

# Coal Silt in River Perils Phila. War Production, House Hearing Told

Unless some remedial action is taken to clean up the Schuylkill river, the citizens and huge war industries...

**HARRISBURG, March 30.**—Taken to stop the dumping of anthracite products in the Schuylkill river, the House committee on Public Health and Sanitation was told today.

At the same time, the legislators were warned that if the silt in the river is not removed, the Federal Government might intervene and prosecute the coal producers.

**PORT BRUNNER BILL.**—Arranged in support of the Brunner bill, subject of the committee hearing, were representatives of Philadelphia, nearby communities, the Schuylkill River Valley Restoration Association, and the U. S. Army Engineers Philadelphia District office.

Approaching the matter widely, "to open up the silt dumping extension," the State's Supreme Court Law, were a necessary for the coal producers and the United Mine Workers.

**SITUATION CRITICAL.**—Robert McCay Green, Philadelphia's City Solicitor, John H. Neeson, Director of Public Works, and Dr. John Laird, of the City Health Department, described the "critical situation" facing the city's water supply because of continued silt, coal dumping and sedimentation.

"This is a serious matter," Green commented. "The operators have been given enough time to correct a situation which they have brought about."

**INTOLERABLE CONDITION.**—"This condition is intolerable," he asserted, "and it has been tolerated each day and each week."

Dr. Laird said that complete closing of the intake stations "might force people to go down to the river with buckets for their water and to scull in the worst typhoid epidemic the country has ever known."

Colonel H. B. Vaughn, Jr., of the U. S. Engineers, "has also approved the U. S. or Federal intervention and an against coal operation," and "will continue to focus the law."

**AGAINST COURT ACTION.**—"We have no desire to take court action and would prefer that the matter be settled within the city," Judge Grover C. Ladner, of Philadelphia, president of the Schuylkill River Valley Restoration Association, said that if the coal producers would do what they say, he can do anything to get them out of the river.

**Council Gets Bill For Water Pipes.**—An ordinance authorizing the laying of additional water pipes in South Philadelphia to provide more fire protection for war plants, including the New York Arsenal, was introduced to City Council yesterday by Mayor Schuylkill.

The pipes are to be laid in Schuylkill ave. from Passunkt ave to Lanier st., in Lanier st. from Schuylkill ave. to Penrose ave. in 26th st. from Passunkt ave. to Penrose ave. Additionally, an ordinance provides for laying new water pipes in the Northeast, in Sumnerdale ave. from Roosevelt ave. to Rockwood, and in Bridge st. from Cass to Roosevelt boulevard.

**HEALTH ENDANGERED.**—Neeson declared that "defense plants and the health of our people are endangered by the sedimentation which threatens to block the city's three water intake stations."

At the Queen Lane pumping station, 47 percent of the capacity of the basin has been restricted by sludge and sediment. At the Belmont station, sediment capacity is being lost, and at Roxborough 65 percent is restricted.

# SCHUYLKILL SILT ENDANGERED BY CITY OFFICIALS

Endangers Health and War Industries, They Tell Legislators.

Record's Harrisburg Bureau, HARRISBURG, March 30.—The silt-clogged Schuylkill is a menace to public health in Philadelphia.

It also presents an ever-present threat to continued operation of the city's war industries.

City officials so advised the House Committee on Public Health and Sanitation at a public hearing on the Brunner bill which would prohibit the discharge of silt and coal into any stream in Pennsylvania.

**Neeson Warns of Danger.**—Director of Public Works John H. Neeson warned that Philadelphia will suffer a catastrophe if any of the city pumping stations along the Schuylkill is forced to close because of the accumulation of "slush" at the intakes and in sedimentation basins.

Dr. Robert L. Laird, chief of the Department of Health's division of laboratories, predicted that breakdown of the city's water supply system would bring about "one of the worst typhoid fever epidemics this country has known."

**OTHERS SUPPORT BILL.**—Others who supported the Brunner bill were Mrs. Nelson Ogden, of the Lehigh Navigation Company, and Norman G. Young, borough engineer of Pottsville.

**Water Board enforces license.**—The Water Board enforces license for 1037 pure streams act to force anthracite operators to discontinue silt dumping into streams.

**Dredging a Mere Gesture.**—"What dredging to the Schuylkill we have been able to do in conjunction with WPA is nothing more than a pathetic gesture," he said.

