

Prompt Appraisal Wanted of Incoel Water Plan

In an editorial earlier this week, The Inquirer urged Pennsylvania and Philadelphia to obtain expert opinion on the proposed Incoel plan for four-State allocation of Delaware River water, to make sure that our water needs shall be properly secured.

In a letter to the Editor published elsewhere on this page, James H. Allen, executive secretary of the Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin, agrees that our State and city should be absolutely certain that their interests are protected.

He states that Incoel would welcome expert analysis on that score, but he makes the important point that the appraisal should be conducted promptly. Otherwise the opportunity to participate in an integrated program might be lost, as New York and northern New Jersey areas would be forced by the urgency of their water problems to proceed on their own.

In another letter to the Editor, Judge Grover C. Lадner, an authority on stream conservation, also recommends that the In-

coel plan be examined by disinterested experts, "and not rushed through this session of the Legislature as seems to be the program."

Not only should the plan be scrutinized, but scrutinized without loss of time. For the State and city governments to do nothing about the proposal could be as injurious as rushing it to approval without examining it.

Distribution of Delaware water by four-State agreement is obviously preferable to unilateral grabs made by the States individually. What is wanted is four-State allocation that is fair to all affected areas.

The Incoel proposal may be the right answer. It deserves consideration. It should neither be shunted aside nor railroaded to passage. Both the State Legislature, which is to be called upon to ratify it, and the city of Philadelphia, a major interested party, should move promptly to obtain expert opinion on the plan, to help them decide whether or not it provides the necessary protection, and whether or not it should be approved.

INCOEL PLAN DEFENDED

To the Editor of The Inquirer: This Commission is keenly interested in the editorial in the Feb. 20th issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer entitled, "Protect Philadelphia's Water Rights."

We agree wholeheartedly with your position that Pennsylvania, particularly Philadelphia, should make sure that all of its water needs shall be amply and properly secured before agreeing to participate in any program for the development and utilization of the waters of the Delaware River Basin.

We are firmly convinced that the proposed integrated water project which has been formulated by Incoel, adequately and equitably provides for the interests of all four States who are the proprietors of the Delaware River Basin and their political subdivisions.

The proposed four-State agreement which Incoel is asking the Legislature to approve in order to give life to the integrated water project has been carefully designed to protect and safeguard the interests of each of the participating States. The administrative commission which would be created to carry the project out would have equal representation from each State, with decisions to be made by the Governor.

Under the terms of the agreement, no allocation of water could be made to any of the respective States unless and until the proposed distribution was agreed upon by the majority of the members of the commission from each of the participating States.

The proposed project, in Incoel's judgment, is especially beneficial to Pennsylvania and Philadelphia. Incoel would welcome expert analysis and opinion on this score. It would point out, however, that it is essential that the project be appraised on a constructive basis and with dispatch. Otherwise areas in New York and New Jersey will be forced, because of the urgency of their problems, to meet their needs by other alternatives. If this should happen, the proposed Incoel project would become meaningless. Pennsylvania and Philadelphia would be compelled to find the answer to their water supply and stream flow problems entirely on their own.

By all means Pennsylvania and Philadelphia should be absolutely certain that their interests are protected by this plan. It would be desirable promptly or the opportunity to participate in the integrated program may be lost forever.

JAMES H. ALLEN
Executive Secretary, Interstate Commission on the Delaware River Basin
Philadelphia, Feb. 21



PHOTO BY JAMES J. METCALFE

Light on the Porch

*I like a cozy little home...
A neat and pretty lawn...
But most of all like at night...
To see the porch light on...
It seems to lend a friendly glow...
As though to say, 'Welcome...'
And think you very much...
It means the house is lived in and...
And like as not, in love and peace...
They happily abide...
The porch light is a beacon light...
To guide the welcome guest...
And greet the child when...
When they come home to rest...
I like it kindly gleam...
I know it is the carefree sign...
That someone left it on.*

We had better go slow and be as instead of sorry.

Worthy of note also is that Incoel plan would forgo the protection of the U. S. Supreme Court decree which presently limits New York's draft to 40 million gallons a day, and New Jersey to apply for a reduction if actual experience demonstrates that allocation to be too much. Why should we give up this protection?

