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# The Luzerne County News-let

VOL. VI. NO. 1 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. JANU

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### THE ANNUAL REPORT (continued from the last issue)

Following the introductory part should be a brief summary of important legislation enacted during the past year. Important ordinances and resolutions passed by the governing body, and new state laws of importance should be embraced in it.

The citizens' interest in services is probably greatest with respect to those which affect him most directly. Thus, a major portion of the report should be devoted to a description of the municipal services rendered and a summary of the activities of each service for the preceding year. The report should touch on the following topics at this part:

1. The activities carried on by the city to promote and protect the health of its citizens.
2. The scope and variety of recreational activities sponsored by the municipality.
3. Welfare activities and the relative welfare responsibilities of the city, county, state, and the federal government.
4. Current housing conditions in the community.
5. The amount and character of crime, the success of the police in solving cases, their work in crime prevention, and traffic safety measures.
6. A summary of the fire protection facilities and fire protection measures.
7. Services rendered in connection with construction and maintenance of streets, sewers and sewage disposal, refuse collection, street cleaning, and street lighting.
8. An account of each utility operated by the municipality, and a statement on the relationship with privately owned utilities.
9. Discussion of educational facilities and activities in the community.
10. Library facilities available to cities and trends in the development of these facilities.
11. Municipal services available to business and industry, and a statement under the Balance Agriculture with Industry Program in Mississippi.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

VOL. VI . NO. 1 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. JANUARY 15, 1957

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### THE ANNUAL REPORT (continued from the last issue)

APR 30 1957

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The citizens' interest in services is probably greatest with reference to those which affect him most directly. Thus, a major portion of the annual report should be devoted to a description of the municipal services available and a summary of the activities of each service for the preceding year. Generally, the report should touch on the following topics at this part:

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9. Discussion of educational facilities and activities in the city.
10. Library facilities available to cities and trends in the use of these facilities.
11. Municipal services available to business and industry, e.g., those under the Balance Agriculture with Industry Program in Mississippi.

The activities of the secretary should be described. The work of the city attorney, such as ordinance drafting, advice to departments, framing contracts, and law suits also should be indicated. Purchasing and personnel practices should be reviewed, and any other agency function summarized.

While other municipal services touch citizens more often, few have more direct effect or leave a more lasting impression for good or ill than the financial operations of city government. Finance, therefore, is one of the most important phases of government activity to report. At the same time it is no doubt the most difficult.

The common practice of including in the annual report the complete auditor's statement for the fiscal year does more to discourage the citizens from reading and understanding the activities of the municipality than any other single factor. Finance should not be given a back seat in the report, but, conversely, it should not occupy three-fourths of available space. Furthermore, municipal officers may not reasonably assume that all citizens are trained accountants or have a knowledge of accounting principles; they should strive rather to present the city's financial condition in clear, concise terms that any layman can understand.

#### SOCIAL SECURITY

Municipal pension fund members in the city of Wilkes-Barre will decide on social security as soon as a referendum is authorized by Governor Leader. The 1957 budget allots \$14,000 as the city's share if the federal plan is adopted.

The procedure to be followed in cases where a retirement system already exists is explained by Anthony F. Chernefski, Director of the Bureau of Social Security for Municipal Employees in the Department of Labor and Industry, and the November speaker at the local officials' dinner.

Policemen and firemen covered by a retirement system when social security is adopted for other municipal employees are excluded. Many councils have found it advisable to convert such already existing retirements plans into sickness or disability benefits. This avoids litigation that may arise if the funds are dispersed to members and the plan dissolved.

The community may exclude from social security those employees engaged in emergency work, employees on a fee basis, either both must be included or both excluded. Likewise, with other employees, they are covered by class and not by single individual employee.

Where a municipality has a pension plan, as in the case of Wilkes-Barre, an actuary must determine whether the present pension fund is solvent.

#### HARRISBURG

A \$30,000 grant to the Regional Commission of Greater Harrisburg was announced by the Urban Renewal Administration. The grant, plus an equal amount of local funds, will be used for surveys, studies, plans and technical services in preparation of a comprehensive regional plan for the growth and development of the area, which includes Harrisburg and ten surrounding communities in Dauphin County.

It seems that progress in the Greater Wilkes-Barre area is a bit slower.

#### SCRANTON

The redevelopment program will be discussed by officials of the city and civic development groups. A cross section of public opinion is sought on redevelopment plans.

#### PITTSBURGH

The State Commerce Department has granted the Urban Redevelopment Authority a \$500,000 state subsidy for two slum clearance projects to be divided between the East Liberty Area and Manchester District on the north side. Grants will soon be received from the Federal Urban Renewal Administration.

#### TRAFFIC OFFICERS' TRAINING SCHOOL

Penn State's 17th annual Traffic Officers Training School will be held May 6-17, 1957, at University Park. The course is designed for traffic and other police, including private officers having traffic duties.

Among the topics for the event will be dealing with the public, relationships between the minor judiciary and the police, uses of radar, traffic problems, Pennsylvania Vehicle Code, accident investigation, Civil Defense operation of traffic safety schools, traffic engineering, the Financial Responsibility Act, administration, and enforcement policy and tactics.

### WHAT'S NEW?

SWOYERVILLE - Council ordered the annual payment of \$100 to each of three fire departments.

LARKSVILLE - The borough has accepted full responsibility for the community ambulance.

KINGSTON - Request of borough employees for a \$500 a year increase was made to borough council. A public hearing has been scheduled for the purpose of re-zoning a section from residential to light industry.

PLYMOUTH - A police pension fund has been established under Act 600.

FORTY FORT - Council will investigate complaints about sand and gravel pit in the borough.

LUZERNE - Efforts continue between this borough and Swoyerville to open Chapel Street.

NANTICOKE - Meter collections for 11 months of 1956 total \$12,484.

WILKES-BARRE - Pay increases of \$400 each were granted to policemen and firemen.

### CHRISTMAS TREES

A sanitary landfill will bring Christmas trees to Havana, Illinois. A 20 acre-site will be turned to profit making. The completed fill area will be planted to Christmas tree seedlings.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

There is no idle gossip; all gossip is worked to death.

The noblest of all animals is the dog; and the noblest of all dogs is the hot dog - it feeds the hand that bites it.

### PUBLICATION

This News-letter, published monthly as a community service, originates in the Political Science Department of Wilkes College. Notes and inquiries may be addressed to Dr. Hugo V. Mailey, Political Science Department, Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

# The Luzerne County News-letter

FEB 19 1957

VOL. VI. NO. 2 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. FEBRUARY 15, 1957

### THE USE OF SALT

The widespread use of salt for de-icing streets, coupled with the increased need for the nation's already overcrowded highways to provide for the safe and expeditious movement of increasing numbers of vehicles under all weather conditions, has acutely focused attention on the methods employed to maintain streets free of ice.

One of the most common methods used to keep traffic moving in cold weather when snow and ice cover the streets is to provide a gritty surface to let the vehicles obtain traction, and for this purpose cinders and sand are generally used. Neglecting for the time being any discussion of corrosive action, consider some of the following characteristics of these abrasives. Cinders are bulky and their use is restricted by economics to the immediate vicinity of their source. They lack uniformity in size and must be shoveled from trucks by hand rather than distributed by a mechanical spreader. They are lightweight and easily blown from the street by strong winds such as those that usually accompany a snowstorm. After the thaw, many of the cinders eventually are deposited in the catch basins from which they are laboriously and expensively removed. Finally, the use of abrasives in a continuing storm results in the build-up of a thick ice mat as each layer of sand or cinders is in turn covered by a new layer of ice. This mat tends to break up at manholes and catch basins and leave deep holes and ruts which are dangerous traffic hazards.

Most of the objections to the use of cinders apply also to the use of sand. Being a much more uniform and compact material, sand is easily distributed by mechanical spreaders but this advantage usually is nullified by the tendency of sand to freeze. To prevent freezing the sand must be mixed with chemicals (usually chloride salts); however, there still remain the main objections of ultimate deposits in the catch basins and the building up of an ice mat.

(first article of a series)

### CERTIFIED MAIL

Borough secretaries should not indiscriminately use certified mail as a substitute for registered mail when registered mail is required, according to a recent opinion of the Pennsylvania Department of Justice. The opinion is based on the fact that certified mail does not provide a notice to the sender if the mail is not delivered to the addressee and therefore does not provide the security necessary to conform to the statutes.

Act 97 of 1955 authorizes the use of certified mail in place of registered mail for notices demanding appearance at summary proceedings involving violations of the Motor Vehicle Code. Act 503 authorizes the use of certified mail for notices stating that municipal liens and claims have been revived.

In accordance with the ruling of the Justice Department, certified mail may be substituted for registered mail for these two types of notices only. All other notices required by law to be sent by registered mail must continue to be registered.

### LEGAL RIGHT TO USE A GUN

John Gallagher, assistant District Attorney of Luzerne County, stated at the first lecture of the Crime Detection Series that the use of force by police officers and the type is determined by the exercise of good common sense which is free of malice and emotional excitement.

