

## MAIN BREAK FLOODS AREA IN BROOKLYN

Accident at 3 A. M. Results in Slight Inconvenience—Two Trolley Lines Halted

## SQUARE MILE IS AFFECTED

Water Spouts 15 Feet Near Two City Prisons, Extends to Navy Yard Gates

Hundreds of thousands of gallons of water flooded a square mile of Brooklyn streets yesterday morning when a forty-eight-inch water main, one of the largest in the city, burst at Ashland Place and Willoughby Street, in front of the Civil Prison, which adjoins the Brooklyn City prison.

The break occurred at 3:45 A. M. and because of the time few cars were on serious traffic snarls. However, it was necessary to halt the Flushing and Graham Avenue trolley lines, both of which operate along Flushing Avenue in this vicinity.

While two police emergency squads with fire guns stood guard at the falls, firemen trained powerful floodlights on the area near the break to assist other city employees to cut off the water that poured fifteen feet into the air. At 5:10 A. M. the main was cut off and the floodwaters drained into sewers during the next two hours.

Many cellars in the vicinity were flooded and work was interrupted at the Union Parts Manufacturing Company, which operates on a two- or four-hour schedule making shell and incendiary bombs. At this plant, situated at 125 Ashland Place, the forty-seven men on the night shift were sent home as the water poured into the basement, where the boilers are located.

The water poured down an inlet to two of the gates of the Navy Yard about a quarter of a mile away. As the water began pouring into the yard, Marine workmen piled up sandbags. Rear Admiral Edward J. Magrath, commandant at the yard, said the water had done no damage there.

Members of the Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity said the break was one of the worst in recent years and was regrettable, particularly at this time because of a shortage of water in the city.

The break was discovered by Charles Edwards, a Chinaman, who left a police booth after hearing the asphalt cracking. By the time the break was stopped, 200,000 gallons of water, 20 feet in diameter had been caused in the street. The cause of the break was unknown.

## PRIORITIES GRANTED FOR WATER PROJECT

Director of Public Works John H. Nesson said yesterday that "we're ready to go to work on the large-scale program to rehabilitate Philadelphia's water distribution system."

He explained that assurances, just received from Federal agencies, give priority, in effect, an A-1 priority for needed materials, after long negotiations.

He warned, however, that the city's pumping plants at this moment were in a bad condition, and that the city's water situation now was serious, and could easily become critical unless the water-consuming public rigorously conserved the supply.

A broken fire plug at 37th and Lehigh averts, in part, the situation, said, had been working for two days, was repaired early yesterday by an emergency crew.

## High Priority Granted for Water Job

Philadelphia has been granted high priority ratings for materials necessary to rehabilitate its water system, it was reported last night.

A top rating of A-3 has been assigned by the War Production Board for pumping equipment valued at \$800,000 for the Lardner, Point and Torresdale stations, it was said, and an A-1 rating has been tentatively approved for steel pipe, wire and other materials for the entire \$18,000,000 program.

### FINAL ACTION AWAITED

Final action on the priorities is expected today, when representatives of the WPB meet with officials of the Army and Navy Munitions Board, who have the final decision on the use of vital materials.

Favorable action will permit the city to begin work on the rehabilitation program immediately, according to Leonard W. MacCumber, a member of the Government Requirements Branch of the WPB.

### COMMISSION APPROVES

The priority ratings have been approved by the WPB's Review and Approve Commission, MacCumber said. Previously they had been tentatively approved by Major Mavrick, head of the Government Requirements Branch.

A rating of at least A-1 was asked by Director of Public Works John H. Nesson several months ago when it became known that a previous rating of A-4 was virtually worthless in view of the heavy demands for certain materials.

Nesson, in seeking a higher rating, emphasized the importance of the water system to Philadelphia war plants.

## WPB CLEARS WAY FOR CITY WATER PLANS

### Higher Priority Will Speed \$18,000,000 Rehabilitation.

The War Production Board yesterday granted a new and higher priority for Philadelphia's belated \$18,000,000 water program.

Director of Public Works John H. Nesson was notified by the WPB's Bureau of Governmental Requirements that his application has received preliminary approval.

### Four Notches Higher.

The new order gives the program an overall A-1 rating—four notches higher on the list than the A-4 issued two and a half months ago—with a special A-1-C for certain materials on the critical list including copper and brass.

The Government's action rescued the city from a critical situation caused by the refusal of succeeding military administrations to take needed action.

