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Good Microbes Will Conquer Bad Microbes

This Is the Principle of the Aseptic System of Sewerage Favored by the Mayor-Construction Commission to Include Municipal Officers

Mr. Mendes Cohen, of the late sewerage commission; City Engineer Benjamin T. Fendall, Water Engineer Alfred M. Quick, Subway Engineer Charles E. Phelps, Jr., and the mayor—these gentlemen will compose the unpaid sewerage commission provided for in the sewerages system enabling act being prepared by Mayor Hayes.

His honor has been hard at work upon the bill, and in a short while will have it ready for the law makers. Senator Olin Bryan has been selected to introduce it in the State Senate. In the House of Delegates its sponsor, in all probability, will be Gen. A. Leo Knott.

“In selecting the members of the commission,” said the mayor yesterday, “I have endeavored to fix upon men who combine engineering skill with experience in directing public works. Mr. Cohen is an engineer of recognized ability, and as a member of the late sewerage commission became thoroughly familiar with the needs of the city and the best methods of meeting them. Messrs. Quick, Fendall and Phelps, by their exact knowledge of the water supply system, the streets and the subways, are unusually well equipped to plan the sewerage system and supervise its construction. The mayor, I think, should be a member of the commission *ex officio*.”

“Of course, the extra work will be an added burden to the municipal officials concerned, but this may be much lightened by the employment of a capable supervising engineer. This officer, besides being a sewer expert, must give proof of his ability to handle money and men. Mr. Kenneth Allen, the principal assistant engineer of the late sewerage commissions, has been mentioned as suitable for the place. Very probably I shall soon communicate with him.”

The special sewerage committee—Messrs. Fendall, Phelps and Quick—held a meeting yesterday afternoon at which the plans prepared by the sewerage commission were thoroughly examined. The cost estimates were found to be rather meager as to detail, and before a report is made to the mayor upon the probable cost of the system Mr. Allen will be consulted.

Of the various plans proposed the committee favors that known as the aseptic. It was originated but two years ago, and as yet has been tried by no city having a sewage flow of over 1,000,000 gallons a day, but already its merits are admitted by all experts.

In brief, the aseptic plan is one whereby good microbes are made to slay bad microbes. The drainage from house and street is conducted into large underground tanks, where the bad microbes develop and consume the poisonous animal matter. Then it is conducted to other tanks, where the good microbes feast upon the bad ones. After it has been then aerated it is entirely harmless and may be poured into any convenient stream without injuring the health of those dwelling along the banks.

“This plan,” said the mayor yesterday, “will do away with the objections to dumping the sewage into the Chesapeake. If the outflow is harmless it cannot injure the oysters, and in consequence there will be no big lawsuits and no trouble. As a matter of fact, I think the sewage might be carried into the Patapsco.”

The aseptic method, unlike that of precipitation, does not involve the use of chemicals. The microbes, unaided, commit suicide by the wholesale.