

POLITICS TO BLAME FOR LACK OF WATER SUPPLY

Close-Fisted, Short-Sighted Inaction Has Placed City on Verge of Drought, Says McCain

POISON FROM INDUSTRIES MENACES PUBLIC HEALTH

More Deadly Than Sewage Moloch Which Has Claimed Thousands of Lives

By GEORGE NOX MCCAIN

POLITICS and palaver have put this city in its present plight so far as its water supply is concerned.

It takes Philadelphia too long to make up its mind to act on any proposition. It has been close-fisted and short-sighted.

As a result we will have to tremble on the verge of a water famine for months to come. Chief Davis, of the Water Bureau, for years has sounded this tocsin, but it fell on deaf ears.

Above all a new danger menaces the future water supply. It arises from our remarkable industrial development.

This far the danger has been latent, but it must be reckoned with in any survey of a new system of supply. Heretofore the menace in the city's water has been from sewage contamination. Tens of thousands of lives have been sacrificed to this Moloch. The community's loss, estimated in the economic value of the lives of men and women sent to death in their prime from typhoid fever, amounts into millions.

Typhoid is a disease of impure water. In the six years from 1903 to 1909 there were 35,187 cases of typhoid fever in this city. In the ten years from 1900 to 1919 there were 10,220 cases, a decrease of over 60 per cent. In 1918 there

'What's the Matter With Philadelphia?'

THE city's industrial growth will be a danger instead of a blessing unless a way be found to prevent contamination of our drinking water by chemical and organic waste from mills and factories.

Colonel McCain here follows up his article of yesterday with a more detailed discussion of Philadelphia's water supply of the future.

were only 383 cases, a fraction over one per cent, compared with 9712 cases in 1909, or nearly 27 a day.

Filtration and the chlorine treatment brought about this remarkable change. It would seem, though, that as one danger is eliminated a new one arises. Twenty years ago pollution from industrial wastes was unimportant. Today it is the paramount danger. Our best filtration system is not proof against it.

Fear Chemical Poisons
Sanitary engineers are not so much in dread of the sewers of Conshohocken, Norristown, Pottstown and Reading that empty into the Schuylkill as they are of organic and chemical poisons that flow from industrial plants along its shores.

The problem of the coming year is to secure our supply from sources removed from industrial operations. Engineers regard the Delaware, from which 60 per cent of our water comes, as impossible unless the intakes are located far up the stream. That is why distant sources are sought for mountain water.

The Delaware and Haritan canal is a one-horse cross-country waterway,

with a depth of 7 feet 6 inches. Some day, very possibly in the near future, it will become a ship canal for coastwise trade. When that time arrives, both shores of the Delaware river are as far up as Trenton will inevitably be dotted with great manufacturing establishments like beads on a rosary.

Refuse of toxic potency undreamed of will then be discharged into the river. It will become, like the Schuylkill, little more than an open sewer leading down to the sea. A water supply for millions of human beings from such a source is unthinkable.

A few weeks since the entire city lifted up a voice of lamentation over the odor and taste of the water. Racteriologists repeatedly declared that, while it was unpleasant to the senses, it was not injurious. From floods and other causes the water often becomes slightly muddy and turbid, and the public mistakenly associates turbid, or "smelly," water with disease. But these do not render it dangerous. The foe to human life and health lurks more often in sparkling water.

Mayor Moore is wise in his decision, as expressed to me, that he will make no recommendation about water until a board of eminent engineers has been appointed and made a report. They alone must decide whence the water for a greater Philadelphia must come.

I have talked with some of the ablest sanitary engineers on this subject. There are differences of opinion as to sources of supply, but there is unanimity on the subject of purity. If the city proposes to draw its future supply from the Lehigh river and its tributary streams or from the upper Delaware, it will be a costly and needless expense to construct vast beds to filter this mountain water.

Water Gap Site Best
If the filtration method of purification is deemed the best, then a supply sufficient for all needs can be drawn from the Delaware at points below the Water Gap.

Suggestions of the Perkiomen valley as a watershed can be considered only in the light of an auxiliary expedient. The volume of water there is inadequate. The construction of necessary dams would flood half the valley. Enormous costs for property condemnation would be entailed.

The New Jersey lakes and Mullica river are out of the question. The supply mains would wander all over creation before they could be led up

to the Torresdale and Lardens Point stations. Millions would be spent on an unsatisfactory experiment.

It is a great problem. Only great engineers should be employed in its solution.

One possible hope looms up. Science may discover a process to minimize this danger of industrial pollution. Sanitary engineers are praying for it, but no definite results have as yet been achieved.

The Schuylkill must be eliminated from consideration as a future source of supply. It is up to its limit. Besides its water is poorer than that of the Delaware. The city must go far afield for its greater supply.

It is idle speculation for laymen to attempt any estimate of the cost of bringing water from a distance. Vast concrete or masonry conduits from 8 to 14 feet in diameter must be constructed. Aqueducts must be stretched across valleys and hills must be tunneled. It is a work of years, but in the end, and engineers, scientists and citizens with whom I have talked are unanimously of the opinion, it will be worth the price, whatever it may be.

Last Report in 1909
The last comprehensive report on water supply drawn from the mountains to the north was made in 1909. A board consisting of Rudolph Hering, James M. Wilson and Samuel M. Grey acted as a commission on extension and improvement of our water system. They recommended for immediate needs of

Philadelphia filtration of the Delaware and Schuylkill waters.

The present plans of Chief Davis, of the Bureau of Water, contemplates an increased supply for the immediate future; enlargement of the filtration plants with an addition of 50,000,000 gallons daily to the central city zone.

Contracts have been let for a third of a million dollars' worth of machinery supplies.

But all of this is makeshift and temporizing. It does not solve the problem of the future, and that is what Philadelphia demands.

The greater Philadelphia must have a greater water supply. The work should be well under way before the Moore administration ends.

RANSOM PRICE INCREASED
Relations of American Victim of Mexican Bandits Are Worried

Chicago, March 12.—(By A. P.)—Ransom for Peter W. Summers, American ranch owner captured near Salina Cruz last week by Mexican bandits under Jesus Morelos, was raised from \$500 to \$5000 and March 12 fixed as the last day for payment, according to a telegram from American Consul Burlingame, at Salina Cruz, to two sisters of Summers here.

Informed through the State Department that the ransom had been set at the smaller figure, the woman said, a brother raised the money and forwarded

it to Senator Owen, of Oklahoma, to be turned over to the bandits. Their hopes were blasted with receipt of the message from Consul Burlingame, who added:

"One or two thousand dollars, if available, might save him. No funds available here."

The sisters were informed from Washington that the State Department was doing everything possible to have Summers released.

Two Boys Held as Burglars
New York, March 12.—(By A. P.)—Louis Rubin, fifteen, and Morris Reiman, eleven, must answer charges of acts usually accredited to man-size robbers, following a complaint made to the police in Brooklyn last night by Frank Wasserman, who says his house was broken into Thursday and \$150 in cash and jewelry taken.

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Electric Spot Light; mirror back, \$2.95. 30x3½ in. Tire Covers, well-made, \$1.15.
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