The job could have been finished by now—with no worry about priorities—if prompt action had been taken when the voters authorized the \$18,000,000 bond issue in the spring of 1940.

### Contracts to Be Let.

Contracts will be let within the next two months to round out the first phase of the program covered by the initial issue of \$7,000,000 worth of bonds. This first phase includes new pumps for the Lardner's Point and Torresdale stations, which are under contract but which have been delayed by difficulty in obtaining materials; the preliminary mechanical filters and chemical treatment equipment for the Torresdale and Queen J. plants, and electrical equipment installations for the new pumping stations.

"Then," said Nesson, "we'll proceed with the rest of the program and put it all under contract as fast as we can."

### 2 or 3 Years Required.

The whole job will take two or three years and will increase the capacity of the system by 10 percent (present maximum capacity is 400,000,000 gallons a day). Moreover it is expected that the water will lose its chlorine taste. The Philadelphia Defense Council, in collaboration with suburban areas, is waging a campaign for conservation of water to meet demands of war industries on top of normal hot weather requirements.

## Water Priorities at Last

Philadelphia gets a break at last in the form of an A-1-A priority from the WPB for pumping plant material for the city's water supply system. An A-1-C rating for chemicals, steel pipe and wiring lags some distance behind. But on the whole the prospect is brighter for the most vitally needed and insistent repairs, especially to the Lardner's Point and Torresdale pumping plants.

Both ratings are so far above the former A-4 allowance made for the great industrial community that they render the difference between reasonable probability and utter impossibility. Under the former dispensation any valuable improvement in Philadelphia's overloaded water supply service was simply out of the question. We might as well have had a ladder at all.

Yet it has taken nearly eight months in the face of a dangerous and pressing situation in the water system, to get this change made. That has gone to the unremitting efforts of Mayor Samuel, Director John H. Nesson and other city officials. They are to be congratulated for their persistence and overcoming an almost unopposing attitude during most of that period at Washington.

Getting the advanced priorities now, however, doesn't mean immediate results, although the pumping plant materials were on order nearly a year ago. More months must pass before the needed materials are ready, delivered and installed. But, as it is, the prospect for eliminating a master-circumstance, possible breakdown of the pumping plants, are immensely improved.

## Water Wardens' You and I

On the heels of Philadelphia's fine job collecting three times its quota in scrap rubber, comes another patriotic achievement: Saving water.

Industrial and population increases were sufficient to send water consumption up. Yet in May and June it came down.

In other words, output from the worn-out system was conserved; serious shortage was averted in a supply so necessary for war production.

But don't misplace the medals. As with rubber, City Hall wins the spring union. Household and industries win the bouquet. They did their part well; cut May consumption from 18,000,000 gallons a day from May, 1941; cut it 25,000,000 gallons a day in June.

What were the Rip Van Desskitters in City Hall doing to fix a water system that has been decrepit for 50 years? Nothing. Once they yawned and asked Washington for a priority on the necessary materials. They got the priority, but not the materials. War requirements had taken all. Same old story: *Zoo label!* Now the Government has given them a higher priority. When will they get the materials? Nobody knows.

Nevertheless, homes, stores and factories saved water in a big way while cracked mains creaked and fireplugs kept on wasting it.

We commend Philadelphia for this important conservation, though their city officials refused to plug the biggest single waste.

## NEW WATER MAIN UNDER CONTRACT

### Roosevelt Boulevard to Get 16-Inch Line, Welsh Road, 12-Inch

John H. Nesson, Director of Public Works, awarded contracts today for the construction of a 6-inch water main in Roosevelt Boulevard from Welsh road to Southampton road and a 12-inch main in Welsh road and Grand av. from Bustleton to Lehigh av. on Lehigh road, at a cost of \$146,811.

"This is but one step," said Nesson, "in improving the distribution system in connection with the water works improvement project. It is now possible to proceed with the granting of the higher priority rating by the War Production Board, after ten months of laborious negotiations."

"Existing mains are not large enough to supply the Byberry and Somerton areas, as well as other sections of the northeast, and furnish adequate fire protection. This has become more apparent since the Army and Navy have taken over large tracts in this section of the city and are rapidly increasing their construction program most essential to our national defense."

"The existing shortages, therefore, are intensified through war needs of the area for industrial-domestic uses and fire protection. Connecting lines will eventually be laid in Byberry and Southampton roads from the boulevard line to the proposed tank site, which is included in the plans to meet fully the water requirements of the district."

