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Sewage Pollution of Oatka Creek and Lower Irondequoit Creek*

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THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION

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SEWAGE POLLUTION OF OATKA CREEK AND LOWER IRONDEQUOIT CREEK

In July and again in September, 1966, the Committee took coliform counts in the vicinity of the Town of Scottsville's sewage treatment plant which demonstrated that the waters of Oatka Creek below this plant are seriously polluted with undisinfected sewage, and that the plant is responsible for the fact that this stream violates the standards of the Van Lare Law. On December 10, 1966, a second follow-up study of Oatka Creek in the Scottsville area was made. The following data were obtained:

| <u>Location</u> | <u>Coliform Index</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Scottsville sewage treatment plant effluent | 11 million |
| Oatka Creek, approx. 50 yards downstream from plant outfall | 24,000 |
| Oatka Creek, at Highway 251 bridge, downstream from plant outfall | 35,000 |

The sewage effluent was tested for residual free chlorine, with negative results. Grease balls and some sediment were noted in the sewage effluent. The greatly augmented flow of the stream (due to recent rains) diluted the undisinfected sewage so that the counts on the stream water were substantially lower than counts taken earlier this year. No change has been made in the extremely poor quality of this effluent since we began our study last summer.

In a recent letter to the Committee, Mayor Selden S. Brown of Scottsville made the following statement:

"I hope that any follow-up report, issued by your committee, will be forwarded to Mr. William J. Leary, New York State Department of Health in Albany and the F.W.P.C.A. If you do, please refer to WPC 293, Scottsville, N.Y.

"Presently all plans and specifications for the proposed W.W.T.P. allegedly are in the hands of the F.W.P.C.A. According to the New York State Department of Health, the next step will be granting permission to go for bids. Our advisors are hopeful this may happen this month. We do not share this optimism, but for practical purposes must continue being the target for censure."

During the first week in December Mr. Wayne Harris, of the Conservation Council, called our attention to the discharge of sewage solids into Irondequoit Creek via a tributary (see map next page) issuing from a large culvert under the Sea Breeze Expressway about 50 years south of the Tryon Park overpass. The discharge has been investigated on two occasions, with the following results:

| <u>Location</u> | <u>Coliform Index</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| December 7, 1966 Browncroft Blvd., large culvert at edge of hill down to Irondequoit Creek | 4,000 |
| Empire Blvd., Irondequoit Creek, second bridge (heading east) | 10,000 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| Tributary to Irondequoit Creek, just south of Tryon Park | 10 million |
| December 10, 1966 | |
| Tributary to Irondequoit Creek, just south of Tryon Park | 450,000 |
| Confluence of Irondequoit Creek with the tributary in the vicinity of Tryon Park | 1 million |
| Irondequoit Creek, approx. 50 yards upstream from Tryon Park tributary, but below the Brighton Dump | 4,8000 |

Sewage solids (particularly toilet paper and condoms) were observed in extensive deposits in and along the tributary. A strong fetid odor was noted, and sludge banks were seen in portions of the tributary where the flow was slow. The volume of water flowing through the tributary was rather large. The single count on Irondequoit Creek below the dump suggests that the dump is not a major source of coliform pollution. Modest amounts of grey and yellow-green leachings from the dump into Irondequoit Creek were observed. The dump is currently in active use.

The tributary to Irondequoit Creek in the Tryon Park area is a discharge from one of the City of Rochester's combined storm-sanitary sewer overflows. The lower reaches of Irondequoit Creek are classified B; this classification of the stream is clearly being violated by the discharge.

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Rough Sketch Map of the Tryon Park Area

