AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE -
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT

WE GUESS WE'LL TRY IT



GETTING JUNIOR A DRINK AT 2 A.M.

MAY HAVE ALL SORTS OF THRILLS FOR THOSE WHO "SAVE ELECTRICITY" BUT THERE ISN'T ANYTHING THRILLING ABOUT THE AMOUNT THEY SAVE.

A 10 WATT LAMP WILL BURN FROM 10 P.M. TO 7 A.M. FOR A MONTH AT THE COST OF 7½ CENTS AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE -

READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT 7½ CENTS ISN'T WORTH SAVING, BUT YOUR NECK IS! DON'T

TAKE A CHANCE!

Consider the street light.
It burns all night.
Why the waste
Of electricity?

FREE VERSE

Because somebody
May find it convenient
Most anytime.

How you would yell
If you were obliged
To switch that light on
And off
Whenever you passed
A lamp post!

Then why -
When we prescribe
One porchlight
Burned until ten o'clock
Every night
At a cost of
Only ten cents a month
At our two-point-seven
Cent rate -
Do you yell
That the waste
Of ten cents a month
Is

SCANDALOUS !

TO THE LADY



WHO SAYS "YES, ONCE WE THOUGHT OF DOING IT BY ELECTRICITY, BUT WE FOUND IT WAS TOO EXPENSIVE" - WE SAY "WHEN ?"

BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE BONNET AND THE BUSTLE AND THE STREET-SWEEPER SKIRT ? BACK IN THE DAYS OF THE 20-CENT LIGHTING RATE AND A SEPARATE METER AND WIRING FOR ANY OTHER RATE ? TIMES HAVE CHANGED !

COMPARE THE 12.6 CENT LIGHTING RATE OF 1920 WITH THE ALL PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT OF TODAY. 7.2¢, 4.5¢, 2.7¢ AND DOWN TO 1.8¢! FOR ALL ELECTRICITY USED ABOUT THE HOUSE, OUTSIDE OR

INSIDE !

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**THE ALL PURPOSE
HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE
READING MUNICIPAL
LIGHT DEPARTMENT**



BAR- GAIN DAYS

EVERY MONTH THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT OFFERS ELECTRICITY TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD AT THE BARGAIN PRICE OF 2.7 AND 1.8 CENTS.

ADVANCE NOTICE IS SENT TO ALL CUSTOMERS WHO HAVE CHARGE ACCOUNTS. (IT IS ON THE BACK OF THE BILL.)

THE FIRST 25 KWHRS. COSTS 7.2 CENTS
THE NEXT 25 KWHRS. COSTS 4.5 CENTS
THE NEXT 150 KWHRS IS OFFERED AT THE
BARGAIN PRICE OF 2.7 CENTS
ALL THE REST COSTS ONLY 1.8 CENTS !

AND THERE IS NO LIMIT TO THE AMOUNT WHICH ONE PERSON CAN GET AT 1.8 CENTS

EVERY MONTH !



THE OPPORTUNITY

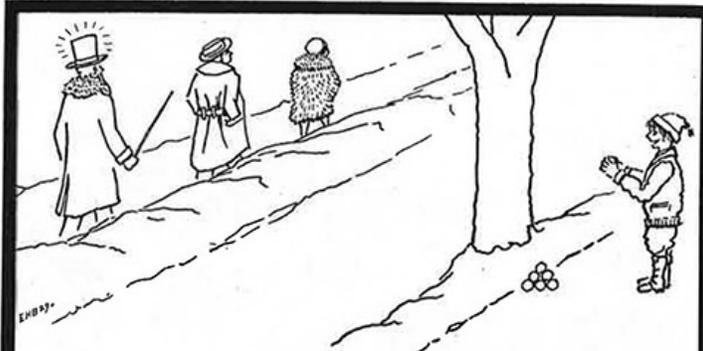
TO TAKE A WHACK AT THAT 2.7 CENT ELECTRICITY COMES EVERY MONTH TO THE CUSTOMERS OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.

IT COSTS ABOUT 10 CENTS A DAY TO USE UP THE FIRST TWO BLOCKS AND GET DOWN TO THE 2.7 CENT RATE. BUT THEREAFTER THE EXTRA COST FOR USING ELECTRICAL CONVENIENCES ISN'T BIG ENOUGH TO FIGURE!

FOR INSTANCE YOU CAN RUN A FLAT IRON FOR OVER TWO HOURS FOR

2.7¢

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WHO GETS IT ?

WHO GETS THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT?

ANYBODY! EVERYBODY WHO ATTRACTS
IT! THERE IS ONLY ONE RATE FOR HOUSE-
HOLD USE.

THE FIRST 25 KWHRS. COSTS 7.2 CENTS
THE NEXT 25 KWHRS. COSTS 4.5 CENTS
ALL THE REST COSTS ONLY 2.7 CENTS

NOW WE HOPE

THAT'S ALL SETTLED!

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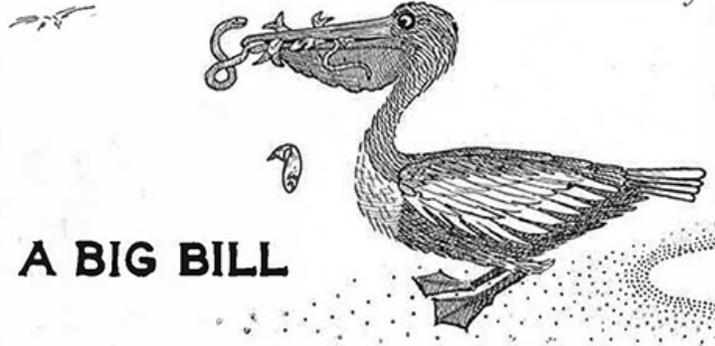
**HIS
BILL IS
TOO BIG!**



TO BE SURE HE HAS JUST BITTEN UP TWELVE BRAZIL NUTS, TWENTY-ONE PECANS, THREE HARD SHELLED CRABS AND A SPIKE OF THE PANAMA-PACIFIC RAILROAD, SLICED THIN. BUT REGARDLESS OF WHAT HE CAN DO WITH THAT BOLT-CUTTING PROBOSCIS OF HIS, OR WHAT HE GETS BY MEANS OF IT, OR WHAT OPPORTUNITY IT AFFORDS, WHENEVER HE CRAVES EXCITEMENT HE HOPS AROUND AND TELLS THE COCK-EYED WORLD HIS BILL IS TOO BIG!

WITH THE 2.7 CENT HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT THE UNIT COST OF ELECTRICITY CANNOT GET TOO BIG.

LOOK AT IT!



A BIG BILL

IS A PROBLEM, BUT IT MAY BE WORTH WHILE.

\$1.80 IS A SMALL BILL - 25 KW.HRS. @ 7.2¢ -
AND IT REPRESENTS ONLY A STARVELING
AMOUNT OF LIGHT - MOSTLY DARK.

\$4.28 IS A SUBSTANTIAL BILL - 100 KW.HRS.
AVERAGING 4.3¢ - FOR ALL KINDS OF LIGHT
AND SMALL EQUIPMENT.

\$12.38 IS A BIG BILL - 500 KW.HRS. AVERAG-
ING 2½¢ - FOR ALL - ELECTRIC HOUSEKEEPING.

