

\$1,000,000 Program Proposed in 1939 to Eliminate Pollution

No Excuse for Coal Silt Clogging River U. S. Army Engineers Hold

There is no excuse for the coal silt that clogs the Schuylkill and makes every heavy rain rise to flood level.

U. S. Army engineers said so in 1939 after a three-year survey. Their findings hold truer than ever now after three more years of coal waste dumping by operators upstream.

Not Blamed State.

3, Brigadier General John man reported:

district engineer at Philadelphia considers the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the aggregate industry as primarily responsible for pollution of the Schuylkill Valley.

He report that "and a \$1,000,000 program to clear away the silt, by throttling the stream. It calls for:

1. Sixteen additional bar coal mines from dumping an estimated 6,000,000 to 1,000,000 tons of coal waste into the river annually. Without this, the engineers said, anticipation program is in the open.

Dredging Proposed.

2. Dredging of upward of 20,000,000 tons of accumulated silt from the river from Norristown to its headwaters at a cost of \$5,000,000.
3. Construction of a huge \$1,750,000 desilting basin at Auburn, just below Pottsville, to check silt in the upper river from drifting downstream.
4. Erection of walls in the mine regions to prevent silt from old coal dumps from eroding into the Schuylkill and tributaries, total cost \$2,500,000.

Would Stop Pollution.

The report further said:

"The district engineer concludes that silt pollution in the Schuylkill Valley can be economically stopped by carrying out, in general, the plans outlined in this report. He is of the opinion that this work should be undertaken by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in co-operation with the aggregate industry."

Proposed Waste Tunnels.

Meanwhile, the James Administration's endorsement of a \$30,000,000 project for two mammoth tunnels to drain acid waste from mines into the Schuylkill and Susquehanna was cited as revealing its attitude.

ident of the Schuylkill River Valley Restoration Association, said:

"Fortunately, the association and other public-spirited citizens succeeded in defeating the proposal before it completed the ruin of the Schuylkill."

Governor's Attitude.

"But it clearly illustrated the Governor's propensity for helping the coal mines but not the people."

When \$125,000 might have helped curb flood damage, most of the 150-mile length of the Schuylkill Valley, it was withheld by James.

"But when it came to approving \$30,000,000 to carry waste from coal mines, the James Administration heartily..."

Earle Project Revised

At that time the Earle administration was leaving office after sponsoring a WPA project under which \$1,750,000 worth of culm retention walls were erected.

The WPA project was revised to involve spending an additional \$1,250,000. Under a 1939 Act of Congress, passed under Republican pressure to check "spending," State sponsors were required to put up 10 percent.

The James Administration refused to spend the \$125,000 necessary for the work. It charged the New Deal with "discrimination" against it, although the 10 percent law applied all over the nation and was urged by Republicans.

The dredging project came to a dead halt and none of the other work outlined in the engineers' report has been done.

U. S. Action Considered.

There was conjecture yesterday over whether the Federal Government might take its own steps to prevent future flooding of war plants like Bethlehem Steel.

Major S. E. Potter, at the district engineer's office, said:

"We will survey the damage and the condition that led to it and will make recommendations to remedy the situation. Those may or may not be in line with the 1939 report, as we may find that conditions have changed in such a way as to warrant other steps."

Filed for State Action.

Ladner said that when the organization went to Washington to urge further action on Army report, it was told that the Government would not act until the State Sanitary Water Board barred further culm dumping.

So it turned to the board, he said, and was told "that presents very difficult problem, so difficult that it is impractical for some mines." Subsequently, Ladner declared, Howard N. Evanson, chief lobbyist for the coal industry, admitted to a Congressional committee that it would "be no great hardship to require mines to check dumping."

And yet, continued Ladner, "the Sanitary Water Board of the James administration pretends there is a difficult problem which even the polluters themselves admit does not exist."

James Assails Ladner.

James, from Harrisburg, yesterday assailed Ladner's statement blaming James for the flood situation as a "preposterous" one in which Ladner sought to make capital for his candidacy for the State Supreme Court.

The governor said that Honesdale, White Mills and Hawley, the towns hardest hit by the flood, were the last to be reached by Ladner's "highly questionable silt removal program."

Ladner's Reply.

Ladner retorted:

"The Governor refers to Lackawaxen Creek. What about the Lehigh and Schuylkill rivers? What about flooding at Reading, Norristown, Pottsville? What about flooding of the Bethlehem Steel and Philadelphia Electric plants?"