As a general rule the law states that shooting is never permissible to arrest a person, even if the accused will escape, when the offense is only a misdemeanor or when there is only a suspicion of a felony.

In Pennsylvania a police officer may only use a gun in making an arrest for a misdemeanor if the resistance offered by the accused endangers the life or may cause serious bodily injury to the officer. In other words, the police officer can only use a gun in self defense.

When felonies are involved, the rule is different. The police officer may use a gun if necessary to make an arrest or to prevent a felon from escaping. Care should be exercised to make certain that a felony has in fact been committed, and that shooting is reasonably necessary to effect an arrest. Suspicion of a felony is not enough. A felony must be committed, and it was absolutely necessary to kill to prevent an escape.

### STANDARD BRIDGE PLANS

The State Department of Highways can now expedite the construction of bridges, for standard bridge plans have been developed by the Department. The time-consuming process of designing individual bridges has been eliminated.

The first part of the plans consists of thirteen drawings which contain elaborate details suitable for use on all bridges. Part 2 consists of fifty-five drawings of all types of standard structures. Bridges in the standard structures include spans from 20 to 80 feet in reinforced concrete slab, reinforced concrete T-beams, steel I-beam, composite I-beam and pre-stressed concrete. All spans have at least two of the above types which permits the use of an alternate in the event of material shortage. The spans have been designed for roadway widths of 28, 40, 68, and 84 feet.

If a disaster occurs, the Department will not be compelled to wait months or years for a bridge to be designed. Plans will be available immediately and placed in the hands of construction agencies for immediate construction or replacement of damaged or destroyed bridges.

### SPEAKER

The Luzerne County Local Officials will hold a dinner meeting on Tuesday, March 12th at 6:30 P.M. at the Wilkes College Dining Room. The speaker will be Mr. James B. Rinehart, Township Administrator. He will discuss Act No. 655.

### SURVEY

Parking studies in 14 major American cities revealed that 36% of cars parked downtown are by those on business errands and 26% by workers. Shoppers comprise 22%, those on trips to medical offices, schools and restaurants make up 11% and the remaining 5% are persons on pleasure trips.

### PARKING AUTHORITY

The Norristown Parking Authority has presented to the Borough Council (42,000) plans for a \$665,000 off-street parking program.

### WHAT'S NEW?

KINGSTON TOWNSHIP - Supervisors have filed reports to the Court to lay out and open six streets.

PITTSTON - Parking meter fees and fines for 1956 established a new high.

SWOYERVILLE - Council transferred funds from several departments and payment of bills totaling \$11,756,36.

KINGSTON - The Burgess was authorized to appoint another school crossing policeman at Rutter and Chester Streets.

BACK MOUNTAIN - A number of residents are interested in a broad planning program and are willing to support a regional planning commission.

LARKSVILLE - Council agreed to abandon 1,110 feet of road in the 7th Ward.

DUPONT - Council is contemplating the construction of sewage lines in the borough.

WILKES-BARRE - Coal land and buildings dropped \$968,610 in assessed city valuation.

HANOVER - The contract between the Township and the Glen Alden Coal Co. for care of the streets was filed with the Courts.

WHITE HAVEN - Council reappointed Carl Jenkins to a five-year term on the municipal water authority.

ASHLEY - A tentative budget provides for a wage increase for all employees.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

Wilkes College Library

VOL. VI. NO. 3 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. MARCH 15, 1957

### THE USE OF SALT

Another approach towards solving this problem is removing the snow and ice from the street by chemical means using sodium chloride (rock salt), calcium chloride (pellets), or a mixture of the two. These chemicals melt ice by reason of heat which is generated when they go into solution. As a particle of the chemical starts to dissolve its weight allows it to penetrate deeper into the ice layer until it reaches the pavement where it spreads underneath the ice, breaking the bond between the ice and the pavement.

Rock salt is considerably cheaper than calcium chloride (pellets) in most areas, which accounts for its more widespread use. Calcium chloride appears to remain effective in melting ice at lower temperatures than sodium chloride, therefore mixtures of rock salt and calcium chloride (pellets) are reported to be used during severe winter low temperatures when rock salt alone is ineffective.

Snow removal and ice control operations vary according to the type of storm and temperatures prevailing during the storm. Salt spreading, plowing, and snow removal are used as circumstances require, to keep the snow from freezing.

Much attention has been given to the real and imagined effect of salt used in snow and ice control on the outer decorative and under-body surfaces of automobiles. The enamels and lacquers used on automobiles today are relatively unaffected by salt used on the streets to melt ice and snow. Only when the finish is broken in some manner, allowing the brine solution to reach the underlying steel, will corrosion start. Once started, the corrosion will spread under the paint in all directions from the break, causing an unsightly appearance. Breaks in the paint film can come from gravel thrown up from the road, or, for example, on doors which strike other cars or objects when swung open. Breaks can also be caused by faulty fits of parts on the car such as hoods, trunks, and mouldings.

(continued on following page)



Pockets or crevasses which retain water, snow or salt solution for long periods of time also make the finish more susceptible to corrosion. Car builders have been aware of this for some time and have been taking steps to eliminate, by changes in design, these pockets or water traps. For example, by making the rear fender an integral part of the body, the trap formed by joint of rear fender to body has been eliminated. The use of phosphate coating prior to painting, as now practiced by practically all manufacturers of motor cars, has done a great deal to minimize the spread of rust under paint films when a break occurs.

Evidence accumulated in the General Motors study over the past five years shows that more corrosion is evident on automobiles in cities where salt is used than in other localities. As an example, in a recent study 58% of cars examined in Detroit (where salt is used) showed corrosion along chrome mouldings, while only 35% of the same model in Miami (where no salt is used) showed corrosion at the same spots. This in spite of the fact that Miami has more than double the amount of rainfall and much higher relative humidity than Detroit.

A recent 1953 investigation indicates a greater increase in failure of the surface finish at the gravel reflector on cars in Detroit when compared to those in Washington and Miami. The gravel deflector was the point examined since many cars have eliminated the fender welt previously used as the point to examine.

Another portion of the automobile vulnerable to the action of salt is the decorative chromium-plated parts, such as bumpers and trim. There appears to be an increased deterioration in appearance of chromium in those States which use salt in road de-icing compared with States which do not.

Considerable interest has been expressed on whether use of de-icing salt had any deteriorious effect on telephone and electric utilities. The effect on utility cars and trucks is the same as on private vehicles on public streets. The utility vehicles are protected by undercoating and usual maintenance procedures.

Corrosion of some parts of steam lines is caused by salt seeping into manholes; however, parts that are easily replaced are still made of steel because thus far it has not been economically justified to employ more resistant material. Other parts which are more expensive to replace are made of stainless steel. In some applications, such as valves in manholes, steel plate hoods are placed over the areas to deflect the drip from the manhole opening.

(second article of a series)

## BILLS AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNEMENT BEFORE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### Townships -

Officials' names reported to Bureau of Municipal Affairs limited to sworn officials. Bill number - HB 161. House, passed finally. Senate, - .

### Municipal Authorities -

Financial reports required to be rendered to Department of Internal Affairs annually. DOWN Bill number - HB 143. House, passed reading three times, and amended since introduction. Senate, - .

Fuels tax proceeds allocation formula population base revised to be the latest official census. Bill number HB 162. House, passed finally. Senate, - .

## CONVENTIONS

Pennsylvania Association of Township Commissioners, Wernersville, Pa., June 12-14.

Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs, June 26-29, Philadelphia.

## SURVEY

11% of the traffic in business districts are transit vehicles; 12% are trucks; 34% are taxis; and 43% autos. Wiping passenger autos from the central district would not solve the problem.

## GOOD GARDENING

First plant five rows of peas: preparedness, promptness, perseverance, politeness, and prayer.

Next to them plant three rows of squash: squash gossip, squash criticism, squash indifference.

Then five rows of lettuce: let us be faithful; let us be unselfish; let us be loyal; let us love one another; and let us be truthful.

No garden is complete without turnip: turn up for church; turn up with a smile; turn up with a new idea; turn up with real determination.

Good advice for local officials.

### WHAT'S NEW ?

DUPONT - Council is presently discussing the construction of sewage lines for the entire borough.

WILKES-BARRE - The total assessed valuation in the city for 1957 is \$312,329 less than 1956.

DALLAS - The borough secretary, Robert Brown, declined an increase in salary.

FAIRVIEW TOWNSHIP - Supervisors are considering drawing up a master plan for the area, making use of the tool of planning.

LUZERNE - Council has ordered a teenage curfew for the borough.

PLAINS - The police have warned of the ratty railroad crossings.

EDWARDSVILLE - The Borough has granted an increase of \$300 a year for all salaried and hourly workers.

### BOOKS

Two excellent books on traffic problems are Turn Controls in Urban Traffic and A Volume Warrant for Urban Stop Signs. Both of these are published by the Eno Foundation for Highway Traffic Control of Connecticut.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

More people are voluble instead of valuable.

