

Water Meter Puzzle

**Thousands of Gauges
Lost in Repair Shops**

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THOUSANDS of water meters removed from homes to the Water Bureau's shops at 20th and Clearfield sts., for repairs, have been "lost" by title company executives, real estate brokers and homeowners declared yesterday.

Search clerks, charged with the responsibility of checking into such matters when the title firm is liable, explained to their superiors that the records on the disposition of these meters failed to indicate what happened and sometimes no records could be found at all.

This, in addition to the inefficient "gueswork" meter-reading system, has forced title companies to keep more than a quarter million dollars in home-sellers' funds tied up in thousands of frozen settlements accounts.

WHILE home-owners wait for months and often years for a special reading, or the return of the meter, the title to their properties is technically clouded, it was reported, unless the bureau's records are accurate.

The bureau's operation, however, has been charged with being so inefficient and its records so meagre that one title company has discussed a plan under which it would not insure the home-buyers against unpaid water bills.

Other companies have discussed the same matter and reported they too may soon take such action unless the bureau's "gueswork" figures are replaced promptly with accurate ones.

A VICE president of the Wyoming Trust Co. said the problem of finding "lost" meters is a serious one, since his firm insures the water meters for the home-buyer.

Many persons have found that once the meter was removed, it frequently became "lost," and no amount of searching through records could establish where or how it "disappeared."

One of the problems, a city official explained, has been the difficulty the bureau has had in keeping abreast of repair work.

A shortage of parts during the war built up a backlog of 40,000 broken meters.

In June last year, John J. Stapleton, general chairman of the legislative and civic affairs committee of the Philadelphia Real Estate Board, charged that 80,000 water meters were held in the repair shops.

While figures for this year were not available, it generally was conceded that the number is even greater.

**NEW CITY AIRPORT
WON'T BE READY
UNTIL MARCH 1**

Construction Delays May Hold Up Opening Till April 1

Construction of the Northeast Airport has run into unexpected delays and the field probably will not be ready for airline service until March 1 or even April 1. Director of Public Works John H. Neeson told City Council yesterday that the city and the Civil Aeronautics Administration are having difficulty in obtaining equipment necessary to finish the airport.

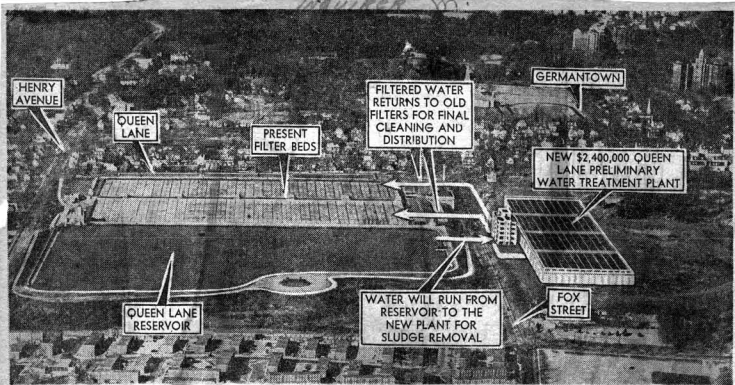
Priority Status Changed
Materials for the field, originally given a military priority rating, have been changed to a civilian status, Neeson explained, with the result that delivery of cast iron pipe, sewer pumps, and radio equipment is likely to be delayed two months or longer.

City—and airline—officials had hoped the new field could be opened for service by December 23, a year after the Federal Government closed the Municipal Airport in Southwest Philadelphia because of nearby military hazards. Neeson said that appears now to be out of the question.

As for the Municipal Airport, Neeson said it may not be reopened for civilian flying until six months after the war ends. He was unable to say what the relative roles of the Municipal Airport and the Northeast field will be in Philadelphia's postwar aviation picture.

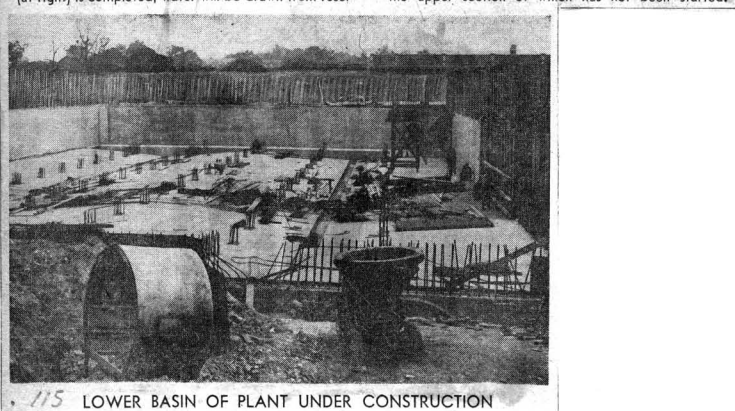
Appropriations Promised
Neeson appeared before Council yesterday in connection with the budget hearings. Council cut the payroll appropriation for the closed airport from the \$81,050 proposed to \$30,550, based on actual costs of the past year. Councilmen gave assurance, however, that they will act promptly in appropriating necessary personnel and maintenance funds for the Northeast Airport when the time comes.

A \$30,000 item for ground rent to the Federal Government on the Municipal Airport site was eliminated because \$30,000 is available in unexpended funds toward meeting the \$38,000 annual city payments.



