

Private Affairs Commissioner

To the Editor: Some people are trying to conserve natural resources for the benefit of the public, while others make every effort to use them solely for private gain. The letter from Ed Averill which you published September 14 states that Commissioner Bennett has voted against every proposal to clean up the Willamette. He has referred to both the Oregon law, which proves that it is illegal to pollute our rivers, and the two orders given the city council by Portland voters to establish a sewage disposal plant.

In a former letter to The Oregonian, Mr. Bennett said no action could be taken as the council had no program. Many will remember that years ago the city council hired a well-known eastern engineer to study this Portland problem and he offered complete plans for the erection of a sewage disposal plant. After years of delay, they hired another easterner at \$200 a day who has always been a leading opponent of stream purification. His suggestion of further delay was more study and the employment of more engineers. Portland has a city engineer capable of disposing of sewage according to the engineering plans of many other cities.

Mr. Bennett, in a letter in The Oregonian, September 20, differs with Mr. Averill in what is best for our community. Mr. Bennett objects to the ordinance to raise money to stop making an open sewer of the Willamette, because he says it "would run some industries out of Portland and perhaps prevent others from locating here." The answer to this is that several years ago the representatives of Portland industries were members of the committee who wrote the state law to stop polluting our rivers, and it was passed by a big majority.

It has been clearly publicized that the fish living in the Willamette are public resources and are being poisoned. The public recreational rights of swimming, boating and angling are also being destroyed. This open sewer through the center of our city is a menace to public health.

At present J. E. Bennett is commissioner of public affairs in Portland. He is seeking reelection. If he is re-elected many feel that the mayor of Portland should offer a resolution to change the title of his office to commissioner of private affairs.

WILLIAM L. FINLEY,
Oregonian Route 10.
Sept. 27, 1940

As far as they can include in publication some kind of building a sewage disposal plant

Journal Oct 4-1940

Averill to Talk

Ed F. Averill, new president of the Oregon Audubon society, will speak on the "Game Birds of Oregon" and illustrate his talk with colored lantern slides at the society meeting today at 8 p. m. in Central Library hall. The meeting is public. Averill is co-editor with Dr. W. L. Finley for the nature page in the Sunday Journal.

Oregonian Oct. 8, 1940
Bennett on the River

To the Editor: I did not realize that my communication to you some time ago in regard to the sewerage problem, in which I endeavored only to give the people of Portland the facts, would result only in further confusing the public. In answer to my communication you have published two communications in reply thereto, one by Mr. Averill and one just recently by Mr. Finley. Both of these gentlemen in their communications have been rather reckless with the facts, and not very constructive.

Most of the people of Portland know, I believe, that should we levy the full 33 1/3 per cent charge on the water user, that it would be detrimental to the industries, and the industries have told us so in no uncertain terms, notwithstanding Mr. Finley's letter.

And, second, if the full 33 1/3 per cent was assessed, it would take years and years to accumulate anywhere near enough money to complete the project. I believe also that people know that in this small charge that is now being levied is merely a case wherein the city council is taking an unfair advantage of the people, who, when they voted upon this matter, thought they were voting upon something that had been thoroughly digested and worked out. They know now that it was a catch-as-catch-can proposition and is unworkable.

Therefore, these people who claim to be so sincere in their desire to clean up the river should come forward with a program that will work or prevail upon the engineering department of the city of Portland to do so, and I assure them that I will vote to refer the matter to the people for their approval, as I have already done in several instances.

J. E. BENNETT,
Commissioner of Public Affairs.

Finley Comment Challenged

To the Editor: William L. Finley, on September 27, criticized Commissioner Bennett for his attitude toward sewage disposal. For this many will commend him. But how does disapproval of Mr. Bennett justify sarcastic and untrue statements about other people? Mr. Finley wrote:

Years ago the city engineer hired a well-known eastern engineer (Harrison P. Eddy of Boston) . . . and he offered complete plans for . . . a sewage disposal plant. After years of delay they hired another easterner (Abel Wolman of Baltimore) . . . who has always been a leading opponent of stream purification. Portland has a city engineer capable of disposing of sewage according to the engineering plans of many other cities.

Mr. Finley paints a slurring picture of Mr. Wolman and thus daubs with the same brush our own respected city engineer who served with him. Could he have wished to infer that others on the engineering board were just rubber stamps for the double-crossing Wolman? No!

Mr. Eddy at no time offered "complete plans for the erection of a sewage disposal plant." Mr. Wolman has nationwide reputation for vigorous attacks on stream pollution. Eddy, Wolman and all their associates agreed that adequate plans were of foremost importance in developing a sensible program for stream purification. And, finally, our "capable city engineer" knows he can't dispose of sewage "according to the engineering plans of many other cities." These are the facts, and surely the cause of stream purification will not benefit by cantankerous misstatements.

We admire Mr. Finley for his accomplishments, thrill to his tales of wild life, marvel at his way with chipmunk, porcupine and skunk, and, with feminine abandon, simply adore his pictures. And so we are surprised and shocked when he attacks publicly, and unjustly, the reputation of a man who has no chance to defend himself.

If Mr. Finley wants to lambaste Commissioner Bennett for his consistently obstructional tactics in the city council we may applaud his effort, but his service to the community will be greater if the issue is not confused by irrelevant statements reflecting on the reputations of persons for whom the commissioner is certainly not responsible. R. E. KOON,
Consulting Engineer, Spalding Building.

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