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Press Reports

Walter Lawrance

Bates College

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Launch 3-Ton Boat in River for Use in Hauling Chemicals to Fight Androscoggin Stench

Greene - A three ton launch from which the Androscoggin River will get halitosis treatments this summer was floated onto the river here today. Dr. W. A. Lawrence of Bates College, court appointed river master supervised the launching of the heavy boat which had been transported from Boothby by truck by Richard Reed of Reed's Transfer.

The boat 38 feet long with a 9 foot beam carried a 100 hp Chrysler marine engine. It is capable of carrying 10 tons of sodium nitrate for river treatment at one time.

The launch replaces an outboard motor equipped flatbottom boat which was used for that purpose a few times last year.

Dr. Lawrence said today as the new boat was launched three miles up river from Gulf Island Dam that a five-ton load would be the normal working basis. Two hundred tons of sodium nitrate will arrive in New York Saturday from Chile. Treatment of the river with the odor removing chemical is scheduled to begin in another week.

Even as the boat was being launched it was obvious that river pollution is mounting rapidly once again. The odor from the water was not strong this noon time but there
was some sludge along the river edge and numerous small
dead fishes here and there, a large sucker floating belly
up bore mute testimony to the fact that the water kills large
as well as small fish.

The chief advantage of use of the heavy motor driven
launch, according to Dr. Lawrence, is that the nitrate can
be dropped at the positions of greatest pollution concen- 
tation. Last year nearly all of the nitrate had to be dropped
from the Turner Bridge. While this proved effective it is
believed that the treatment by boat will be far quicker and
better.

So far this year the river has given little difficulty
from an odor standpoint, in Lewiston and Auburn, despite the
current heat wave.

Lewiston Daily Sun: June 17

"The Islander" Launched — "The Islander", the motor launch
to be used in control of pollution of the Androscoggin River
was put into the water about three miles above Gulf Island
Dam, Thursday afternoon. The three-ton launch, 36 feet in
length and powered by a 100 horsepower marine engine, is
capable of carrying a ton-ton load but Dr. W. A. Lawrence
of Bates College, court-appointed river master, said it would
carry approximately five tons of sodium nitrate at a time.
Treatment of the river is expected to start in another week.
The boat was transferred here from Boothbay.
Lewiston Evening Journal: June 17

The Lawrence Navy

The battle against river pollution in the Androscoggin has started again.

Dr. R. A. Lawrence of the Bates College faculty, river master, has a 100 horse-power motor launch at his disposal to ferry chemicals to spots were conditions are bad.

The Bates College Chemistry Department head is waging a winning battle against the river stenches that come as summer waters lower.

In the long range, this is an expedient. Some day, pollution that spoils the waters of Maine - and particularly the Androscoggin river - will be converted into by-products valuable to agriculture and other activities.

Then will nature's heritage of clean water again flow down the valley. Riverside drives will be desirable residential sites along the banks. Fishermen will again whip the stream. That's the dream of tomorrow.

Lewiston Evening Journal: June 22

Lead a Nautical The River Is Smelling Again!

Ole Man River was just a whiff behind the advent of official summer this year.

The well known River stench arrived with a vengeance

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today - along with more welcome rain. Persons who had happily forgotten what the Androscoggin River can smell like thought a crate of rotten eggs had been upset in their back yards early this afternoon, and then forebormly remembered what the River has been like in years past.

Meanwhile, a summer thunderstorm built up over the two communities shortly after the lunch hour today. Scudding black clouds formed in a low cover over the business section, the wind rose suddenly - and then large drops started to fall. By 2:30 it was still raining hard, and some streets were already under water. Some thunder and lightning accompanied the summer storm.

Gardners, farmers, and State forest authorities welcomed rain - any rain - but hoped fervently that it would fall moderately instead of violently so that the parched earth could absorb the welcome moisture. Otherwise, it would run off without really soaking in the ground.

