

Rouge To Get Sewer Monitors

By W. W. EDGAR

"It's time we quit wasting money with experiments and get down to business, and this is the best way to start fighting pollution."

With these words as a preamble, Gerald J. Remus, general manager of the Detroit Metro Water Service, has proposed expanding the department's sewer monitoring system to include the entire Rouge basin.

He was moved to make this proposal in view of the success of Detroit's \$2 million system that was installed last spring.

"THIS IS the finest and most accurate check we ever have had of our sewer system," Remus informed a group in the Water Board offices last week. "There is no reason why it can't be extended to include the entire basin."

"It will cost approximately \$975,000, but I am almost certain that the federal government will finance more than 50 per cent of the cost."

While he was speaking, Remus held a check in the amount of \$158,351, which represented a part payment of the government's pledge of \$1 million for the Detroit system.

This is the largest single payment ever made for a project of this type, Francis T. Mayo, Great Lakes regional director of the Federal Water Quality Administration said as he endorsed the expansion proposal.

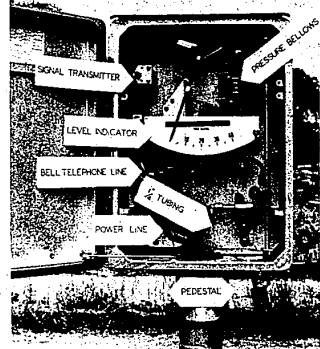
Remus' latest plan, he quickly pointed out, will in no way interfere with the work of the Wayne County Drain Commission, which has been given jurisdiction over water pollution in the Rouge, now being referred to in official circles as "the dirtiest river in America."

"On the contrary," Remus explained, "this expansion would provide the Drain Commission with minute information on pollution all along the basin that takes in the main stream and two branches."

"This monitoring system will take all the guess work out of the condition of our sewers at any given time," Remus explained. "We can tell Commissioner Herrick and his men just where the trouble lies, and it will eliminate any more costly studies."

Commenting on his positive assurance Remus, smiling remarked, "This system has sure made liars out of all of us."

THE EXPANSION, if adopted, would telemeter data from water supply monitors, rain gauges, stream gauges, overflow monitors and sewage or



THIS IS the monitoring device which the Detroit Metropolitan Water Service will install at many points along the Rouge River. The pressure bellows (upper right) transmits a tone signal to the water service's systems control center in Detroit.

storm water-level sensing devices throughout the basin.

"The relationship between rainfall and runoff into the different sewerage systems will show where an area is underserved and allow alternatives to be considered in search for the most economical solutions to the problem," Remus pointed out.

Expansion of the monitoring system through the 487-square mile basin would place \$394,750 worth of equipment in Wayne County, \$100,250 worth in Oakland County and \$5,500 worth in Washtenaw County. Other costs include \$75,000 for six remote water quality sensing units and additional data processing equipment.

Remus has estimated that the annual cost of operation and maintenance would approximate \$205,500.

The system control center in the Detroit Water Board Building is one of the first, and the best, installations of its kind in the country.

There is an hourly check on several hundred points regard-

ing sewage levels, and the system also sends out warnings every 10 minutes during a heavy rain or other type of storm.

BY THE MERE push of a button, the control center is furnished the information telling the amount of water being absorbed and the height of the sewage in the various barrels along the way.

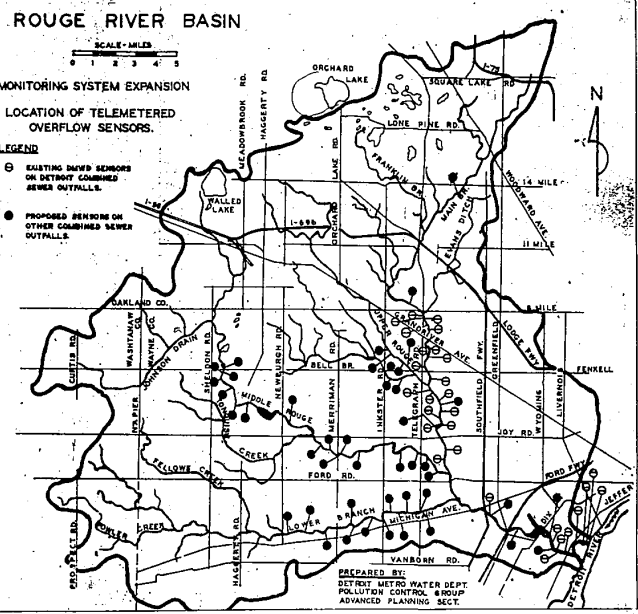
"One 100th of an inch of rainfall will tip the buckets," Remus explained, "and alert the entire system of an approaching storm."

"When this happens, we can control the levels in other areas, readjust the flow and prevent any flood damage. This used to be guess work. But no more."

The DMWS monitoring system now includes:

- 14 rain gauges, 11 spaced evenly around Detroit, the rest north and west of the city, with one of these in the area adjacent to Plymouth.

- 119 sewage level sensing devices, located in all major sewers in Detroit.



71 overflow-sensing devices to indicate if polluted storm water is spilling into either the Detroit or Rouge River from stormwater outfalls.

- Telemetry equipment to transmit data from sending devices to the downtown Systems Control Center.

- A "data logger" and computer to store and present information to sewer system operators when needed.

THIS SYSTEM now enables systems control operators to "see" a storm coming and to empty the sewer system of heavily polluted dry weather sewage before storm water reaches the sewers.

The empty sewers thus hold more stormwater.

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