

# Bill Hits Detroit's Water

A bill regulating municipally owned water systems has been reported out of the House Public Utilities Committee with a recommendation that it pass. Purpose of the bill is to place any city, village or township supplying heat, power, light, water or sewage to more than 1,000 customers, outside its boundaries, under State Public Service Commission regulations.

State Rep. John Bennett, D-Redford Township, a co-sponsor, said this week, "It is no secret that this bill is aimed at the Detroit Water Board. Under the present contracts, Detroit retains exclusive right to set water rates" charged to suburban communities who become customers.

**RATIONALE** behind the bill, Bennett said, is on the record:
 

- In November, 1959, Detroit increased the water and sewer rates by 60 per cent.
- In 1964, under threat of another rate increase, Detroit pressured one suburban community to build an over-sized water main.
- In November, 1967, Detroit again increased its rates, this time about 15 per cent, without offering supporting evidence to justify such an increase.

**UPON PROTEST** by several Western Wayne County suburbs, the House appointed a special interim study committee that conducted hearings.

Testimony from community representatives—which included Observersland communities of Livonia, Garden City, Westland, and Redford Township—was overwhelmingly in support of the state regulatory legislation.

Redford Township withheld support, however, noting instead that it was pursuing relief under a unique agreement it had negotiated in 1964 with Detroit.

Bennett said: "The Detroit water system is now in the process of completing a water intake at Port Huron which will supply the Flint area, and by 1975 it is estimated the Detroit water system will supply about 70 per cent of the population of Michigan."

**HE DECLARED**, "We have no objection to the Detroit water expansion program, but we do object to the indiscriminate water rate increases to suburban communities."

"It appears the suburban communities are paying for the Detroit water expansion program through periodical rate increases."

"Therefore, we believe the Detroit Water Supply System should be regulated the same as any other utility-monopoly, and they should have to justify their water rate increases to the Public Service Commission."

**BENNETT'S** home township, through action of its township board last week, has gone on record as not supporting the House Bill at this time.

Instead, the board said it prefers to pursue its own means of tempering the November, 1967 rate increase announcement.

The Redford board has asked for a hearing with the Detroit Water Board and is currently retaining an attorney and accountant to carry its case to that board.

Also, Redford Township has withheld payment of the 15 per cent increase portion of Detroit water billings since Nov. 1.

Basis of the township case was stated by Bennett this week as part of his "rationale" for his legislative bill:

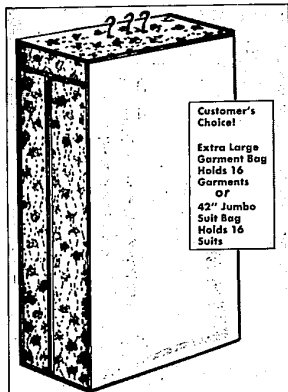
Redford Township was charged a 25-cent per thousand cubic foot rate increase in 1959.

The township built an over-sized 48-inch water main in 1964 at a cost of \$500,000, to aid the Detroit system transport water to suburban communities, particularly Livonia, on Redford's west.

At that time an agreement was indicated whereby Redford Township would supposedly not have to stand future rate increases.

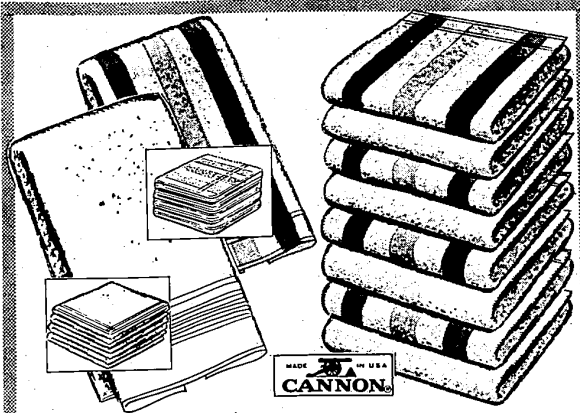
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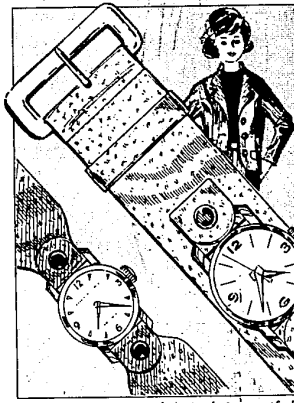


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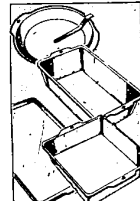
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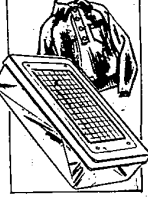
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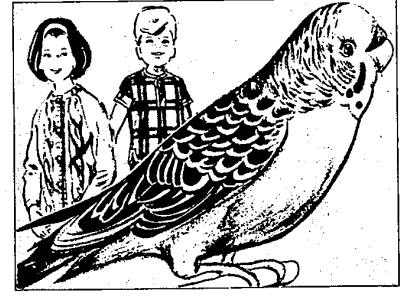
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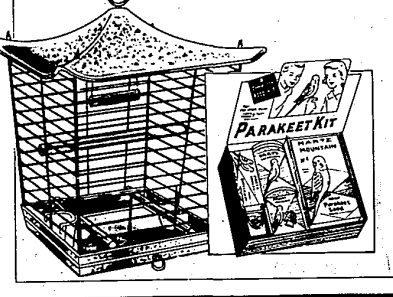
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