THE 2.7¢ RATE OF THE READING MUNIC-
IPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT, WHICH MAKES THE
4.3¢ AND THE 2.5¢ AVERAGE, IS SOMETHING

TO BE PROUD OF.

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WHAT IS IT ?



WHAT IS IT WE MEAN WHEN WE SAY THAT IT IS THE UNIT COST THAT SHOWS WHETHER AN ELECTRIC BILL IS LITTLE OR BIG ?

THE UNIT COST IS THE AVERAGE COST OF ELECTRICITY - THE AMOUNT OF THE BILL, LESS THE 10% DISCOUNT, DIVIDED BY THE NUMBER OF KILOWATT HOURS CHARGED FOR.

FOR INSTANCE A \$11.75 BILL LESS 10% OR \$10.57 FOR 400 KW. HRS. ISN'T BIG.

$\$10.57 \div 400 = 2\frac{6}{10} \text{¢}$ A KW.HR. $2\frac{6}{10} \text{¢}$ AT THE HOUSEHOLD RATES OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT ! $2\frac{6}{10} \text{¢}$ WHERE CAN YOU GET IT FOR LESS ?

WE'D LIKE TO KNOW !

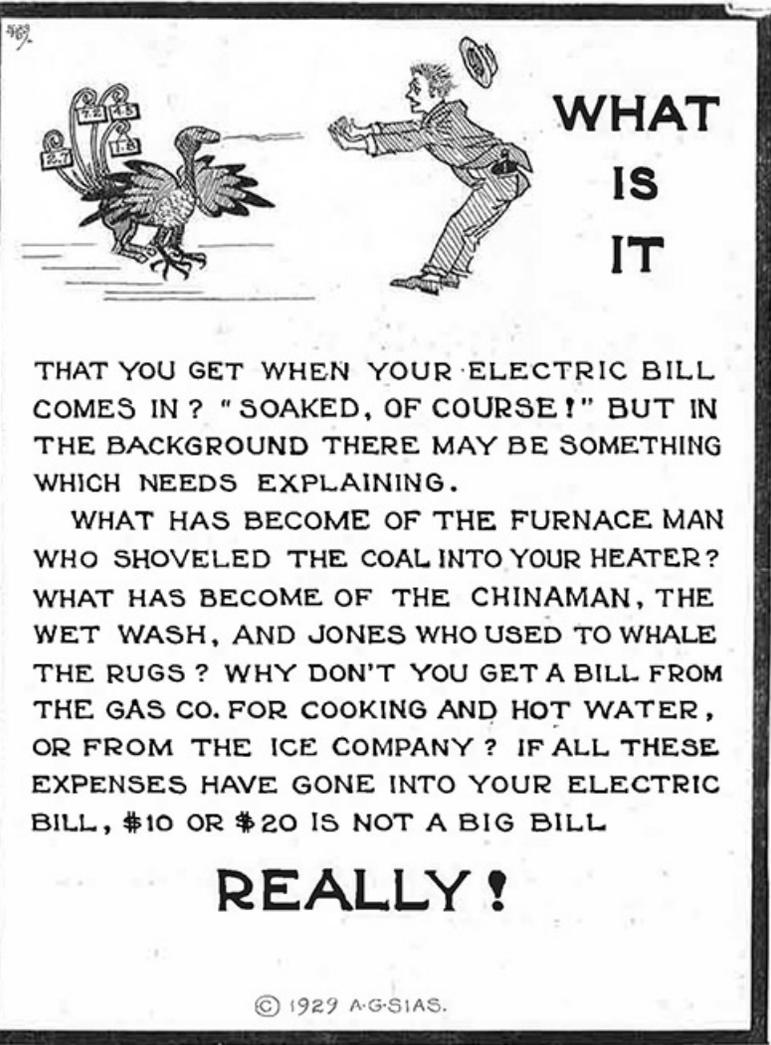


**DON'T
WORRY!**

YOUR ELECTRIC BILL IS LIKE THE INCOMING TIDE. AT FIRST IT COMES RAPIDLY (25 KW-HRS. @ 7.2¢). THEN NOT SO FAST (25 KW-HRS. @ 4.5¢). THEN SLOWLY. (150 KW-HRS @ 2.7¢) AND THEN SO SLOWLY THAT YOU CAN HARDLY SEE IT MOVE (ALL THE REST @ 1.8¢). WITH THE ALL PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT NO MATTER HOW BIG YOUR BILL IS

IT CAN'T GET MUCH HIGHER!

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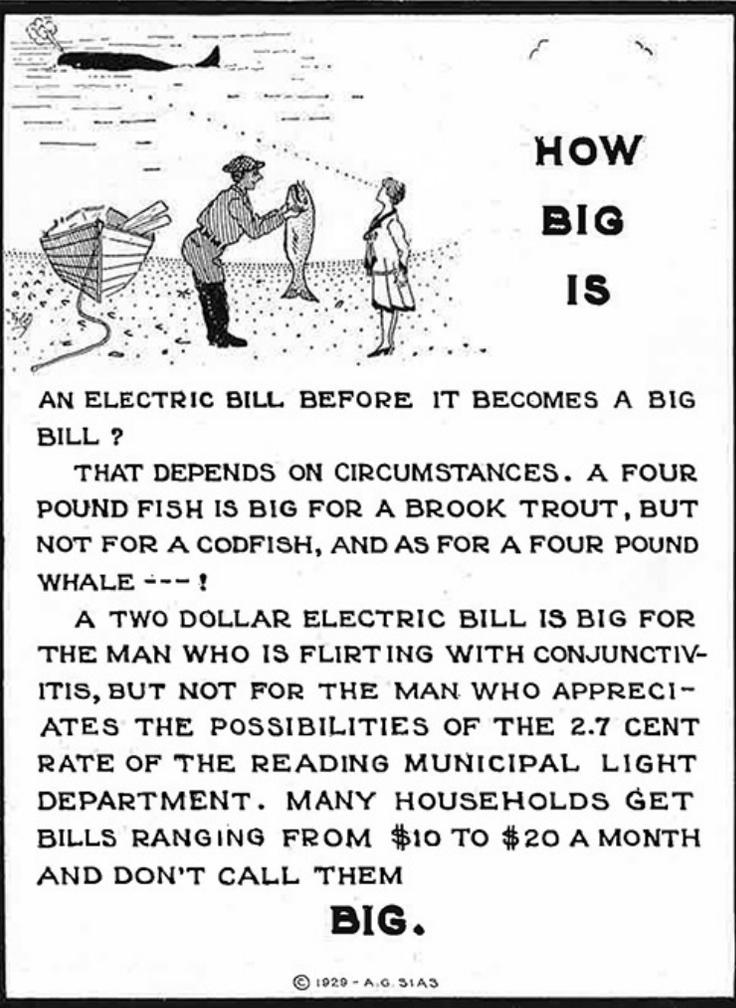


**WHAT
IS
IT**

THAT YOU GET WHEN YOUR ELECTRIC BILL COMES IN? "SOAKED, OF COURSE!" BUT IN THE BACKGROUND THERE MAY BE SOMETHING WHICH NEEDS EXPLAINING.

WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE FURNACE MAN WHO SHOVELED THE COAL INTO YOUR HEATER? WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE CHINAMAN, THE WET WASH, AND JONES WHO USED TO WHALE THE RUGS? WHY DON'T YOU GET A BILL FROM THE GAS CO. FOR COOKING AND HOT WATER, OR FROM THE ICE COMPANY? IF ALL THESE EXPENSES HAVE GONE INTO YOUR ELECTRIC BILL, \$10 OR \$20 IS NOT A BIG BILL

REALLY!



