

MINUTES OF THE FIFTEENTH MEETING  
OF THE  
STATE SANITARY AUTHORITY

December 12, 1941

The meeting of the State Sanitary Authority was called to order by Chairman Harold F. Wendel, at 10:15 A.M., December 12, 1941, in the offices of the State Sanitary Authority, 412 Oregon Building, Portland.

Those present were Harold F. Wendel, Chairman; Dr. Frederick D. Stricker, the Messrs. Albert Burch, Blaine Hallock, John C. Veatch, Col. Wm. A. Aird, representing the Oregon Business & Tax Research, Commissioner William A. Bowes and Senator Lew Wallace.

MINUTES: Copies of the minutes having been supplied to the members in advance, the chairman, with the consent of the board, dispensed with the reading of the minutes of the meeting of September 12, 1941, and the minutes were approved as prepared by the secretary.

ACTIVITIES REPORT: The secretary reviewed the contents of the activities report for the months of September, October and November, 1941.

PROJECT PLANS: After a review of plans for sewerage projects submitted for examination and approved by the State Sanitary Engineer during the months of September, October and November, 1941, MOTION: it was moved by Mr. Burch, seconded by Mr. Hallock, and unanimously carried, that the following sewerage project plans be approved by the Sanitary Authority:

<u>Date</u> 1941	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of Project</u>
Sept. 16	Mt. Vernon School	Sewage disposal
23	Maple School	Sewage disposal
29	Myrtle Point	Sewer extensions (General Plan)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Type of Project</u>
1941		
Oct. 7	Willakenzie School	Sewage disposal
7	Elmira School	Sewage disposal
14	Independence	Sewer extensions Pumping stations

NEW INDUSTRIAL PLANT ESTABLISHMENTS: Because of the establishment of new industrial plants in the state, the secretary requested a statement of policy relative to sewage and industrial waste treatment facilities for new industries located in Oregon. Following some discussion on the subject, MOTION: it was moved by Mr. Veatch, seconded by Mr. Hallock, and unanimously carried, that industries which hereafter locate outside of corporate limits shall provide treatment for both domestic sewage and industrial wastes. Those industries which hereafter locate within the corporate limits of a municipality should make arrangements to dispose of domestic sewage into the municipal sewerage system if such sewerage system is available. The degree of treatment required for industrial waste discharged into municipal sewerage systems will depend upon the quantity, quality and characteristics of the waste. If municipal sewerage facilities are not available for the disposal of domestic sewage and industrial wastes either with or without pre-treatment, then adequate facilities for the treatment of these wastes must be provided.

PORTLAND PROJECT: The chairman then requested Commissioner Wm. A. Bowes to discuss the status and prospects of the Portland sewerage and sewage treatment project. Commissioner Bowes stated that surveys and engineering investigations were under way, but as yet were not complete due to the difficulties encountered in obtaining qualified engineers for sewerage investigations and design activities. Mr. Bowes reported further that an

engineer had been employed for a period of about four months to supervise the work of approximately 17 persons who are carrying on the necessary research and field investigations. Flow records are being obtained, and analyses of the physical and chemical characteristics of the Portland sewage have been determined. In addition, surveys are under way on high and low level intercepting sewers.

It was further reported by Mr. Bowes that the chief difficulty with which the city of Portland was now faced was the matter of obtaining a qualified and experienced engineer for the design of intercepting sewers and the sewage treatment plant. Experienced firms of consulting engineers have been retained by federal agencies and are no longer available for municipal work. Mr. Bowes stated that the city had now collected \$203,619 from sewerage service charges. Of this amount, some \$20,000 was used to pay for the services of consultants and \$17,981 for personal services, equipment, etc., required for the investigations conducted to date. A balance of some \$165,638 remains, which sum will be increased somewhat in March when collections from certain districts in the city have been completed. Because the council had given the impression that the charge would be discontinued when the money collected was sufficient to defray the cost of engineering investigations, it was Mr. Bowes' opinion that the charge should be discontinued until such time as the plans were ready and the financial structure set up and presented to the people for approval.

Mr. Hallock suggested that the charge be continued and a sinking fund established to accumulate moneys which might later be used for the construction of sewage treatment works.

It was Mr. Bowes' opinion that such a plan would not be acceptable to the people of the city of Portland.

