

Public Hearing on Water Drawn from Trenton



Fewer than 200 spectators appeared today to hear City Council's Public Works Committee discuss improvement of the water supply. Two policemen were on hand to control the crowds anticipated in the hearing. At extreme left is Mayor Samuel and at extreme right is Director of Public Works Martin J. McLaughlin.

With less than 200 spectators present, City Council's Public Works Committee today began public hearings on plans for improving Philadelphia's water supply. Regardless of what new source of supply is agreed upon, Philadelphia is going to continue to get "water" until the distribution system is improved. The 3,400 miles of water mains here are corroded and that water from them is going to continue dirty until the mains are replaced. Today's hearing, and one scheduled for May 22, were called solely for a discussion of plans now being considered by Council. Another hearing, the date for which has not yet been set, will be held to give opponents of the plans a chance to voice their criticisms. A small attendance had been expected at today's opening session—but not as small as the audience which showed up. Two policemen assigned to handle visitors to the gallery in Council's City Hall chambers, stood by idly when not a person appeared there. A makeshift "audience" of spectators came from areas in Montgomery and Bucks Counties which would be inundated if the Wallpack Bend project to bring water here from the upper Delaware River is the one chosen. Chief witness today was Herbert W. Goodall, chairman of the Mayor's Water Commission, who gave a brief report of the findings of a board of engineers appointed by the commission to study the best methods of bringing water here. "Philadelphia," Crossan said, "should not have to wait for a new supply system to get better water. It is imperative, I believe, that we do something now—not five years from now—to eliminate the reputation we have at Philadelphia's water works and smelt."

Facing the Water Problem

Quality of Delivered Water, Rather than Raw Supply, Not Stressed in Engineers' Report

The Bulletin resumes today its presentation of a series of articles intended to give readers in brief and simplified form a clearer understanding of the voluminous technical reports compiled for the Philadelphia Water Commission. The first three of these articles appeared May 14, 15 and 16. Because of their importance to every resident of Philadelphia the series was suspended during the period of curtailed Bulletin circulation. The fourth article follows; the fifth will appear tomorrow.

In their discussion of the raw water delivered to the city's purifying plants, the Water Commission's Board of Consulting Engineers say that both raw water and the water as delivered are now polluted to an extent greatly exceeding the maximum recommended by the U. S. Public Health Service for raw water to be purified by rapid sand filtration. "This meaning is lost, if the reference to 'rapid sand filtration' is not given due emphasis, for Philadelphia does not at any point rely solely on rapid sand filtration for purification. Almost all the water passes through slow sand filters or is double filtered. Rapid sand filtration is the only filtration for some of the Belmont Water, but it is supplemented by chemical treatment. Since the engineers were primarily concerned with sources, they may not have felt called upon to discuss at length the suitability of the water after treatment, either now, or after anti-pollution measures have become effective, or after the installation of better methods of treatment. A very important anti-pollution measure, of course, is the city's own sewage disposal program. But while one searches in vain for a direct statement from the engineers that the water from present sources is suitable or can be made so, this seems to be necessarily implied. Presumably the engineers would not have gone to the trouble to make through estimates of the cost of making the "present system suitable for continued use," as they did, had they not thought that a suitable supply could be provided. If this is what they thought, it is unfortunate they did not say so more emphatically.

Water Hearing

(Continued from page 1)

Goodall said, would increase in water rents of the average household about 102 per cent, or from about \$8 to \$16 a year. The second plan would entail an increase of 13 cents in the water rents.

Goodall pointed out that the two plans were to have been placed before the city's voters at next Tuesday's primaries, but that Council postponed the referendum so that public hearings on the question could be held.

Councilman Clarence K. Crossan, who followed Taylor as a witness, said that since authorities agreed that it will take at least five years to complete an upper Delaware supply, City Council should, in the meantime, provide some way of eliminating bad tasting water.

In this connection, he suggested serious attention be given his proposal to abandon the Torresdale intake from the Delaware River for a new one to be constructed at Yardley. At the Torresdale station, he pointed out, water taken at tidal flow, a condition that would not be necessary at Yardley.

"Philadelphia," Crossan said, "should not have to wait for a new supply system to get better water. It is imperative, I believe, that we do something now—not five years from now—to eliminate the reputation we have at Philadelphia's water works and smelt."

Director of Public Works Martin J. McLaughlin, who followed Goodall, told the committee that no matter which plan was adopted, "it's going to cost a lot of money."

McLaughlin also stated that water from any source—present or planned—is going to be "black as ink" if it is not filtered and requires purification. Despite admitted inadequacies, the water now supplied to Philadelphia has never failed to meet health standards, the director told the committee.

Summers' tunnel is subject to seepage and possible contamination from underground drainage. He also declared the 31-foot diameter of the tunnels proposed in the Lehigh plan is too small.

So, using the type of construction on which they based their estimates for the Wallpack Bend project, they figured it would cost \$320,000,000 to bring the Upper Lehigh water to the city limits. That includes no provision for filtration equipment or connections to the distribution system.

