

Dec 6, 1971

Pledge Follows Conference With Mayor Burns

U.S. Official Promises River Pollution Cleanup

A new attempt to clean up pollution of the Blackstone River was promised today by an official of the federal government.

John McLennon of Boston, area director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, gave that assurance at a conference in Mayor Burns' office at City Hall, where he said the Blackstone would receive "top priority" in his agency's efforts to halt pollution of New England's rivers and streams.

Mr. McLennon told the mayor, Joseph Scanlon, administrative assistant to Rep. Fernand J. St Germain, and others at the meeting that his agency has identified the Worcester area as the main source of the pollutants which mar the river in Pawtucket.

He said his office will use its influence to prod these industries which have been soiling the watershed to clean up their effluents and take whatever other means are necessary to enforce the anti-pollution laws.

Mr. McLennon said studies of the Blackstone have shown that pollution from Rhode Island is not significant and that the major problems are in Massachusetts.

Today's meeting was arranged by Congressman St Germain at the request of Mayor Burns, to impress upon federal officials the nature of the pollution problem in Pawtucket and its effects on the Slater Urban Renewal

Museum. Mr. Scanlon represented the congressman, who was unable to attend.

After the conference, Mr. McLennon and his aides were taken to the Slater Mill by Stuart A. Woodruff, president of the Old Slater Mill Association, who outlined the association's plans to bring river waters into the flume beneath the mill. Mr. Woodruff emphasized the importance of clean river water to the restoration of the mill's water wheels.

The mayor pointed out the federal government has a stake in ending pollution of the Blackstone since the Slater Mill has been designated as a national historical shrine and should be

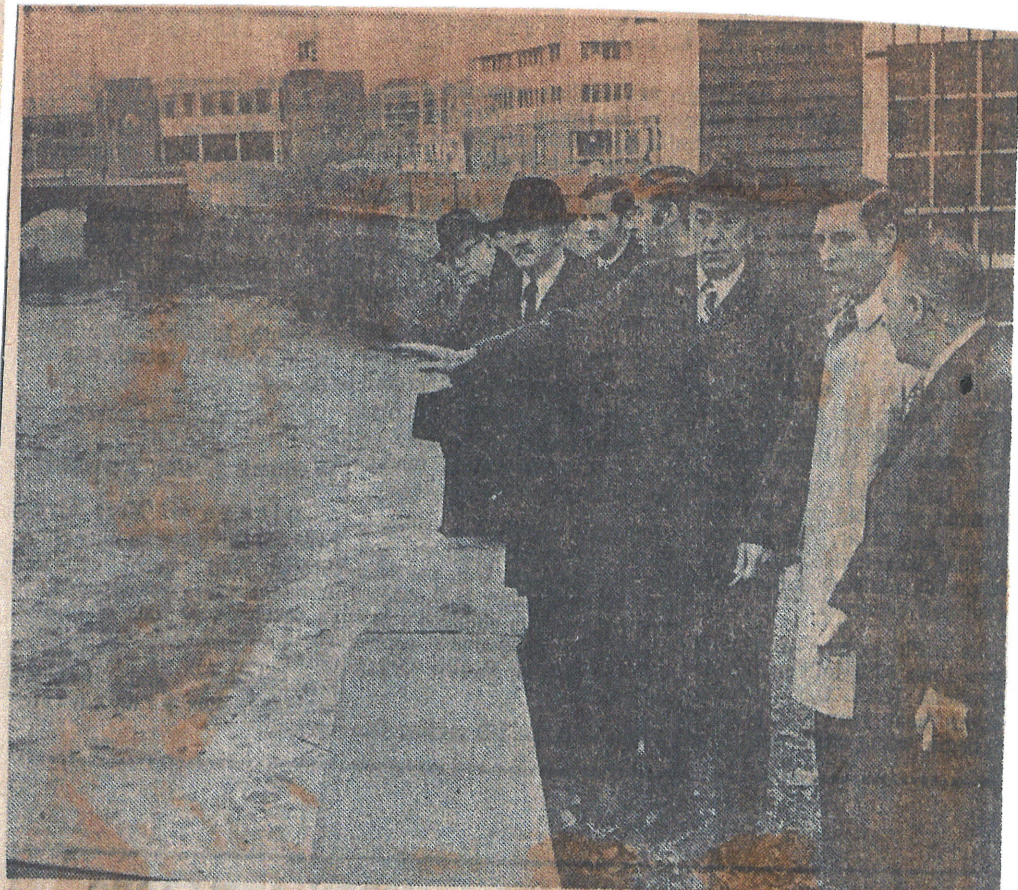
viewed in a setting unmarred by pollutants which course down the river.

The federal official agreed that unsightly collections of river-borne pollutants should not be permitted to exist in the mill area, where millions of dollars have been invested through urban renewal.

Possibly because plants along the river were closed over the weekend, the Blackstone was relatively clean today but the mayor assured Mr. McLennon the detergent foam is a constant problem to the city.

David M. Rosser, executive director of the Blackstone River Watershed Association, a non-profit anti-pollution organization, told Mr. McLennon he could supply him with a list of polluters which the association has identified. The federal official said he would welcome the information.

Accompanying Mr. McLennon were Lester Klachman, EPA deputy director for New England, and Donald Tickman, EPA assistant for intergovernmental relations. Also present were Eugene J. Jeffers, city engineer and Clarence Gaudette of the Blackstone River Watershed Association.



COLLECTION POINT for debris and detergent foam flowing down Blackstone River is pointed out to federal and city officials by Stuart A. Woodruff outside Old Slater Mill Museum, right background. Others, from right, are Mayor Burns, John McLennon, Joseph Scanlon, Eugene J. Jeffers, Clarence Gaudette and David Rosser. Main Street Bridge is in left background and the dam is at lower left, directly below the group.