GROVER C. LADNER
Philadelphia, Feb. 21

Editor's Note: A further editorial on Incoel's four-State water plan appears on this page today.

Firm Proposes To Lease City's Water System

Says It Can Improve Supply, Treat Sewage, Step Up Collections

By JOHN C. CALPIN
Of The Bulletin Staff

The City of Philadelphia will be offered a plan to lease its water and sewer plants to private management within a few days.

For several months, officials of the American Water Works Service Co. have been studying the municipal setup and are convinced they have a workable plan to give Philadelphia "good" water within a year.

The plan, its sponsors say, would give the city an income at least equal to—possibly greater than—the present revenue. The company's profit would come from more efficient management and better collection.

Native Philadelphian

John Ware, chairman of the board and president of the North-carolina Water Works Co. and the American Water Works Co., which control a network of water plants in 23 states, will be in direct charge of the negotiations with the City.

Back of the plan is the personal interest of Ware, a native Philadelphian.

Ware left Northeast High School at the age of 14 and became, all an electric motor for a freight elevator and made \$150 on the job.

Ware has a net worth of \$240,000,000 which own or operate 126 water works and four sewerage plants and manage others owned by 14 municipalities. Thirty-five of the plants are in Pennsylvania. The remainder are scattered from Maine to California.

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Water System

Delaware River water... remain the principal source...

Moves Back to City

Several months ago, Ware moved his headquarters to Philadelphia, after an absence of about 35 years ago. He plans to run Philadelphia his operations from his headquarters.

He and his associates plan to offer the City a lease similar to that under which the Philadelphia Gas Co. operates the City-owned gas works.

"That gas lease is the most important thing we have to get expert management with the present revenue. The company's profit would come from more efficient management and better collection."

"We can do the same. Within a year, we feel we can give the City of Philadelphia gas water in less than that. Taking on our job at a time, in three to five years, we think we can bring the whole system straightened out."

Vote of City Council

"The first problem is to get the people to want better water. Then we'll sit down with all the various factions in this City to discuss the matter. We will talk to the city agencies and the businessmen and the politicians."

"City Council must vote for the lease before it can become effective."

The adoption of the new city charter should facilitate a lease of a municipal authority, for a provision was written into the charter for such an event.

The charter sets up a separate water department, divorced from the present Department of Public Works.

Ware feels that a municipal authority is the answer here, although his companies deal with several such authorities. A lease of the City department would save money and much intermediate planning and maneuvering.

The operating company would be the Municipal Management, Inc., a subsidiary of the Ware system.

No Criticism

Ware refuses to criticize, for the time being, the present water and sewer management here. He does praise Director of Public Works Thomas Buckley Taylor.

Guardedly and generally, he says that he does not like the political ties which affect the operation of any municipal utility, not specifically Philadelphia. He thinks such obstacles can be overcome on a business basis.

While Philadelphia does not have good water, he says, "the water quality has improved, and anyone who says it hasn't is being unfair. It will be a long time to go."

He does not foresee the use of so-called "upland water." He thinks that with the state's stream cleanup program and the many improvements Philadelphia has made in its systems in recent years, the clouds can't be stored in regulating basins.

City Shortage Cited

"That the estimates of engineers can be wrong is borne out by the experience of New York City. All the dams and reservoirs were left vast, that were supposed to hold flood waters for water later, were all small when a drop of water came."

New York finally turned to their own watershed, the Hudson, for its water supply. Even now engineers are considering the same source as a permanent water supply. They will not use the Delaware on the Hudson and not the Delaware watershed.

It appears that Pennsylvania should not take a step it cannot retract until it is first determined if the Delaware will stand the diversion of the 440,000,000 gallons allotted by the U. S. Supreme Court. What that is established why take a

Water Meter Puzzle

Utility Firm's Efficiency Shows Up City's Laxity

By Kos Semonski
Second of 3 Articles

ALARMED by the threat to home-owners, title company officials and real estate brokers warned here yesterday that the city should promptly hire an efficient water meter-reading service or arrange to turn the job over to private utility firms under contract.

The need for prompt action was stressed by these officials, who earlier had pointed out that the inaccurate and haphazard methods were clouding the title to many homes.

Philadelphia home-seller, they said, have been obliged to tie up their money in a settlement account because of the city's failure to present prompt and accurate water bills.