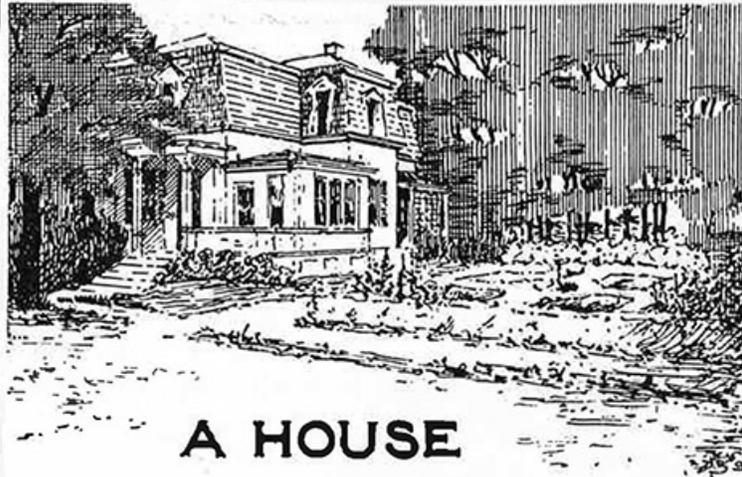
HOW BIG IS

AN ELECTRIC BILL BEFORE IT BECOMES A BIG BILL ?

THAT DEPENDS ON CIRCUMSTANCES. A FOUR POUND FISH IS BIG FOR A BROOK TROUT, BUT NOT FOR A CODFISH, AND AS FOR A FOUR POUND WHALE --- !

A TWO DOLLAR ELECTRIC BILL IS BIG FOR THE MAN WHO IS FLIRTING WITH CONJUNCTIVITIS, BUT NOT FOR THE MAN WHO APPRECIATES THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT. MANY HOUSEHOLDS GET BILLS RANGING FROM \$10 TO \$20 A MONTH AND DON'T CALL THEM

BIG.



A HOUSE

MAY BE A SMALL ONE AND YET HAVE A LARGE ELECTRIC BILL. IT IS NOT THE SIZE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, BUT THE CONVENIENCE THAT COUNTS.

IN THIS HOUSE THERE IS NO ICE OR GAS OR MANUAL LABOR SUBSTITUTED FOR ELECTRICITY. THE BILL IS \$16.59. OR 734 KWHRS. AT AN AVERAGE COST OF 2¼ CENTS.

THE SAME INTELLIGENT APPLICATION OF THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT IS POSSIBLE ANYWHERE

IN READING.

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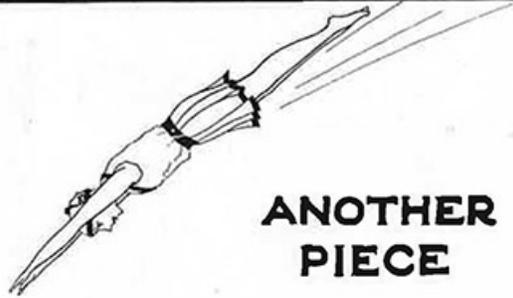
ONE PIECE

OF ADVICE ABOUT THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSE-
HOLD RATES OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT
DEPARTMENT WILL BEAR REPEATING.

REMEMBER THAT IN EVERY MONTH THERE IS
THE OPPORTUNITY TO SECURE ELECTRICITY FOR
2.7 CENTS. "YES, IF YOU USE *ENOUGH!*" SAYS
THE CHAP WHO ONCE BOUGHT SOME FLORIDA
LAND AND ISN'T GOING TO GET STUNG AGAIN.

JUST SO. AND "ENOUGH" IS THE EXTORTION-
ATE SUM OF 10¢ A DAY! THE PRICE OF A SODA
OR JUST ONE CIGAR! THIS IDEA WE CONSID-
ER RATHER

ESSENTIAL.



ANOTHER PIECE

OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSE-
HOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT
DEPARTMENT IS WORTH NOTING.

ALTHOUGH YOU DO NOT GET THE 2.7 CENT
JUICE UNTIL YOU HAVE USED \$2.93 WORTH
A MONTH, OR LESS THAN 10¢ WORTH A DAY,
YET YOU START ON A LOWER RATE (THE 4.5¢
BLOCK) AS SOON AS YOU HAVE USED \$1.80
WORTH, OR 6¢ WORTH A DAY.

SIX CENTS! THE PRICE OF A CONE OR A
COUPLE OF YEAST CAKES! THIS IDEA

IS SOMETIMES REASSURING.

A THIRD PIECE



OF INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT SHOULD APPEAL TO EVERYONE.

THE LOW RATES DO NOT COME INTO THE BILL UNTIL 25 KWRS. HAVE BEEN PAID FOR AT THE 7.2 CENT RATE, MAKING \$1.80 A MONTH OR 6 CENTS A DAY. YET THAT 7.2 CENT RATE IS IN ITSELF LOW ENOUGH TO BE A CREDIT TO THE TOWN.

IN 1920 THE RATE WAS 12.6¢. IT WAS REDUCED TO 11.7 IN 1922, TO 9.9 IN 1923, TO 9.0 AND TO 8.1 IN 1924 AND TO 7.2 IN 1927. THEREFORE THE "HIGH BLOCK" AT 7.2 IS REALLY

NOT TO TOUGH.

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TO EXPOSE

COMPLETELY THE REMARKABLE FEATURES OF THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT WE SHOULD NOTE THE RECENTLY ESTABLISHED FOURTH BLOCK PRICED AT LESS THAN 2 CENTS (1.8 TO BE EXACT.)

UNLIKE THE 2.7 CENT BLOCK WHICH COMES TO EVERYONE AT SOME TIME DURING THE YEAR THERE ARE ONLY A FEW HUNDRED CUSTOMERS AT PRESENT WHO GET THE 1.8 CENT JUICE, BUT THAT LOWEST RATE STANDS AS AN INVITATION TO CONSUMERS OF ELECTRICITY WHO MAY DESIRE TO USE

MORE THAN USUAL.

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**THERE IS
PROPRIETY
ENOUGH**

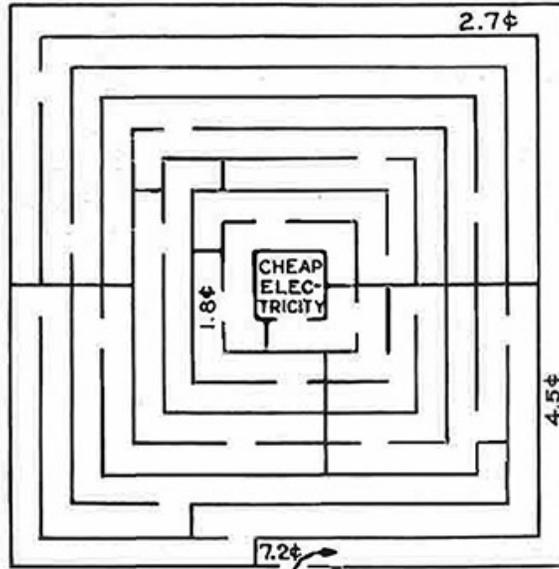


IN OLD FASHIONED FOLKS GOING AROUND TURNING OFF LIGHTS AS SOON AS THEY ARE "NOT NEEDED" OR BEING SURE THAT THEY ARE NOT TURNED ON UNTIL "NECESSARY".

