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PHILADELPHIA, PA., MONDAY, MAY 21,

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Levy Raps Committee Delay Asks Quick Action By Mayor



ISAAC D. LEVY

29

November Vote on Water
Urges

Levy Asks Speedy Action To Place Issue On Ballot

The radio crusade of Isaac D. Levy, chairman of the WCAU Broadcasting Co., to provide decent drinking water for Philadelphia went into high gear last Friday night, when he and his executive director, Mayor Samuel, planned a referendum on the issue.

Levy, who is conducting his campaign with little support from newspapers, charged that Philadelphia does not want a referendum on whether to drink filthy or clean water." He stated that citizens want action, not "buck-passing."

Levy urged the Mayor to appoint immediately a city committee, arrange loans with banking institutions and start work on the project.

The text of Levy's speech follows:

On May 18th I spoke to you

(Continued on Page Nine)

Phila. Water Plan Called Impractical

Legal difficulties in the way of the Wallack-Yardley plan for using the upper Delaware River as a source for Philadelphia water make it impractical.

John L. Boyd, assistant secretary of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co., so declared last night at the monthly meeting of the United Businessmen's Association at the Standard Hotel.

Boyd asserted that not only would New Jersey and Pennsylvania laws prevent in 1783 any permitting diversion of water, but that an interstate compact among New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania would have to be approved by Congress and the Army Engineers before the plan could be put into effect.

Levy Asks Speedy Action To Place Issue On Ballot

(Continued from Page One)

about the insistence of WCAU that the public officials of this city perform their sworn duty to see that you are able to get a glass of decent drinking water instead of the filthy liquid that is now given to you. In that talk I reminded you of our promise to dramatize the condition of our city water in such a manner that would awaken you to its condition, and also to stimulate the city officials to action for fear of your condemnation of their inactivity, of their incompetence, or worse.

Recently I received a letter from Senator George Wharton Pepper. Let me quote from that letter. "I was delighted with your suggestion that the function of the existing committee is not to appoint another committee but to get busy itself. If you are driven to be on the 'bottle' experiment, I hope to be on the 'bottle' demonstration, but should like to be excused from drinking anything but out-of-town water!"

Mr. Mayor, if you force us to act, it will be your fault.

Mayor Bernard Samuel completed the unexpired term of Mayor Lammerton, then was elected to the office of Mayor, and has been in office for a total of 45 months. He has been mayor for 25 years or more and was a member of city council for a long time. I know all about your water condition.

In response to the letters that you sent him condemning our water situation and asking him to stop fooling around and do something about it, he replied to some of them that his appointed committee is engaged in preparing two plans for the people to vote on. One was the improvement of local sources and the other was the utilization of upland sources. He stated in that letter that while there have been reports by other water committees in the past, that this is the first time the voters will have an opportunity to express their preference in a clearly defined referendum. It was necessary to have a referendum, why was it that our committee, who has run for the office of mayor during my memory has gone out of his way to promise to remedy the water condition of this city? Does Mayor Samuel think that after being in office for 45 months that the best he can now offer is a referendum? Shades of Rip Van Winkle!

David and Goliath:

When you elected Mr. Samuel the Mayor of this city, you entrusted him with a duty and the responsibility of correcting this water situation. The Mayor has decided not to assume this responsibility himself. Very few people like to assume responsibility. It is easier to appoint committees and leave nothing to happen. This is called "paving the plank." It is both of business and fear. If our public officials could learn that straight, clear thinking and hard work produce results. So many are afraid of imaginary shadows. Listen to whispers, wink a wise eye and look in all directions before they dare tell you it's a nice day. It is up to the Mayor to determine how to proceed, and while we disagree with him on the method, nevertheless, during the term of his office we must abide by his decision

Our form of government may have its faults, but it is still the best government on earth.

Since 1917, the people of the city of New York have been receiving their water from the Catskill Mountains. It is very good water. The people like it. They do not mind spending a few extra pennies for it. The public officials of the City of New York acted promptly. They had a referendum. They did not bother about appointing a committee after committee. The people of the city of New York voted and you will be rewarded by the gratitude of the people of this city for generations to come.

For the referendum, Mr. Mayor, you promised certain information to the people. We are not trying to impress you, so we are going to make a spelling proposition. I you insist on a referendum, we will take and talk until September 1st of this year to present to the people the information you will give them. You neglected to state to the people to whose letters you replied whether or not you expect to hold this referendum in November. Do you? If so, the people are entitled to know it. You promised in your letter to the Mayor, that this administration "is determined to settle the problem once and for all," but you didn't get busy.

Mr. Mayor, as we have said before, we have no desire to dramatize this situation, and we will resort to it only if you do not act. If you want to get this referendum on the November ballot, if that is your desire, you had better get busy. If it does not appear on this ballot, the people may never ask you what you have been doing, what you have been doing for the past 51 months. By November, you will have served as Mayor 5 months. We are determined to fight for good water until we obtain it. If the people fight hard enough for anything, they get what they want. When they do not care enough to get what they are called to accept what the water of the character this city offers.

