

# Almost 25,000 Water Meters in City are Awaiting Repairs

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Of The Bulletin Staff

A complete revision of the city's system of water meter installation and service was urged yesterday by officials of several municipal bureaus.

The action stemmed from complaints of thousands of property owners whose water meters are either out of order or have been removed for repair and not returned. Nearly 25,000 meters have been awaiting repair, some for as long as four years, it was reported.

One of the proposed changes would be the procedure of having property owners bring their meters from a list of city approved types and then paying for water meter repairs. Instead, the city would buy a supply of meters, install them when requested, and pass the cost on to the consumer through an additional fee or along with the regular utility water bills.

**Service Charge Proposed**  
Two bills suggested that a small service charge be added to the regular water bills to defray the cost of material and labor in having the consumer pay the entire cost of water meter repairs are made by the city. The city supply of meters is indicated, would be in eliminating the time spent in checking an individual meter through the repair stage to make certain that it is returned to the proper owner. In addition, the city could decide upon three or four types of meters and use the best instead of the 20 types now in use.

The difficulty in obtaining replacement parts for so many types of water meters would be suitable for the huge backlog of repairs.

# Better Water Leads Citizens' Demands

**By PAUL TRESCOIT**  
Of The Bulletin Staff

When it comes to civic improvements, Philadelphians are mostly of one mind. The water supply ought to be improved first.

Other major city projects rank a poor second in the minds of the rank and file citizens.

When civic undertakings got the interest of only about one person in five, what is reviewed in the Bulletin poll made this inquiry:

Which of these public improvements do you think should be done first to remove Chinese Wall's extended transit service? furnish express service in subways? improve water supply? provide off-street parking facilities in downtown? any other?

Sixty-one per cent picked the water supply.

Here was the rating of the others: District open parking, seven per cent; extended transit service, six per cent; furnish express service in subway, four per cent; remove Chinese Wall, three per cent; others, one per cent; no answer, three per cent. The total is more than 100 because a few got as their first choice.

In almost every question asked concerning civic affairs, the water issue rates high. Previously, when residents were asked what the Legislature could do to help the city, most water was in first place.

The city now has a major program under way in improving water supply, and this, coupled with the State's undertaking to clean up the Schuylkill through and above the city, promises results within a year or two. In addition, the construction of sewage treatment works by the city provides for better conditions for both the Schuylkill and the Delaware.

# 22 Odorless City Water

**READINESS** of the Bureau of Water to install the largest ozonation plant in the country at the Belmont Reservoir registers the Water Bureau's conviction that this method of removing tastes and odors is definitely beyond the experimental stage.

That disagreeable tastes and odors, which were stimulating the drive to go to the mountains for the city's water, could be removed was one of the contributions of the Bureau of Municipal Research to the water problem discussion a year ago.

It was then shown that while it would cost more to remove the tastes and odors than to not remove them, it would cost far less than to take water from a source of water a hundred miles from the city. Council wisely decided to have a try at treating water taken from the present nearby sources.

Last week the Bureau told the public that taste and odor control had been in effect for some time for some parts of the water supply, and that "threshold odor numbers" as high as 30 had been reduced to three. That means, substantially, that while it took the addition of twenty-nine parts of odorless water to one part of raw water to kill odor, it took the addition of only two parts to kill the odor after treatment.

The new treatment may be one reason why there appears to have been less complaint recently about the water. Early results of its treatment with a partial installation hold promise that a nuisance may be abated.

# Another Main Lets Go

Another of Philadelphia's troublesome water mains blew its top today. Results: a gash nearly 200 feet long down the middle of S. Broad st.; a bad scare for two bus-loads of people; topsy-turvy sidewalks; water, water everywhere. It all happened at Snyder av.—News Page 1

# City Work Plan is Its Greatest Buckley and Mayor Promise Speed

Director of Public Works Thomas Buckley yesterday described the municipality's program of city improvement projects as unquestionably the greatest ever contemplated in its history.

In a statement supplementing the 46-page brochure prepared at his request, Mayor Samuel said that a total of \$139,050,000 is available for the works program as authorized.

Assurance was given by both officials that a huge backlog of projected improvements, delayed by the war, will be expedited as speedily as possible.

The 1947 Works schedule is, according to Buckley, notable for several reasons—"its great volume, variety, cost and geographical spread."

A number of the projects already authorized are of major importance and large in scope and, therefore, the time required for completion will run into next year. Also, uncompleted contracts carried over from 1946 have been placed at the head of the list of new work now pending.

Buckley further explained that the current-year program is "not rigid but elastic; it can be amplified to meet the demands of sudden emergencies or of other necessities when they develop, and all elements of the construction industry will have opportunity to participate in it."

