

U. S. Threatened By Crisis Of Dwindling Water Supply

Editor's Note: America's water resources are dwindling so rapidly that our agricultural and industrial advancement is threatened with disaster—in some cases within a decade. Here, in the first of five articles on the shortage of water, is the story behind an approaching national crisis.

By ROGER D. GREENE
AP News Features Writer
WASHINGTON — America's thirst cities are fighting a losing battle today as scooping water from the nation's rain barrel with a giant dipper. There's trouble ahead. Men have fought and died for water. Civilizations have perished for lack of it, and experts warn disaster could strike again unless U. S. communities awaken to the danger.

President Eisenhower underscored the urgency of the problem last year when he set up a Cabinet committee on water resources and declared:

"If we are to advance agriculturally and industrially we must make the best use of every drop of water which falls on our soil or which can be extracted from the oceans."

More than 1,600 American cities and towns have water shortage problems. More and more, they are reaching out—sometimes hundreds of miles—for additional water supplies to keep pace with the

20th century's "explosion" of population and the vast expansion of industry since World War II.

Denver, fastest growing city in the mountain west, reports, for example, that without more water its industrial growth will be stopped dead by 1964.

Underground water tables are reported lowering in most of the United States—alarmingly in some regions—with the drop averaging 40 feet from Texas to California in recent years. This summer ground-water tables dropped to all-time record low levels in many States. Even the humid East is feeling the pinch.

Wells in Atlantic City, N. J., used to flow at 29 to 25 feet above sea level. Now the ground-water level has dropped to 85 feet below the sea.

In Salina, Kan., the level has fallen 26 feet in the past three years. It's dropping five feet a year in parts of Arizona. New wells in Mississippi have to be drilled as much as 300 feet deeper than a few years ago to get flowing water.

Over-pumping of wells to supply mushrooming populations and industry has led to the seepage of salt water into fresh water supplies along coastal areas—notably in California, New Jersey, Long Island, N. Y., Louisiana and Florida—and in Los Angeles, which has caused the land to sink eight feet in some spots.

But what gives nightmares to federal and state authorities is the possible long-range effect on human health arising from the flushing of millions of tons of noxious chemicals, oils, acids, grease and other industrial waste into the nation's waterways.

Amid growing nationwide shortages, one out of every seven cities with a 10,000-plus population has to restrict the use of water at times. Hundreds of cities have had to ration or ban lawn sprinkling and car washing in the dry summer months. Some residents "police" each other to guard against violations. New Haven, Conn., has had loudspeaker trucks prowling the city to warn against daytime sprinkling.

"The long-range picture on water supply is critical unless corrective measures are taken," says Carl G. Paulsen, chief of the U. S. Geological Survey's water resources division.

Paulsen cited the bleak ruins of cliff dwellings in the American Southwest as suggesting the fate of an earlier civilization that died for lack of water. And he commented:

"Water is also the key of our present civilization." Paulsen who has been studying water supply problems 42 years, pointed to "danger zones" on a huge wall map of the United States in his office.

"All of Southern California is running out of water as a result of population and industrial growth," he said.

"San Diego faces a crisis within three to five years. Los Angeles and Dallas, Tex., are among others in trouble. Some Texas towns have paid up to 36 a thousand gallons for water. The usual price is 20 to 30 cents a thousand elsewhere.

"Everybody took water for granted until we ran into shortages. Now the nation is really becoming water conscious. We've suddenly discovered it is the life blood of our economy."

Prodigal in their use of water, Americans require an average of 145 gallons a day each for such purposes as drinking, baths and showers, shaving, dish washing, cooking, laundry, and so on.

Back in 1890 we used only 95 gallons per capita, but that was long before the invention of such water-consuming devices as stoves and automatic dishwashers and laundromats. And if you remember, there weren't many indoor toilets in those days. There was a little house out back . . .

Today there are more than 25 million bathrooms in the United States. In 1930, there were only 13 million.

As for industrial usage of water, it has skyrocketed until it now surpasses irrigation as the No. 1 user.

But there's plenty of water, isn't there? The answer is yes—and no.

There's plenty of water if we could catch it and distribute it where needed. In that case, we could make the deserts bloom.

Average U. S. rainfall is 30 inches a year—some 4,300 billion gallons a day—ranging from 120 inches in the Pacific Northwest to less than five inches in the arid Southwest.

Altogether, that's enough water to fill a lake the size of the State of California 50 feet deep.