"However, despite every effort to convince the WPB that this storage tank is a definite need of the city, it insists that construction be deferred and declines to include it in the priority issued, because it involves structural steel."

"Nevertheless, the main to be laid under this contract will provide a direct circulation of water to Byberry and Somerton areas. The installation of the 12-inch main in Welsh road and Grand av. will eliminate a bottleneck between two sections of the Torresdale high service district, improving the service to Fox Chase."

## June Water Consumption

PHILADELPHIANS piled up another impressive water conservation record in June.

The average daily consumption was 206 million gallons, 23 million gallons less than that of June 4, 1941.

There doesn't seem to be a rational explanation of this except that the people of Philadelphia have heard and heeded the plea that they take from a system only such water as they really need.

The weather deserved credit for this year's June had a much wetter right to sing "How Dry I Am" than last year's. The Weather Bureau reports 2.18 inches of rain in June of this year at against 1.96 inches more than twice as much in June, 1941.

Because the drafts on the water supply are so much lower, it is possible to operate the pumps at considerably less than full capacity. That improves their chances of carrying the peak loads that hit immediately ahead without breakdown.

A serious breakdown would be a catastrophe. It is necessary to continue to save every gallon possible.

## Higher Priority Granted for Materials Needed to Repair System.

Records' Washington Bureau WASHINGTON, July 13.—The War Production Board's Review and Approve Committee today approved Philadelphia's application for higher priority ratings covering \$18,000,000 water program.

The formal order, bearing some unforeseen delay, will be issued tomorrow, clearing the way at last for an actual start on the long-delayed rehabilitation job. It is in two parts—an A-3 rating for materials required at the Lardner's Point and Torresdale stations, and an A-1-C on the steel pipe and valves to be used in filtration plants.

**Pumps Ordered.** The pumps are now on order, the contracts having been awarded a year ago, but their construction has been held up by the manufacturers' inability to furnish materials. The A-3 rating will correct that at once.

Leonard W. MacCumber, member of WPB's Government Requirements Branch and Government consultant, said the A-1 rating would assure the city of the other materials. The new ratings supersede an A-3 priority issued in March which Philadelphia's Director of Public Works John H. Nesson reported he found useless.

### Year Behind Schedule.

The three-year rehabilitation program already is more than a year behind schedule. It originally was scheduled to be completed by the end of 1943, and it is everybody's guess when it will be finished now, even with the new priorities. Nesson has promised, however, that it will go ahead as rapidly as possible.

It troubles him that Philadelphia's successive Republican city administrations waited until after the war broke out in Europe to launch the water program. The voters approved an \$18,000,000 bond issue in the spring of 1940—but by the time the detailed plans were drawn and specifications were prepared that took more than a year, war production was taking precedence in the allocation of steel, brass and copper.

### Delay Doubles Cost.

But for City Council's hatred of the New Deal, the water job would have been done during the old years, at little more than half the cost to the taxpayer.

The old Public Works Administration, for five years made out of the New Deal's water program a string of just such projects but uncared its eyes to the opportunity to save money.

It is a change of heart, in 1941, at by then WPA's zone.

## A-1 Priority For Phila. Water Project

Philadelphia has been granted high priority ratings for materials necessary to rehabilitate its water system, it was reported recently.

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## A Problem for the Duration

ALTHOUGH there is cause for gratification that the appeals for conservation of water during the summer have resulted in a saving of 53,000,000 gallons daily in the Philadelphia area, the report does not mean that the can be any let-up now.

The figures come from the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, and were compiled from statistics of the three major water supply services in the area.

In Phila. itself, the saving of water is of particular importance. The little prospect that the supply can be increased now after the war, though improved priority ratings are pending, the installation of so few mains and replacement of so much old equipment. Demands of war industries for water are expected to be a positive next year.

At adequate supply for these essential plants depends on a continuation of its conservation measures, saving the war.

## Oyster Shipment Arrives in Dock St.

Amid a gloomy outlook among dealers for filling market demands, the season's first shipment of oysters arrived in Dock Street yesterday. Wholesale prices are 20 percent higher this year.

The war has brought difficulties, with many oyster boats now in Government service, many oystermen in the East Coast, and other difficulties in transportation. The bulk of the oysters received at Dock St. come from Delaware, 1941.

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