Chairman Wendel suggested that the charge not only be continued but that it be increased to the maximum of 33 1/3% of the water charges, since it was his belief that the city would be proceeding lawfully both by city ordinance and by state statute, and that through such a plan, funds could be accumulated at a time when construction could not be undertaken. Chairman Wendel also pointed out that it would be much easier to finance the project with part of the money on hand. Mr. Bowes replied that if the charge were increased or continued, the ordinance would be repealed in the May primary.

Colonel Aird agreed with Mr. Bowes, and remarked that cooperation might be expected from industries in connection with the continuation of the charge, but that the individual home owner, although he wanted pollution of the Willamette River reduced, was unwilling to assume the cost of it.

Following some discussion relative to the advisability of continuing the service charge, State Senator Lew Wallace mentioned that the city of Lebanon was faced with a serious problem in which they were involved with the pollution of the South Santiam River, but that the city was proceeding to make plans for the construction of treatment works. Mr. Wendel pointed out to Senator Wallace that the State Sanitary Authority had threatened the city of Lebanon with court action before any studies were undertaken by that city.

At that time Mr. Bowes asked to be excused and stated that before any action was taken relative to the discontinuation of the service charges that he would call for a joint meeting of the city council and the State Sanitary Authority to discuss the matter.

**MUNICIPAL SEWAGE TREATMENT:** The secretary reviewed the plan presented to the Authority by Mr. Kehrli, Executive Secretary of the League of Oregon Cities, at the September meeting, and suggested that a letter be

sent to all municipalities for which sewage treatment is indicated, in which the local authorities would be advised that sewage treatment plants would be required in the future, and that the recommendation be made that service charges or the 5 mill tax be put into effect as early as possible in order to create a sinking fund to defray the cost of sewage treatment plant construction which might be undertaken at a later date.

Following some discussion on the matter, MOTION: it was moved by Mr. Hallock, seconded by Mr. Burch, and unanimously carried, that the chairman, the secretary and Mr. Veatch cooperate in the preparation and addressing to the various cities concerned, a communication containing the material suggested.

RULES AND REGULATIONS: The secretary requested authorization from the State Sanitary Authority to prepare rules and regulations governing the submission of engineering data on sewers, sewage treatment facilities, etc. for review and approval. The secretary mentioned that the State Board of Health approves plans, specifications, etc., for water supply systems and swimming pools, and that it was expected that the State Board of Health would adopt similar regulations, governing the submission of engineering plans for water works structures and swimming pools.

MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Hallock, seconded by Dr. Stricker, and unanimously carried, that regulations for the submission of engineering plans be prepared by the secretary in cooperation with Mr. Burch and Mr. Stricklin, preparatory to submission to the Sanitary Authority for adoption.

INDEPENDENCE PERMIT: The secretary then discussed his action in granting a temporary permit to the city of Independence to discharge untreated sewage into the Willamette River for a period not to exceed three years. It was explained that the permit was granted to enable the city to proceed

immediately with the installation of extensions and additions to the existing sewerage system. MOTION: It was moved by Mr. Burch, seconded by Mr. Hallock and unanimously carried, that the action of secretary in issuing a permit to the city of Independence to discharge untreated sewage into the Willamette River for a temporary period of time be approved.

PERSONNEL: Authority was granted to the secretary to use Sanitary Authority personnel, should any emergency arise in connection with water supply, sewage disposal, etc., in which engineering assistance in addition to those employed by the State Board of Health would be needed.

In connection with the employment of an additional engineer by the Sanitary Authority, it was generally agreed that the additional engineer should not be employed at this time. In the event of an emergency, however, the secretary was granted authority to employ an additional engineer.

Mr. Kenneth H. Spies, Associate Sanitary Engineer, who had reported for assignment on November 1, had been introduced to members of the Sanitary Authority prior to the meeting.

COLUMBIA RIVER POLLUTION INVESTIGATIONS: Members of the Authority were advised by the secretary that the investigations of the Columbia River were proceeding as well as could be expected with the difficulties encountered in obtaining equipment and maintaining personnel. Information relative to the location and factors responsible for the growth of slime organisms in the river were explained, and it was estimated that actual field work on the Survey should be completed within the next four months.

BUDGET: The secretary requested and received authority to begin preparation of the biennial budget for the two-year period beginning July 1, 1942.

