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Water Pollution Issues Enter a New Era*

*By: Herman S. Forest
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THE ROCHESTER COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION
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Water Pollution # 53

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Water Pollution Issues Enter a New Era

by

Herman S. Forest

The battle against gross pollution is by no means over, yet two events can serve as convenient mileposts of public enlightenment and governmental action: voters in the Northwestern portion of Monroe County favored paying for participation in the County-wide sewer and treatment system in the face of a general taxpayers "revolt", and the State Health Department announced that removal of phosphates by larger treatment plants discharging into Lake Ontario would be mandatory; removal had already been planned both by Rochester and Monroe County. During the past five years, the R.C.S.I. engaged in some controversies to establish the presence of gross pollution by micro-organisms and nutrients. If plans already approved are implemented gross pollution of Lake Ontario by Monroe County almost will be eliminated.

The new phase of pollution issues has already begun. The issues are more subtle, and the decisions much less clear-cut. Thus, the need for skilled and patient analysis is increasing profoundly. Some of these issues will be discussed in forthcoming R.C.S.I. reports, "What control should be exercised over sewage release by boats?" "What treatment should be demanded of apartment developments on the shores of the Finger Lakes?" "Should radioactive isotopes be discharged into drinking water?" "Can weeds be controlled in smaller lakes without environmental consequences?" "Is the concept of "damage" to a lake changing?" "Are the recently announced Health Department regulations for thermal discharges likely to be effective?"

It is an unhappy coincidence that Dr. David Wilson has accepted a position at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, and moved from Rochester a few weeks ago. Dr. Wilson was the most important driving force during recent years in the effort to inform the public of the presence and meaning of gross pollution of local waters, as well as in other areas of public concern.

The group of bulletins published in August, 1969 were prepared by the Water Pollution Sub-Committee, Herman S. Forest, Chairman. Contributors include J. Roger Christensen, Howard Huddle, E. Grant Pike and David J. Wilson.