

# Work Pushed On Sewage, Water Jobs City Plans Outlay Of \$109,576,000

Progress reports on two of the city's most ambitious projects—construction of new sewage treatment plants and improvement of the water system—indicate that work is well under way and should be completed within the next four years.

Recommended by the City Planning Commission, area disposal projects cost \$109,576,000 and improve the water system estimated at \$37,970,000, a total of \$109,576,000.

## WILL REDUCE POLLUTION

The sewage treatment plant will reduce pollution in the Schuylkill and Delaware, and with construction of new sewers as part of the program, will improve drainage and flood control.

In this connection, three huge projects are already under way.

Construction of the Northeast Sewage Treatment Works at Wheat Street and Roosevelt is about 70 percent complete and should be finished by the spring of 1955.

## TO HELP NORTHEAST

This plant will treat sewage from the city's northeast, which combined with river pollution in the Schuylkill and Delaware, and with construction of new sewers as part of the program, will improve drainage and flood control.

Work on the building of the Southeast Sewage Treatment Works, at Swanson and Packer ave. on the Delaware, was started in November and is expected to be partly completed in 1954.

## PRIMARILY FOR SEWER-BUILDING

The sewage treatment works on land owned by the city near the International Airport has begun, but actual construction will start in the spring. It is estimated that this plant will be completed by 1956, at a cost of \$100,000,000 and ready for full operation in 1958.

Principally for sewer-building, the sewage treatment works on land owned by the city near the International Airport has begun, but actual construction will start in the spring. It is estimated that this plant will be completed by 1956, at a cost of \$100,000,000 and ready for full operation in 1958.

## PROJECTS OUTLINED

The water improvement work includes:

Installation of an ozone plant at the Belmont Pumping Station at a cost of \$100,000,000. The plant is to be used for water treatment and will provide an adequate and palatable supply for West Philadelphia and Overbrook. Also installed are new filter equipment, installation of temporary canals feeding facilities at Torredale Pumping Station to improve the water taste at a cost of \$400,000 and a new filtered pumping station.

## NEW FOX CHEAD UNIT

A new filtered pumping station at Fox Chase.

## A NEW CAR HOUSE

A new car house at East Passyunk.

## NEW FILTER EQUIPMENT

For the Queen Anne station.

Other and additional improvements, including the construction of many new filter tanks connecting new homes, are well under way, with nearly \$5,000,000 worth of contracts having been let during the last year.

# 4 PRIORITY OK'D TOO LATE TO HELP IN '42

Old System Nearing  
Peak of Capacity;  
Repairs Frequent.

By LEEDS MOBERLEY

Philadelphia's whole water production program is in danger because of the precarious condition of our run-down waterworks.

## SYSTEM BURDENED.

The hundreds upon hundreds of millions of dollars in defense contracts placed in this key industrial center have imposed a burden which the system is in no condition to bear.

The granting of an A-4 priority last night for materials needed to put the long-delayed \$18,000,000 rehabilitation program into effect came too late to solve the problem this year.

## CONSUMPTION INCREASES.

Consumption is now running upwards of \$30,000,000 gallons a day—25,000,000 to 30,000,000 above normal—and when the hot weather peak demand comes, the consumption will rise possibly beyond the system's maximum capacity of 400,000,000 gallons a day.

Nor do those figures take into account any further increases in demand resulting from new industries locating in Philadelphia or expansion of existing plants.

## WHEEZY OLD PUMPS.

For about 75 percent of its supply the city is dependent upon the wheezy old steam pumps at the Queen Lane and Lardner's Point stations that have been in service since as far back as 1903.

Breakdowns at Lardner's Point, which supplies nearly half the city, have become increasingly frequent in recent years, but Water Bureau engineers have managed thus far to keep enough of the overage pumps and boilers in service to avert catastrophe. The newest equipment there was installed in 1908. \$65,000 for repairs.

Queen Lane, where the equipment is not quite so archaic (most of the boilers were installed in 1912 but one was installed as recently as 1927) has given less trouble, but the situation at both plants has become

# CITY RUSHES START OF WATER WORK Priorities Granted, Bids for Improved System to be Asked soon

Bids for \$7,000,000 worth of materials and equipment for the city's water system will be sought in the near future, Director of Public Works John H. Neeson said today.

Under priorities granted last night by the City Production Board, a start will be made on the \$18,000,000 improvement program, but the job cannot be done to the extent desired, Neeson said.