Under proper supervision, leaders in the real estate field asserted, the city could provide adequate water meter-reading service for less cost than for the present "guesswork" system.

The modern and efficient methods of public utility firms already operating in Philadelphia were recommended as a model for the water meter service.

As an example, these officials compared the workings of a meter reader employed by the Philadelphia Gas Works, and a city employee "supposedly employed to do similar work."

For the gas company, they pointed out, the average reader covers about 250 meters daily, of approximately 5000 monthly. In all, the gas firm has 5200 gas meters that are read regularly.

Only 10 in 100 of the homes he covers does the gas meter reader find residents away. In these cases, readers are left so residents may make their own readings and forward the findings by mail.

Meters missed or on which no record is made are placed on a "skip list." Special men are assigned "call-back" to cover these.

HELPFUL information is recorded on the account sheet carried by the account reader. It might be noted here that the home reader frequently leaves a key with a neighbor for the convenience of the reader. Or it might be stated that readings in certain houses can be made only by certain persons.

According to the informants, meter readers for the gas firm are usually in uniform and carry routes to which they are assigned and also the best manner in which to read the meters.

Salaries for these readers start at \$43 weekly and follow a scale that reaches a maximum of \$55.80 monthly.

BY CONTRAST, these officials emphasized, the city has about 280,000 water meters that are not read. A total of 31 men are employed for this type work.

Based on the average set by the gas company workers, the informants pointed out, the municipal readers could handle without difficulty 465,000 meters four times a week. This would provide an environment of four weeks annually, it was explained.

However, under the present system, the official said, the city readers are unable to provide the services for about half the water meters.

Reel and Trigger

By JOE PANCOAST

Once we bind ourselves to a contract drafted by Incoel we are bound forever and cannot change without consent of all the other participating states. It was pointed out by Pennsylvania Supreme Court Justice Grover C. Ladner in a recent opinion in a case involving 600 million gallons of water daily from the Delaware to Hudson watershed.

Judge Ladner made clear this point in answer to contentions made by Incoel in its leaflet: "Facts demonstrate that allocation to be of special interest to The Sportsman."

The U. S. Supreme Court, April 9, this year, handed down a decision that applies Judge Ladner's said. "The Court refused to permit West Virginia to withdraw from an Ohio River pact. It was ruled that such a contract supersedes all prior water rights that

Ladner Warns of Binding Features in Incoel Contract

communities, states, individual or industries previously acquired."

Cites Perilous Situation

"A pact such as Incoel proposes under conditions laid down by the recent U. S. Supreme Court decision, could result in a perilous situation for riparian communities, industries and sportsmen of the Delaware River Valley."

Incoel's further states, "Every competent engineer who has studied their project agrees there will be a dependable supply of water for all parties' interest at times of greatest need."

"I don't, I dispute," Judge Ladner said. "I am not aware of an impartial group of engineers studied the Incoel project and approved it. I further contend that stream flow reports of the Delaware, taken from the U. S. Geological Survey Water Supply Re-

ports at Trenton, do not support the claim that there is a dependable supply of water to be safely diverted from the Delaware to Hudson River Valley."

"Incoel infers there is unanimous agreement among the experts regarding its plans. Those that testified in the U. S. Supreme Court case didn't agree," Ladner pointed out.

"They found the Delaware watershed could not stand a diversion to New York City of more than 400 million gallons daily. They found that to quantify the court left the door open for New Jersey and Pennsylvania to apply for a decision reducing the quantity if experience demonstrates the amount to be too great."

Delaware River Water

Delaware River water... remain the principal source...

Want to Make Money

Ware will not discuss, at this time, the financing of the operation. Nor will he discuss whether rates would be decreased or increased.

The rate structure, however, needs to be considered. That is something that will be worked out later.

"I think that the rates we ought to be able to make money for the city and still earn a management fee. I think that the rates would be through more efficient methods of operation and management, and that the rates would be something other than what we are paying now."

"Private utilities compete everywhere with public-owned utilities and make a profit. This is true despite the fact that privately-owned utilities pay higher taxes than do municipalities do not. In some cases, the taxes run to 41 per cent."

"We are not careful, the United States will be another China as to water supply. We no longer have the underground water supply we formerly had. Every well we drill has to be taken deeper and deeper."

Philadelphia Water Department

Historical Collection

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