

Labor Organize New Water Board

Will Ask Legislature To Take Over System

Establishment of a Philadelphia Water Authority to take over control and development of the municipal water system will be recommended to the current session of the State Legislature, Mayor Bernard Samuel announced yesterday.

In announcing the far-reaching proposal, Samuel explained that under the plan that city would lose ownership of the water system, but that the authority would have the responsibility of seeing to it that an adequate supply of pure water is made available to the residents of Philadelphia.

CHARGE UP TO PEOPLE
Nor does the plan necessarily mean, the Mayor added, that the city will abandon the present source of water in favor of an upland source. Before any change is made, he said, the people of Philadelphia will be given an opportunity to express their preference.

"Supplying water to the 500,000 homes of the people of Philadelphia and to our many manufacturing, industrial and mercantile establishments is a tremendous undertaking requiring the application of modern business practices," the Mayor asserted.

HEARINGS TO BE HELD
"It is a big business enterprise and should be managed best by an agency specializing in the operation of this vital and all-important public utility."

"Public hearings will be held on the plan after the legislation is introduced in the Legislature. The agreement of approval both by the Assembly and the Governor, a supplementary agreement to be negotiated in City Council, where the people will have another chance to express their views on the proposal."

2 PRINCIPAL PROBLEMS
After stating that the two principal problems in connection with the water supply involve the abundance of supply, keeping in mind the future needs of the city, and the quality of water in relation to purity, softness, odor, taste and other characteristics, the Mayor continued:

"The project is a monumental one. It involves difficult problems of engineering and design. Subject to these problems being met, it can be done by the city directly or by the city through the agency of an authority."

"It would seem preferable to have the work done by an authority rather than the city. An authority, which would concentrate on the one activity and would not be subject to the many demands imposed on the municipality, would be more able to secure the technical staff and to proceed in the most expeditious manner."

"An authority of selected members, assisted by a qualified technical staff, would be organized, with the responsible assurance of management that will compare with the best quality of private ownership, but at the same time will protect the public in that the improved property will be held for the benefit and will tilt to the system, as improved, will ultimately revert to the city."

"It is determined to proceed with the project and to form the subject of the present authority, transferring the present facilities to that authority, the agreement with the authority for a five-year annual rental fee to the city sufficient to pay the

charges on the existing water debt so that it can be maintained as excluded debt."
The Mayor explained the city's investment in the water system exceeds \$100,000,000 including the expenditure of \$100,000,000 since 1942. The disbursement of another \$200,000,000 within the next four years is planned. "The existing water debt is now excluded as a lien against the city's borrowing power and the court has ruled that the city is not liable for contemplated expenditure of the additional \$200,000,000 from the debt calculation."

"Turning to the possibility of an upland source of water, the Mayor asserted:
"In the event an upland source of water is to be received by the authority, such a project, I am convinced, would include many possibilities available to the city of Philadelphia."

REVENUE POSSIBILITIES
"After the development of the project, it would be possible, I believe," the Mayor asserted, "to contribute to communities abutting or within reasonable distance of the route of supply improvements well beyond any additional revenue from the sale of power along the same route."

The Mayor reviewed the recommendations of many water commissions over the years. He specifically mentioned the Philadelphia Water Commission appointed by him in 1942. The city is well equipped to study the question of an improved water supply and a possible new source of supply.

COMMENTS ON REPORT
Commenting on the commission's final report, he said:
"The commission considered two possible plans, an upland source of supply and, second, improvement of present sources."
"Regardless of any decision in the future to procure our water supply from upland sources, it was imperative to make certain improvements in existing facilities within the city. These improvements have been under way since Federal restrictions on necessary and vital materials were lifted in 1945 and are continuing. These improvements would have been in operation if the city decided to go on up-State for its water supply in 1946."

PLANS FOR FUTURE
"The \$18,000,000 spent in the 1940-48 period and the \$200,000,000 proposed to be spent in the 1949-52 period have for their purpose the extension and improvement of the facilities for the improvement of the quality of water."
"Although the quality has been improved to some extent, it has not reached the desired standard and, in addition, there are periods during which the quality of the water is objectionable in taste and odor becomes objectionable, due to contamination of the water."
"He pointed out completion of the sewage disposal plants and elimination of raw and industrial wastes from the Schuylkill and the Delaware River will improve the quality of the water."

"The future demands of the Philadelphia, however, must be adequately met from that portion of the present sources to which it may be possible to apply the principle of allocation now in effect," continued Samuel.
"The solution of these problems may lie in the establishment of an up-State source which will assure

to the city the quantity and quality of water required by it; the transmission of this water to the city and its distribution to the users by extension of the existing facilities, as improved and modernized."
"For the purpose of extending, rehabilitating and improving the water system of Philadelphia, contracts for work cost \$4,250,000 since 1942, and during 1948 by the Department of Public Works. These will provide for the completion of the new Torresdale pumping station, the ozonation plant at Belmont filters and many distribution mains."