The U. S. Geological Survey, which keeps track of water supplies, says American farms, homes and factories withdraw about 200 billion gallons a day from wells, lakes and streams.

Thus actual usage is only a drop in the bucket compared to the enormous amount that falls as rain. But untold billions of gallons are lost as they evaporate or run off to the sea. And much of our surface water is so polluted it is no longer fit for use; in the words of the U. S. Health Department, much of it is "sick water."

Some experts say that right now we are approaching the limit of actual supply under present conditions. The North Carolina Water Resources Committee, in a comprehensive summary of the nationwide water situation, said in a recent report:

"Accelerating demands for water by cities are beginning to add up to a significant load on the water resources of the United States. In many parts of the country, the total use of water is reaching physical or economic limits."

Yet federal authorities estimate nationwide requirements will jump from 200 billion to at least 350 or 400 billion gallons a day by 1975.

Where is the extra water going to come from in the next 20 years? Moses saved his people from thirst by smiting a rock and bringing forth water. Modern science may have to perform a 20th Century version of the same miracle.



PORTLAND UNIVERSITY FRESHMEN, second from left, Dino Reginato, Roger Seibert and Gary Thill were greeted recently by Student Body President Joe Drilly, left. All three Klamath students are graduates of Sacred Heart Academy. Reginato was student body president at the academy.

Rickett Maintains Several Missionaries Prefer China

SEATTLE (AP)—Walter Rickett, who returned Sunday from 4 1/2 years in a Chinese Communist prison "without bitterness," says there are some Americans remaining in China of their own free will.

The returned 34-year-old Fulbright scholar, who has said he was guilty of the espionage charges laid against him by the Chinese, told reporters there are some American missionaries who

could come out of China if they desired. "I know one of them," he said at a news conference after the first meeting with his wife, Adele, since both were arrested in 1951. "He is Robert Winter. He is an old man with a university pension and he is satisfied to stay."

Rickett did not name any others. He said the missionaries who could leave have to obtain standard permits to travel but have freedom of movement in their own towns.

Mrs. Rickett flew in from New York a few hours after his mother, Mrs. A. J. Rickett, greeted him at the airport here. Rickett's wife was deported from China ahead of him after serving a shorter term on espionage charges.

Rickett reiterated that U. S. Navy officers in Seattle had asked him to "keep my eyes open" to developments in China.

"They asked me to, and I said I would be very happy to," Rickett stated. "I can prove everything I say."

(A spokesman for the 13th Naval District in Seattle said last week the district command has changed completely since Rickett went to China in 1948 but that there is no record of any request or instructions to him.)

"I hardly expect the Navy to

admit it," Rickett said Sunday. "If they do press me on the point, I can prove it."

He said his plans for the future are uncertain but he still has hope of continuing at the University of Pennsylvania for his Ph.D. degree.

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Ocean Deaths Probed By CG

SEATTLE (AP)—The Coast Guard Monday continued its investigation into the finding of two bodies early Sunday along the Oregon coast.

The bodies were identified as those of Jesse P. Keene, 46, Everett, Wash., and Charles R. Russell, 40, Florence, Ore.

A Coast Guard spokesman here said the men apparently were victims of a fishing vessel disaster, although no trace had been found of their 40-foot boat, the Selma B.

Keene's body was found floating in Winchester Bay near the mouth of the Umpqua River. He was fully clothed and wore two lifejackets. Russell's body was discovered several hours later on the ocean beach about 15 miles north of the bay.

The Coast Guard spokesman speculated the Selma B. exploded and burned.

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Attack Kills Medford Boy

Gary Kliever, 17-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Ed Kliever, Medford, died at the family home shortly after noon, Saturday, September 24, apparently following a heart attack.

The youth was washing a new car, a birthday present given to him about a month ago by his parents when he collapsed and died.

The family left here a few days ago to make their home in Medford. While in Klamath Falls Ed Kliever was associated with the Klamath Machine and Locomotive Works. He now owns and operates his own machine shop in Medford.

Mr. and Mrs. Kliever have another son about 12 years old. Funeral services will be held Wednesday, September 28, at 10 a. m. The Conger-Morris Funeral Home will be in charge.

Dance Band Breaks Record

Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians shattered all dance attendance records for the Klamath Basin when the famous musical aggregation played Saturday night in the Exhibit Building at the Fairgrounds.

Impresario Baldy Evans, who brought the Lombardo group to Klamath Falls, said the dance drew 2,000 paid admissions. Nearest to this record was chalked up by Jan Garber, so-called "lady of the airways," when he brought a band to Klamath Falls under Evans' sponsorship in 1944.