PORTLAND PROJECT: Chairman Wendel raised the question as to whether

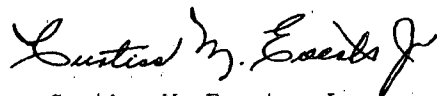
it was the consensus of opinion of those present that the Sanitary Authority should proceed further than merely recommending the continuation of the present minimum sewerage service charge for the city of Portland, or whether the Authority should recommend that the full service charge be placed in effect as authorized by city ordinance.

Mr. Hallock expressed the opinion that he was rather fearful of the advisability of suggesting an increase at this time, and it appeared that the opinion of the members in general was that it would not be wise to advocate an increase in the Portland sewer users' service charge at this time.

SALARY INCREASE: The chairman requested Miss Helen Shearer, Office Secretary, to retire from the meeting, in order that matters concerning her salary might be discussed. The chairman then read to the members of the Authority a letter addressed to him by the secretary, in which an increase in salary from \$85.00 to \$100 per month was recommended for Miss Shearer. Following a discussion on the matter, MOTION: it was moved by Mr. Veatch, seconded by Dr. Stricker and unanimously carried, that Miss Shearer's salary be increased to \$100 per month, provided it received the approval of the State Budget Director; otherwise that Miss Shearer's salary be increased to the maximum amount permissible.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1 P.M., to reconvene at the office of the State Sanitary Authority at 10 A. M., Friday, March 13, 1942.

Respectfully submitted,



Curtiss M. Everts, Jr.  
State Sanitary Engineer  
Secretary

CME/hs

STATE SANITARY AUTHORITY

TRANSCRIPT OF DISCUSSION ON STATUS  
OF  
PORTLAND SEWERAGE PROJECT

December 12, 1941

PERSONS PRESENT

State Sanitary Authority:

Harold F. Wendel, Chairman  
Dr. Frederick D. Stricker  
Albert Burch  
Blaine Hallock  
John C. Veatch

Curtiss M. Everts, Jr.  
Secretary  
Kenneth H. Spies  
Associate Sanitary Engineer

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City Commissioner Wm. A. Bowes  
State Senator Lew Wallace  
Col. Wm. A. Aird, representing  
Oregon Business & Tax Research, Inc.



Mr. Wendel: Commissioner Bowes, would you discuss the status and prospects of the Portland project?

Mr. Bowes: I think that our records are open, and I think you are fairly familiar with what we are doing.

Mr. Wendel: As we understand the matter, the sewer service charge fee has been levied now for a little over a year, and the surveys and engineering work is nearing completion.

Mr. Bowes: The data on the levy is right, but the surveys and engineering are not complete. About a year and a half ago our sewer engineer, Mr. C. H. Smith, died, and we immediately made plans to get another engineer. About that time this emergency appeared. The government through various agencies, and the Army and Navy employed qualified men almost as fast as they could get them, which made it very difficult for us to get a man. We visited Cincinnati and found a young fellow interested in the job. He took a Civil Service examination and came out within the first three. Mr. Morrow and I went to the east to see various plants and purposely to interview this man from Cincinnati, whose name is Bartow. He has been here about 4 months, has taken over the supervision of the city sewer system and has done all research work necessary to obtain information on the sewerage system. We have employed to date a total of 17 people who are continuing with the work. They have made flow records and are making analyses of the character and quality of the sewage. Surveys are being made of high level and low level intercepting systems. Now we are up to the point of engaging a high class designing engineer. You can't find any in the country available. We've had several people and several national organizations out here up to 4 or 5 months ago who wanted to take on the work. But now they notify us they are not interested during the emergency, and it appears that we're going to