He added that work would be begun as soon as possible on filter piping for the filter pumping plant and electrical machinery for driving pumps at the Torredale pumping station on a new filter building at the Queen Lane station; on electrical installations at the Lardner's Point station, and on reconstruction of large mains elsewhere.

The city was required to curtail the original program because of the heavy demand for materials, but had agreed to use concrete piping instead of iron and steel wherever possible.

The rating on priorities given to the city is A-4, which is the highest granted by the city.

"We have been trying for five months to obtain a rating so we might rehabilitate the water system," Neeson said. "We have been to Washington ten times to find out how critical our situation is."

"After two or three conferences, we were told we would not receive our requirements for cast iron, wrought iron, steel, sheet steel, re-enforcing steel, copper, bronze, manganese and other materials from 49,000 to 33,000,000, substituting concrete pipes for iron and steel pipes."

The Federal officials realized our water system could not operate without rehabilitation, but they also realized that the great defense industries in Philadelphia could not function without an adequate water supply.

The priority rating means we can proceed with part of our program," Neeson said. "We may play a part in the war effort."

## OBTAINS PRIORITIES FOR WATER SYSTEM

Director of Public Works John H. Neeson announced yesterday he had obtained a compromise agreement on priorities which will enable the city's \$18,000,000 water system rehabilitation program to go forward.

Substitutions of materials will be necessary in some instances, work will be slowed and some portions of the program may be held up "for the project." More than \$7,000,000 worth already have been spent.

## ON IMPORTANT ITEMS

But priorities on the "more important things" he said, had been obtained in the latest of a series of visits he made to Washington, and from whom he returned to his office yesterday.

Despite the substitutions, Neeson said, he believed the rehabilitation of the plant would be completed in time to cost no more than the originally-estimated \$18,000,000, and would be just as durable and satisfactory.

## TO USE LESS STEEL.

Substitutions, he said, would include such things as the use of reinforced concrete in building pump houses instead of structural steel construction, and the use of concrete instead of steel.

Metals needed for pumps, he said, would be obtained through priorities.

# WELLS WOULD PROVIDE 22,000,000 GALS. DAILY

Plans to Drill them here  
Disclosed by Owen

The city's water supply would be increased by about 22,000,000 gallons daily if plans to drill between 20 and 25 artesian wells in South Philadelphia go through.

The plan, estimated by Director of Public Works John H. Neeson after the plans were disclosed in Washington at a meeting of a conference of mayors by Dr. Hubert R. Owen, president of the Philadelphia Council of Defense.

Neeson said the project, which would require a drilling and filtering plant, and cost about \$750,000, and that it could be included in the \$18,000,000 water rehabilitation program.

If the plan is approved, the wells would be sunk in the region west of Broad and south of Pattison, at a site of a proposed building at the Queen Lane station; on electrical installations at the Lardner's Point station, and on reconstruction of large mains elsewhere.

Water from the wells would be used to reinforce the supply in the area between the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers, from the Queen Lane to Washington, and the Navy Yard, the Quartermaster Depot and Government defense housing projects.

## ENDS City's Concern

The concern of the Chemicals and Allied Products Branch of the new War Production Board, was officially lifted yesterday.

Dr. Hubert R. Owen, Director of the Council of Public Defense, informed the members of the General Assembly that the city's concern over the water supply was over.

He said, "The message, expected to take about 20 minutes to deliver, will primarily for an expansion of Pennsylvania's public health, welfare and insurance programs. It was proposed in concise terms that the public's demand is the primary concern of the present system."

## PHILA. Reform and Tax Fights Face Session Starting on Tuesday

By DUKE KAMINSKI  
Of The Bulletin Staff Correspondent

Washington, Jan. 28—Although chlorine is of little use in widely used chemicals in war manufacture, enough of it will be available for the purification of Philadelphia's drinking water supply.

It was indicated here today in an announcement by the Chemicals and Allied Products Branch of the new War Production Board.

Official said that despite a general shortage of chlorine, there will be no program to cut back on the use of chlorine in the drinking water supplies.

He also pointed out that chlorine is important in laundry and hospital use, which would affect many Philadelphia institutions.

## Study Plan to Drill Wells

Dr. Hubert R. Owen, at the same time that city officials were studying a plan to drill artesian wells in Southwest Philadelphia to create an auxiliary source of water for defense purposes, was also studying substantial increases in domestic water supply.

With the aid of the city's engineering department, he said, he had heard Mayor LaGuardia, U. S. Civilian Defense Director, mention that the chlorine would be subject to his priorities and would be interfered with.