Money may talk, but it never gives itself away.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

VOL. VI. NO. 4 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. APRIL 15, 1957

## Wilkes College Library

### THE USE OF SALT

APR 30 1957

Referring to underground electric cable, salt gets into the cable ducts and, if the voltage differential is under 1/2 volt, it will pull salt from the ground to the cable where corrosion then occurs. These cable cannot be flushed as the Telephone Companies do, because of possible damage to the sheath when the cable is "hot".

In general, however, the problems of the electric utility are not measurably increased by use of salt in de-icing streets. The abandonment of street railways coupled with a greater use of non-corrosive cable sheaths and a good duct flushing maintenance program have materially reduced the effect of street de-icing salts in causing corrosion troubles to Telephone Companies. The wider use of impervious asphaltum compounds in street resurfacing is suggested as a step in the right direction to keep salt from entering the ground and lowering soil resistivity.

An investigation of 116 lane miles of pavement built of air-entrained concrete showed no scaling or disintegration after 12-14 years of service. Adjacent concrete slabs built of the same material but without air-entrainment scaled up to 100% of their surface. It would appear that the concrete would reduce the adverse effects which take place after the application of de-icing salts. Apparently the use of salt for de-icing is not considered as being detrimental to asphalt surfacing.

Much has been written and published pro and con on the value of various chemicals which, when mixed with salt, are purported to reduce the corrosive effect of the salt. In the past few years, those companies who produce and sell compounds under various trade names to inhibit the corrosive action of salt, have been vitally interested in learning their value and have independently studied their use with salt in various cities. It was the opinion of the De-Icing Committee that the use of inhibitors in the salt is of doubtful value in protecting the exterior appearance of automobiles, but there is some evidence that certain inhibitors may reduce the weight loss of metals due to corrosion.

(continued on following page)

The importance of good highways to the economic strength of our nation is well established. Vast sums are to be spent in improving and extending the network of roads that integrate forty-eight states into one sovereign nation. This scheduled expenditure serves to dramatize the dependence that our way of life places on motor vehicles in commerce, industry, and agriculture.

Many of the economic advantages of a dry pavement over a slippery pavement are intangible. Obviously, it is of prime importance that the people of a city have roads that permit easy access and movement to policemen, firemen, doctors, and ambulances, but how much money is saved by having the streets always open for such emergency services cannot be estimated.

One of the largest single losses is that caused by employees being late for work. Based on the average person being 30 minutes late, the total loss of work would amount to \$1,590,000 per icy day or approximately \$55 million per year (average of 35 storms per winter). When shoppers find it very difficult to get to and from the stores, the sale of merchandise drops about 50%. This loss amounts to approximately \$760,000 per day or \$26 million per year.

Trucking companies are directly affected by icy weather, being slowed down to half their regular operating speed. This results in their losing about \$200,000 per day or \$7 million per year.

The great savings in having a dry pavement a short time after the snow has fallen pays off in lives saved, less damage to property, better flow of traffic, and an overall economic saving to all citizens.

Public safety through the safe movement of traffic should be the paramount compelling force in any choice of de-icing method or material.

(final article of a series)

### MOTOR LICENSE FUND ALLOCATIONS

Act 655 provides an increase in the motor funds allocations to municipalities of \$30 annually. Previous allocations were limited to \$18 million a year. The restrictive factor compelling municipalities to match state allocations has been removed. Under the Act, 60% of the fund is distributed on the basis of mileage and 40% on the basis of population.

The mileage factor for distributing the money is \$298 per mile. This is a \$2 reduction from last year due to the increased mileage in municipalities in the state. The population factor is \$1.14 per person based on the 1950 census. One-quarter or 25% of a year's allocation must be used by the local officials for new construction. If this 25% is not used, the following year's total allocation is reduced by the amount equivalent to 25%. Non-use means not only that the allocation lapses, but the community is penalized by a decrease the following year.

The Township Administrator of the State Highway Department regards a two inch roll with bituminous as new construction. Less than two inches is considered maintenance. If oil and chips raises the type of road, it is new construction; otherwise, it is maintenance. Ordinarily, a four-inch stone base will qualify as new construction. Less than that is not. While no state money may be used for curbing, it is possible that drainage pipes might be new construction.

Under definitions set forth by the Township Administrator, a street must be a minimum of 20 feet from curb to curb. Streets less than 20 feet might be included in the municipality's mileage map if the street was used prior to state aid. If a community has an increased mileage, a new map and Form 990 must be filed with the State Highway Department by December 1.

While many local officials may not be aware of it, a Board of Auditors in the Highway Department audits the expenditure of the funds by the municipality. The State may seek a return of the money if it has been illegally spent.

### DOCUMENTS

The documents that the Bureau of Municipal Affairs hopes to destroy are as follows:

1. Annual reports of Pennsylvania local tax collectors for all years except the past three. In other words, in 1957 this would include all reports up to and including 1953.
2. Annual municipal budget reports for all except the present year and the past two. The reports which will be kept for 1957 will cover the years 1955, 1956, and 1957.

(continued on following page)

### WHAT'S NEW?

DUPONT - The boro has been sued by a lumber company for damages caused by boro employees when exploding dynamite to unblock an old mine shaft used for waste water and sewage.

FORTY FORT - Council ordered 100 shade trees to be planted in the boro.

SWOYERVILLE - Council will operate the boro on a 17 mill rate for 1957, 2 and 1/2 mills of the total being for street lighting.

NANTICOKE - The city will replace its penny parking program with a nickel program.

WILKES-BARRE - A half-mile of the City's five miles of street traffic lines will be converted from paint to plastic as soon as the weather permits.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Egotism is the art of seeing things in yourself that others cannot see.

The trouble with telling a good story is that it reminds the other fellow of a dull one.

### DOCUMENTS

(continued)

3. Annual municipal financial reports for certain years up to the past ten years. For example, the reports for the years 1947 to 1956 will be kept during this year. In addition, reports for every fifth year will be kept indefinitely. We will, therefore, keep all financial reports for the years 1945, 1940 and 1935. The Department did not receive these documents in 1930 and prior.

It is anticipated that every year, as new reports are received, the earliest report which is being kept will be discarded.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

VOL. VI NO. 5 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. MAY 15, 1957

MAY 29 1957

### DR. WILLIAM C. SEYLER

Excerpts from remarks made by Dr. Seyler, Deputy Secretary of the Department of Internal Affairs at the Fifth Annual Dinner of Luzerne County Local Government Officials held on May 9, 1957

"the kinds of decisions local officials reach on police and fire facilities, garbage collection, condition of streets and other matters affect most of us far more than we realize."

"Solution to the problem of financing local government lies in making the necessary constitutional and statutory revisions so that local governments can do some of the things themselves which they now leave to authorities."

"Only by doing this can we guarantee that happy combination of responsible government with efficient government, the goal to which we are all dedicated."

### GRADUATES

Congratulations to the class members of the Secretaries class for completing the prescribed 6-session course. The success of the instruction can only be measured in terms of its application. It is the hope of the instructional staff that the information learned will be reflected in the new attitudes that the secretaries take toward their work. Congratulations to Thomas S. Richards of Forty Fort; Thomas J. Reese of Kingston; Harvey O. Nielsen of Laurel Run; Harold E. Ivey of Moscow; Andrew Garber of Hanover; Mary L. Slesinski of Laflin; William J. Paculavich and George Soback of Luzerne; and, John Mulhall and Roy Speece of West Pittston.

### ACTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Act 27- Council organizational meeting deferred if first Monday is a holiday. (3rd class cities)

## ACTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Act 29 - Road and highway ordinances may be filed in court with either a draft or a survey of roads affected. (2nd class townships)
- Act 18 - Claims and judgments authorized to be revived, reduced, or collected after procedural lapses. (tax collection)
- Act 12 - Report of "Sworn and appointed officers" annually submitted to Bureau of Municipal Affairs no longer to include constables. (officers)

## SOME SEARCHING QUESTIONS

Is consolidation into one large unit the only solution for increasing costs of governmental services? If consolidation was opposed in the past, was it because people did not understand it, or because the solution was not palatable? Is not consolidation merely a piecemeal expansion largely because the city lags behind economic development? Does annexation really permanently catch up? Is not consolidation a polite word for extreme centralization?

Is not finance really the bottleneck to cooperative action by groups of communities? Cannot, therefore, per capita costs be reduced by joint purchasing? Do not authorities created by towns effect economies? If the main objective is to reduce per capita costs, can not this be done by functional cooperation and not geographical annexation? Aren't the differences in tax rate and assessment real obstacles? Why do merger groups always aim to annex the "better" towns rather than the "liability" towns?

Is it not a whole area that attracts industry rather than just one municipal unit? Does not cooperation of any kind overcome the psychological barriers? If consolidation is a long range solution, which is highly debatable, why not look for short range remedies? Would not technical help be of greater value for the short range? What assurance is there that a consolidated area will require less police when local police forces are undermanned? Wherein is consolidation a savings when towns now are permitted to turn their function over to the state for free? Wouldn't taking it back mean the expenditure of money which people in the merging units do not now pay? If state highway aid is on a population and mileage basis, how would consolidation mean more state money? Does consolidation necessarily mean improved services or is that a preconceived conclusion or assumption? Does not consolidation promote antagonism? If the central city already furnishes fire protection on a contractual basis to a neighboring town, how would consolidation reduce the cost to the neighboring town?