IT IS PROPER ENOUGH, EVEN AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT, TO "SAVE ELECTRICITY", TO "CONSERVE OUR NATURAL RESOURCES", AND INCIDENTALLY TO SAVE A CENT A DAY ON THE ELECTRIC BILL.

BEING A "SLAVE OF THE LAMP" GIVES YOU ALL SORTS OF CARE AND APPREHENSION

BUT LIMITED FREEDOM.



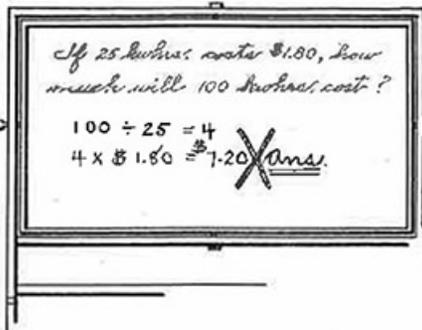
A MAZE

MENT WILL BE YOUR PORTION SOMETIME.
SOONER OR LATER.

LATER IF YOU LAG BEHIND AND MERELY IMITATE. SOONER IF YOU LEAP AT THE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED BY THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.

AMAZEMENT WHEN YOU THINK BACK TO THE TIME WHEN YOU CONSIDERED THAT 30 KWHRs. A MONTH WAS ENOUGH ELECTRICITY

FOR YOU!

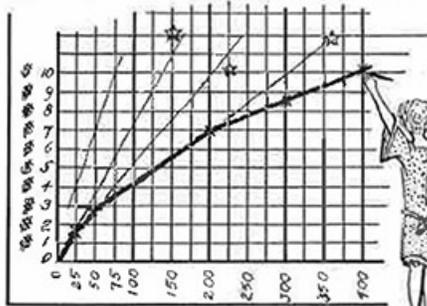


WHAT DID HE FORGET ?

LIKE MANY OF THE GROWN UPS HE FORGOT
THAT THE FIRST 25 KWHR. COSTS 7.2¢
THAT THE NEXT 25 " " 4.5¢
THAT THE NEXT 50 " " 2.7¢
AND ALL THE REST COSTS ONLY 1.8¢.

INCREASING THE USE OF ELECTRICITY
DOESN'T GO SO FAR AS TO DIMINISH THE
SIZE OF THE BILL, BUT THE BILL INCREASES
SLOWLY WITH

**THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSE-
HOLD RATE OF THE READING
MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT!**

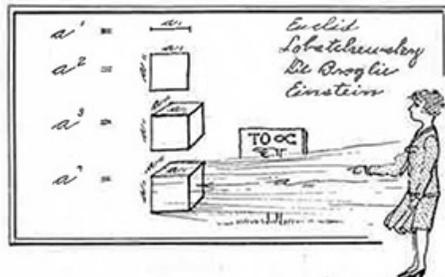


HIGHER MATH- EMATICS

PARABOLA? NO. HYPERBOLA? NO. WHAT IS IT THEN?

THE MIRABILA - FROM MIRA, THE WONDERFUL. THE CURVE OF THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT. THE CURVE WITH THE EQUATION $7.2¢ \times 25 + 4.5¢ \times 25 + 2.7¢ \times 150 + 1.8¢ \times X =$ YOUR BILL. THE CURVE WHICH SHOWS HOW THE AMOUNT OF THE BILL TENDS TO STAY DOWN WHEN THE USE OF ELECTRICITY INCREASES. THE CURVE OF THE RATE WHICH MAKES CHEAP ELECTRICITY AVAILABLE

FOR EVERYBODY !



THE FOURTH DIMEN- SION

IS DIFFICULT TO RELATE TO HUMAN AFFAIRS
BUT THERE IS NO DIFFICULTY WITH THE SIG-
NIFICANCE OF THE FOUR STEPS OF THE ALL-
PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READ-
ING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.

(25 @ 7.2¢, 25 @ 4.5¢, 150 @ 2.7¢, REST @ 1.8¢)

THE FIRST BLOCK BANISHES THE KERO-
SENE LAMP, THE SECOND BLOCK BANISHES
THE TOASTING FORK, SAD-IRON, CARPET
SWEEPER, ETC. THE THIRD MAKES ELEC-
TRIC COOKING POSSIBLE. AND THE FOURTH
PROVIDES FOR HOT WATER AND THE CO-
PIOUS USE OF ELECTRICITY FOR THOSE
WHO WISH TO HAVE HOUSEKEEPING

MADE EASY.

"SIT ON THE STOVE



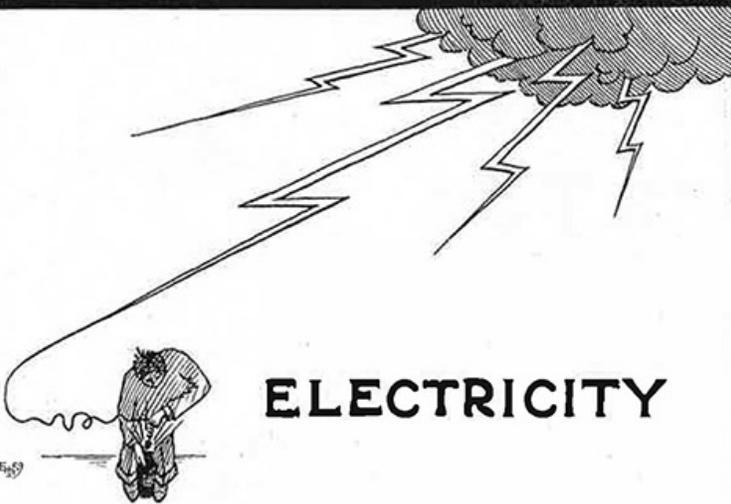
AND STIR CONSTANTLY" WAS A DIRECTION NOT EASILY FOLLOWED WITH THE RANGE OF THE PRE-VOLSTEAD ERA.

BUT WITH THE ELECTRIC RANGE OF TODAY - WHITE ENAMEL, INSULATED OVEN, THERMOSTAT HEAT CONTROL, HIGH SPEED BURNERS AND TIME CLOCK SWITCH - YOU CAN DO ANYTHING!

"EXPENSIVE TO OPERATE?" NOT WITH THE 2.7 CENT ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT!

WITH THAT RATE YOU CAN AFFORD TO COOK AND DO ALL OF YOUR HOUSEWORK

IN COMFORT!