"The silt has killed the Schuylkill River in Fairmount Park Recreation purposes. It has snatched up the clubs along Boathouse Row and the famous American society rowing course which a few months islands will appear soon be covered with vegetable matter, with resulting stink."

John C. Nagle, chief air raid warden, said that the volume of voluminous data to the committee in support of the bill in the interest of health and sanitation, the war effort and fire protection.

**Coal Operator Objects.**—Everett Evans, assistant vice president of the Lehigh Navigation Coal Company, was the spokesman for the hard coal operators. Passage of the Brunner bill, he complained, "will make it impossible for us to operate at all."

He estimated that it would cost about \$10,000,000 in the next 20 years to improve and perfect present methods of preventing silt from the Schuylkill and its tributaries. He revealed that his own company plans to spend at least \$1,000,000 for plants which will utilize new methods of silt recovery in an attractive way, in which there is a grow-market.

**U. S. Army Intervene.**—Colonel H. B. Vaughn, Jr., U. S. Army engineer in charge of the Philadelphia district, declared that if the State does not take steps to correct conditions, the Government may be compelled to intervene, to insure uninterrupted operation of war industries along the lower Schuylkill.

Principal opposition to the bill came from the anthracite industry and the United Mine Workers of America.

**Opposition.**—Orphanas Court Judge Grover C. Ladner, the State's outstanding leader in the fight for pure streams, and the opposition made arguments to support the bill. He said that if the operators would reduce pollution by 80 percent, as they claimed they could do—the problem would be solved.

**Affects Three Pumping Stations.**—Director Neeson described the present condition of the city's pumping stations along the river. The Queen Lane station's capacity has been reduced to 60 percent, he said; the Roxborough station by 15 percent and Belmont by 10 percent.

He estimated that it would cost the city at least \$1,250,000 to close up the water stations.

"It is necessary for us to spend \$75,000 more the would normally be required to treat the water with chlorine to make it safe for the people to drink," the director said.

**Asking Too Much.**—PHILADELPHIA is not unmindful of the necessity of cooperating with the rest of the country for the winning of the war. It is willing to make whatever sacrifices may be required to that end.

**But the Director of the Office of War Utilities doesn't see the whole picture in correct perspective when he asks this city to give up the new pumps under construction for its water supply system, and the motors necessary to drive them, to meet production in Detroit.**

**Detritus is going to be laid pressed for water during peak hours on peak days if we should have a hot, dry summer.** But Philadel, hia is in danger of a water-supply breakdown at any time because of its antiquated and inadequate plant equipment. It's just a little too much to ask this city to yield the priority for which it fought so long and hard, and which was granted only because of proof that our own situation was critical, not because of a contingent condition elsewhere.

**Director of Public Works Neeson points out that he has no legal authority to dispose of city property as requested.** But Philadelphia is able to rest its case on firmer ground. This city is full of plants making war supplies—some of them operated by the Government—which would break down if the water supply should fail.

**The Office of War Utilities request is unreasonable and does not correctly appreciate the present situations in Detroit and Philadelphia.**

**Water Main Projects Pushed by Mayor.**—He Seeks Approval For Work in Two Sections of City.

Approval of projects to install water mains in north and northeast Philadelphia under the \$18,000,000 water rehabilitation program has been sought by Mayor Samuel Krug from City Council.

One project, outlined before Council at its meeting yesterday, calls for the laying of pipes in Schuylkill ave. from a point south of Passunkt ave. to Lanier ave., Lanier ave. from Schuylkill ave. to Penrose ave. and in 26th st. from Passunkt ave. to Penrose ave.

This will provide additional fire protection to war plants, including the Philadelphia Navy Yard, Council was told.

Water pipe is also to be laid in Sumnerdale ave. from Wackerly st. to a point near Foulkrod st., and in Bridge st. from Castor av. to Delaware boulevard.

Because of Holy Week, Council voted to dispense with its scheduled meeting next Thursday.

# JERSEY SHIP CANAL BARRICKED AT HEARING

House Group Told Project Would Aid Phila. Area Industry

**Inquirer Washington Bureau.**—Major Samuel Krug, director of the Erie R.R. when a proposed ship canal across New Jersey cannot be completed before the present war ends, its construction should be authorized now to assure an inland route safe from enemy submarines if the "triangle" States should become involved in a third world war.

