

# Levy Asks Mayo Action On Clean Water

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### Levy Raps Committee Delay Asks Quick Action By Mayor

Isaac D. Levy, chairman of the board of the WCAU Broadcasting Company, urged Philadelphia citizens to support his radio crusade for better drinking water by writing letters and cards to Mayor Bernard Samuel demanding immediate action on purification measures. His plea was made in an address over WCAU last Friday night.

Levy's campaign, which has been almost completely ignored by newspapers here, has been steadily gaining supporters. Following his broadcast last week the station was swamped with telephone calls and mail.

In his talk last Friday night Levy declared "it is the duty of the Mayor to convene with Council and effect legislation to remedy the water condition. From previous reports he has all the necessary data. It was unnecessary to appoint another committee. The water sources from which we could receive excellent water have been known since previous reports were made.

The complete text of Mr. Levy's address follows:  
 On May the first I told you that WCAU urges you, if necessary, to compel the public officials to give the people of the city of Philadelphia the best drinking water obtainable. In that talk I pointed out to the Mayor, the city council and the members of the committee, whom the Mayor appointed, how the necessary legal mechanism could be set up in thirty days if they acted promptly. I sent all of these gentlemen a copy of my talk I want to inform the people who did not hear my previous talk, that WCAU proposes to



ISAAC D. LEVY

2916

**Urges November Vote on Water**

### 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 the radio executive blasted Mayor Samuel's plan for a referendum on the issue.

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

Levy urged the Mayor to consult immediately with city engineers, 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 Wallpack-Yardley plan for using the upper Delaware River as a source for Philadelphia water make it impractical.

Robert 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 Sylvania Hotel.

Boyd asserted that not only would New Jersey and Pennsylvania laws passed in 1783 and prohibiting diversion of river water have to be repealed but that an interstate contract 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

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 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 now comes 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 perils, 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 be not to appoint another committee but to get busy other people but to get busy himself. If you are driven to the 'big bottle' experiment, I hope to be on hand to see demonstration but should like to be excused from drinking anything but out-of-town water!"

Mr. Mayor, if you force us to act, it may be your fault. Mr. Mayor, if Samuel completed the unexpired term of Mayor Lambert, then was elected to the office of Mayor, and has been in office for a total of 45 months. He has been in politics for 85 years or more and was a member of city council for a long time. He knows all about our 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 the letters that his appointed committee is engaged in preparing two plans for the people to vote on. One was the improved use 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. If it was necessary to have a referendum, why was it that every candidate who ran 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!

**Duty and Responsibility**  
 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 usually nothing happens. This is called passing the buck. It is born of laziness and fear. If only public officials could learn that straight, clear thinking and hard work produce results. So many are afraid of imaginary shadows, listened 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 a 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 no referendum. They did not, neither about appointing committees after committee. The people of the city of New York acted 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 embarrass you, so we are going to make a sporting proposition. If you insist of the referendum, relation take 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 whom letters you replied whether or not you expected to hold this referendum in November. If you? If so, the people are entitled to know it. You promised in your letter Mr. Mayor, that this administration "is determined to settle the problem once and for all" but you didn't say when.

**Time to 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 busy, if that is your desire, you had better get busy. If it does not appear on this ballot the people may very well ask you where you have been and what you have been doing for the past 51 months. By November 1st you will have served as Mayor 55 months. We are determined to fight for good water until we obtain it.

If the fight has been hard enough for anything, they get what they want. It is only when they do not care enough to fight that they are compelled to accept water of the character of this city's water.

The committee the Mayor appointed through its chairman Ernest V. D. Sullivan, stated that in the shortest possible time they will be in a position to vote or whether you want to continue to receive the water you are now getting from the present heavily polluted water sources or from new sources.

A sub-committee was appointed. As I knew it would be, we gave advice from competent engineers to be selected immediately. Immediately means promptly. It means no time shall be lost. It means now. In the past, engineers have taken months and years to prepare their reports. All the information that can acquire is already on file. We will not be satisfied with piecemeal, 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 together promptly, just as you would in your own business affairs. Show the public you are a man of stature and show that you are interested in giving them their birthright. **Prefer Clean Water.**

Let me read to you a paragraph of an address delivered by Edgar W. Baird, Jr., the city treasurer of Philadelphia, before the Lindbergh

Only Lions Club on the city. He said: "Why are we drinking water from sources in 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 a comparatively few miles of Philadelphia and at the lowest comparable per capita costs, we have a source of pure, clean water, finer than any other city in America enjoys today. It is because the citizens of the city of Philadelphia have not been sufficiently interested 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 statements of all other candidates for Mayor. You, Mr. Mayor, said the same thing many times. WCAU sponsors no particular water source. We want good water and we do not care where it comes from, but it must be obtainable. But it costs 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 satisfied how do not care why is City Hall loaded with bottled water for them to 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.

What shortsighted 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 how corroded your pipes are and how full of mud they are? How do many of you have driven through the parkway when you were almost suffocated by the stench of the Schuylkill River? That comes from your water.

**Will Hold Forums**  
 In the near future, WCAU intends to hold forums 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 that 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 condition; then consult with your leading bankers and arrange for a loan. This could be done in no time. It is as simple as that. You have as much information now as you will ever get. 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 unwholly 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 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 a 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 our frightening terms, that the people could have pure 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!"