## MUNICIPAL REPORT CONTEST

Each year for the past five, the Institute of Local Government at Penn State has sponsored a competition known as the Municipal Report Contest. This contest is again in full swing. The deadline for submitting entries is July 1st. Winning entries of other years may be seen by calling this Letter. No community in Luzerne County has ever submitted an entry. This could be a good beginning.

## POLICE OFFICER

The State Superior Court has ruled that a police officer can change the flow of traffic at any time in an effort to relieve heavy or dangerous travel conditions. In a case before the Court, a motorist appealed action of a policeman who had prohibited him from making right turns, which ordinarily would have been allowed. The Court stated "although traffic may ordinarily be controlled by signs or signals, the motor vehicle code recognizes that unusual conditions may require the intervention of a trained officer; and, it is therefore provided that at the direction of a peace officer, a motorist may lawfully disregard the direction of a traffic signal."

## REDEVELOPMENT

The State Commerce Department has allocated \$200,000 to the Oil City Redevelopment Authority and \$208,000 to the Scranton Authority. In Oil City the money will be used in one of six areas for the clearance of blight in the heart of the city. The Scranton money will be used to restore as a public park the East Scranton area damaged by the 1955 hurricane. In both cases the State funds will match funds to be provided by local and federal agencies.

## FIREMEN'S FUNDS

Local firemen's relief fund associations were under a Justice Department ruling that their accounts and records must be audited by the Auditor General. Most of the associations qualify for a share of the 2% tax on premiums collected in Pennsylvania by out-of-state fire insurance firms. The ruling made on April 12 overrules a 1941 department decision.

### SUPERMARKET

Some owners of property adjacent to a proposed shopping center endeavored to persuade the Superior Court in *Hannum v. Oak Line Shopping Center* that a shopping center is a nuisance. These property owners pointed to the offensiveness of increased traffic, of flood lights, of heavy trucks, etc., and claimed that their intrusions on a residential area would constitute a nuisance.

Chief Justice Horace Stern closed his decision favorable to the shopping center in the following language:

"The large grocery and provision markets or super-markets have become an important feature of suburban life, indeed an almost integral part of every suburban community ever since the exodus to the suburbs that took place following the advent of the automobile; they have replaced for good or evil, the former pattern of small stores dispersed throughout the neighborhood. To hold that such supermarkets in a residential neighborhood are nuisances per se, no matter how carefully and properly they may be operated, would be to deny the residents of such communities the advantages and convenience of shopping that housewives obviously find in them."

### WEST WYOMING

A report of the commissioners appointed by the Court of Quarter sessions of Luzerne County to determine whether or not West Wyoming should be divided into wards recommended that "the interest of the inhabitants of West Wyoming will be best served" by not dividing the borough into wards.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

If your wife wants to learn to drive, don't stand in her way.  
Smart people get what they earn and wise ones earn what they get.

### PUBLICATION

This News-letter, published monthly as a community service, originates in the Political Science Department of Wilkes College. Notes and inquiries may be addressed to Dr. Hugo V. Mailey, Political Science Department, Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

### MORE SEARCHING QUESTIONS

Other than a federated municipality, doesn't a regional planning commission acting in an advisory capacity accomplish the same objective as consolidation? Aren't the Mountaintop townships exploring this very avenue right now? Isn't it being suggested in the Back Mountain area too?

How does consolidation solve a central city's traffic problem? Or decreased assessments? Or fleeing commercial establishments? Isn't pooled services by a number of communities a practical method of stretching the tax dollar?

Wouldn't communities in Wyoming Valley do well to consider the course of the Sherrango Valley Regional Planning Commission representing two cities, three boroughs, and two townships?

Do not common problems require merely area planning which requires merely cooperation? Doesn't the joint authority transcend political boundaries? How does consolidation free a larger city to embark on capital improvements when the merging units may have already reached their debt limitations? Since the population of cities has increased about 14% while fringe areas about 35%, where will the bulk of expenditures go under consolidation?

Isn't metropolitan planning the ready made device to overcome provincialism? What's happened to efforts to bring Central Valley communities together on that basis? And what about a joint sewage treatment project? And didn't the West Side communities partially solve the fire protection problem by joint action? Wasn't the vocational school problem solved by joint action without effecting the identity of any community?

### SERVICE AWARDS

Congratulations to the following local officials who have given faithful service to their respective communities: Samuel Banks, Conyngham; Elmer Luchetti, Exeter; John Wordoski, Hanover; Frank Weiskerger, Hughestown; Harry Scureman, Kingston; Andrew Natt, Laflin; Evan Thomas, Laurel

SERVICE AWARDS  
(continued)

Run; George Kulka, Luzerne; Stanley Janowski and Frank Marcinkowski, Nanticoke; James Price, Newport; Nicholas Keller, Nuangola; Thomas Kehoe and Leo Fasciana, Pittston; John Wasmanski, Plains; Walter Garrison, Shickshinny; Grace McGinty, Sugar Notch; Louis Alsandra, Yatesville; Robert Lloyd, Warrior Run; John Lowellyn, West Pittston; George Dennis, West Wyoming; Ethel Price and William Jones, Wilkes-Barre; John Hahan, Wilkes-Barre Township; Steve Mergo, White Haven.

ACTS OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

- Act 45 - Controllors or treasurers' office when vacant to be filled only for remainder of original term; vacancy unfilled by city council to be filled by court. (3rd class cities)
- Acts 76, 82, and 83 -- Contracts and purchases allowed without advertisements for low bid if for no more than \$1000. (boroughs, 1st and 2nd class townships)
- Act 71 - Auxiliary police provided workmen's compensation coverage, with minimum payments prescribed for those self or unemployed.

WECHSLER v. PHILA. 1955

A municipal corporation is not liable to an action for damages for the non exercise of discretionary powers of a public character. A municipality is not liable for failure to enforce an ordinance pursuant to permissive authority. In this case, a city ordinance, which provided that no operator should park or stop any vehicle upon any sidewalk, was held to be passed under a discretionary and not a mandatory power. There is no legal duty on the part of a municipality to light its thoroughfares or streets, and it cannot be held responsible for a mere insufficiency of light.

The plaintiff contended that the city was negligent in permitting trucks to remain on a driveway leading to a gas service station, partly obstructing the sidewalk, and causing a shadow to fall upon the edge of the driveway, as a result of which there was not sufficient light for plaintiff to see the different level into which she stepped.

It was held by the Superior Court in an opinion written by Justice Woodside that the City was not liable for insufficiency of light nor for failure

to enforce its ordinance against unlawful parking.

OPEN DUMPS

The Public Health Council in the Health Department in New Jersey has added a new section to the sanitary code of the state which bans open dumps as hazards to health. The only method of disposing refuse, rubbish, and garbage is by sanitary landfill or incineration.

Such a law may not be long in coming in Pennsylvania, for such a regulation is necessary to make a community attractive. Now is the time for Valley communities to explore a joint landfill or incineration project. The Public Services Committee of the Greater Wilkes-Barre Chamber of Commerce explored such an undertaking several years ago, but there was no one who had the vision to foresee problems a decade from now. This is another area that the County might explore. Witness Delaware County or Bucks County. See News-letter, February 15, 1954 and October 15, 1954.

COMBINED FIRE AND POLICE

Three cities in different part of the country will be added to the 32 which combined the police and fire departments. Dearborn in Michigan, Fox Point in Wisconsin, and Freewater in Oregon will have one service unit. Police will carry small firefighting equipment in their station wagons. The strongest argument in favor of such a combination is that it makes for a higher degree of administrative efficiency.

CHANGING SHAPE OF METROPOLITAN AMERICA

Rates of population growth in metropolitan areas have declined between 1900 and 1950 due to the stability of central cities, but that satellite areas have been growing rapidly since 1920. High rates of growth occurred as far as thirty-five miles from the center of the central city in the past decade. The peak rates of satellite growth are still in a five to ten mile radius from city centers, where they have been for the previous two decades.

(continued on following page)

## CHANGING SHAPE OF METROPOLITAN AMERICA

Satellite as well as total area populations have grown most slowly in areas where central cities have also grown slowly. However, the lower the growth rates of central cities, the higher has been the proportion of growth taking place in their satellite areas. Higher growth rates were found in widely spaced metropolitan areas, due perhaps to the same factors that produced highest growth rates in the Western regions. At the same time, satellite growth has been the greatest in bunched metropolitan areas (those whose central cities were less than fifty miles apart.) and in the Northern region, perhaps for similar reasons.

Analysis shows that metropolitan areas near rivers have grown the least, and areas away from water locations, the most. However, the greatest satellite growth was found in areas whose central cities bounded on lakes and oceans. The most rapidly growing kinds of satellite areas were found to be those located near highways, replacing those located near intra-area railways.

These findings could perhaps be correlated with the age of the central city.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Honeymoon: the vacation a man takes before going to work for a new boss.