be delayed for sometime on completing and drawing up plans. Our effort is being directed toward having our information complete and correct so that when we can find the man for the job, we can put him to work immediately. We visited nine different plants in the East. Some of them have problems very similar to our own. The man we really want is Mr. Schropfer in St. Paul. I believe he is one of the finest operators and has one of the most efficient plants in the United States, from our observations of other cities. We have also given consideration to a man in Detroit, but he now is working on the Burma Road. I don't know whether Mr. Schropfer is interested in accepting the Portland position or not. He loves his work, and I am uncertain whether we could get him to come out here. However, we're going ahead with what man power we can get which we believe is competent, and we're going to carry it forward as rapidly as we can even during the emergency. During this war if Portland is bombed, it might completely change our sewer system, so we're sitting on the fence. As long as we're in the position that we are at present, we're going ahead with the work. So far, \$203,619 has been collected from the service charges. Twenty thousand dollars was used to pay the expenses of Wolman and Eddy. We have spent actually on personal service and other minor expenses: equipment needed for testing, etc., \$17,981.00. There is a balance of \$165,638.00, which will be increased somewhat when the tax revenues are in from other districts. This total will not be complete until about the middle of March if we discontinue the service charge. That money is going to be used, and it was so stated that it would be used, to do all preliminary work, such as surveys and to prepare plans upon which a contractor could give us a bid. This would include the engagement of a high class man to do the work. That is the status of the project today. As to what we intend to do, although it did not so state

in the ordinance or in the matter on which the people voted, it was our understanding, and we were so advised by the city attorney it was in the Commission's discretion, to levy a sewer service charge. You are acquainted with our Equalization Board. A certain amount of money was needed to make the survey. It was the will of the council and recommendation of the engineer at the time that this thing went before the council, that we levy a minimum charge of 10 cents to raise a sufficient fund with which to prepare plans and make surveys. It was the intent of the Council and was discussed openly at council meeting, and I think it was the general understanding of everyone that when sufficient funds were raised to do this work that we would discontinue the sewer users' service charge unless we were in a position to proceed with actual construction of the plant. We have by publicity but not by ordinance put ourselves on record that when this money is sufficient, we would discontinue it until such time as we had those plans ready, and we had a financial structure set up and approved, upon which we could proceed to construct interceptors and plant.

Mr. Hallock: Why not continue that fund for this system right along and build up a fund?

Mr. Bowes: No matter if we put on the  $33 \frac{1}{3}\%$ , we would still need a very large amount of money to construct a plant and intercepting system which would have to be raised by government grant or a bond issue or both. The council is very much concerned about continuing this levy and building up a fund and then when the time comes, and we submit a bond issue or government loan, the people will say "No." If the Government said "No", and we had to go back to the people, and then the people said "No", which they might after this emergency is over, then we are in a position of having a fund upon our hands with which we could do nothing but argue about from time to time. We feel it is the better course to discontinue the charge as of the

first of January, and when the plans are complete and our financial structure is approved, then immediately put it back on at 10¢ or 33 1/3¢.

Mr. Hallock: Has anybody complained about paying the charges? I must say that it comes to me as an astonishing bit of logic that it is a mistake to accumulate funds on the theory that you might get the money and then some day be in the position where you can't utilize it.

Mr. Wendel: It appears to me, and I think I'm voicing the sentiments of the Authority, from discussions we have had at previous meetings, that were you to not only continue this charge but to increase it to the maximum, it would be proceeding lawfully both by the ordinance of the city and also according to the vote of the people in their desire to have the work done. You would be proceeding lawfully and wouldn't this period of emergency when nothing can be done in the way of construction be the time to accumulate funds which can be used eventually in defrayment of part of the cost of the work? Of course, I don't expect that all the money needed can come from this fund unless this is going to be a 10 or 15 year war, which I doubt. In the first place, it's just as if you and I were to go into business together and needed \$30,000 to establish the business. If we had \$10,000, it is much easier to borrow \$20,000. The city will find itself in that same position. If it attempts to float revenue bonds for 75% of the cost, it is much easier to do it. You would have a junior security of cash on hand. That is the first principle I would like to establish. The second principle is this: I would like to see Portland take the leadership in a program, as it has in many other respects, of trying to accumulate now some moneys for public works which can be used when the deflation comes.--Money on hand that can give employment at a time when it will be badly needed so that we will not have to borrow from the future for employment. It might be the salvation of the

entire country if we do this. Although it is only a drop in the bucket, it is setting the way and would have a salutary effect upon every other municipality in the state.

Mr. Hallock: It would also have a tremendous moral stimulus.

Mr. Bowes: There is another angle. This emergency has brought an additional burden on industrial and home owners. Unless this thing is discontinued or if we put on the maximum immediately, there would be a movement to repeal the sewer users' service charge which would be put on your May ballot, and if I'm any judge, it would be repealed, and we would be without any means of proceeding at all.