"As far as the rehabilitation of the local source of supply is concerned," he concluded the Mayor, "our plans include additional projects for existing supplies and the extension of existing plants toward further improvement of quantity and quality of water. These plans are being extended to the distribution system to keep pace with new building and for booster pumping stations to supply outlying areas."

He repeated that his sole interest in the water problem is to furnish an adequate supply of pure water to every Philadelphian.

Bureau Bungle Blamed for City's Bad Water
Improvements Started in 1946 Not Completed, Researchers Charge

By JOHN G. McCULLOUGH
Of The Bulletin Staff

The nauseous taste and odor of Philadelphia water was blamed yesterday on the City's bungling of its water system improvement program.

It included the \$1,000,000 ozonation plant still under construction at the Belmont Filtration Plant, chlorine ammonia treatment at the Queen Lane plant and the use of activated carbon at the City's filter stations.

The Bureau of Municipal Research, in its weekly bulletin on municipal affairs, pointed out that the program, authorized in 1946, was to be completed in 15 months. Although more than \$10,000,000 immediately was made available, the agency declared, the work is still far from finished.

"Recent experience with bad-tasting and evil-smelling water," the bureau said, "has overtaken the city of Philadelphia. They expect and should have good water every day. Technical explanations of the cause are not enough, particularly when the cure is at hand."

"The City undertook to carry out the improvement program outlined, if possible, the need for undertaking the highly expensive work of bringing water from the Poconos, 'Hue and Cry Rising'."

"It is little wonder," the bureau said, "that the hue and cry for an upland source of water is rising again. People care little that they could have equally high-quality water from the present sources so long as the cost, if they aren't getting it."

"It was the taste and odor problem that brought the city to a decision in 1946 to spend \$15,000,000 for an upland water supply."
"The present state of affairs is that Philadelphia would not have been 'plagued' with the phenol and tar odors during the war, if the program, if the taste and odor program had been completed as scheduled. The program was worked out by City Council and a special water commission after months of public hearings and field investigation."

"It is a big business enterprise and can be administered best by management specializing in the operation of this vital and all important public utility."

"I suggested it."
The Committee of Fifteen, in the course of its researches last year, reached the conclusion that the water system was too large to be an enterprise for the City to handle and recommended that the job be turned over, under lease, to private enterprise.

Falling that, committee experts suggested, the job should be given to an authority modeled on the Delaware River Joint Commission. Samuel's decision to foster the authority plan is the result not of the Fifteen's recommendation, he said, but of many months of his own study of the problem.

Creation of the authority would not necessarily mean that the City would abandon present water sources and turn to development of an upland supply, at least not right away. "The city is well equipped, nothing at all would happen right away."

Showing the introduction of legislation at Harrisburg providing for establishment of an authority, "but hearsings have not been held."
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It included the \$1,000,000 ozonation plant still under construction at the Belmont Filtration Plant, chlorine ammonia treatment at the Queen Lane plant and the use of activated carbon at the City's filter stations.

Up to the present time, chlorine has been the mainstay of treatment facilities.

"It was planned to observe the results of the two methods in use at Belmont and Queen Lane and to extend the better procedure to the other filtration plants."

"Thirty months have gone by and the ozone plant is still not in operation," the bureau pointed out. "Moreover, the chief of the Water Bureau is now talking about at least a year's experience with ozone before extending its use."

Albert J. Taylor, chief of the Water Bureau, last week disclosed that he would insist on the long trial period for the ozone process. The Bureau of Municipal Research, he said, this was counter to the results of many months of tests which "clearly show that the bad taste and odor can be eliminated by ozonation."

As an example of what it called the City's "bungling" the bureau listed the steps taken for construction of the Belmont ozonation plant. It said they indicated "why the city was kept unprepared to handle a major taste and odor problem 30 months after it launched a program for taste and odor control."

"At the time the whole installation was supposed to be completed, the Bureau reported, bids were just being taken for the contact chambers, a major part of the job. Transmitters, known to be in short supply, were ordered nine months after the job was authorized, stated, but the ozone equipment, on the other hand, was available and waiting to be installed for over a year."

Mayor to Propose Philadelphia Water Authority

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be held at which all interested parties could be heard.
"In the event of favorable action by the Legislature and approval by the governor, supplementary legislation would be introduced in the Philadelphia City Council where again public hearings would be held to procure the views of our taxpayers on the subject."

"If an authority of supply should be recommended by the authority, such a project, I am convinced, would include many possibilities favorable to the City."

One such possibility, he said, lay in the fact that if the City had plenty of good water the authority could procure additional revenue by selling some of it to other communities.

Samuel reviewed some of the water problems which he hopes may some day be turned over to the new authority. Looking back on his own handling of these problems, he commented that "regardless of any decision in the future made by the city on upland sources, it was imperative to make certain improvements in existing facilities."