WORK PROGRESSING ON NEW TREATMENT PLANT AT QUEEN LANE

Upper photo-diagram shows a general view of the Queen Lane pumping station. The present reservoir and the connecting filter beds are at the left. When the projected two-story preliminary treatment plant (at right) is completed, water will be drawn from reservoir and chemically treated before it is pumped into the filter beds. Three tunnels (indicated by arrows) will draw off the water and return it to either end of the beds. Below is shown lower basin in the new plant. The upper section of which has not been started.



LOWER BASIN OF PLANT UNDER CONSTRUCTION

**Queen Lane Plant
25 Pct. Completed**

Work on the preliminary-treatment plant at the Queen Lane pumping station, only one of its kind in this area, is about 25 per cent completed, according to G. Edwards Sheldrake, filter plant manager for the Bureau of Water.

When the \$2,400,000 plant is completed next year, it will have a normal rated capacity of 120,000,000 gallons of water every 24 hours. It will, however, be capable of an overload of 25 percent—or 30,000,000 gallons a day—above this amount.

BEDS FILL WITH SLUDGE
At present, water is drawn from the Queen Lane reservoir directly into the adjacent filter beds. That process tends to keep the beds filled with sludge and requires almost continual cleaning of the filters, it was explained.

When the new plant is completed, water will be drawn through 11-foot-diameter tunnels into the upper story of the two-story treatment plant. It then will pass through a baffles into the lower basin of the plant, which is equipped with straight-line sludge collectors. After the sludge has been removed, the water will pass through two eight-foot tunnels into either end of the filter beds.

Sheldrake said the use of the preliminary-treatment plant "will provide the perfect water to put on the filters" and thus give residents of a wide area extending generally west of Broad st. and north of Hunting Park ave. better water than they have ever tasted.

FIRST STEP IN PROGRAM
Erection of the new plant is the first step in the modernization of the entire pumping station, according to Sheldrake.

Other projects include the installation of electric pumps and a complete chemical storage building. The latter structure will be eight stories high and will be in front of the treatment plant. It will contain laboratories and administration offices.

It was estimated that improvement of the filters will cost \$33,900 and the new equipment will cost \$349,000.

The Queen Lane projects are part of the city's \$37,381,500 program to improve its drinking water supply. That figure includes \$13,948,000 for water-treatment facilities and \$17,433,500 for the distribution system.

OZONATION PLANT BUILT
Last year an ozonation plant, largest in the world, was placed in service at a cost of \$2,200,000 to eliminate tastes and odors from water in West Philadelphia.

The Lawrence Point pumping station, work costing \$503,419 has been completed, while improvement of the Forrester pumping station at a cost of \$1,698,000 is nearing completion.

The proposed plan to establish a water authority calls for cooperation between the States of New Jersey and New York for the construction of dams in the upper Delaware River to bring the water supply to Philadelphia and communities along the line. Although the water authority plan has been agreed upon, details of the proposal have not been worked out. Before arriving at a detailed plan, the conferees will confer with the Interstate Commission for the Delaware River Basin (ICDRB).

Several years ago, when plans were discussed to bring Philadelphia's water supply from the Poconos, it was estimated the cost of such a program would approximate more than \$200,000,000.

**ate GOP Backs
Water Authority
to Supply Phila.**

By JOSEPH H. MILLER
Creation of a State Water Authority to bring Philadelphia's drinking supply from a Pocono watershed will be proposed in the Republican State platform to be adopted by the party's State committee at a meeting in Philadelphia next Saturday. The decision to recommend the creation of the water authority was reached last night at a meeting of Philadelphia Republican leaders, Gov. James H. Duff and former Judge John S. Pine, the party's nominees for Senator and Governor. The meeting was held at the Barclay Hotel.

CONSOLIDATION SUPPORTED
Three other proposals to effect improvements in Philadelphia were agreed upon at the meeting, it was said.

They called for: Creation of a Philadelphia Port Authority along the lines of the recent New Jersey proposal for the purpose of expanding the city's waterfront.

Support of the city-county consolidation constitutional amendment when it comes before the Legislature for a second time next January.

State aid to the Philadelphia General Hospital and Philadelphia Hospital for Contagious Diseases for the care of mental and tubercular patients.

OTHER STATES AFFECTED
In addition to Duff and Pine, those attending the meeting included Republican City Chairman William J. Morrow, Mrs. Edna R. Carroll, vice chairman of the Republican National Committee, Republican State Chairman M. Harvey Taylor, Sheriff Austin Meahan, County Commissioner Gordon Wilkin and Councilman Louis Schwartz.

During the meeting the conferees agreed to support the conferees.

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Philadelphia Water Department
Historical Collection
2004.019.0032B

State's extension of program to stop the discharge of mine waste into the Schuylkill and clean out the 20,000,000 tons of silt now clogging the river bed.

Orders Given Communities.
As a corollary, the State Sanitary Water Board has ordered communities along the river as far west as Reading which now have primary sewage treatment works to install complete treatment facilities within the next two years.

That order is meeting considerable resistance. Communities above Reading have no treatment

contacted City Solicitor Frank F. Truog to obtain information concerning the legal aspects of the Philadelphia program.

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