Coal Sludge (Courtesy of James) Blocks Driveway



A six-foot flood over East River Drive along the Schuylkill left 4000 cubic yards of coal sludge in two blocks between Middle and Ferry rd, between Saturday night and yesterday. Russell T. Vodge, chief engineer of Fairmount Park Commission, said this section of the drive is closed to traffic. The silt is some of the stuff which U. S. Army engineers urged the James Administration to remove from the Schuylkill.

"What about the statement of Philadelphia's Director of Public Works, John H. Neeson, that the flood brought tons of coal silt to Philadelphia and re-emphasized the need for cleaning the Schuylkill before the city's drinking water is affected?"

"The silt removal program would take care of all these things. Moreover, it is not my highly questionable program. It is the program of the U. S. Army engineers, regarded by all experts as the last word in accuracy and practicability."

Park Engineer Considers.

"An official Philadelphia viewpoint was voiced by Russell T. Vodge, chief engineer of the Fairmount Park Commission. He said: "Everybody agrees that the reason for this flood is the piling up of culm deposits in the river bed."

Democratic spokesmen in Philadelphia have long been urging control of Schuylkill pollution. John B. Kelly, then Democratic City Chairman, appealed directly to President Roosevelt in 1938 and won a project for dredging portions of the Schuylkill as it passes through the city.

WASTING OF WATER 'MUST BE ENDED'

Mayor and Neeson say it should be halted for War Effort

Prevention of waste water in industries and private homes was stressed by Mayor Samuel at a conference in his office in City Hall today.

Attending the meeting were John H. Neeson, Director of Public Works; Martin J. McLaughlin, chief of the Bureau of Water; David W. Robinson, executive secretary of the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, and newspaper representatives.

The Mayor and Neeson emphasized that the campaign, originally scheduled from May 25 to June 8, will be continued indefinitely. Neeson told the conferees that conservation of water is a vital factor in the prosecution of the war effort.

Only by conservation can a private water supply be provided for industries and householders, Neeson said.

"The time may come when the city's consumption will reach the maximum filter bed capacity of 400,000 gallons daily," he said.

"The problem is not one of raw water, but solely of manufactured water and the city's ability to supply it in adequate quantities."

Neeson explained that many persons are under a misapprehension that because of heavy floods there is plenty of water available.

The city's low water stage was given by officials as one reason for "astors here."

"The water saving campaign sponsored by the Mayor, Philadelphia Council of Defense and Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, and newspaper representatives."

No Matter Whose Fault,— Help Save Water!

Philadelphia and its four surrounding counties face a severe water shortage.

The situation is becoming so acute that war production may be hampered— unless the public co-operates in saving water.

This means a gallon of water wasted today might cause delay in the delivery of a tank on a distant battlefield. Multiplied many times, it might mean the loss of a battle.

Everyone knows who is to blame.

This newspaper has been campaigning for a good water system for more than 10 years. We have pointed to our inadequate supply and lack of maintenance. We have warned of impending breakdowns that would be disastrous.

The GOP organization running City Hall did nothing. Even after the public overwhelmingly approved, two years ago, an \$18,000,000 bond issue for improving the water system, Council did nothing.

All that is now, quite literally, water on the dam.

We feel like the crew of a ship that knows the captain is incompetent. The crew helps man the pumps to save themselves, even though the leaks are the fault of the captain. Philadelphia has been ruled without plan for 50 years.

But we must all help now—not to save our political bosses, but to help win the war.

The Philadelphia Defense Council, in cooperation with the defense councils of Montgomery, Delaware, Bucks and Chester Counties, has launched an intensive campaign to save water.

Every citizen should help.

It is estimated that more than 50,000 gallons of water A DAY are wasted here Philadelphia metropolitan district.

A large part of this—10,000,000 gallons a day—is due to leaking water mains.

Another large part is due to waste which the individual citizen can control. A trip from a leaky faucet can waste 10 gallons a day, a thin trickle 260 gallons a day. Every householder should see that these leaks are stopped.

Another way the householder can help is in an air-raid emergency, do NOT fill bathtub with water.

Dr. A. C. Marts, executive director of Pennsylvania State Council of Defense, who that 60,000,000 gallons of water would instantly demanded in the five-county area if all citizens filled their tubs at once.

Pressure in the mains would be dangerously reduced, and fire protection seriously jeopardized.

The fact that we don't have water facilities to meet these emergency needs is the fault of those who have mismanaged Philadelphia. No matter—

Help save water now. Election is the time to remember who is to blame.