An American is a person who isn't afraid to bawl out the President, but is always polite to a policeman.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

VOL. VI. NO. 7 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. JULY 15, 1957

## Wilkes College Library

SOME MORE QUESTIONS

JUL 5 1957

If the central city has shown no inclination toward planning or re-development, won't consolidation mean that a wider area will suffer? Is the basic problem to jack up the population of a central city because the people are moving from the city or is the problem to plan for the development of an area with a view to making the area a more attractive place to work and live? How does consolidation meet future needs? Does not planning concern itself with fundamental economic and social factors whereas consolidation does not?

Does consolidation equate the political with the sociological city? Isn't consolidation living from decade to decade? Will parks, social centers, libraries, etc. be relocated with consolidation? What happens if the city, enlarged by consolidation, becomes almost as large as the county?

Will consolidation improve street layout? Does consolidation determine the design and location of buildings if the central city is not now zoned? If towns merge, what happens to zoning in those towns which have it? Will educational services be improved? Or will insurance rates be reduced? If the two most important factors encouraging a fringe area to want to become annexed are sewage and water supply, and the city provides neither, what are the basic factors making for consolidation?

Why not follow the pattern of Louisville, Nashville, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Denver, Easton, and others? Why is it that where consolidation has been consummated on any large scale, it has always been as the result of fiat of the state legislature (Atlanta - 82 sq. miles)? Isn't it significant that the four largest annexations in 1952 took place where state laws did not require direct approval of the annexed dwellers? What about the Toronto plan?

Isn't it strange that most surveys indicate that newly annexed areas may not pay for themselves in the years immediately ahead assuming the services are furnished now?

CONCLUSION BY MANY STUDENTS OF MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT: It seems unlikely that consolidation will be the approach used in many metropolitan areas in the foreseeable future.



## CITY AND SUBURBS WORK TOGETHER FOR SEWAGE DISPOSAL

The center city is not always the big ogre to its fringe municipalities; it is, at times, the helpful brother. This is exactly what has happened in the Philadelphia area.

The need for municipalities in metropolitan areas to work together in the solution of sewage disposal problems has resulted in many forms of cooperative effort. Joint authority is one. Contractual services has often been used, though it may not have received the publicity that the authority has. A core city and its neighbors can work together. All that is necessary is officials with a genuine desire for the common good operating in an atmosphere free of suspicion.

Lower Merion Township wanted sewers to serve its closely developed areas as early as the turn of the century. But it could not construct a sewage treatment works.

Negotiations for a cooperative solution were successfully concluded. In 1902, an ordinance was passed to provide for the connection of certain sewers to be constructed by Lower Merion with certain sewers of Philadelphia.

Evidence that the arrangements thus made were satisfactory to both parties is found in the execution of similar agreements for additional connections in 1904, 1924, and 1927.

In 1922, Cheltenham Township entered into an agreement with Philadelphia by which the latter accepted sewage from this Township.

There followed, then, a number of agreements with other municipalities and extensions of agreements in effect. Drainage areas have no regard for municipal lines and brought into the picture municipalities that have no direct physical contact with Philadelphia. Just as the City had to plan for drainage areas beyond its boundaries, so the bordering townships had to consider their neighbors further up the drainage area. This situation is reflected in the agreements.

Agreements already in effect or under negotiation cover municipalities which ring the city. Agreements between Philadelphia and eight of its neighbors actually deal with sewage of 18 suburban municipalities.

It is not to be supposed that all negotiations are contrived without disagreement as to terms. Each party has the responsibility to strike the best bargain he can for his municipality. But argument has always been pointed

toward a final action satisfactory to all interests. The negotiations are considered to be outside the political field and are conducted in an atmosphere free of suspicion.

There is no one pattern for the solution of regional problems. The complexity of the transportation problem of a region, for example, could hardly succumb to the simple device of contractual services freely negotiated. But the fact that suburban fringe municipalities have found it possible to work easily and quietly with a metropolis, the core city of its region, bodes well for the ultimate solution of even the toughest problems.

## THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

No matter how happily a woman may be married, it always pleases her to discover that there is a nice man who wishes she were not.

Spring is wonderful. Recently a farmer and a golfer were seen doing their plowing together.

## GIFT

John Jarzenbowicz, President of the Luzerne County Boroughs Association, and Peter Keblish, President of the First Class Township Association in Luzerne County, each presented to the Institute of Municipal Government of Wilkes College a check so that the Institute may continue its work of offering instruction and information to local officials. The College, through the Institute, offers local government officials quite a varied program, and all because the College feels that it is a part of the community. Although the College does not intend to ask for the support of this program, gifts are more than welcome. Both Pitt and Penn have Institutes that have been heavily endowed with grants so that they may carry on their work with local government officials.

If you local officials know of financial angels looking for a worthwhile program to underwrite, you might advise them of the work of Wilkes College in the local government field. There is no better investment than that of helping to raise the standards of performance of local officials, who, by the way, are most receptive to aid and instruction.

## LANDFILL

What does it cost a medium size city of 109,000 population to operate a sanitary landfill? A Citizens Committee in New Bedford, Mass.  
(continued on following page)

LANDFILL  
(continued)

did come up with an answer.

The City could dispose of its garbage and refuse at the rate of 45 1/2@ per ton. Initial cost to the City to change to the landfill method was approximately \$50,000 for the purchase of 3 pieces of basic equipment. These were a 126-horsepower tractor, a 15-cubic yard capacity scraper and a hydraulic tractor mounted shovel. Personnel required to work at the site would be 2 operators for the equipment and a supervisor.

URBAN PLANNING

The State Commerce Department has sought approval for contracts totaling \$31,000 to assist urban planning programs in four areas.

The contracts: Titusville \$15,000; State College \$10,000; Cumru Township in Berks County and Marple Township in Montgomery County, each \$3,000.

The Commerce Department, in a Federal-state program, administers planning services for the urban programs. It supervises the spending of funds appropriated by the federal government.

WOW!!!

A Swiss student, after touring America, had certain criticisms to make. He said we have bad food, slow mail, dirty cities, and inefficient garbage collection.

One writer, commenting on the visitor's reactions said it makes it even more clever of us to have become a great nation in spite of all these shortcomings.

PUBLICATION

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

VOL. VI. NO. 8 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. AUGUST 15, 1957

Wilkes College Library

FALL MEETING

AUG 26 1957

The September meeting will be held on Tuesday, the 24th, at the Wilkes College Dining Hall. The dinner meeting of local officials will be called at 6:30 p.m. The discussion for the meeting will center around "MUNICIPAL LIABILITY and INSURANCE." The speakers will be Howard Kennedy, former solicitor of Wilkes-Barre, and the following representatives from the Greater Wilkes-Barre Association of Insurance Agents: J. F. Sallada, J. Williams, and S. Graham. The host for this meeting will be the boro of Ashley.

PLANNING

The University of Pennsylvania will receive a \$410,000 grant from the Ford Foundation to improve education of city planners throughout the country through the development of teaching methods and materials, a research professorship, and the exchange of ideas with practitioners in urban problems. Under the Department of City Planning, there will be instituted a five-year program for the preparation of such materials.

Dean Jose L. Sert of the Harvard School of Design has announced that Martin Meyerson has been appointed the first Frank Backus Williams Professor of City Planning and Urban Research, and Director of Harvard's new Center for Urban Studies. Meyerson was formerly at the University of Pennsylvania.

Funny! Strange! If Wilkes can't have a grant, nor a chair, how about a stool. And maybe some few interested people who will listen. Learning is free. Is that too much? All that it requires is some vision. Time to think about it has passed us by. IT IS NOW TIME TO TINKER. No more glue and adhesive tape. The Public Square is trivial. IT IS TIME FOR SURGERY.

WHERE IS THE MASTER PLAN FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF WYOMING VALLEY - OR IS IT UPPER LUZERNE COUNTY.....

## NO PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES

The general public will join with the American Automobile Association in saluting Nanticoke, Newport Township, Luzerne, West Pittston, Edwardsville, Pringle, Exeter, and Swoyerville for going through 1956 without a pedestrian fatality. Luzerne, Newport, and West Pittston are newcomers to the list; the others have records ranging from two to six years.

The Luzerne County towns that were cited are not off the beaten path. Thousands of cars, for instance, pass through Luzerne daily. Nanticoke is a city and a large center of population, adding to its accomplishment. The other communities have traffic problems, but they managed to keep the slate clean for the twelve months also.

## KINGSTON

Three traffic recommendations presented at the Kingston Council meeting by the citizens' traffic committee and the police committee were adopted for a 90-day period by a resolution of the Council.

Parking will be eliminated on both sides of Pierce Street, from Tioga to the North Street bridge, during the period. All left turns at intersections of Rutter Avenue and East Dorrance Street will be prohibited for the 90 days. Parking also will be eliminated on the south side of West Union Street between the DL&W tracks and Wyoming Avenue on a trial basis.