Mr. Wendel: I seriously question that.

Mr. Bowes: Such a movement is on foot now.

Mr. Burch: In my judgment, it will be ten years before you can finance the construction of sewerage facilities. After the war is over, there will be a period when bonds can't be floated. If the sewer users' charge is continued, you would have accumulated in the neighborhood of  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 million dollars, which would help out a long, long ways toward financing the cost of construction.

Mr. Hallock: Following the depression of 1929 the municipalities who had money were in a position to move forward. It is a tremendous stimulating influence. The difficulty is that so many people were caught with nothing. They were just helpless. If I can sense the feeling of the people, I wouldn't be at all open to the possibility of the suggestion of repeal.

Mr. Wendel: If the time comes when repeal is attempted, you will have plenty of proponents who will take the stump for you which will far out-number those against it.

Mr. Bowes: Ben Morrow and the Board of Equalization have heard a

great deal of industries on this thing. You can't depend on the support of the fellow with a low income. Unless he is interested in pollution, the only thing he sees is the extra 30 or 40¢.

Mr. Wendel: I think when it is explained to these industries and small home owners that this is something which they in effect, ordered done and which is certainly desirable from other standpoints--when they understand, I think you're going to remove a large part of those objections.

Mr. Bowes: I hope you're right; and certainly that would be a logical argument--to create employment when the backlog comes such as in 1937. And we're going to need it.

Mr. Hallock: God help us if they put our domestic water supply out of commission, and we have to depend on the river for drinking water.

Col. Aird: We're not concerned about industries so much as about different home owners, etc. You can convince the industries as to the advisability of these things.

Mr. Wendel: It is my understanding that the housewives really wanted this thing cleaned up.

Col. Aird: They want it, but they're not willing to pay for it.

Mr. Veatch: Wasn't the small home owner the one who voted for the charge?

Mr. Wendel: I suppose the Commission, if we were to proceed blindly, could go ahead and order the city to do the work. The Commission has taken the attitude that as long as some reasonable progress continued to be made, the Commission is going to be content. Suppose we don't even require that progress which can be made to be made, I would feel personally, if the people of the state concurred in that, that we should go to the governor and resign our posts, and recommend that this law be repealed. Isn't that logical?

Mr. Veatch: I know we all get our reactions from individuals, but the reaction we've gotten around the state is that outside municipalities say you're letting Portland lay down on this thing. I think the facts that you gave here, Mr. Bowes, should be made public.

Mr. Bowes: We've made them public time and time again.

Mr. Veatch: I certainly agree with what has been said with regard to continuing of the charge, for as I look at it, you are, by a painless method at the present time, doing something which the people can do at the present time. Undoubtedly, you will have a substantial fund accumulated by the time the city is ready to use it.

Mr. Bowes: The Equalization Board met and reviewed the situation up to date, and they passed a motion, that, if in the judgment of the city engineer, he would recommend the discontinuance of the service charge to the council, the council could act upon his recommendation. The Equalization Board can do nothing more than make recommendations. If the city council wants to continue it or discontinue it, it's up to them. The city engineer will make his recommendations to them.

Mr. Wendel: This is a matter of policy and finance, not engineering.

Mr. Bowes: In the first place, someone came to Commissioner Clyde and wanted to know whether or not they would continue the charge when the sum had reached \$100,000 and inasmuch as we had accumulated that and more, why should it be continued? Mr. Morrow, the city engineer, discussed it with me. At my request, they called a meeting of the Equalization Board and discussed continuing and discontinuing of sewer service charges. I just wanted their judgment on the matter. It was their recommendation that the matter be left in the hands of the council and the city engineer. The council is the only one that can revoke the charge.

Mr. Wendel: Don't you believe that there is some logic and reasoning to our point of view?

Mr. Bowes: There are good arguments on both sides. You have stated a very sound policy this morning.

Mr. Hallock: Does it really seem to you there could be any semblance of just criticism which involves accumulating this fund which might resolve itself in a situation where you had a lot of money on hand and couldn't use it?

Mr. Bowes: I don't know how familiar you are with the people of Portland. The great majority are small home owners. I think you'd find out in a survey taken now, in my judgment at least, that they would repeal it. I may be wrong. I hope I am. I would hate to see it happen, and I would hate to see a fund built up that this council or some future council couldn't use because they wouldn't give us a bond issue.

