TOWN AFFAIRS AND FINANCES

The warning for the annual town meeting has been posted in four public places since Thursday, Feb. 23rd, and includes 17 articles of the usual nature, such as accepting the report of the town officers, voting certain and usual appropriations, exemptions, road appropriations, election of all town officers required by law, and several other items of interest.

It will behoove the voters to give each and every article that is to be acted upon due and careful consideration, and the further fact that there are about 200 unpaid poll taxes, which means there are that many voters who are not entitled to vote on any matters that are to be considered. Give the appropriations and taxation matters careful thought and figuring before any action is taken.

It would not seem at this time that a much lower tax rate in town could be consistently voted, with the duty that the town is at present incurring, and with the Overseer's department having to meet such an enormous expense item as it has the past year. The tax rate took a deep drop from 83.42 in 1931 to 82.74 in 1932, a big reduction, and one of the biggest drops in a tax rate that this or any other town ever experienced ever in good times.

The annual report of the town officers for the year 1932, or for the fiscal year ending February 1, 1922, is in the hands of the voters at this time, and a proportion of some figure will be of little interest at this time.

In the overseer's department, Mr. Bell, the present incumbent, has had the busiest year in the history of the town since his office was established. The unemployment situation, the depressive times, etc., has created a demand upon his department that is not only astounding but astonishing for the town of Hardwick, and that Mr. Bell has done as well as anybody could with the great demands made upon his department, goes without saying.

In the year 1931 the Overseer drew orders to the amount of practically $300.00. Of this amount there was a return from other towns to an amount of about $200.00, and a total expense to the town of about $500.00.

In 1932 the amount was more than doubled, or practically $500.00. All of the amount there is about $200.00 as there is in refunds from other towns and individuals, which will cause the total amount of orders drawn to be some over $1000.00, at least. In spending this amount of money, or in orders drawn by this office, Mr. Bell has been called upon to aid about 70 families, and a greater per cent of aid has been for some families for a whole year, others nearly that and so on down through the length of time.

The recently organized Community Welfare Association, of which Mrs. Marcia was elected supervisor, has been of material assistance to the Overseer in clothing these 70 families (thorougly), except possibly so to the winter, and if the amount of money that would have been necessary for the expenditure of clothing was available it would be found that the association has been the means of saving the town many hundreds of dollars.

As far as the town farm account, that is a department exhausted solely by the selectmen and the figures available in the report following the report of the overseer will explain itself. Sowing to say the farm is not what could be called the present time a paying proposition, and there was an article in the warning a previous year noting that the selectmen be authorized and empowered to dispose of the town farm. They had a few offers under consideration but nothing developed, and they have continued to run the farm as best they could under the conditions and circumstances.