"Dr. Owen said, 'to be sure we will have enough chlorine to drink water.'

He also pointed out that chlorine is important in laundry and hospital use, which would affect many Philadelphia institutions.

## Water Works Priorities

IT is good news to Philadelphians that questions of priority for waterworks improvements have been settled so that so far as materials are concerned the work can now go forward.

The City is far behind on its waterworks rehabilitation, which for some time has been described as being of the utmost urgency if disastrous interruptions of service were to be avoided.

A great deal of the delay has, of course, been beyond City Hall's control. Drawing specifications is a baffling task when no one can be certain what new restrictions tomorrow's war production program will impose.

The City is now planning to get through with 36,000 instead of 49,000 tons of metal testifies not only to the difficulties of the Department of Public Works in designing the improvements, but also to a certain effectiveness in the prioritizing system.

Meanwhile, water consumption is rising rapidly and is now far in excess of what the city's present waterworks system can supply. The city's Council has never needed the advice it has received so often to conserve water by metering the unmetered services and by a scientific scheduling of charges.

The plant was originally ex-

# CHLORINE SUPPLIES ASSURED FOR CITY

Use for Disinfecting of  
Water will not be Cut,  
U. S. Officials say

By RAYMOND C. BRECHT  
(A Bulletin Staff Correspondent)

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# Assembly Set For Battles On Key Bills Phil. Reform and Tax Fights Face Session Starting on Tuesday

By DUKE KAMINSKI  
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Harrisburg, Jan. 28—An assembly of mayors from 25 artesian wells in South Philadelphia go through.

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## 36 Million Gallons a Day

Whether or not the City finally would have to develop a new source, the water commission reported, would depend on the success of the rehabilitation of the system in producing an adequate supply of healthful, palatable water.

The commission offered a bill, increasing doses to combat turbidity caused by the recent rains. The bill causes impurities to settle to the bottom of the filter basins.

Samuel Cirelli, superintendent of the plant, said it was first hoped that the heavy rains might wash the wastes causing the turbid water. Instead they created a new problem by churning up the river.

The ozone plant at the Belmont plant, Belmont ave. and Ford road, was placed under contract in the spring of 1943 and is expected to produce 36,000,000 gallons of water taste-free and odor-free each day for the West Philadelphia area.

At the time, Dr. Hubert R. Owen, Director of Public Works, was in charge of the plant and he said that the plant would be the largest of its kind in the United States. Other ozonation systems, now in use, treat less than 5,000,000 gallons a day.

Taylor yesterday attributed most of the delay to the vastness of the experiment. The bill has been considered, he said, almost entirely through engineering difficulties and shortages in material and skilled personnel.

Ozone, its backers claim, will eliminate tastes and odors regardless of their source. The present Belmont system uses sand filters along with the standard chlorination method, but the ozone is to be used before the water gets to the sand filter basins.

## Spark Sets Up Gas

Ozone is a gas, and is to be manufactured at Belmont by passing chlorine and oxygen and adding a powerful electric spark. It will then be bubbled up through the water in tanks, combining with impurities to make them easy to remove.

"A lot of work has been done," Dr. Hubert R. Owen, Director of Public Works, said. "We have been to the city several times, and the city has been very helpful. We have been able to get the city to do what we wanted."

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# Start of Project To Purify Water Held Up 9 Mos. Bulletin - 1/2/49

Ozone Test Plant at Belmont to Take

Another 3; Year More Will Be Needed

To See If the Process Is Effective

By JOHN G. McCULLOUGH of The Bulletin Staff

A \$1,000,000 experiment to find out whether Philadelphia can get good water without spending half a billion dollars or so developing new sources is nine months behind schedule, and will be delayed at least another three, city officials acknowledged yesterday.

The experiment is the treatment of water through ozonation. The ozone equipment, which cost \$600,000, has been ready to be used at the Belmont filter station in West Philadelphia for three months, but the City has not completed other work to get the plant into operation.

The ozone process was ordered in an effort to decide if the city can continue to use the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers here as its source of water. The alternative is to bring the water from upstream.

Ozone, a departure from the filtration method now in use, was recommended by a special water commission appointed by the mayor in 1945. It was part of an improvement and expansion program designed to meet the city's water needs.

The algae problem, said, is being used in increased doses to combat turbidity caused by the recent rains. The algae causes impurities to settle to the bottom of the filter basins.

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