I think the question before the council is whether they're going to continue the 10¢ service charge. I'm frank to tell you it would be utter foolishness to increase it to 27¢ today. If an attempt were made just at this time to double or treble the amount collected--you'd have it repealed at the May primary.

Mr. Wendel: I think if the reasons for it were given proper support and publicity--

Mr. Bowes: With this war, you couldn't give it adequate publicity. It's difficult right now to get any kind of publicity. Things that were headlines last week are not even getting local briefs now.

(Senator Lew Wallace made his appearance).

Col. Aird: We have an increase in property tax which is a very small increase, but there's a lot of people who object to the increase. They would probably object to this, too.



Mr. Wallace: You don't propose to cut that off?

Mr. Bowes: The council is the only one to do that.

Mr. Wallace: The people have voted this twice, one time to bond themselves. The people have expressed their opinion twice. I doubt if there will be any concentrated movement on the part of the people to object to this. When I'm elected governor, the pollution won't stay in the Willamette River.

Mr. Bowes: Sure as hell you're not going to be elected governor.

Mr. Wallace: Well, I'm in the Senate this year.

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Mr. Burch: Well, why not go ahead with this thing, and then if you have to fight for it, fight for it.

Mr. Bowes: You're right.

Mr. Wendel: Unfortunately, Portland's rather on the spot with other cities in the state. When we tell them to put in treatment works, they say look at your own city of Portland. Portland is really a vulnerable point in our arguments.

Mr. Bowes: I think we are making progress.

Mr. Wallace: I was down at Lebanon, and I found because of the paper mill or pulp mill of some kind, there's quite a bit of pollution in the river there, and they seem to be going ahead with treatment works now. If these towns out in the state can do it, it's certainly going to make it pretty difficult for the city of Portland to back down.

Mr. Wendel: It took threatened court action on the part of the Sanitary Authority before Lebanon started work.

Mr. Hallock (to Mr. Bowes): I would just like to urge you to join our happy band and discourage any program which may be in contemplation

to discontinue these charges.

Mr. Bowes: The council has not discussed it yet. I don't know what action will be taken. Before any action is taken, a meeting of the council will be called and the matter will be discussed.

Mr. Wendel: Would it avail anything to have another joint meeting with the council?

Mr. Bowes: If you could get them all together.

Mr. Wendel: When will it come up before the council?

Mr. Bowes: The first of January or first of February. Before any action is taken to repeal the act, I will call for a meeting with the Sanitary Authority and as many representatives of the city government as possible, to get together before any action is taken. If any action comes up to repeal the charge, I will see that such a meeting is held.

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Mr. Wendel: When Commissioner Bowes left, he promised to arrange a joint meeting before the city council, should they move to eliminate the charge. I would like some consideration given to the possibility of increasing the charge. I would have stopped Commissioner Bowes before he left and interjected that, had it not been for the presence of Mr. Wallace, it was my hope that we could go further than merely the continuation of the present minimum, which is only around \$150,000 a year. The total of 33 1/3¢ would still only bring in \$500,000 a year.

Mr. Hallock: I'm just a little fearful of the advisability of suggesting an increase at this time. The people are being bombarded from all sides with advice to save their money, and the increases in taxes, etc.

Mr. Wendel: The reason I favor this is because it is one form of saving, even with the 33 1/3¢ charge.

Dr. Stricker: The water rate will still be the lowest in the state.

Mr. Burch: It looks as though business conditions in Portland are likely to be better than they have been.

Mr. Hallock: In spite of all of their talk, the fact remains that that outfit at the city hall are definitely hostile to this thing. They embrace every opportunity to discourage us.

Mr. Wendel: Do you think it advisable that we should urge more than this minimum charge?

Mr. Burch: I don't think so unless it is too late for the May primary.

Mr. Veatch: The council always anticipates a lot of things that never happen, but I don't think as a matter of policy, it would be well to advocate an increase now.

Mr. Wendel: I'd like to see it done.

Mr. Hallock: So would I, but this doesn't seem to be the time.

Dr. Stricker: We should make certain that it isn't stopped completely.

Mr. Hallock: Once they take it off, we're definitely through.

Mr. Wendel: I take it you're opposed to doing anything further.