## ACT 358

Approved July 10, 1957

This act amends the police pension act of 1956 (P.L. 1804) applying to boroughs and townships, as follows:

Section 1 -The act now applied to boroughs and townships with three or more policemen rather than eight or more, as formerly. Pension funds must provide for disability and death benefits (provisions of such to be determined locally, however.)

Section 3 -The minimum period of service for retirement that may be provided in an ordinance is reduced from 25 to 20 years.

Section 5 -The employment of an actuary is made permissive rather than mandatory. A maximum of 8 per cent is placed on member contributions, the minimum remaining at 5 per cent.

## PLANNING IN LEBANON COUNTY

At the end of 1956 the Regional Planning Commission of Lebanon County obtained approval for a grant of \$31,000 from the Urban Renewal Administration for general planning work in the Lebanon Metropolitan Area. Technical supervision of the project will be provided by the Bureau of Community Development of the Pennsylvania Department of Commerce.

This federal grant, with an equal amount of local funds, will be used for surveys, studies, plans, and technical services primarily involving preparation of a comprehensive plan for the metropolitan area including the City of Lebanon and nine surrounding boroughs and townships in the southern portion of the county.

The project includes: analysis of trends in population growth, the economic base, financial resources and capacities of the local communities involved, the extent and location of neighborhood blight, the housing market and resources, building trends and construction methods suited to the needs of the municipalities; the study of physical characteristics and existing land uses and preparation of a land-use plan; the preparation of standard building and housing codes, zoning and subdivision regulations and plans for their coordination and enforcement; and the preparation of a major thoroughfare plan, a community facilities plan for location of public schools, parks, playgrounds, and other public facilities; and a public improvement program and financing plan. The project also calls for preparation of reports for the dissemination of information to the public.

## SOCIAL SECURITY ENDS

July 1, 1957, was the last day for Pennsylvania counties and other local government units to commence social security coverage programs in combination with the local retirement systems, if federal coverage is desired to include back years.

The federal social security law requires that contracts providing for retroactive coverage must be executed by the state agency, on behalf of the political subdivision, not later than December 31, 1957. However, before contracts can be signed, certain formalities must be met under federal and state laws.

There are only 184 days from July 1 to December 31 inclusive. The two 90-day notice periods leave only four days to negotiate the necessary agreements. This is the absolute minimum period of time in which these negotiations can be accomplished. Consequently, the subdivision's initial announcement of its plan cannot be later than July 1.

Social security can be extended after this year. However, after 1957, coverage under social security will begin in the year in which the coverage contract is signed.

### SNOW EQUIPMENT

Snow plows and cinder trucks operated by or for the Department of Highways or for the highway department of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth must be equipped with at least one flashing emergency lamp before it will pass the current State inspection requirement.

The lamp, which must be red, is to be used only during an emergency, and must be of the type approved by the Bureau of Highway Safety.

The law requiring the lamps was enacted in 1956. The law also provided that any vehicle in the Commonwealth used for repair or emergency purposes may be equipped with no more than one warning lamp of the same type as that required for snow plows and trucks distributing non-skid materials during inclement weather. This type lamp is to be used only in connection with repair or emergency work while the vehicle is standing still.

Private owners of vehicles which are used by state or local highway departments as snow plows or cinder trucks were especially reminded of the new mandatory lamp which must be of a type that will cover a 360 degree area and will flash a red warning no less than 60 times a minute nor more than 120 times a minute.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

It's unbelievable how many ugly rumors get started in beauty shops.

When a person always puts off until tomorrow, nothing is done in a day.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

SEP 27 1957

VOL. VI. NO. 9 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. SEPTEMBER 15, 1957

### BORO BULLETIN

The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs has acquired the Borough Bulletin as the official publication of the Association. The August, 1957 issue, Vol. XV., no. 7, is really the first issue under the new banner with Glenn A. Marburger as Editor. Boro officials ought to avail themselves of the informative material in it. In Luzerne County, 13 boros are members of the State Association - Ashley, Avoca, Dupont, Duryea, Edwardsville, Forty Fort, Kingston, Larksville, Warrior Run, West Hazleton, West Pittston, West Wyoming, and White Haven. On the Executive Committee of State Association, John Jarzen-bowich, councilman from Sugar Notch is the representative from Luzerne County Association. At present there are 33 counties organized into 27 county associations of boros. Other officers of the Luzerne County branch are: Alan Bare, Forty Fort, vice-president; John Mizin, West Wyoming, vice-president; Roy Speece, West Pittston, secretary; Harvey Neilsen, Laurel Run, Treasurer.

### BOROUGHS TO SHARE RADIO

Kingston and Forty Fort Police Departments will use the same wave length for broadcasting police calls with the installation of two-way cruisers. At the present time Forty Fort has not received its radio license so Kingston broadcasts the calls for both boroughs. Later on when Forty Fort's transmitter goes on the air, both signal will be heard in cruisers of the two communities. This will insure rapid communication between the two departments which have co-operated for many years when any help is needed.

The arrangement originally was approved because channels are becoming scarce for broadcasting and Forty Fort would have to wait some time to get a separate wave length. Emergency calls in Forty Fort now are placed by telephone to Kingston.

Possibility another borough may be placed on the same wave length. Edwardsville may have a radio installed.

## PLANNING FOR EXISTING INDUSTRY

Many cities go all out to attract new industries into their areas. Yet in some cities existing industry gets little attention in future planning. This can be costly - for it may result in plants moving away.

Large businesses have growth problems like the entire economy. With expanding manufacturing and more sales, plants take on more employees, have need for added loading facilities and parking, and often want to increase their present space. If cramped for room, they make plans to shift to another location. A recent survey in Detroit found the City already had lost 97 plants employing some 9,000 workers.

To combat this exodus the Detroit Planning Commission has designated a pilot area in the city to be occupied wholly by industry. All residential uses will be eliminated, and streets will be redesigned to take up only half as much space as formerly. Rebuilding in the area with modern one-story plant facilities will be encouraged.

Provision will also be made for lots of automobile parking - for workers - and zoning will call for minimum land coverage. Included in Detroit's plans for holding existing industry are certain areas to be developed primarily for small plants. The planning engineers found that many of the smaller manufacturers were swallowed up in the larger industrial districts. They also had trouble with deliveries and their personnel had no place to park.

One problem in Detroit, as in other older cities, is the fact that wide areas in the city used for plants have become industrial slums. It is anticipated that current redevelopment plans may help find a cure for this business blight.

## TRAFFIC LIGHT

"How do we get a traffic light for the coroner?" is a question often heard today as the number of motor vehicles continue to increase and new neighborhoods come into being. Traffic lights may be created only after issuance of a permit by the Secretary of Highways. Permits are issued only to local governing units such as cities, boroughs, and townships. The department does not pay for the lights or installation.

Application for traffic lights are forwarded to local governing officials when they ask for them. The Department Traffic Division receives about 600 applications each year. Of this number, about one-quarter are rejected. The Traffic Division must conduct a survey to determine whether the intersection specified for a traffic signal meets the requirements.

In recent years, the Department has stepped up issuance of permits for actuated type traffic signals instead of fixed time signals. These actuated lights avoid much vehicular and pedestrian delay and are adaptable to many kinds of traffic movement problems. Requirements for actuated signals are as follows:

In urban areas (population, more than 5,000):

1. At an intersection of an important street, vehicle volume along that important street must average at least 750 vehicles an hour for any eight hours of an average day.
2. The combined vehicle and pedestrian volume from the side street or streets must average at least 75 units an hour for the same eight hours.
3. The average one vehicle speed exceeds 20 miles an hour on the principal street approaches to the intersection.

In rural areas:

1. At an intersection of an important highway, the vehicle volume along that principal highway must average at least 500 vehicles an hour for eight hours of an average day.
2. The combined vehicle-pedestrian volume from the side highway or highways must average at least 50 units an hour for the same eight hours.
3. The average one vehicle speed exceeds 20 miles an hour on the principal highway approaches to the intersection.

For standard fixed-time signals in urban areas, vehicular volume entering the intersection from all approaches must average at least 750 vehicles an hour for eight hours of an average day, and the volume from the major street should average at least 500 vehicles an hour.

In rural areas, the respective figures are 500 and 375.

Justification for placing signals such as those that operate part time for protection of school children or at industrial plant entrances has no specific requirement. These signals are recommended by the district traffic engineer after investigation.

## TIME FOR REAPPRAISAL

Are there too many local governments? Who is to say on the basis of survey and study? No one. That there is a relation between the number of governments and attractions of industry is pure speculation. A recent ad in the New York Times would indicate that industries locate in communities of less than 100,000. Why consolidate then?

If the big number of governments produces inefficiency, that can be remedied without consolidation. Any relationship here requires prove, too.

Furthermore, it is not the structure of government that needs study. It is the service that requires study. And that is entirely different, apart from structure. This kind of a study is the only logical approach to our Valley wide problems. This was the approach used in Allegheny County by the Metropolitan Study Commission of Allegheny County. Functions and services were surveyed in order to determine how they could better be performed at the lowest unit cost. Three general headings were used:

1. Those services which could more satisfactorily be performed by existing governmental units.
2. Those services could be more adequately be carried out through cooperation with other municipalities.
3. Those services which should be administered at the County level.

