

Letter To Editor

WHAT PRICE ANNEXATION?

Editor, The Altamont Enterprise:

Some of the residents of the McKownville area of the Town of Guiderland have become confused about the question of annexation to the City of Albany because all of the issues involved have not been presented to them.

These are the issues:

SCHOOLS — If annexation took place, children of the area would be scattered throughout the already crowded Albany school system instead of attending the new schools which the Guiderland Central School District has provided and which are being expanded to meet growing needs.

Instead of having transportation provided by the district, parents would be obliged to provide it. This would be true for children attending parochial schools as well as for those in the public schools.

Parents from the McKownville area would be a small minority and would have little or no voice in making sure that the Albany school system, with its appointed board of education, would provide the quality of education they want their children to have.

FIRE PROTECTION — Instead of having a volunteer fire department in their own community, the nearest fire protection would be that at Allen St., from two to three miles from the area to be protected. Distance, time and manpower can be all-important in combating fire.

The McKownville Fire department, and the Western Turnpike Rescue Squad, so far as the McKownville area is concerned, probably would cease to function.

WATER AND SEWERS — The city of Albany has twice refused to sell water to McKownville. The price of Albany water is annexation.

Mayor Corning's annexation bill provides: "Within a reasonable time after such annexation takes effect, the city of Albany shall provide said newly annexed territory with a proper water supply, and shall provide a suitable sewer outlet for the same and connect it with the sewers in said territory to dispose of the sewage therefrom, in any manner that the city of Albany may deem proper."

The words "reasonable time" are important.

Those who are looking to annexation to solve sewer and water problems need only look to some of their neighbors in the city of Albany to find out how long they might have to wait.

That part of the city of Albany adjoining McKownville, west of Fuller Rd. off of Madison Ave. extension, has been in the city for at least 40 years, yet the residences there have neither a public water supply or sewers.

REAL ESTATE ASSESSMENTS — Valuations of homes and other real estate would be fixed under the city's assessment system.

To have the privilege of annexing the McKownville area with its more than \$1.5 million of assessed valuation, the city is willing not only to provide water and "a suitable sewer outlet" within "a reasonable time" but is, according to the Mayor's bill, ready to pay some of the indebtedness outstanding against the area to be annexed.

Why?

Many of the residents of McKownville choose to live there because of the advantages which it affords in having an opportunity to have a voice in affairs of the community in which they live. The 1,400 residents of the McKownville area, if they exercise their freedom, can reasonably expect to have their influence felt in the Town of Guiderland, but in Albany they would constitute a tiny, powerless minority.

The loss of an opportunity to be heard with reasonable prospect to action is, therefore, the real price of annexation.

The loss of the McKownville area also would be a loss to the remainder of the town and the school district where remaining taxpayers would continue to pay cost of general government and of overhead in operation of the school system.

The Town Board also has an obligation. It should act immediately to correct conditions which have been a cause of complaint for some time. If the board acts, as there is every reason to believe it will, I am confident the minority move for annexation soon will be forgotten.

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