Results Not Encouraging
The City spent \$18,000,000 on those improvements between 1940 and 1948, Samuel noted, and plans to spend \$20,000,000 more in the next four years, but so far the results have not been encouraging.

"Although the quantity of water has been improved to some extent, it has not reached the desired standard and, in addition, there are periods during which, the quality of water in taste and odor becomes objectionable, due to contamination of the water sources."

What is needed, he said, is maximum purification of existing sources and the development of new ones, possibly from an upland source. "The city is well equipped, but may be assured not only of pure water but plenty of it."

"The project," he said, "is a monumental one."
"It would seem preferable to have the work done by an authority, rather than the City. An authority, which would concentrate on the one activity and would not be subject to the many limitations now imposed on the municipality, would be more able to secure the technical staff and to proceed with the project in the most expeditious manner."

"An authority of selected members, assisted by a qualified technical staff, will give responsible assurance of management that will compare with the best quality of private ownership, but at the same time will protect the public in that the improved property will be held for its benefit and that title to the system, as improved, will ultimately revert to the City."

"If it is determined to proceed with the project and to perform the work through an authority, transferring the present facilities to that authority, the agreement with the authority must provide for annual rental fee to the City sufficient to pay the charges on the existing water debt so that it can be maintained as excluded debt."

"The outstanding indebtedness is now excluded from the city debt in that the court exclude the \$1,000,000 recently authorized and the \$10,000,000 proposed to be authorized from the debt calculation," the mayor said.

Assistant City Solicitor Herman Schwartz, will go into court this week to seek the necessary court order on the debt exclusion.
The rise in water charges which began on January 1 will bring in an additional \$1,000,000, which is slated at present to keep the waterworks self-supporting. The rise amounts to 16 per cent on meter and 25 per cent on fixture rates.

At present, said Taylor, there are 46,000 meters being repaired and thousands of new meters, which the city ordered a year ago, which have not been installed.

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the next three years in the further improvement and extension of the system.
2,620 Miles of Mains
"The system includes 2,620 miles of mains, an administration building and shop, a garage building and certain raw water pumping stations, filtered water pumping stations, filtration plants, storage reservoirs and other appurtenant facilities."
"It serves approximately 488,000 customers and pumps more than 130,000,000 gallons of water annually. About half of these customers receive water at metered rates and the other half at schedule or fixture rates."

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Fox Chase Pump Open Tuesday

The new \$300,000 Fox Chase booster pumping station, which is expected to furnish a better water supply to the entire Fox Chase area and northeast section of the city, will be put into operation Tuesday morning.

Mayor Bernard Samuel and other city officials will participate in the formal opening of the station. Included will be Director of Public Works Thomas Buckley, Albert J. Taylor, chief of the Water Bureau and Councilmen Clarence K. Crossan, George D. Mansfield, Cornelius S. Deagan, Jr. and David Jamieson.

FOUR PUMPS IN PLANT
"The booster station," said the Mayor, "is designed to provide adequate service to the Fox Chase area, but in order to level off the pumpage during peak demands and provide more uniform pressures in the higher sections, the improvement program includes storage facilities extending to the Fox Chase and the Somerston section. This storage would be in the form of an elevated tank with a capacity of approximately one to three million gallons."

The new station houses four electric pumps, with the switchgear and appurtenances necessary for operation. Two of the pumps have a capacity of four million gallons daily and the other two a capacity of two million gallons per day.

\$ MILLION GALLONS A DAY
"These pumps," continued the Mayor, "are started and stopped according to the demands in the Fox Chase area. If necessary, a total of 6,000,000 gallons per day can be pumped to supply the demands."

The water reaches the booster station pumps through a 20-inch cast iron pipe in Lardner st., connecting with the 24-inch main in Rising Sun Ave. The water is discharged through a 20-inch and a 10-inch main in Rising Sun Ave.

The distribution area affected is bounded by City Line, Pennypack Creek, Penway st. and Geitfeye ave.

an Dry
Just Overnight By Attendant

TEMPLE ran dry in homes near the stadium last night, after a super-temperature yesterday, and apparently the last person to know about it was the attendant in the Water Bureau's Oak Lane booster station.

Homeholders plagued City Hall and the Water Bureau with inquiries. Dishes piled up unwashed, youngsters with filthy faces were everywhere, and the water was out of order. Hundreds were excited.

NO ONE was more upset than the Water Bureau's night superintendent. He was baffled—no leaking mains, no clogged, broken or leaking breakdowns and no water in the basement. The night superintendent, the booster station attendant and City Hall men, was an island of "no water."

"No water," an attendant phoned a telephone office. "Wait a minute while I look at the meter." He discovered the pressure drop. "It develops that he had been to see an eye doctor in the morning. The meter was running normally again, but the attendant, returning from his job, found the booster station embroiled.

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