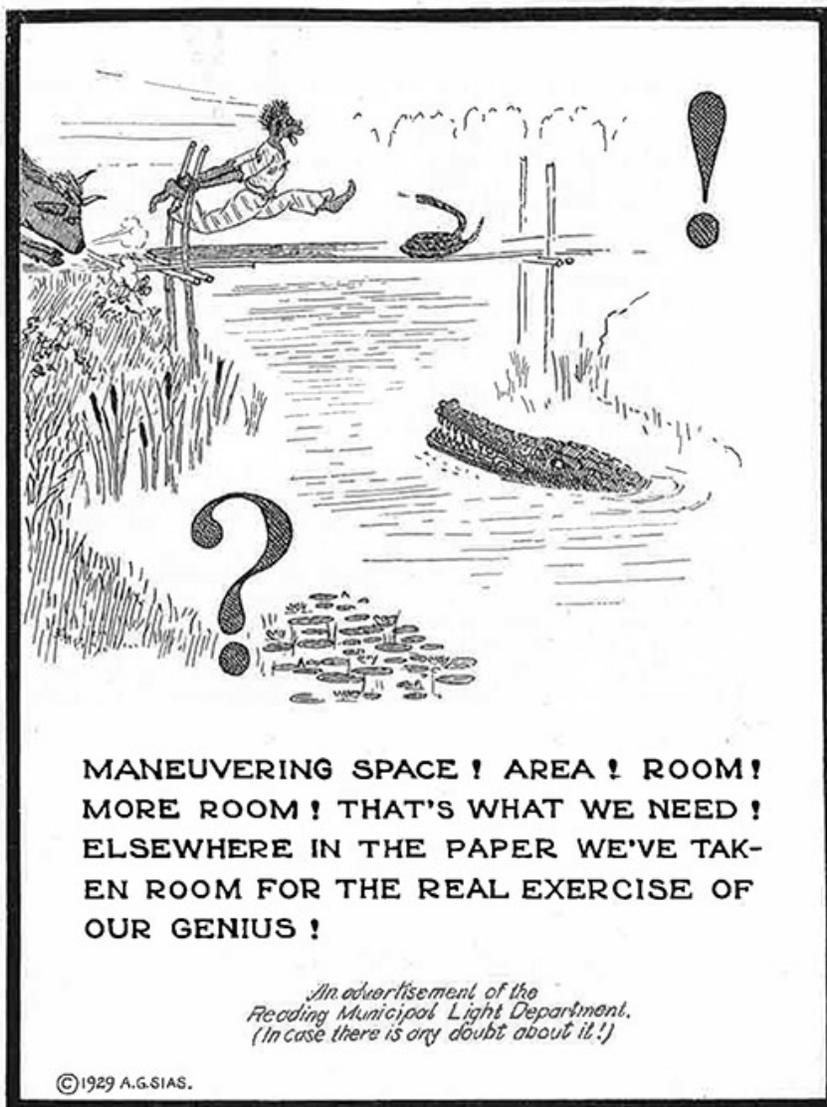
ELECTRICITY

CAN BE OF UNEXPECTED SERVICE TO THOSE WHO HAVE GUMPTION ENOUGH TO MAKE USE OF IT IN UNCONVENTIONAL OR MODERN WAYS.

THE 2.7 CENT ALL - PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT WILL BRING YOU LARGE AMOUNTS OF ELECTRICITY FOR OCCASIONAL USE, OR SMALLER AMOUNTS FOR CONSTANT USE AT SLIGHT EXPENSE.

HAVE SOME !

© 1929 - A. G. SIAS



MANEUVERING SPACE ! AREA ! ROOM !
MORE ROOM ! THAT'S WHAT WE NEED !
ELSEWHERE IN THE PAPER WE'VE TAK-
EN ROOM FOR THE REAL EXERCISE OF
OUR GENIUS !

*An advertisement of the
Reading Municipal Light Department.
(In case there is any doubt about it!)*



Birth Announcement



We are taking more space than usual for such an announcement because we are not calling attention to the advent of a squalling bit of humanity, but rather we are announcing the birth of a new idea.

The new idea, which has tangible form in the display windows of the Reading Municipal Light Department, is an electric range which is fast in operation and low in price, and at the same time has the sleek appearance of the high priced contraptions which have been available heretofore.

The proud parents of the new arrival are The Edison Electric Illuminating Company of Detroit and the Manufacturing Division of that company.

For some years the Detroit Edison Company, like other companies which sell electricity, have realized that standing against the popular use of electricity for cooking there have been three obstacles—the high price of electricity, the high price of the electric range, and the slow response of the electric range when it is called upon to operate.

The high price of electricity has been taken care of in some places. Reading is one of them. (If you don't know about the all-purpose household rate of the Reading Municipal Light Department which goes as low as 1.8c, it isn't our fault!)

The high price of the electric range the Detroit Edison Company thought it could take care of by applying to range manufacturing the methods of mass production which characterize the automobile industry in its vicinity.

The slowness of the ordinary electric range could be overcome only by a radical redesign, freed from the conventions of the past.

The Detroit Edison designed a new creation in the realm of electric cookery. They designed for speed of operation, for convenience and simplicity of operation, and they designed for economy of production.

Then they organized a Manufacturing Division and made the range.

We joined the waiting list, and stood in line, and secured some of the first stoves. The first shipment sold while we were looking at it. We got some more, and a third lot are on the way. We will save enough to display them completely in our show windows on Main Street and to demonstrate their unusual features in our sales-room from November 15 to 29. Thereafter we expect that they will be sold from the freight platform as fast as they arrive.

The price of the range is \$125, which includes delivery, installation on the customer's premises, and the rewiring of the house for all-electric service. If the house is already wired for a range the price will be \$90 installed.

Like most proud parents the Detroit Edison Company is inclined to brag. They say the oven will climb up to 400 degrees in five minutes. That the plate burners will purr like a kitten when turned to low and flash up like the heels of a mule when turned to high. We have heard about wonderful infants before, and we took care to test the first stove we could get.

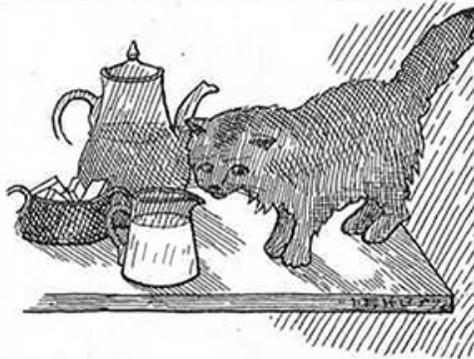
Our conclusion is that the Detroit Edison Company exercised a commendable restraint. The range is convenient, ingenious and many times faster than any other electric range we have ever seen.

The beauty of this range with its white enamel and polished chromium plate throughout, its simplicity, the facility with which it can be taken apart and cleaned, and the inexpensiveness of spare parts (the plate burners cost \$1.50, they screw in like a lamp, and can be taken out and scrubbed with a potato brush if the soup boils over) must all be seen in our windows or demonstrated in our kitchen.

Space limits the further expression of our enthusiasm for this new creation. We announce the arrival of the "Electrochef." On display at the office of the Reading Municipal Light Department.

November 15 to 29

WHO'LL KNOW



IF YOU DO GET SOME ?

WE ASK FOR THOSE ECONOMISTS WHO SAY THAT THE 2.7 CENT BLOCK OF THE HOUSEHOLD RATES OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT IS ALL BLAH, BECAUSE NOBODY GETS ANY OF IT ANYWAY.

