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BATTLING PROBLEM OF CITY'S BAD-TASTING WATER AS RESIDENTS BRAVE RAIN TO FILL BOTTLES AT SPRING

A worker, wearing a mask as protection from dust, unloading bags of carbon to be placed into the water at the Torresdale pumping station to remove impurities. Eight parts of carbon are placed in 1,000,000 gallons, but the process fails to do away with the bad taste and odor. Meanwhile, residents of the Wissinoming section are shown braving the rain yesterday to fill bottles at a spring in Wissinoming Park, a scene that is being repeated at springs all over the city. Right: Bruce Campbell, a chemist at the Torresdale station, sniffing a sample of water after it was filtered. A remedy to end the taste and odor has not been found.

Good Water Is Hoped for by 1953

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and $2,500,000 for miscellaneous purposes—engineering and surveying fees, etc.

Included in the over-all program was the expenditure of $1,000,000 for the ozone plant at the Belmont filtration station soon to be placed in operation and which will give West Philadelphia and Overbrook a "pleasant" tasting water, and $400,000 for machinery to feed chemicals into the water at the Torresdale station.

NEW FILTER MACHINES

Temporary carbon feeding facilities have been installed both at the Belmont and Torresdale stations.

It is contemplated that about $5,000,000 will be spent annually in the new program which also will include the construction of new filter equipment at Belmont and Queen Lane, giving both stations double filtration. New main distribution lines also will be run into areas with new homes and the city plans to build large reinforcing mains.

The present plans are the result of action taken in November, 1946, following a report to Council by the Mayor's Water Commission.

At that time, it was decided to hold in abeyance plans for a $284,588,000 upland water supply until the city had exhausted every means of improving local sources.

The commission was ... pointed May 22, 1945, following a long controversy over the Delaware River project which called for impounding water 95 miles north of this city at Wallpack Bend, and the Pocono Mountain project proposed by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co.

The latter project called for impounding water in four large reservoirs on the headwaters of the Lehigh River, 75 miles from Philadelphia. The company owned and had certain water rights in a portion of this watershed. Under this proposal, the water would flow by gravity through pipelines into the city for filtration at the rate of 445,000,000 gallons daily.

While the commission, upon conclusion of its studies, reported that the Delaware River project was "the best of all proposed sources," it recommended a start on local improvements in two stages, the first of which is now nearing completion.

The commission pointed out that the local improvement program was necessary before contemplating "the more ambitious proposal" and it urged the city to preempt the Wallpack Bend site for Philadelphia's use in the future.

Yesterday, Taylor said that improvements at the Belmont and Queen Lane stations would fit in with any future plans the city might have regarding a new source of water supply.

FEW ATTENDED MEETINGS

He pointed out, however, that the same provisions could not be made at the Torresdale plant because "in event the city should seek an upland source, it would have to be abandoned and constructed on much higher ground to facilitate gravity feed."

The proposal made by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co. was rejected by the commission because the members believed the yield was too small, that filtration would be required and that the costs were underestimated.

Throughout the many public hearings held on the water source questions, members of Council and the commission repeatedly urged Philadelphians to attend, but all meetings were poorly attended.

Attendance was generally limited to experts reporting on the various plans and to individuals whose properties would be adversely affected if any of the specific proposals were accepted.

The commission, in its final report, generally followed recommendations made by the Bureau of Municipal Research which urged use of all possible methods to eliminate taste, odor and color from present sources, including the treating of filtered water with activated carbon or with ozone.

Another plan called for the development of huge reservoirs in the Poconos to supply 2,000,000,000 gallons a day to Pennsylvania, New York and New Jersey.

SAME PROBLEM IN '30

Almost 20 years ago, the problems of taste such as the recent mysterious appearance of phenol were not new to Philadelphia.

In The Inquirer of March 3, 1930, the following statement from the Bureau of Municipal Research was published: "Philadelphia is more fortunate than some cities," it said. "In that it probably would not be necessary to treat the water for the removal of tastes at all times.

"At least, it would be only occasionally that doses of phenolic wastes, such as recently contaminated the water supply, would have to be overcome," it said.

However, in those days, the State had a warning system through which it warned municipalities when phenol "was accidentally discharged in one of the streams." Forewarned, water bureaus could be ready to remove the obnoxious taste.

Tri-State Survey Of Water Urged

A tri-State water survey project was recommended yesterday by the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin for the purpose of constructing reservoirs on the upper Delaware to give Philadelphia and other municipalities "good drinking water."

This was announced by James H. Allen, secretary-treasurer of INCODEL, who said complaints about Philadelphia's drinking water would continue as long as the city depends upon the "decidely sub-standard water" which comes from the polluted Delaware and Schuylkill.

"Objectionable tastes and odors in Philadelphia's drinking water will probably be continually encountered despite the river clean-up programs," Allen said.

Allen serves as chairman of an INCODEL subcommittee which has developed extensive plans for a study of a tri-State solution to the city's water problem and which calls for a "cooperative investigation by New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania to determine sources which would provide adequate and suitable drinking water for the areas most directly concerned—Philadelphia, New York City and the North Jersey metropolitan area."

