

# BORDERTOWN LIT BY ELECTRICITY

## Successful Opening.

Bordertown Electric Lighting System was officially opened on Wednesday evening amid scenes of rejoicing. Except for the postponement of the lighting of the Bowling and Croquet greens where the lamps had not been installed, the proceedings were an unqualified success. Mr. V. G. Petherick, of Naracoorte, characterised the plant as the best South of the Murray.

The engine was started at the Power House, Farquhar Street, about 7 p.m. by Cr. D. Stoddart (Chairman of Tatiara District Council), at the formal request of Mr. A. J. Frayne (local representative of the Border Electric Supply Company). Cr. J. C. Haynes then switched on the house lights of the town. At the corner of Woolshed and Farquhar Streets, Cr. A. A. Fisher turned on the street lights, which lit the town more brightly than most of Adelaide's suburbs.

### HISTORY OF THE SCHEME.

The question of provision of a proper lighting scheme for Bordertown has been alive for many years and dates back to a time before any other country town in the State had adopted the electric lighting system, but the movement that brought the present scheme into being began to really move on April 4th, 1922, when the Murray Engineering Company suddenly appeared with an agreement under which it asked the Tatiara Council for a franchise to supply electric light and power to Tatiara. Tatiara Council has a very large volume of public work on hand at all times owing to the great area it controls and the necessity of keeping open communications between a large producing hinterland and the railway outlets to the markets

a large producing hinterland and the railway outlets to the markets for wheat and wool. In this first and most important work of a local governing body the Council is as progressive as any Council out of Adelaide, and was the first South Eastern Council to invest in up-to-date road making plant. The call for roads has been so insistent that it has kept the Council so busy with construction, repairs and finance, that it is not surprising that Tatiara Councillors did not rush at a proposition which was right away from road making, so the River Murray Company's proposal was not accepted at once, and the Company passed on to Naracoorte where their terms were accepted, to the subsequent inconvenience of the local body and ratepayers because the Company soon went into liquidation, and left its contracts in a mixed condition.

Tatiara Council had on May 2, 1922, appointed a sub-Committee to go into the whole matter of electric lighting and this Committee at the meeting in the following December, asked for, and was granted, a sum to obtain an expert's report on the most practicable up-to-date scheme. On March 6th, 1923, the Committee brought before the Council a proposal for a municipal scheme to be installed at an estimated cost of £4,500 the scheme being

ted cost of £4,500 the scheme being largely the outcome of the expert advice of Mr A. W. Murray of the Southern Electric Power Co. The Council, after some opposition, decided to refer the scheme to the ratepayers, and the ratepayers at a meeting approved of it. The need for a loan, however, caused trouble and petitions from ratepayers of Mundalla and Wolseley Wards asked that a poll be taken on the loan, and, in October 1923, the ratepayers were against the loan. That finished the municipal proposal for that time. Then a new development occurred. Messrs Jackett and Kneese approached the Council on November 6, 1923, with a scheme to erect works and carry out the installation and the supply of light and power on fixed terms by means of a limited company. The Council at once signed the agreement submitted and the Tatiara Electricity Company was floated by the promoters. No move was made to instal the plant and supply the light, though it was reported that if the works were established three railway stations and one Victorian centre would deal with the new company for light and power. The scheme slept for nearly a year, when Mr A. W. Murray raised a new proposal to start works in Bordertown and to supply electric energy in bulk to the Council for supply to consumers. Under that proposal the new Company was to erect the plant and generate power, and the Council was to erect distributing plant. When the scheme was discussed it was found that the contractors under the agreement of November 1923, would not move one way or the other. After long negotiations they agreed to get out of the way on return of their deposit of £25, and the Council then, on November 7, 1924, signed an agreement with the Border Electric Supply Com-

pany to carry out the latest scheme. The new Company set to work at once, and, although there were difficulties in the way of obtaining necessary machinery in time, the distribution cables were erected, houses wired, and the plant erected in what, under the circumstances, was remarkably quick time. The scheme which was brought to working point this week, has involved a great deal of work and the Electric Light Committee of the Council had held innumerable meetings to

deal with theories and facts, while the untiring work put in by Mr A. W. Murray as the representative of the new scheme and the expert adviser of the Council has been very great. The new plant was ready for a trial run on Monday night, and about 10 p.m. current was generated and the street lights switched on so that staid residents who happened to be abroad at that hour wondered what miracle had occurred when the streets of the town were suddenly illuminated.

#### OPENING CEREMONY.

Cr. D. Stoddart was Chairman at the opening ceremony on Wednesday evening, May 13th, 1925, in the Bordertown Institute, which was filled to overflowing. He proposed the toast of "The King." In his address the Chairman said that the Bordertown people had required the light for a long time and now saw the service turned on. He was pleased to see a large gathering from all parts of the district. All the councillors were behind the local representatives in the scheme, and he hoped it would prove beneficial to everyone. Recalling the ceremony in the old Institute in 1886, when the Adelaide to Melbourne railway was opened, he said that this was the greatest step for

dourne railway was opened, he said that this was the greatest step forward the town had taken since then, although the lighting had not yet gone so far as it would have to go. There were several new buildings going up in the town. He had lived in the district 44 years and considered it second to none.

Apologies from Messrs Reidy and Shepherd, M's.P., Hon. J. Cowan, M.L.C., Mr. M. D. Cameron, M.H.R., and Lawloit Shire Council were read.

