

# City Power Plant In Best Shape Of Its 46 Year History

## Principle of City Owning Plant Now Accepted But Some Opposition Exists

For the past 46 years there has been almost constant controversy over the City of Kinston's electric generating plant. That's how long the city has had a plant. From the beginning there has been debate—sometimes bitter—on the principle and practice of municipal ownership. On several occasions municipal ownership has nearly ended. Today, however, the city plant is in better condition than ever before in its history, both from the mechanical ability to generate electricity and from the general acceptance of its continued operation by the city.

This state of acceptance by the majority has, of course, been necessary from the beginning to make possible the approval of three and one half million dollars in bonds for the addition of new generating equipment and additions to the building in which the plant is housed.

The principle bone of contention insofar as city ownership is concerned stems from the argument: Does the city provide service comparable to private companies at a price in line with that being charged by other sellers of electricity in this immediate area?

Perhaps the only yardstick for service comparison comes in the number and length of periods during which power is off for one reason or another. In this respect, contrary to opinions of many local individuals, the Kinston record stands extremely high for the past several years—and this during a period of major construction. There is every reason to presume that the "power off" record of Kinston will be even better now with construction and renovation over for a period.

The price comparison is more difficult, but it is obvious that the Kinston plant operates at a

profit far above that of private power generators in this area. It is obvious for several reasons: First, the property taxes in Kinston are less than the debt service item in the current budget and since the million dollar plus budget is balanced it is more than apparent that a good-sized piece of change is picked up from some other source and that the only other major source of income the city has is the income from its utilities.

Kinston's electric power plant does operate at a profit. There's no getting around this fact. But if the people of the community had rather pay higher property taxes the electricity rate can be pulled down at any time.

In the end the profit-making prices for electricity in Kinston are only another type of taxation. Many will argue that it is an unjust tax but there are other arguments that point toward it being an even fairer tax than a real estate tax. Study a few: Consider the transient Kinston resident, who lives here for a few months or a few years. He owns no property, pays no city tax. Yet his children go to school, he needs fire protection, police protection, health department service streets to ride on, his trash and garbage have to be collected just as well as that of the biggest tax payer in town. By realizing a profit from the water and electricity used by such a transient he at least pays a fraction of his cost to the community.

Another factor that is fixed and unchangeable is: The family or business using the most electricity is also the family or business that is best able to pay. In this sense it is a lot less discriminatory than North Carolina's sales tax law which charges a farmer or soda shop

clerk the same tax on a \$500 flivver that a millionaire pays on a \$100,000 yacht. The ability to pay is assuredly connected to the rate of consumption of electric power.

Suppose a property owner is unfortunate enough to have several pieces of his rental property empty over a long period. His real estate tax remains fixed but the "tax" collected from electricity is only collected when electricity is being used.

Consider the 20 or more chain stores in Kinston, who own no property except the usually pre-shrunk inventories that bob up at tax listing time. True the pay rent to a landlord who in turn pays taxes but not in the ration of the money siphoned out of a community. Such stores usually have a low wage scale and very successfully manage to take away a great deal more than they bring to a community—this is of course obvious for they have to in order to stay in business. Yet these chain stores require just as much fire protection, police protection as the oldest or the largest taxpayer in the business area. If Kinston is able to make \$100 per year profit on each of these from their utilities this represents several thousand dollars that are not collected over in Goldsboro where power is furnished by the Carolina Power and Light Company.

The Kinston plant today stands ready and able to provide power in the quantities needed at present and for an unforeseeable time in the future. Imagination alone can determine how long the present facility will be adequate for this area it serves. No one dreamed ten years ago—including the large private power companies—that electricity consumption would jump so rapidly. Generators of electricity—private and public—looked toward industry and gauged their production accordingly, but this is where they got off the track for the tremendous boost in electricity use did not come from more or expanding industry but from the private home.

Where 10 or 15 years ago the home used electricity for a single light bulb hanging in the center of a room today that same home will have two, three or more lamps per room, a radio, stove, a water heater, vacuum cleaner, refrigerator, electric iron and washing machine. And consider how much can be done for so little through this giant called electricity. No servant has ever given so much for so little.

Possibly the worst mistake Kinstonians can make is to hide their heads in the sands again and permit their electric generating facility to get so far behind as it did in the past 15 years. This was not all due to

oversight however since the war interrupted efforts to bring the plant up to snuff and caused a major shortage of men and materials needed for this expansion.

In the sphere of finance, thousands of dollars could have been saved for the city if a fractional part of the utilities' profits were set aside regularly for renovation and additions. This money could draw interest while not in use and would eliminate future needs for bond issues at any rate of interest no matter how low.



**LAIRD'S**  
**APPLE**  
**BRANDY**

**\$3.70**  
4/5 Quart

**86.4 PROOF**

LAIRD & CO., SCoBEYVILLE, N. J.

## Real Bargains

—IN—

## Used Tractors

— SEE THESE BEFORE YOU BUY —

**FARMALL "H" — with Equipment**

**THREE FORDS**

**TWO JOHN DEERE "L's" with Equipment**

**OLIVER "70"**

## Jenkins-Jones Motor Co.

121 West Blount Dial 4702



**Glamorug**  
9 x 12 SIZE  
for only **\$38.50**

Thrifty? Just Look at the Price Tag!

ALL-WOOL FACE

1. Texturous leaf pattern for any color scheme.
2. Handsome scroll in fine embossed effect.
3. Rich modern leaf as new as tomorrow!

CHOOSE YOUR SIZE

27"x54"	\$3.75	9'x10'6"	\$33.50
6'x9'	18.95	9'x12'	38.50
9'x7'6"	23.95	9'x15'	47.50

Thrifty is RIGHT! Such lovely patterns (all of them fade-proof!) in a thick, durable rug with a wool face for beauty and service—and all for this low, low price! No wonder Glamorugs are thrifty!

## Oettinger Bros.

KINSTON NEW BERN