It would take at least seven more miles of pressure tunnel—at a little over \$2,000,000 a mile to bring the water into the city limits to the Torresdale filtration plant. Improvements to the Torresdale filters to handle the new supply would cost an

estimated cost of the Wallpack Bend project does not provide for replacement of corroded mains as does the rehabilitation estimate. The Wallpack Bend project, (Continued on Page Two, Column Three)

LEHIGH OFFENDS ITS WATER PAN-AWAITS HEARINGS

Says Proposal Will Prove to Be Cheapest and Best Source

The Lehigh Coal & Navigation Company yesterday rushed to the defense of its proposal to bring new Philadelphia water supply to the city from the upper Lehigh river and tributaries.

The board of consulting engineers of the Mayor's Water Commission has disapproved the plan as inadequate and excessively costly. As revealed by The Record yesterday, they figured it would cost \$345,000,000, not the \$12,000,000 estimated by Lehigh spokesmen (\$80,000,000 more than the estimated cost of the Wallpack Bend project which the commission favors).

Record Board of Consulting Engineers' report in January but was never made public until the Record obtained access to it last week-end. In this report the engineers accused the company of misrepresentation, improper cost estimates and "inadequate engineering design."

Robert V. White, president of the Lehigh Company, issued this reply yesterday.

The Lehigh-Pocono gravity water project will successfully stand up under any and every view of cost, adequacy of supply and purity of water which we made available.

"Because we are so supremely confident of the outcome we are awaiting eagerly the official investigation by City Council. The cheapest and best water source available to Philadelphia."

The report to the Mayor's Commission, so far as it referred to the Lehigh project, has been news since January, when it filed with the Commission. Nothing new has developed since then and there has been no further investigation.

"When we received the January report we gathered our engineers together and prepared a public hearing before the Mayor's Water Commission and answered every contented question. Our report is a matter of public record and is available to all. We repeat that our proposal would bring to the city of Philadelphia pure, unfiltered mountain water at the rate of \$10,000,000 gallons a day for a total of \$142,000,000.

"During the first 50 years it would cost only \$12,000,000. Our plan has been developed and presented by some of the most outstanding water supply engineers in the country. They are willing to risk their reputations upon the accuracy of their figures and the engineering design of the entire project."

"The Committee on Public Works of City Council has indicated it expects to hold public hearings on the entire water supply question. At those hearings we shall again show the desirability of the Pocono pure water gravity project in comparison with other former statements. Charge of \$6 a Foot

"The Commission engineers amounting to millions of dollars, errors of fact, false statements of judgment."

Engineers Reject Lehigh River For New Phila. Water Supply

Experts Advocate Wallpack Bend As Cheaper and Better Source

FOX CHASE WATER PUMP WINS U. S. APPROVAL

New Booster Station Will Cost \$200,000 Including Buildings

A project for construction of a booster pumping station in Fox Chase has been approved by the Civilian Production Administration. The total cost of the project will be \$200,000, including \$106,000 for electric pumps. The station will be located at Lardner and Oakley sts. The station will relieve low pressure conditions in the northeast and lessen the load of the Torresdale and Oak Lane stations.

The project was among 32 commercial and industrial projects, totaling \$1,265,896 approved by the CPA in the week ending last Thursday. In the same period 31 projects totaling \$2,022,825 were disapproved.

City Speeds Work On Pumping Station

Work on the new electric-pumping station at Torresdale, which will possess six large pumps with a capacity of 200,000,000 gallons of water daily when completed, is moving ahead rapidly, Robert J. Taylor, chief of the Water Bureau, announced yesterday. Taylor said the new station, part of the city's \$18,000,000 water-improvement program, will make it possible to make repairs to conduits at the Lardner's Point Station which cannot be done at this time without jeopardizing the city's maximum hourly capacity.

The proposal of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co. for providing Philadelphia with a pure water supply by damming up the Lehigh River and several of its tributaries was turned down by consulting engineers of the Mayor's Water Commission yesterday because it would supply insufficient water but also because of cost.

That was learned yesterday as an aftermath of the issue of the engineers' report on Saturday, after a year of study.

It was disclosed that the commission had received a confidential report in January which estimated that the Lehigh valley project would cost more than \$345,000,000—considerably more than the estimated cost of \$284,588,000 on the Wallpack Bend project in the Pocono.

The latter project, markedly favored in the engineers' report, was regarded as capable of supplying all of Philadelphia's water needs far into the future.

PROJECTS STUDIED
The Lehigh River Project and the Wallpack Bend project were two among eight upland potential water sources studied by the engineers. Who asserted they were not recommending particularly any one of the several projects.

In their final report on Saturday, they dismissed the Lehigh project by saying merely that it would not provide all the water Philadelphia needs if the present sources—the polluted Schuylkill and lower Delaware—are even partially abandoned.

INDETERMINATE COST
In the confidential report of last January, however, it was said that the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company had underestimated the cost of its suggested project.

That report said the engineers for the company had overestimated the stream flow of the Lehigh and its tributaries by 74 percent. It added that if dams were constructed there would be times when hundreds of acres of reservoir bottom would be exposed. That would mean, it was argued, that plants would grow and that eventually they would give unpleasant tastes and odors to the water.

GREATER TURBIDITY
"Without filtration," the January report states, "the average turbidity would be at least twice the average turbidity of water presently being supplied in the City of Philadelphia."

The report also suggested that the estimate of costs by the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Co. had been based on pre-war figures for labor and materials, plus not on the advanced prices of today.

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