The committee the Mayor appointed, through its chairman Ernest V. C. Sullivan, stated that in the shortest possible time you will be offered a chance to vote on whether you want to continue to receive the water you are now getting. For the present heavily polluted sources are the new sources. A sub-committee was appointed as I knew it would be, to receive advice from competent engineers to be selected immediately. Immediately means promptly; it means no time shall lapse; it means now. In the past, engineers have taken months and years to prepare their reports. All the information they can acquire is already on file. We will not be satisfied with pigeon-holed, delayed reports.

Mr. Herbert W. Goodall, the chairman of the sub-committee, is president of the Tradesmen's National Bank. How long do you think it would take him to decide whether or not a loan should be granted to an applicant? Mr. Goodall, get your committee to act promptly, just as you do in your own business affairs. Show the public you are a man of action and also that you are interested in giving them their birthright.

Philadelphia Water Department
Historical Collection

Only Lions Club on 18th St. He said: "Why are we drinking water from sources into which is being dumped the sewage and industrial wastes of not only our own community, but that of many, other towns and cities, even within the comparatively few miles of Philadelphia and at the lowest comparable per capita costs, we have a source of pure, clean water, far better than any other city in America enjoys today. It's because the citizens of Philadelphia have not strongly enough indicated that they would prefer clean, sparkling mountain water to the highly chlorinated product they now receive and that they are willing and anxious to pay the price for it."

Now, Mr. Baird is our city treasurer. He is a public official, his statement is no different from the statement of all other candidates for Mayor. You know, Mr. Mayor, said the same thing many years ago. WCAU sponsors no particular water source. We want good water and we do not care where it comes from, but it must be the best obtainable. Pay a few pennies more for water and pay less to the doctor.

The Mayor and city council, and certain politicians, may be satisfied with our water. If so, they can have all of it as far as we are concerned. If they are not satisfied with it, however, why is City Hall loaded with bottled water, which they drink and for which the citizens of this city pay? Everybody can't afford bottled water. The doctrine will do for the rich, but not for the poor.

Well-informed people are our executives. Don't they realize how much it would help the city just to have good drinking water? Do you people in this city realize our executives? Don't they realize how much it would help the city just to have good drinking water? Will it help?

In the near future, WCAU intends to hold a meeting at which time the various people who are acquainted with the water problem and prominent physicians will be invited to inform you over this station, about the condition of our water and how it affects your health.

Mr. Mayor, you have suggested the referendum, but it is not too late for you to start over again. You are big enough to change your mind. Call in your city engineers who know all about the water conditions, then consult with our leading bankers and arrange for a loan. This could be done in no time. It is as simple as that. You have enough information now as you will ever have. The people don't want a referendum. They want you to act now. Mr. Mayor, don't you hear the bugle?

Is 'Half Cent a Day' Too Much for Pure Water?

Pure water for Philadelphia was an issue way back in 1899.

The Record on Friday published a facsimile of part of the front page of the defunct Philadelphia Times, dated March 29, of that year—47 years ago.

A Grand Jury with "power to act at once" was to take up the question of foul water.

The automobile has developed since from an experiment to an industry. The airplane has grown up. Two world wars have been fought. The atom bomb has been invented.

But Philadelphia water remains the same—an unhygienic chemical experiment.

Why? Because we have had the kind of thinking in city government as exemplified Thursday by Public Works Director Martin J. McLaughlin.

Before City Council's Public Works Committee, he stated that city engineers were opposed to a plan of the Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company to bring pure water here from its property in the Poconos.

A new, unadulterated source of drinking water! What the city has needed for more years than the oldest inhabitants can remember. Many plans have been advanced during the years.

The chlorine cocktail is still with us.

We do not know the merits of the coal firm's proposal, which the company estimated would cost the city \$142,000,000.

But the point is that neither does McLaughlin.

He objected to the project because:

"Our engineers believe the cost would be millions and millions of dollars more than the company's figures."

An engineer doesn't talk that way. Not if he knows his business. The project may be worthless. But if it is to be opposed it should be for a good reason backed by facts.

No plan should be damned because it will cost "millions."

Of course, a new water supply will cost millions. It can't be had for a song.

This is the same kind of uninformed obstructionism that was employed to block the construction of a depressed, rather than surface, superhighway over Vine st.

It would cost too much!

How much is too much?

Way back in 1937, The Record showed that Philadelphia could have pure, fresh water, that the cost would run about \$150,000,000. Yes, that's a large sum.

But it means, when transferred into non-frightening terms, that the people could have water for only half a cent a day for each adult.

Is that too much?

It is no coincidence that Philadelphia has been burdened by Republican machine rule over all those years the people have been clamoring for good water—and not getting it.

Millions were squandered on municipal white elephants.

But now necessary improvements are obstructed by the unsubstantiated cry—"They cost too much!"

57

(Continued on Page Two)