WELL WHY NOT ? WHY NOT GET SOME ? WHY NOT INDULGE IN 10 CENTS WORTH OF ELECTRICITY A DAY AND GIVE YOUR FAMILY THE HOT WEATHER COMFORTS WHICH ELECTRICITY AFFORDS ? 10 CENTS A DAY ! (THE PRICE OF A PUNK CIGAR.) WILL YOUR POCKETBOOK EVER KNOW

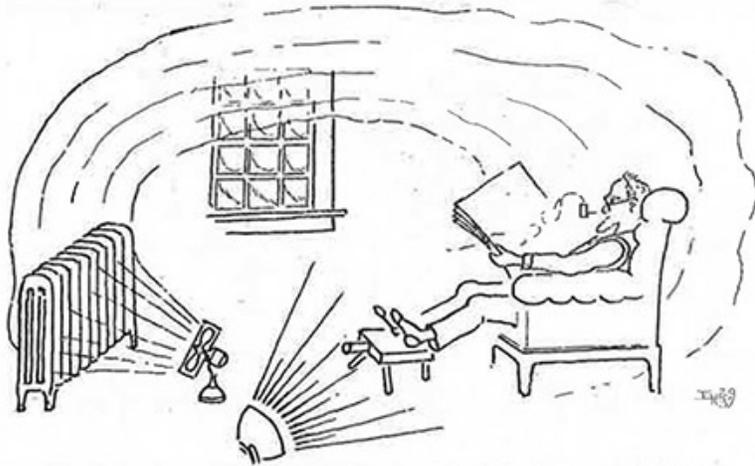
THE DIFFERENCE ?



DECIDEDLY

**USEFUL AND ATTRACTIVE THINGS
TO HAVE ABOUT THE HOUSE ARE THE
PRESENT DAY ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES.
THEY CAN BE CONNECTED TO ANY LIGHT-
ING SOCKET AND OPERATED AT A COST OF
FROM $1\frac{1}{2}$ CENTS TO $\frac{1}{16}$ OF A CENT AN HOUR
AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE -
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.
SUNBOWLS, FANS, FLAT IRONS, EGG -
COOKERS, TOASTERS, PERCOLATORS, BED
LAMPS, - ALL HELP YOU TO LIVE**

IN THE MODERN MANNER!



FOR ROOMS THAT ARE HARD TO HEAT

AN ELECTRIC FAN BLOWING ON THE RADIATOR
OR A SUNBOWL GLOWING ON YOU.- BOTH IF
YOU WANT THAT "FEET IN THE OVEN"
SENSATION OF YE OLDEN TYMME !

A 12" FAN WILL RUN 9 HOURS FOR
ONE CENT AND A SUNBOWL COSTS LESS
THAN 1½ CENTS AN HOUR AT THE
2.7 CENT RATE OF THE -
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT



SICK ROOM COMFORTS

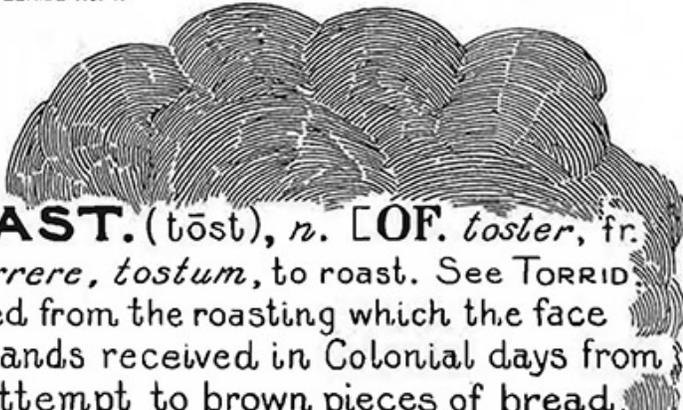
OF VARIOUS KINDS CAN BE FOUND IN ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES.

THEY COST TO OPERATE FROM $1\frac{1}{2}$ CENTS AN HOUR TO 1 CENT A DAY (OR EVEN LESS) AT THE 27 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.

WARMING PADS, BOUILLON HEATERS, TOASTERS, EGG COOKERS, GRILLS, SUNBOWLS, FANS FOR WARMING OR COOLING, BED AND TABLE LAMPS -

THEY LIGHTEN THE CARE OF THE INVALID, THEY DIMINISH THE DISCOMFORT OF ILLNESS AND THEY TURN CONVALESCENCE INTO

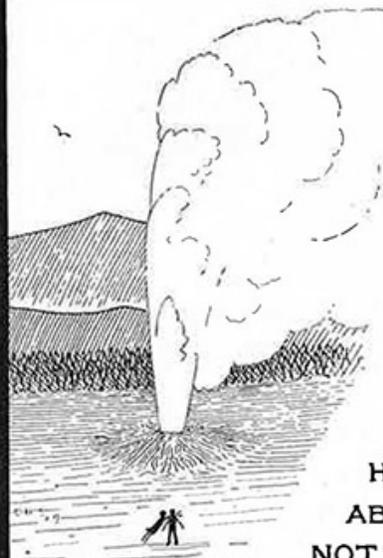
HAPPY DAYS!



TOAST. (*tōst*), *n.* [*OF. toaster*, fr. *L. torrere, tostum*, to roast. See *TORRID*. Derived from the roasting which the face and hands received in Colonial days from the attempt to brown pieces of bread over the coals of the fireplace.] **1.** BURNED BREAD THAT YOU SCRAPE THE BLACK OFF AND THEN EAT. *Obs.* **2.** THE NICELY BROWNEED PRODUCT MADE POSSIBLE BY THE INVENTION OF THE ELECTRIC TOASTER AND THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE (7.2¢ 4.5¢, 2.7¢, 1.8¢) OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT. *Q.V.*

Obs. 





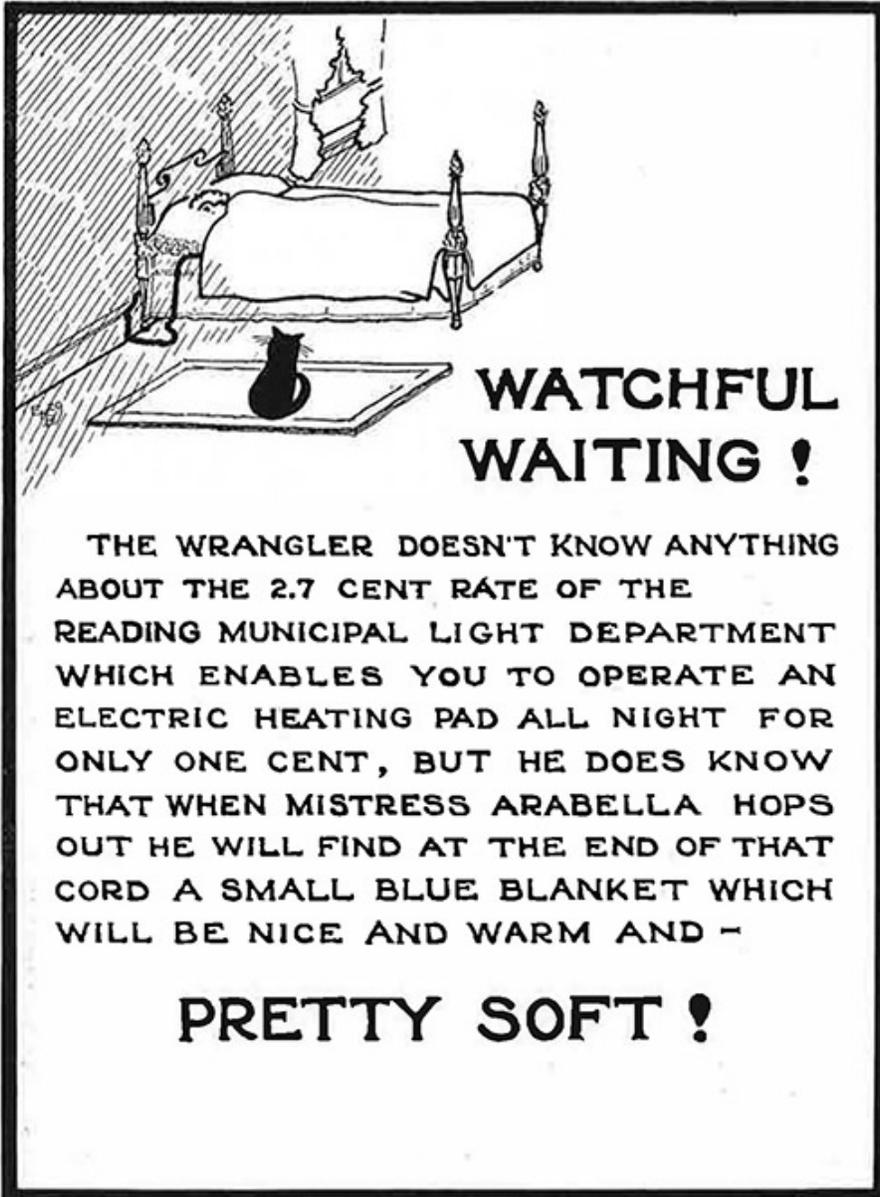
OLD FAITHFUL.