Comfortable temperatures prevailed here, with the official overnight low at 65 degrees, registered at the Union Water Gate House from one o'clock to three this morning. From then until seven this morning the mercury rose gradually until the 80 degree mark was reached. By ten A.M., the reading was 68, by 11 it was 69, and at noon the glass stood at 74, with only a single degree rise by last official reading before the Journal went to press.
First rainfall in the uncomfortable and prolonged drought fell yesterday, accompanied by a mild thunderstorm last night. The official rainfall was 0.23 inches - but this afternoon's would help out even more.

Gardens were perking up everywhere in the area today - so were the persistent weeds. A Norway professional green pea grower had his first pickers in the fields bright and early this morning, and local folks who were lucky enough got in on the early delicacy. Green peas are fully two weeks early this summer - and if you knew someone, and he really liked you, the price might be as little as $1.00 per peck. In the retail stores, out of state peas were selling from 35 to 50 cents for a two pound sample.

Maximum temperature here yesterday was a modest 65, while Boston was sweltering in the 90's, a top high mark.
PRESS REPORTS
July 1949

Lewiston Evening Journal: July 21

Androscoggin River Agreement But Lower Production Delays Use New Plan

An agreement drawn several weeks ago in the interest of curbing Androscoggin River summer pulp waste odors was filed Wednesday, at the clerk of courts office in Auburn.

Since the instrument was drawn, however, working conditions at paper mills along the river have changed considerably and the provisions may not be put into effect this year, Dr. Walter A. Lawrence of Lewiston, river administrator, said last night. Lessened production at the mills obviates the necessity of using the plan at this time.

The agreement filed in Auburn was signed by Justice Harry Manser, active retired, of the Maine Supreme Court, Dr. Lawrence, and officials of the Brown Paper Company, Berlin, N.H., Oxford Paper Company, Rumford, and the International Paper Company, Livermore Falls.

By the agreement, the Oxford mill would reduce its sulphite production by 200 tons for a five-week period in which the Brown firm would correspondingly increase its output. Then the situation would be reversed for eight weeks with Brown's production reduced while that of Oxford's would be increased. International signed as a party to a previous agreement for control of wastes dumped in the river.
Dr. Lawrence said nitrates were being dumped into the river at various points. He expressed disappointment the river flow had been poor in recent weeks.
PRESS REPORT
August 1949

The Evening Journal: August 17, 1949

Pollution A Top Problem - Editorial

Maine is in danger of losing millions of dollars of tourist money as pollution of its inland waters spreads.

Pollution is also a serious menace to health.

Polluted waters provide a source of infantile paralysis.

The polluted Androscoggin river is an under-the-nose example. This river is sullied by sewage and industrial waste products. As soon as oxygen in the water reaches a predetermined low, chemicals are placed in it at strategic points. This keeps the stench out of the air. The pollution is still in the stream.

Industrial pollution in rivers is carried down stream. In ponds and lakes there is no flow to speak of. Industrial pollution has been endured as a necessary evil. It is no longer regarded in that light.

Three big investments are concerned. The industrial which will be required as time goes on to eliminate the nuisance. The municipal with its sewage. This also must be corrected. And the seasonal recreational camp and cottage - victims like the year around resident of this unhealthful and unnecessary condition.

Annabessacook Lake, Winthrop, is a flagrant example right close by. Property owners on the shores of that lake are up in arms. Camp expansions, improvements and developments are stalled because the water is so polluted that it is unhealthful for bathing and recreation. Fish life is suffering. Dead fish are found on shore regularly.

Complaints to the selectmen have been of no avail.

The net result of a complaint to the Governor a week ago was a suggestion from the State Sanitary Engineer, that the campers contribute to a fund to clean up the mess.

A family came from Chicago to spend the summer. They remained at Annabessacook a day and a half. A million dollars worth of advertising won't bring that family back into Maine vacationland.