Where is there talk of merger or consolidation? The Commission started with no preconceived ideas or notions but concerned itself with the facts and with how the problems related to the growth of the County could best be solved.

Let us study the problems. Let us not be blinded by a particular remedy because we know no other.

#### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

A gold-digger is a woman after all!

If you must kill time, you might try working it to death.

#### PUBLICATION

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

VOL. VI. NO. 10 WILKES COLLEGE, WILKES-BARRE, PA. OCTOBER 15, 1957

## OCT 16 1957 DELINQUENT WAGE-TAX ACCOUNTS

One of the chronic problems associated with municipal income taxes is the collection of delinquent accounts. Approximately 600 Pennsylvania jurisdictions tax earned income by virtue of authority given them by Act 481 of the 1947 General Assembly. There is no compilation of the delinquency rate in these political subdivisions, but the rate is high enough in some to cause concern among local officials.

Since April, 1956, the Borough of Dormont in Allegheny County has taken steps to collect its delinquent wage tax accounts. In April the Borough assumed collection responsibilities, a job which previously had been performed by a private firm under Borough contract.

Under the new system the collection of the Dormant tax is under the direct supervision of the Borough Manager's administrative assistant. This man is a trained professional municipal employe.

As such he is less subject to the temptation, which sometimes besets a private collection agency, to let the difficult cases go. His primary interest is to increase the Borough's revenues, and, with this thought in mind, he not only seeks ways of improving the collection system, but also thinks of methods to bring in new taxpayers, catch up with delinquents, and contact those who have not registered.

By the very nature of his relationship to the municipality, the private collector often cannot achieve these results. The municipality can coordinate the entire tax program, whereas the private collector sometimes can do little more than collect. This over-all approach frequently is needed for effective tax administration.

The technique used by Dormont is effecting a decrease in the delinquency rate is applicable in many communities. Dormont believes that, in the words of Mr. Stuwe, "The best collection results are achieved when competent people are employed by the municipality to administer its own tax."

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### DELINQUENT WAGE-TAX ACCOUNTS (continued)

Dormont found that thorough and vigorous attempts to contact delinquents were needed. In going after non-payers the Borough checks every record that is available to it - the Bell Telephone street directory, swimming pool passes, voter registration, newspaper items which mention Dormont residents, lists of school children registered in the schools, and other similar records. In addition, a street file has been assembled which permits the tax office to keep track of all moves from the Borough, and thus to register new occupants as soon as they move into the Borough.

The Dormont experience appears to lend weight to some officials' contention that wage taxes can best be administered by competent municipal employees. The municipality is in a favorable position which can rarely be held by a private collector. Collection is only one of several problems encountered in the administration of a municipal wage tax. It must be pursued in light of other problems, and it is the governing body which already deals with those allied problems.

### TAVERN KEEPER RESPONSIBLE

The Supreme Court of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recently ruled that a tavern keeper who had served beer to a minor was responsible for an automobile accident in which the youth became involved after leaving the tavern.

The court reversed a decision by Honorable Arthur P. Bretherick, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas, Delaware County, in which the proprietor was absolved of liability for the accident.

The high court decision was unanimous and the opinion written by Honorable Michael A. Musmanno, Justice of the Supreme Court, noted that before the accident the youth had been drinking "intoxicating beverages" at the tavern to such an extent that when he "departed from the hotel, he left sobriety behind."

The Supreme Court based its decision on an Act of May 8, 1954, which provides that persons furnishing intoxicants shall be held civilly responsible for injuries to persons or property in consequence of such drinking.

### TELEPHONE FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS

According to the experience of a number of cities, the leased telephone system, which is installed and maintained by local telephone companies, is proving to be the quickest method of getting the fire engine on its way.

The basic feature of the new system is a conventional non-dial telephone, which does not require a coin deposit. The phone is installed in a water-proofed aluminum box with a self-closing door and no lock. Each box is connected by its own line to fire headquarters. If one box goes out of order, the rest of the system is still in service; this was not true of the older style alarm. The traditional alarm boxes, in which a glass must be broken and a handle pulled to give a signal, are so constructed that when one is out of order, the other boxes on the same circuit won't work either.

The telephone reporting method gives the person calling the opportunity to tell the exact location of the fire, whereas the telegraph alarm can only indicate the location of the particular box, and the person who gives the alarm must wait to direct the fire apparatus. False alarms have been far more prevalent with this older type of signal, according to the association, because the temptation for some passerby, usually juvenile, to break a glass and pull a handle has frequently brought fire engines roaring out to find a deserted alarm box.

With the telephone alarm system, as soon as a person wishing to report an emergency raises the receiver, a light flashes on the switchboard at fire headquarters, giving the number and location of the call box. At the same time, an alarm bell sounds until the call is answered. Any number of calls from any number of boxes can be received at the same time.

Most emergencies today are reported by telephone. In fact more than two-thirds of all fire calls in the average city are received over home and business telephones, the figure in some cities is as high as 90 per cent.

### FLYPAPER OF SUBURBAN ROUTINE

Authors Bonnie Prudden and Dr. Hans Kraus in a recent book state that wheels have replaced muscle. Consider the tyranny of the wheel. Willy-nilly, the child is forced to rely increasingly on the wheel from the time he is born, to the point where it has virtually supplanted muscle in getting him from here to there. He starts out in the carriage, goes into a stroller, then graduates

FLYPAPER OF SUBURBAN ROUTINE  
(continued)

to the school bus and family car. He seldom walks if he can help it.

In short, the average child today, caught in the flypaper of the suburban routine, sits, rides, and looks.

Hasn't this philosophy helped to change the functions and services of municipal governments?

BOROUGH ASSOCIATION

The nominating committee named to present a slate of officers to serve for the coming year are: Dr. John Biernacki, Ashley council president; Theodore Powloski, West Wyoming councilman; and George Weiskerger, West Pittston councilman.

WHAT'S NEW?

FORTY FORT - Members of Forty Fort Police pension fund have petitioned the court to dissolve the fund and distribute the assets of \$51,000 among members.

EDWARDSVILLE - The town's assessed valuation took a sizeable jump with the purchase of 15.3 acres of land along Northampton Street by Triangle Shoe Co. for 68,000 dollars.

KINGSTON - Parallel parking is under consideration for Kingston Corners.

LUZERNE - Street expenditures run less than \$10,000 in this borough.

ASHLEY - The Health Board has been dissolved and the health service taken over by the State Department of Health.

THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Marriage is an institution that offers only on-the-job training.

Some modern girls turn a man's head with their charms and his stomach with their cooking.

PUBLICATION

This News-letter, published monthly as a community service, originates in the Institute of Municipal Government of Wilkes College. Notes and inquiries may be addressed to Dr. Hugo V. Mailey, Political Science Department, Wilkes College, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania.

*The Luzerne County News-letter*

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COUNCILMEN AND COMMISSIONERS

'Tis said that "A man's judgment is not better than his information." This in the Montgomery County Recorder. It is from this article that the following bit of advice is taken:

"If you officials bring uniformed opinions to your chambers, you act unintelligently and really let your constituents down. On the other hand, if you take the trouble to look into a matter, to get the facts then you are in a position to make much wiser decisions."

1. How may zoning help solve such problems as strip mining, trailer camps, used car lots, junk yards, billboards, and overhanging street signs?
2. Are there any standards based on population for the number of policemen a municipality should have?
3. What authority does a municipal health officer have?
4. What municipal jobs have a special contact aspects?
5. Should capital improvements be taken into consideration in estimating expenditures?

Can newly elected councilmen answer these and other questions satisfactorily? If not, there is a place to garner information.

The Institute of Municipal Government at Wilkes College in cooperation with the Public Service Institute will again conduct a course for councilmen and first-class township commissioners. All municipal officials are invited to attend. It is our wish to limit the class. A proportion of 2/3 new members and 1/3 old members ought to make for an enthusiastic class.

Both old and newly elected local public officials are welcome to attend the training course. The class is open free of charge. The Public Ser-



## COUNCILMEN AND COMMISSIONERS

vice Institute will grant certificates to those completing the course.

Information on the course will be mailed in the near future to all old and newly elected councilmen. Make arrangements now to attend this ten session course for local officials.

## MUNICIPAL BONDS

Assuming that the investor feels that municipals have a place in his portfolio and understands in general what advantages this type of bond offers him, he wants to know how to judge the investment merits of specific securities. Important things for him to consider are the character of the debtor, debt statistics, ability to pay, type of debt, tax collections, operating experience of the user, and ratings.

As a commercial banker places high value on the character of the individual or firm applying for a loan, so the investor investigates the character of the public borrower whether it is a state or municipal unit. Here are some of the questions he asks in his own municipal quiz programs: What is the history of the borrower in meeting past obligations? Does it have a balanced or nearly balanced budget? How does its debt position compare with other cities of the same size?

Nor can the character of the debtor be determined solely from financial statistics. There are highly important economic, social, and political questions the investor considers.