EVER SINCE ITS DISCOVERY IN 1870 OLD FAITHFUL HAS BANGED INTO THE AIR ITS TOWERING CLOUD OF STEAM AND HOT WATER WITH COMMENDABLE REGULARITY.

NOT SO SPECTACULAR IN ITS OPERATION, WE TRUST, BUT WITH EVEN GREATER RELIABILITY THE ELECTRIC WATER HEATER WILL YIELD ITS SUPPLY OF HOT WATER AT ANY TIME HOT WATER IS REQUIRED.

FOR THE STATISTICS OF THIS DOMESTICATED PHENOMENON WHEN FED ON THE 2.7 AND 1.8¢ JUICE OF OUR ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE CONSULT THE

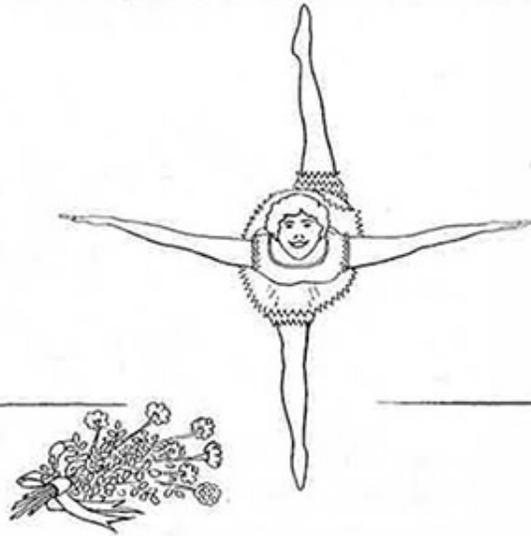
READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.



WATCHFUL WAITING !

THE WRANGLER DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT WHICH ENABLES YOU TO OPERATE AN ELECTRIC HEATING PAD ALL NIGHT FOR ONLY ONE CENT, BUT HE DOES KNOW THAT WHEN MISTRESS ARABELLA HOPS OUT HE WILL FIND AT THE END OF THAT CORD A SMALL BLUE BLANKET WHICH WILL BE NICE AND WARM AND -

PRETTY SOFT !



POINTS OF INTEREST

CENTER ABOUT THE ATTRACTIVE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT WHICH APPLIES TO EVERY HOUSEHOLD ACCOUNT.

LIGHTS CAN BE BURNED WITH REGARD TO YOUR CONVENIENCE RATHER THAN THE SIZE OF YOUR BILL - IN DARK HALLWAYS PORCHES AND FOR NIGHT LIGHTS - AND AS FOR APPLIANCES, OPPORTUNITIES OPEN

IN ALL DIRECTIONS

ONE HORSEPOWER



IS $\frac{3}{4}$ OF A KILOWATT. ONE HORSEPOWER HOUR IS $\frac{3}{4}$ OF A KILOWATT HOUR. THEREFORE 1 KILOWATT HOUR = $1\frac{1}{3}$ HORSEPOWER HOURS. - A HORSEPOWER FOR 1 HOUR AND 20 MINUTES! (DEEP, BUT TRUE.)

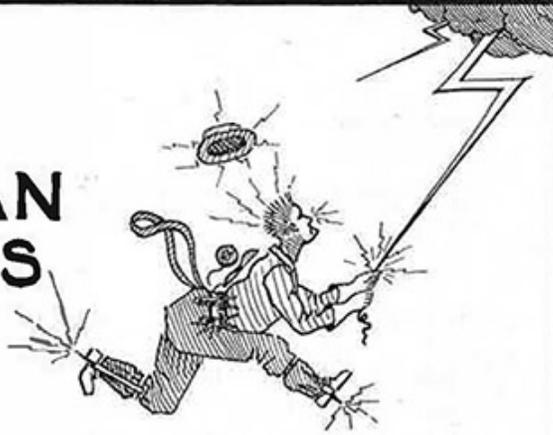
AND THAT HOUR AND 20 MINUTES COSTS 2.7 CENTS AT THE 2.7 CENT RATE OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT.

IMAGINE IT! THE POWER OF A HORSE FOR AN HOUR AND 20 MINUTES ENGAGED IN YOUR HOUSEWORK - BEATING RUGS OR IRONING OR WASHING CLOTHES OR DISHES!



SOME IMAGINATION!

THE LINEMAN CATCHES IT.



THE LIGHTNING MAY MISS YOU BY A MILE OR BY FIVE, BUT WITH EVERY THUNDERSTORM IT DANCES SOMEWHERE ON THE WIDESPREAD LINES OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT, - OFF BY PEABODY OR ANDOVER OR BURLINGTON.

AND WHEN IT DANCES THE LINEMEN TUMBLE OUT TO RESTORE THE LINES FOR THE JUICE THAT ANY HOUSEHOLDER CAN BUY FOR 2.7 CENTS. IN THE DARK AND IN THE WET, AMID BROKEN BRANCHES AND UPROOTED TREES, - EXCITEMENT IN

PLENTY.

A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.



When in the course of human events it becomes possible for the Reading Municipal Light Department to offer electricity to every household at a low price as soon as the first 25 kwhrs. have been paid for at 7.2 cent^s - a decent respect for the convenience of woman-kind requires that she have the freedom to use all of that 2.7 cent juice that her comfort requires.

The consideration that an extra 25 kwhrs. at 2.7 cent^s costs 67 cent^s a month more is thought unbecoming to man^{kind}.



DON'T
BE

TOO SURE THAT YOU ARE BECOMING EXTRA-
VAGANT BECAUSE YOUR ELECTRIC BILL HAS GONE
UP A MILE. YOU MAY BE GETTING ECONOMI-
CAL OR SENSIBLE, OR BOTH.

ELECTRICITY IS NOW A SUBSTITUTE FOR ALL
SORTS OF THINGS AND ALL KINDS OF LABOR.
FOR COAL, FOR GAS, FOR WOOD. FOR THE KNI-
GHT OF THE MUDDY FOOTSTEPS AND THE
LOCAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE YIP SING
TONG.