Stating that the city has provided the authority, the plans, the funds, and possesses the incentive, Buckley added: "The play now passes to the construction industry, and we are in their hands. The first score will depend upon the availability of materials and the labor situation."

The report is an innovation in that it presents a factual, detailed record of the status of authorized public works programs.

# Broad St. Form Nearly 200 Feet by Main Break

**Loaded Buses Tracked, Area Flooded, Traffic Tied Up at Snyder Av.**

A water main under Broad st. south of Snyder av. broke with a roar at 7:10 A. M. today, shooting up a 25-foot geyser.

A hundred or more Navy workers lined up at the southwest corner waiting for Route C buses were drenched by the tumbling water before they had time to realize what had happened.

Passengers on two heavily-loaded double-deck buses on Broad st. became panicked as the water shot up beside them and the area pushed up under the vehicles.

"Get us out!" the passengers began screaming at the drivers, who put on speed and drove out of the danger zone with the street rocking beneath them.

**Water Pours Into Subway**  
Pressure from the break pushed up curbing and sidewalks on both sides and opened a wide crack nearly 300 feet long in the middle of Broad st.

The crack between Snyder av. and Jac. st. was closed to all traffic for more than three hours. After the water was permitted to drain, the outer lips, warning of a possible collapse.

When it came into the subway, it caused a delay of only two minutes for one train. Quick response to emergency calls by Bureau of Water employees, who shut off the main, prevented disruption of service.

Some water flowed into basements of homes on the west side of the street and into the South Philadelphia High School on the east side.

**Sidewalks Thrown Up**  
The sidewalks were lifted out of place in front of the high school and in front of Dr. Davy Paul, Jr., dentist, and Dr. W. J. Blackburn, physician, at Nos. 2114 and 2212, respectively, on the west side of the street.

While the street was blocked off, buses and automobiles were rerouted through 15th and 15th sts. After a brief delay, trolley routes 79 and 81 were able to operate on normal schedules. Both routes cross Broad st. on Snyder av.

A crew from the Bureau of Water began working for a break in the middle of the street about 25 feet south of Snyder av. The bureau expected to be able to restore normal water service to the area before the end of the day.

# Renovation of System Stressed in Water Report



**PROPOSED WATER SUPPLY FOR CITY**  
The chart above shows in detail how the Wallpack Bend project would bring hundreds of millions of gallons of pure water daily to this city from the upper reaches of the Delaware River. Two huge reservoirs and an 81-mile-long pressure tunnel are features of the project.

# Plans Urged To Improve Taste, Odor

A three-point program, with emphasis on plans to improve immediately the taste and odor of the city's present drinking water, was recommended yesterday in the Water Commissioner's final report on a future water supply for Philadelphia.

In submitting the report to Mayor Samuel, the commission urged that steps one and two, rehabilitation of the present system, be completed first and if it is then necessary to obtain water from an upland source that the Wallpack Bend project in the Delaware River near Bushkill, Pa., be utilized.

**COMMISSIONER'S PROPOSALS**  
The commission proposed: Immediate overhauling of the filtration and distribution systems and installation of additional chemical treatment to eliminate taste and odors. Part of this work is already under way.

A long-range program of improvement and additions to the present water system, including the taking of a larger proportion of the water supply from the Delaware River and increased storage facilities.

**'BEST SOURCE OF WATER'**  
Utilization of Wallpack Bend as "the best source of water" in the event the city decides to go to an upland source for its future supply. The estimated cost of this project is \$284,588,000.

In accepting the report, the Mayor asserted the survey "will be a chart for many years to come, regardless of whether the city receives its water from an upland source or whether it shall continue to flow through our mains from the present source, after they have been improved."

# FIRST STEP IN PROGRAM

The first step of the program, involving the expenditure of about \$1,000,000, contemplates the installation of chemical treatment equipment as quickly as possible. The report explained that this must be done regardless of what source of supply was finally chosen.

Mayor Samuel, in his acceptance speech, said this phase of the work was well under way, adding that contracts totaling several millions of dollars have been awarded to install new equipment at various pumping stations.

# BIDS ARE OPENED

He also pointed out that bids were opened a few days ago for installing ozonation equipment at the Belmont filter plant, explaining that ozonation is one of the major methods to remove objectionable odors and tastes in water.

The second step, a long-range program, would bring the present water networks to the peak of efficiency to supply Philadelphians with pure, palatable water, in the opinion of the commission.

# \$62,568,000 EXPENDITURE

This part of the program would require the expenditure of \$62,568,000, which the report explained, could be financed by increasing the average household's water bill 13 percent.

Should the Schuylkill be abandoned as a source of water, the commission warned, the additional cost of Delaware Delaware River water from Tropicville, Pa., would increase the cost \$25,000,000, necessitating a 23 percent increase in water rates instead of 13 percent.