

SEWAGE DISPOSAL STUDY SUGGESTED

Profit in Fertilizer Seen by
O. M. Plummer.

PLANT COST BIG BARRIER

Oregonian

Danger of Spoiling Rivers and
Beaches Grave; System
Used in East.

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While others advocate a program of sewage treatment to end pollution of the Willamette river and other Oregon streams in the interests of public health, angling and commercial fishing, and scenic beauty, O. M. Plummer, general manager of the Pacific International Livestock exposition, proposes that a study of sewage disposal be made to determine whether or not it might be made to pay for itself.

Mr. Plummer does not have in mind a program of sewage disposal "without cost to the taxpayers," but he believes, he said yesterday, that the natural fertilizer that could be obtained from sewage and waste that now goes into the streams of Oregon would pay interest on a very large investment in sewage treatment plants and at the same time open a source of fine fertilizer for the rebuilding of soil in Oregon orchards.

Cost of Plants Barrier.

The attention of the livestock exposition manager was called to the present movement for sewage treatment by articles and letters by William L. Finley, naturalist, published during the last week in The Oregonian.

"Mr. Finley and his friends are on the right track," Mr. Plummer said. "The Willamette river, Columbia river and other streams are beginning to suffer from pollution, and something must be done soon to relieve them of this if they are to remain healthful, beautiful and attractive to fish life.

"But the huge cost of sewage treatment plants stands as a barrier to be surmounted. It seems reasonable that in this land where it is necessary to use much fertilizer for building up the fruit-growing lands, some means could be found to utilize the sewage and waste as fertilizer. Sale of this fertilizer could pay interest and even carrying charges on sewage treatment plants and might in time pay off the cost of sewage disposal systems.

"At least, this is a matter that ought to be considered while stream pollution is up for discussion."

System Used in East.

Mr. Plummer said eastern cities have found markets for dried sludge from their sewage disposal plants, while the market gardeners of Paris, France, are glad to buy waste that flows from the sewers of Paris into large fields to be dried. Thus, he pointed out, this fertilizer becomes a by-product of the sanitation facilities of the city.

The people of Oregon must not allow the fine beaches along the Willamette and Columbia rivers and Oregon coast to become ruined by sewage and waste, as have some of the leading swimming beaches along the Atlantic coast, Mr. Plummer said. There sewage and garbage has been hauled out to sea on barges and dumped overboard, only to be washed back to shore, where it becomes not only a nuisance, but a menace to health.

The suggestions offered by Mr. Plummer were considered about four years ago by the agricultural committee of the Portland Chamber of Commerce, and Mr. Plummer has suggested to W. D. B. Dodson, general manager of the chamber, that the matter again be taken up.

river and they have complained about the stench from dead eels and dead salmon. They departed with a bad taste and have not ceased to chide me about the atmosphere along one of Oregon's famous streams.

The above leads me to believe that if some of the fund of a hundred thousand dollars or more raised by the citizens of Oregon to advertise and attract tourists, and some of the efforts of the business men of Portland and other cities were turned toward getting the house in order for tourists, it would really be of more permanent value.

Those interested in boating and using the river in conjunction with the annual Rose Festival are compelled to hold a regatta in the water that is poisoned by the filth of several hundred thousand people. Boatloads of pleasure-seekers ply the surface above open sewers along the river bed that in places is covered with several feet of festering, poisonous ooze.

According to the report of the City club of Portland, covering pollution of the Willamette river, the city pours in its waste from more than fifty sewers. During the summer months, with little current in the river, the conditions at the mouths of these sewers cannot adequately be described in print. It can only be left to the imagination.

During the construction of the Burnside bridge, the contractors were forced to divert a 24-inch sewer which discharged at this point because the conditions near its outlet were so disgusting that the workmen very properly refused to continue on the job until this was done.

Sooner or later, Portland and other cities along the Willamette will have to protect their citizens against disease that results from the inadequate disposal of filth. Other cities larger than Portland have done it in a practical, scientific way. It takes money and at present, the cry of the tax payers is to reduce. It took money to put in the Bull Run water system, but this is a decided commercial asset to Portland. It took money to widen the streets, but this is another decided asset. The disposal of Portland's sewage through proper sewage reduction plants would pay from a business standpoint. It would help save a valuable run of Chinook salmon that ascends the river to spawn. It would restore a great outdoor recreational resource to which people of Oregon have a legal and moral right.

WILLIAM L. FINLEY.

WILLAMETTE CALLED FILTHY Time at Hand to Act on River Pollution, Declares Mr. Finley.

JENNINGS LODGE, June 11.—(To the Editor.)—A few days ago the Portland branch of the American Association of University Women held a meeting at our home and with their children brought lunches for a picnic. The children naturally wanted to play in the Willamette river along the sandy beach below our house. This was forbidden because, although it was a warm day and the river looked beautiful from a distance, this public stream is an open sewer carrying the combined filth from all the cities above and especially the waste products from the industries at Oregon City. It is a menace to public health and the state health officers have not only advised people against swimming in the river but even getting one's hand wet while boating.

A neighbor of ours who has cottages to rent along the river recently returned a deposit of \$40 to a party who was to take a cottage for the summer. These people had children and were advised by the state board of health that it would be dangerous to allow them to play along the Willamette.

A few days ago, a family from Providence, R. I., drove in for a visit and were surprised when I didn't want to take them for a walk along the river. The fact is—I have in the past taken eastern tourists to the