

Office Memorandum

DEPARTMENT of Conservation - Game & Fish

TO : C. R. Burrows

DATE: October 8, 1958

FROM : Donald Woods

SUBJECT: Cannon River Pollution at Faribault

Repeated instances of pollution of the Cannon River at Faribault have been noted since 1956, despite the installation of a municipal sewage treatment plant. This pollution has made the river unfit for most fishes, particularly Small Mouth Bass. Occasionally, pollution gets so bad that oxygen depletion results and fish are killed. The major offenders have been the Faribault Canning Company and Faribo Turkeys. Other industries have occasionally made impossible adequate treatment of sewage at the municipal plant and pollution has resulted.

On October 7, 1958, Mr. Johannes and Mr. Kiester of the Department of Public Health, Mr. Koch, manager of the sewage plant and myself inspected the industries in Faribault that had been causing the most trouble.

Minnesota Mercury, Inc., manufacturer primarily of metal cabinets and parts for I. B. M. in Rochester, occasionally dumped 1,000 gallon lots of 10% sulfuric acid into sewer lines, resulting temporarily in partial deactivation of treatment facilities at the municipal plant. This problem was temporarily corrected by notifying the treatment plant at the time of dumping so that the acid could be neutralized before entering the sewage treatment facilities. At the suggestion of Mr. Johannes, the acid will be drained on Saturdays over a six hour period to get adequate dilution before reaching the treatment plant. Previously, the 1,000 gallon tank was emptied in about twenty minutes. The suggested schedule is considered adequate for disposal of current wastes.

The Faribault Woolen Mills was visited and their present method of waste disposal was considered adequate. Wash water and dyes previously have caused trouble, but are now dumped in small enough quantities for the treatment plant to handle. The dyes still discolor the treatment plant effluent occasionally, but not enough to be harmful. Some dyes get directly into the river when the floors are washed down, but in very small quantities. Hot water from a boiler blowdown may tend to warm up the adjacent river enough to increase the production of algae, but not enough to be harmful.

A tour was made of Faribo Turkeys, Inc., to observe the disposal methods for feathers and offal. Most of the feathers are separated out at the defeathering machine and are loaded aboard trucks. Smaller feathers are screened out of the waste water by fine-mesh baffle screens. Turkey heads and offal are washed, drained, and ground up to be sold as mink food. The smaller bits of offal are caught also in the baffle screens. The scum collected by the baffle screens is removed periodically and trucked away. Further treatment of blood is necessary and methods are under consideration for improvements. Earlier this year, before installation of larger screens, the plant wastes were too much for the municipal plant to handle and had to be dumped directly into the river.

Mr. C. R. Burrows

Page 2

October 8, 1958

The Faribault Canning Company made provision for disposal of pea canning wastes by piping them out to a 29 acre field and dispersing them by sprayers. In 1957, however, the fermentation juices from a corn silage stack located at the factory were flowing directly into the Cannon River. The result was oxygen depletion and growth of large masses of sewage fungus. Fish, including Walleyes, were killed and drifting sewage fungus was carried as far as Northfield. Before the 1958 season, a sump was built to collect the silage juices, these juices to be diluted and piped out to the spray field. In actual practice, the sump was found to be overflowing into the river on one inspection trip, and as of about two weeks ago, the spray field was ponding the wastes and overflowing into the river. The river below this point is again carrying a heavy load of sewage fungus and suffers from an oxygen depletion. Means to alleviate this condition will be investigated by the Department of Public Health.

As of now, the Faribault Canning Company remains the only serious source of pollution to the Cannon River at Faribault. Progress has been made in disposal of their wastes, but more needs to be done before the river can be maintained in a satisfactory condition for fish life.

Donald Woods

Donald Woods, District Biologist

DW/gb

c.c. Conrad Ohman
Barney Jones