First, the municipal unit issuing the bonds ought to be a well established community with a stable population. Location, natural resources, transportation, type of local industry, banking, public improvement, schools, facilities for water supply and sewage disposal - all are factors which contribute to the economic climate which, in turn, determines the borrower's ability to pay.

The character of local government is also examined.

The prospective investor starts with the offering circular. Under some or all of the following headlines will appear figures that help the investor in determining the tax potential and debt status of the issuer: Actual or Full

Valuation; Assessed or Taxable Valuation; Total Bonded Debt; Utility or Self-Supporting Debt; Sinking Fund for General Obligations; Net Bonded Debt.

The listing of utility or self-supporting debt can be done where bonds are payable primarily from the utility revenues or taxes but primarily from the utility revenues or taxes to meet only a portion of the debt service, only such portion of utility debt is properly deductible from total bonded debt.

Only sinking funds for general obligations should be deducted to ascertain the net debt as self-supporting debt has already been deducted from total bonded debt.

In the debt statement in circulars there is usually a reference to overlapping debt or an additional debt against the same taxable property. There are usually two, frequently three, and occasionally five or more municipal units, that have authority to tax the same property. When for example, the city, county, and school districts issue bonds and levy taxes on the same property to pay the respective bonds, overlapped debt and taxes are the result.

Whether the overall debt and tax burden is in reasonable relation to revenues or not, helps in judging the municipality's ability to pay.

A rule of thumb for judging the ability to pay is the following: the net overall or general debt plus overlapping debt should not exceed 10% of the actual or full value of taxable resources, and the amount required for annual debt services should not exceed 25% of the total net revenues.

The form of debt and its purpose deserve some attention. One of the most reassuring features in municipal finance policy is the almost uniform practice of serial maturities, with the bonds usually maturing within the probable life of the improvement financed by the proceeds. Why is this reassuring? There are three reasons: (1) Serial maturities, if they are properly balanced, mean that the municipality won't be faced with too many principal payments at one time; (2) The compelling necessity of paying serial maturities each year under good and bad conditions forces consistent and sound procedure in debt retirement; (3) No question arises about the proper protection and suitable handling of sinking fund monies.

(first of two articles)

### WHAT'S NEW?

SWOYERVILLE - The council took under advisement the request of the Fire Department to house its newly purchased fire truck in part of the town hall now used by the community ambulance.

KINGSTON - Mrs. Walter A. Richards was selected to fill her councilman husband's unexpired term following his resignation.

NEWPORT - The extension of the sewer line on Newport Street was started in the rear of the homes because many more homes are contemplated in the area.

WILKES-BARRE - City officials have decided to proceed with a curb installation project on Prospect Street, although \$1,300 of the \$6,100 project is still owed by the abutting property owners.

DUPONT - Because of the need for additional water at the Airport, the residents of the airport area will have a larger main through their area.

DURYEA - Council has received an appropriation from the State for the repair of Canal Street which was damaged during the 1955 flood.

KINGSTON - About half of the Kingston streets are in the State Highway system.

LUZERNE - Officials of the boro and Swoyerville have taken the first steps toward opening Chapel Street.

### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

When it comes to singing, some women have what is known as a kitchen range.

The probable reason some people get lost in thought is it is unfamiliar territory.

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# The Luzerne County News-letter

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### MUNICIPAL BONDS

Borrowing in anticipation of bonds was responsible for much embarrassment to municipal units in the early 1930's when refinancing could not be done and there was no other provision for the payment of the maturing notes. Borrowing in anticipation of taxes should not cause special concern unless it is in an excessive amount.

Before 1930 students of municipal credit paid scant attention to the matter of tax collections. But the depression of the 1930's proved that while "nothing is as sure as death and taxes," the collection of those taxes is considerably less certain. In many cases reduced collections resulted in unbalanced budgets, heavy short-term borrowing against delinquent taxes and fiscal embarrassment.

Today, therefore, tax collections are watched more carefully. The investor watches, for example, the pressure exerted on taxpayers by means of penalties for non-payment. These penalties range from 6% annual interest on unpaid taxes to a flat percentage penalty on the due date and up to a 25% annual interest charge.

Naturally the collection experience varies considerably. Where penalties and collections are considerably low, the budget may on occasion carry an overlay item calculated to raise the total tax levy sufficiently so that a determined percentage of collections, say 80%, will produce the sum to meet budgetary needs.

In order to determine the trend in tax collections, the investor needs a record of from three to five years. Progress in collecting delinquent taxes is noted as well as the result of current levies.

Six questions about a municipal bond:

1. Is the municipality which is issuing the bond well established with growing population and well diversified industry?
2. Is the character of the local government good?
3. Has the municipality a sound history of debt payments?

4. Is the municipality effective in its treatment of delinquent taxpayers?
5. Are the serial maturities of the proposed issue so balanced that the city will not be faced with too many principal payments at one time?
6. Is the tax lien securing the bonds general taxes as opposed to special assessments, and are the general taxes free from restrictive limits in providing for debt service?

If the answers to the above questions are all "Yes", the bond is doubtless well worth consideration by an investor for inclusion in his portfolio.  
(second of two articles)

#### ACT 194

#### TERMS OF OFFICE OF SECRETARIES AND TREASURERS

Borough secretaries and treasurers are no longer to be elected every biennium, but, along with all other officers and employees appointed by the borough council, are to have indefinite terms of office subject to removal by the council.

Act 194, approved June 20, 1957 amends section 1001 and clause I of section 1005 of "The Borough Code", 1947 P.L. 1621, as amended by 1951 P.L. 1026 and 1955 P.L. 710, and repeals sections 1115 and 1120 thereof, effective September 1, 1957.

#### ACT 359

#### AIR RIFLE SALE, TRANSPORT OR DISCHARGE

Discharge of "air rifle" (including B--B guns and slingshots) "from or across any street, sidewalk, road, highway, or public land or any public place except on a properly constructed target range", sale of the same to persons under the age of eighteen years, and carrying of such by a person under eighteen years of age unless "unloaded in a suitable case or securely wrapped" are made criminal offenses. "The provisions of any ordinance enacted by any political subdivision which impose greater restriction of limitations in respect to the sale and purchase, use or possession of air rifles as herein defined than is imposed by this act shall not be invalidated or affected by this act."

#### TRAFFIC LINES

Motorists often wonder why traffic lines are not painted on new or resurfaced highways as soon as the construction crews have completed their tasks.

The answer is that the white paint should not be applied until the solvents in the various blacktop mixtures used for surfacing have dried out. This requires a week or two, depending upon the weather. The drier and warmer the weather, the faster the surface is "cured."

But most surfacing is done during the summer or late spring and early fall, a time when line painting crews are busy on their annual repainting chore. It is uneconomical to detach paint crews from their scheduled work to paint new surfaces.

The result is that most new surfaces are painted in the fall when the paint crews have completed their regular work.

#### ASSESSMENTS FOR NEW SEWERS

The consequences of a failure of municipal governments to control and set standards for real estate development are often not apparent until some years after the development has been completed. Health, sanitation, special assessment, and standards problems as they affect the community and individuals are exemplified in the recent case of Vendetti Appeal, 181 Pa. Superior Court 214 (1956).

Vendetti, owner of property abutting Montpelier Avenue, Millcreek Township, Erie County, appealed from an assessment for construction of a sewer on that street in 1951. He contended that a privately constructed sewer built in 1924 was dedicated and accepted by the township and, therefore, the abutting property owners should not be burdened with costs for the new sewer. The facts which form the basis for this contention are as follows:

In summary, Vendetti contended that the township adopted the old sewer system by: (1) operation of the system, (2) collection of sewer rents, (3) use of part of the old sewer to conduct sewage from other parts of the township and (4) taking over Montpelier Avenue as a public road.

The township, for its part, claimed that a private conveyance of 1939 which included the sewer lines shows that the township had not adopted the old system. This non-adoption by the township is further proved, the township claimed, by an agreement of 1942 between the then owners of the Division and the township which included the stipulation that any new sewers constructed by the township would be regarded as an original construction. The township presented other documentary evidence in support of its position.

The court gave a negative answer to the question of whether a township acquires or adopts a public utility by virtue of the above set of facts.

"The general principle of law is that when a work of local public utility, such as a . . . . sewer has once been constructed . . . . . the abutting owners . . . . . cannot be charged with the cost of any subsequent reconstruction or charge even if there is further benefit. However, the test of the liability of an abutting property owner to pay for further repairs to an existing local public utility or for the reconstruction or replacement thereof is municipal recognition or adoption of the original construction . . . . . The controlling consideration, however, is affirmative municipal intention. This intention may be shown by an original ordinance directing the construction or by acquiescence or adoption."

There are still some municipalities in Pennsylvania which, because they do not enforce health, safety, and welfare standards, leave themselves and their residents open to the unpleasant conditions and undesirable litigation exemplified in the Vendetti case. No community or resident can afford to be complacent about holding to standards sufficient to protect their lives and their investments.

#### THOUGHTS FOR TODAY

Most women try hardest to hide what they don't have.

In one respect, explorers of outer space have a bright future. They will never run out of space to explore.

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