"You have not only a fine primary generating set, but in the system of alternating current you have one superior to anything south of the Murray", said Mr. V. G. Petherick, of Naracoorte, in proposing the toast of "The Bordertown Electric Lighting Scheme". The townspeople started that night under the happiest of auspices, for everything had gone with a swing. The alternating current system lent itself to supplying current many miles from the power house, which no other system could do. Both the Naracoorte and Bordertown systems were indebted to Mr. Murray, of the Southern Electric Power Co., and to Mr. Taylor, of Vickers-Petters Ltd, the makers of the machinery, for the system was the latest that it was possible to enjoy. He congratulated Mr. F. J. Green as one of the founders of electric lighting in the town. He admired the way the Council stood behind the company. In the Bordertown scheme both the District Council and private enterprise were working together. They should not ask too much of the scheme, for there were bound to be occasional mishaps with machinery. He hoped to see the town later order a plant of double the power.

In responding, Cr. A. A. Fisher said that Bordertown people had desired a scheme for a long time, proposals having been submitted ten years ago. Though these were rejected those who worked for the scheme did not stop for rebuffs. A good many halls

stop for rebuffs. A good many halls in the State would be jealous of Bordertown Institute that night. Mr. Petherick's compliments, coming from a man who had inside knowledge of electric lighting, were indeed gratifying. They had only made a start, but it was a substantial start. Some people had expressed doubt as to whether lighting a small town would be a success, but those who had gone into the matter felt certain it would succeed. He would have preferred to see the scheme under the control of the Council, but it was satisfactory to see half of it under the district authorities. The system would need extension, and for this purpose he urged the townsfolk to put their capital into it.

Mr. W. S. Hutley, who proposed the toast of "The Border Electric Supply Company", complimented the directors on their enterprise. The local director, Mr. A. J. Frayne, was one of the progressive citizens of the town. The directors had done the work that the people of Bordertown were not prepared to do, and he hoped they would be rewarded. Many persons present to-night had got a much better service than they were expecting. He hoped that more people would become subscribers, for the more power that was supplied the cheaper it would be. They must remember that if it had not been for the persistent efforts of Mr. Murray the townsfolk would have had no Border Electric Supply Company.

Mr. E. S. Taylor, Australian representative of Vickers-Petters, Ltd., as a director of the Border Electric Supply Company, responded, Speaking for himself, and he believed for his fellow directors, he considered the Company would be willing to sell to the District Council at any time, provided they were repaid for the capital they had put into it. This was only a beginning and he hoped to see extensions with little delay.

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Power Co.", Cr. J. C. Haynes made especial mention of Mr. Murray, who had done the practical work in installing the light in the district. Though they at first doubted that the scheme would succeed, Mr. Murray was able to convince them that it would pay, and had done everything he could to make the scheme a success. There seemed little likelihood of trouble. He was grateful to those who had been public-spirited enough to pay for the mains, so that the Council could run these past their properties. He hoped that before long they would have the pleasure of seeing further extensions.

Mr. A. W. Murray, a partner of the firm, responded. He said they had never had to deal with a council which had treated them better than the Tatiara Council. Every councillor had taken an interest in the scheme. Mr. Wilson, the clerk, had been an important factor in bringing the work to a successful conclusion. The speaker believed in using nothing but the latest electrical machinery and hence had counselled the up-to-date plant installed. It had been his idea to make the scheme serve the whole district. Mundalla, Wolseley and Serviceton could be included. They hoped to have light for houses running all night shortly, and later to have the streets lighted for the express from Melbourne. They would arrange as soon as possible to have current available twice a week for domestic power. The engine at present was running on only about half its load.

In proposing the toast of "The Towns and Trade of the District",

Mr. J. G. Woolcock, of the Southern Electric Power Co., said this was his first visit to Bordertown and he would

carry away very pleasant recollections of it. It seemed to him one of the bright spots of South Australia, and a highly prosperous district. He greatly regretted that such a large part of the population of the State was within a few miles of Adelaide, and hoped that would be rectified with the installation of city conveniences, such as electric light, in the country. Farmers who retired would be encouraged to live in their own country towns. He congratulated the town on its institute and its honor roll. He hoped the light would be the success that was anticipated, and that the price would be reduced as more consumers were connected.

Mr W. J. Thomson, who responded said that the Tatiara was a wealthy and solid district. Its fee simple value, he had estimated, was practically £1,000,000 based on the council figures, which formed a conservative estimate. A great advantage to the district had been the introduction of superphosphates which had revolutionised production here and throughout the Commonwealth. He calculated that 100,000 bags of grain were grown in the Tatiara. The district was served by three regular stock marketing firms who sold between 100,000 and 125,000 sheep a year. Between 4000 and 5000 bales of wool were grown. He estimated that the total income for the Tatiara would be in the vicinity of half a million pounds a year. Its wealth had been indicated by the way in which it had over-subscribed its war loan quotas. The Bordertown railway station was graded as a class 4 station which meant that it handled a large revenue. It had a splendid post office and some other fine buildings, two banks which both appeared to have the liberal support of the district. The next step would be for Bordertown to become a municipality or

town to become a municipality or a corporation. With the many conveniences it now had he agreed that the farmers who retired were more likely to stay in the district. He considered, however, that many of the shop buildings hardly did justice to the importance of the town.

Cr Fisher proposed the health of "The Visitors" and hoped they would go away impressed with the importance of the district. Mr E. S. Taylor responded.

Songs were rendered by Mr V. G. Petherick and by the Bordertown Choral Society, the latter conducted by Mr W. S. Hutley. Miss E. Ferguson was accompanist. A well-attended dance followed. The catering was in the hands of Mr G. Rabone.