The report recommends that legislation be enacted in the three States authorizing a joint water investigation survey. Cost of the survey, which would take two years, isestimated at approximately $200,000.

State Aides Join City Search For Polluted Water Source

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problem because of the pollution going downstream with the outgoing tide and coming upstream with the incoming tide. We are after it, however, and we will catch up with it."

Hoffert, before entraining for this city from Harrisburg, disclosed that while he had no definite appointments for today he had been ordered "because of the seriousness of the situation" to contact Mayor Bernard Samuel and other leaders of the city government.

"We will do everything possible to trace the pollution to its source and track this trouble down," Hoffert said. "The State will fully apply the law if clear-cut violations of the pure stream laws are found."

RAIN FAILS TO HELP

Personnel from the State Department of Health have made visits here for several weeks and yesterday it was disclosed for the first time that more than 200 samples of water had been taken from the Delaware River since Dec. 23. However, it was pointed out "State investigators have not been able to put their finger on anything definite yet."

Those who will be on hand in an effort to aid the city solve its drinking water problems include George Elias, district sanitary engineer in the Philadelphia area; Francis B. Milligan, chief of the industrial water section; Kennett Rhoads, chemist; Edward Edgerley, district engineer, who is checking the Lehigh region; L. D. Matter, assistant chief engineer, and H. G. Knox, technical adviser to the State Sanitary Water [Board, be]fore meeting with city officials. He reported that the Bureau of Sanitary Engineering was "willing to loan all of its engineers to the city to clean up the problem."

Meanwhile, Elbert J. Taylor, chief of the City Water Bureau, declared that despite yesterday's driving rain, pollution in the Delaware River failed to be "dispersed" and that the "unpleasant taste" continued unabated.

MANY PLANTS BLAMED

"We have put extra men to work in our laboratories," Taylor said, "but as yet we have failed to pin down the source of the trouble. We believe it to exist somewhere between Port Richmond and the Bristol area.

"A number of persons has called or written to this office, and that is putting it mildly, stating that such and such a plant is the cause of our troubles. I defy anyone to take samples at any of the plants mentioned and to prove their accusations are correct."

Taylor said his men had taken tests at every one of the plants cited to them by citizens "even at dye plants where passengers on trains or elevated cars had seen colored water pouring into the river.

SOURCE STILL UNKNOWN

Some reports said the pollution may be coming downstream from Phillipsburg, N. J., but Taylor said chemists had reported to him the latest tests indicated the pollution was going up the river to the Torresdale plant.

Taylor added that at present "there was not even an indication on tests to show a trend." He pointed out there was a possibility that the pollution was caused by a combination of matter already in the water mixing with other matter coming from upriver.

"All our men agree that this is worse than anything we have had in recent years," Taylor concluded.

Phila Inquirer

War on Waste Started To Avert Water Famine

City Officials' Aim Is to Save 50,000,000 Gallons Daily To Help Meet Wartime Needs

Faced by a water famine that might bring disaster to vital war production plants, the Philadelphia metropolitan area yesterday began a water conservation campaign to save 50,000,000 gallons each day through elimination of waste.

Headed by Mayor Samuel, city and defense officials called upon all residents to join in support of the campaign which will be continued indefinitely. Originally, it was planned for only two weeks.

PATRIOTISM IS STRESSED

The patriotic phase of the saving campaign was emphasized by the Mayor, who pointed out that "the rapid expansion of defense industries and additional water needs in homes are beginning to tax our water supply, filtration, and distribution systems."

Capacity of the system is estimated at about 400,000,000 gallons a day and, with war plants expanding their production daily, an unprecedented summer peak of 440,000,000 gallons a day is predicted. It is estimated that 50,000,000 gallons can be saved daily if everybody stops wasting—and that would be sufficient to ward off any crisis.

APPEAL TO WASHINGTON

Meanwhile, Director of Public Works John H. Neeson announced that he is going to Washington tomorrow, accompanied by all members of the city's Congressional delegation, in the most concerted effort thus far to obtain a better priority rating for the city in order to get work started on the $18,000,000 rehabilitation program for the overtaxed water system.

Neeson and the Congressmen will confer with Maury Maverick, chief of the Bureau of Governmental Requirements of the War Production Board, which dispenses materials needed for governmental units other than Federal units. The Congressmen already have discussed the situation with Maverick.

PRESENT RATING 'USELESS'

At present, the city has an A4 rating, which is virtually worthless, Neeson said, and it will attempt to get an A1E rating for purchase of materials necessary for the construction work.

Federal officials have admitted, Neeson pointed out, that this is the most important industrial area for war production in the country, with work being done on contracts worth $1,600,000,000. The question might easily become one of "no water—no guns," he said.

IMMEDIATE PROBLEM

Rehabilitation of the system, however, he warned, "does not meet the immediate summer problem. That has to be met right away," he said.

The citizens have been asked to stop waste through excessive use and defective plumbing fixtures. "We are not asking them to stop using water for any essential purpose," Neeson said.

The campaign is sponsored by the Mayor, the Philadelphia Council of Defense and the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin in the five-county metropolitan area. Sponsors began distribution of 500,000 circulars in the city and 250,000 in the neighboring counties yesterday. There also will b[e] ... radio talks.