The House Rivers and Harbors Committee was told today.

The plea was made by Jacob M. Klein, counsel for the Erie R.R. in District, Commission, who declared that arguments that the canal would pour silt, waste into the Delaware River and thereby endanger Philadelphia's water supply were "so much bunk."

Former Mayor J. Hampton Moore, of Philadelphia, president of the Atlantic Coast Waterway Association, declared the canal would not only be a great wartime transportation boon, but would also bring about a "tremendous increase in industry and commerce" in the Philadelphia-Garden areas by linking the ports of Philadelphia and New York through a direct water route.

# Congress Group Told N. J. Canal Is Threat To Phila. Water Supply

**Inquirer Washington Bureau.**—Director of Public Works John H. Neeson, of Philadelphia, expressed fears today that a proposed ship canal across New Jersey would supply by pouring salt water into the Delaware River.

Elwood J. Turner, former Speaker of the Pennsylvania Senate and chairman of the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, went on record with similar misgivings, but also that the lowering of the river level by diverting water to fill the canal might make it possible for tidal action to bring salt water up the river from Delaware Bay to the Philadelphia waterworks intake at Torresdale.

**May Endanger Health.**—Neeson said there was a danger not only that salt water might be brought across New Jersey from Maritime Bay and dumped into the Delaware above Philadelphia, but also that the lowering of the river level by diverting water to fill the canal might make it possible for tidal action to bring salt water up the river from Delaware Bay to the Philadelphia waterworks intake at Torresdale.

**The City of Philadelphia respectfully submits,** Neeson said, "that any canal which does not protect its water supply against salinity would seriously endanger the health and welfare of its 2,000,000 citizens and industries. The same might be said for all the communities along the Delaware from Trenton to Wilmington."

**According to a letter** from Krug to Neeson, Detroit's water production facilities are presently adequate, but pumps and transmission facilities will not be sufficient for peak years on peak days if a hot, dry summer follows.

**Time is lacking to manufacture new pumping units** for Detroit, Krug wrote, and Philadelphia would "make a real contribution toward the effective prosecution of the war" by giving up its pumps, now being constructed by a contracting company. Krug also asked for four 2000-horsepower motors now stored here for driving the pumps.

**Delivery Expected Soon.**—The pumps, part of a \$137,636 contract for 10 pumps and six generator sets of 1000 water system rehabilitation program, Replacement would take at least a year, according to Neeson, if the delay would endanger the city's production of war materials.

**According to Neeson's statement,** his telegram to Krug added, "that our application for needed priority grants to complete the Lardner's Point project."

**\$18,000,000 waterworks improvement program** is on-going calls for laying "water pipe and appurtenances" in Schuylkill ave., Lanier Penrose ave. and 26th st. Council voted to dispense with scheduled meeting next Thurs. because of Holy Week.

**Service Designed to Improve Fire Protection for War Industries.**—Acting Mayor Samuel asked City Council yesterday to authorize installation of water mains in Southwest Philadelphia in connection with the new access road to the New York Arsenal at 28th st.

The work, to cost approximately \$104,000, is intended not only to extend water to the new area but also to improve fire protection for the war industries in that section. It will be part of

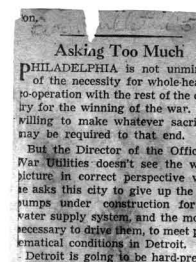
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# LARDNER POINT YIELD WATER PUMPS TO DETROIT FOR U. S.

'Need them Worse' Than Auto Center, WPB Aide Is Told.

Philadelphia rejected a Federal Government request yesterday to give up to Detroit four 40,000-gallon pumps needed for this city's water improvement program.

"We need them worse than Detroit," was the consensus of Acting Mayor Samuel, Public Works Director John Neeson and City Solicitor Robert M. Klein in response to the request from J. A. Krug, director of the Office of War Utilities of the War Production Board.

**Lack of Authority.**—At the Acting Mayor's direction, Neeson telegraphed Krug, "I am advised that I have no legal authority to dispose of city property purchased with money specially appropriated by the people of Philadelphia for this special property."

"Condition of our water supply situation is becoming more critical daily due to war demands by war industries, increased population and other factors."

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