A boy's camp owner in Fayette recently complained that for the first time in thirty years, pollution is a major problem at his pond.
Pollution a Top Problem - continued

The 96th Legislature should act before Maine's advertising is offset by the adverse pollution publicity. Visitors who stay a day and never return are no asset to Maine.

The Legislative Research Committee should put pollution near the top of its work sheet.

The Lewiston Sun - August 2, 1949

Funds Offered for Pollution Studies

Washington - The Public Health Service offered the States and territories $850,000 today as a start on the study of water pollution problems.

The grants will not actually be made, however, until applications setting forth specific programs have been approved by the Public Health Service.

A number of applications already have been received and are under study, the Service said.

Congress appropriated $2,300,000 to the Federal Security Agency to initiate the nation-wide program of water pollution control and prevention.

In addition, to the $850,000 for grants to States, $150,000 will be allotted later to interstate agencies and States for special studies that are of national and sectional importance.

The remaining $1,200,000 has been assigned to the Public Health Service for operation, research, administration and planning.

The allotments include: Connecticut, $12,296; Maine, $10,341; Massachusetts, $18,780; New Hampshire, $10,123; Rhode Island, $10,127; Vermont, $9,559.
The Evening Journal: September 2, 1949

Water Pollution - Editorial

A group of cottage owners at a lake near Winthrop aroused over pollution of the waters has organized, we are informed. They are ready to do something, if they can, about the situation.

We suggest that instead of waiting until the Legislature convenes in January 1951, they appeal to the court. They should also continue a drive on the Legislature.

Pollution of Maine waters is a disgrace. It will drive seasonal business away.

A program of elimination must be undertaken. We do not suggest abrupt action that would be disastrous to any town or industry — but something must be done.

The bell has been booted around too long, too long.
PRESS REPORTS
October 1949

Lewiston Daily Sun, October 10, 1949

Anti-Pollution Fund Sought by Nelson

Portland, October 9 - U. S. Representative Charles P. Nelson (R-Me) said today he will try to obtain Federal appropriations for removing pollution of sewerage and industrial waste in Maine's lakes and streams.

"I find," Nelson said, "that this is one of the fields that has been neglected by the present Administration in its concern to pay the bills of other nations."

Nelson said the 80th Congress passed bills authorizing loans of up to $22,000,000 for this work but that no appropriations bills have been passed.

Nelson said Congress has not yet acted on bills permitting industry to deduct from net income in its tax returns money spent in eliminating the necessity of dumping waste into streams.

"There are many places in my district, especially in Lewiston and Auburn, which would benefit from passage of such legislation," he added.
The Fish Won't Live

Here is Lake Annabessacook in Winthrop with a big investment of summer property along its shores. It's so polluted by sewage that the Inland Fish and Game Department won't stock it with fish.

Dr. Don J. Knowlton, president of the lake association, quotes the lake chairman on fish and game, Arthur Urquhart.

He asked Game Commissioner George J. Stobie about stocking the lake.

The reply was "rather startling to say the least," says Knowlton. Indeed, it was!

Stobie said, "You might just as well kill the fish before dumping them in the lake as it would be impossible for them to live in this water." Stobie was willing to be quoted.

The pollution of Maine's inland waters is disgraceful. It is a serious economic defect that will cost the State millions in seasonal revenue if allowed to continue.

Sewage isn't the whole problem. Tons of sawdust, shavings and other waste materials from sawmills are clogging streams. Waste potatoes are disposed of in water by the ton. Waste of all sorts is diverted into streams and lakes in wholesale.

Industrial pollution of a river is a familiar and disheartening experience in the Androscoggin Valley.

The next Legislature should make elimination of water
pollution a major project.

In the case of the Annabessacook Association, we suggest that it take its case to the court, not wait for the legislature. There is a precedent in the Androscoggin river case.

Maine will be extremely short-sighted if it permits pollution of inland waters to continue. It's a matter of public health also.