"Guy Lombardo has nothing but praise for Klamath Falls," Evans declared. "He told me it was one of the finest dance crowds he had ever entertained."

Dancers came here from all sections of Southern Oregon and Northern California. A group also came from Reno, Nevada in a chartered bus. Communities represented at the dance included Eugene, Oakridge, Bond, Lakeview, Prineville, Alturas, Redding, Dunsmuir, Ashland, Medford, Grants Pass and Roseburg.

JAPAN TO BUILD SHIPS
TOKYO (AP)—Japan's biggest prewar shipping firm Monday announced plans to build two trans-pacific luxury passenger liners next year with Japanese government funds. Nippon Yusen Kaisha (N.Y.K.) said the two 20,000-ton liners would be government-owned but leased to N.Y.K. Construction costs are set at 12 1/2 million dollars each.

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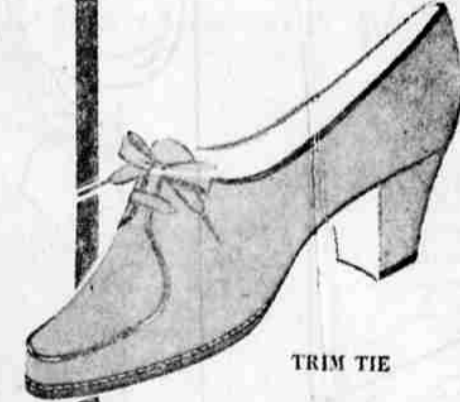
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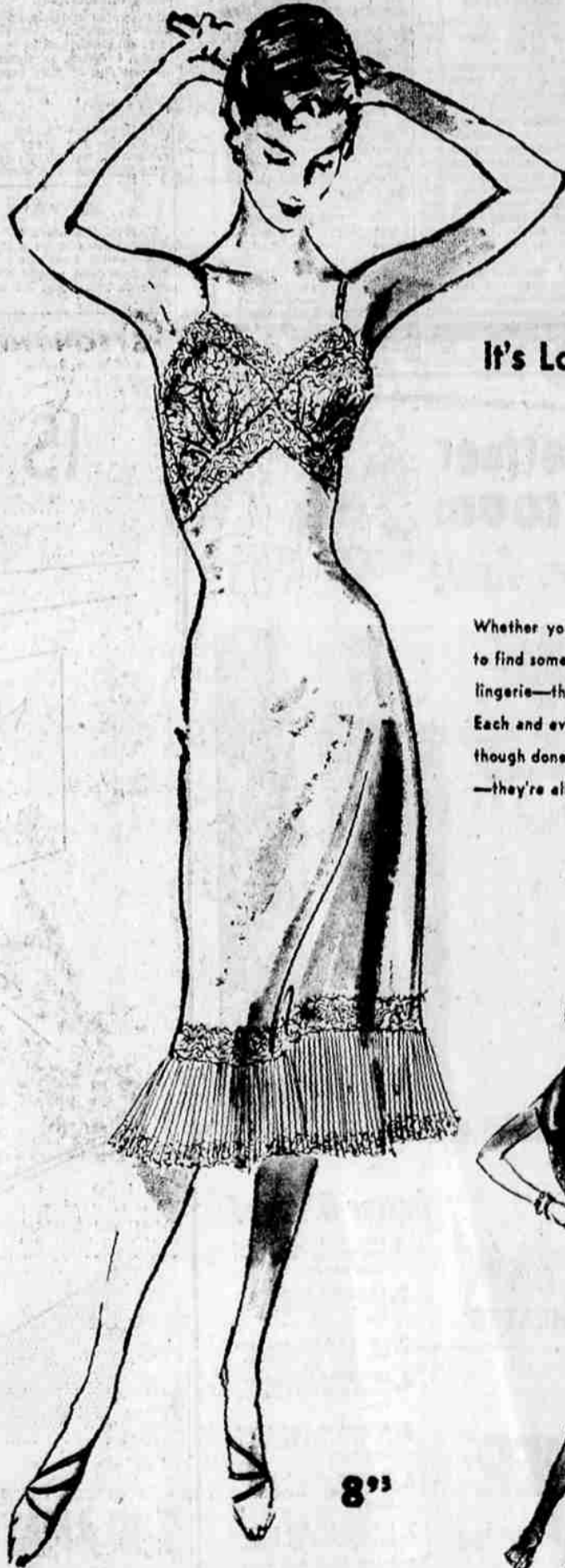
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