CONSIDER WHAT YOU USED TO PAY FOR
INCONVENIENT SUBSTITUTES BEFORE THE
FRUIT OF THE ALL PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD
RATE (7.2¢, 4.5¢, 2.7¢, 1.8¢) OF THE READING
MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT GETS YOU

SCAIRT!

THANKSGIVING ?

SERVICE	FROM		TO		Con- stant	Consumption in K. Whrs.	Amount	
	Date	Reading	Date	Reading				
RESIDENCE	10/20	3291	11/20	3386	1	95	\$ 7 60	
Service Charge							H. P.	
Total for Month								
Credit								
Gross Bill								
Arrears-Net								
TERMS								
30 Days from Date of Bill								
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE								
DEDUCT	If paid on or before						11/27	76
TOTAL NET BILL								\$ 6 84

3PT. CLARENCE SMITH
23 HARTSHORN ST.
READING MASS

1927

DR. to MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD, Town of Reading, 177 Main Street, Reading, Mass.
Office Hours: Daily 8 a. m. to 5 p. m., Saturdays 8 a. m. to 3 p. m. Tel. Reading 150

FOR THE EXTRA 100 KWHRs GIVEN HIM BY THE
ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE OF THE READING
MUNICIPAL LIGHT DEPARTMENT ADOPTED IN 1928 ?

SERVICE	FROM		TO		Con- stant	Consumption in K. Whrs.	Amount	
	Date	Reading	Date	Reading				
RESIDENCE	10/20	6684	11/20	6879	1	195	\$ 7 60	
Service Charge							H. P.	
Total for Month								
Credit								
Gross Bill								
Arrears-Net								
TERMS								
30 Days from Date of Bill								
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE								
DEDUCT	If paid on or before							76
TOTAL NET BILL								\$ 6 84

3PT. CLARENCE SMITH
23 HARTSHORN ST.
READING MASS

1929

DR. to MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD, Town of Reading, 177 Main Street, Reading, Mass.
Office Hours: Daily 8 a. m. to 5 p. m., Saturdays 8 a. m. to 3 p. m. Tel. Reading 150

HE OUGHT TO BE !



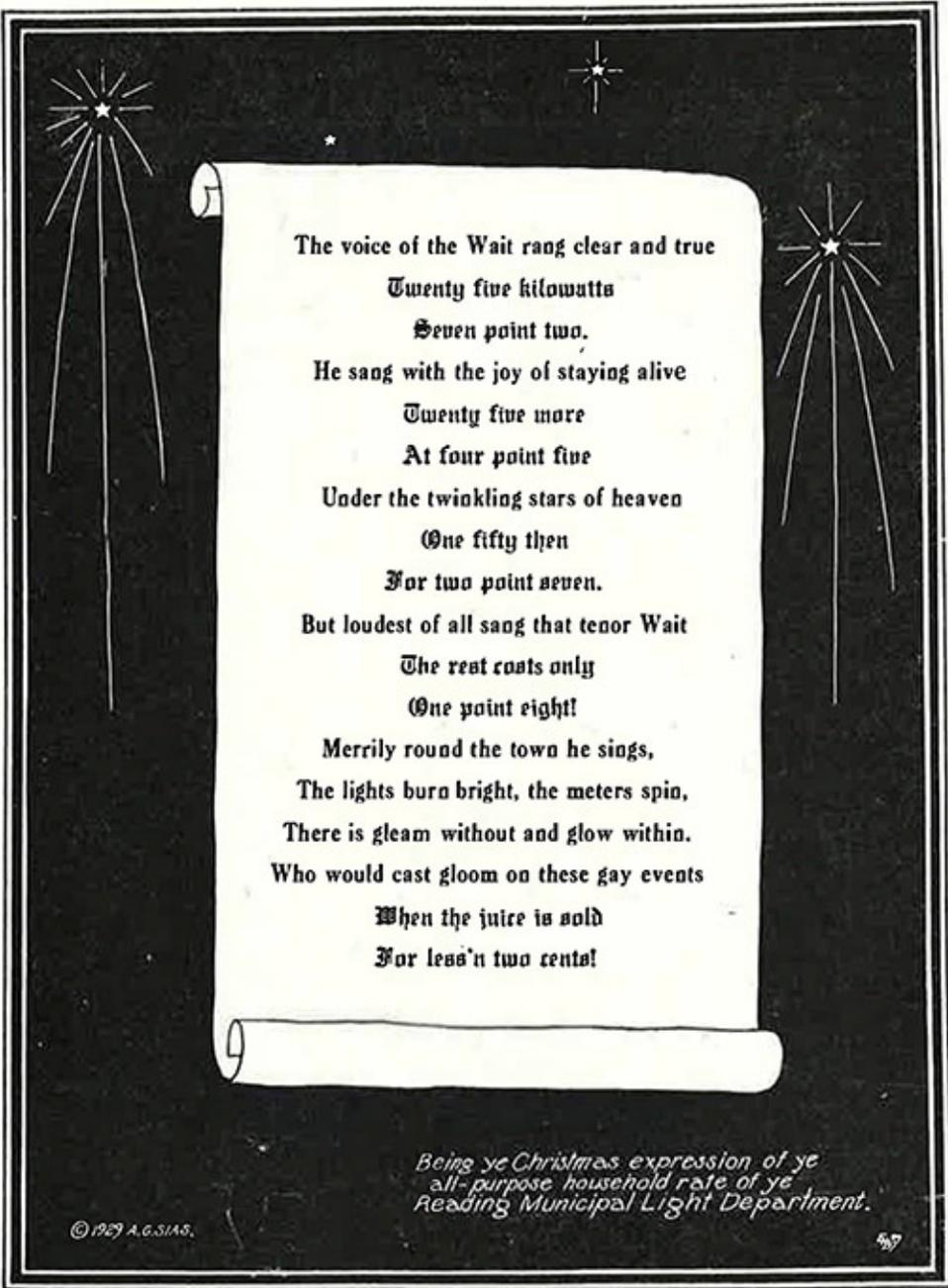
**WE'LL
PUT IT
ON**

ANY GROUNDS YOU WISH-
OUR ARGUMENT FOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTING.
FOR YOUR PERSONAL SATISFACTION, FOR
YOUR PRIDE IN THE APPEARANCE OF YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD, OR YOUR DESIRE TO IMITATE
JONES WHOSE PLACE LOOKED SO CHEERFUL
LAST CHRISTMAS.

WITH THE ALL-PURPOSE HOUSEHOLD RATE
OF THE READING MUNICIPAL LIGHT DE-
PARTMENT YOU CAN BUY TWICE AS MUCH
ELECTRICITY FOR \$6.00 AS YOU COULD
TWO YEARS AGO. GET IT!

AND HOWEVER MUCH YOU USE, REMEM-
BER WE WILL CHARGE IT AND IT WILL GO ON

YOUR JANUARY BILL!



The voice of the Wait rang clear and true
Twenty five kilowatts
Seven point two,
He sang with the joy of staying alive
Twenty five more
At four point five
Under the twinkling stars of heaven
One fifty then
For two point seven.
But loudest of all sang that tenor Wait
The rest roars only
One point eight!
Merrily round the town he sings,
The lights burn bright, the meters spin,
There is gleam without and glow within.
Who would cast gloom on these gay events
When the juice is sold
For less'n two cents!

*Being ye Christmas expression of ye
all-purpose household rate of ye
Reading Municipal Light Department.*