

Your Mayor speaks and makes his weekly report to the people.

Announcer We present Mayor Earl Riley, Director of Civilian Defense in this area, who appears at this hour each week to discuss matters of local interest in connection with the war effort. The discussion is conducted by our special interviewer, Mr. Herbert Johnston. Mr. Johnston.

Herb Good evening Mayor Riley, and good evening citizens of Portland . . . Spring has come and with it has come the big annual seasonal question, mosquitoes. Should we prepare to swat or is something being done about it ahead of time so we wont have to swat? The casual observer has noted that conditions are just about right for a bumper crop of healthy mosquitoes, lots of rain, lots of high water to provide plenty of stagnant pools later, and so on. So we turn to Mayor Riley to ask him about the prospects . . . should we start getting priorities on swatters and ointment or have you some substitute?

Riley Well, Herb, I don't think they're making swatters this year, we are hoping we wont need them. I believe that this season offers the best prospects Portland and vicinity has had in years for a fine crop of hungry mosquitoes, but I don't think we're going to be bothered. That's a pretty broad statement, but I know that under the mosquito control system inaugurated in Portland, there is no excuse for a plague or for mosquitoes in any great numbers living to see the stage of life when they have even a pair of wings, let alone a stinger. The season is just right for mosquitoes and consequently we are organized to put on a more extensive fight than ever before. Most of us can remember when mosquito fighting was strictly a fight between each individual and each mosquito. If the individual was fast enough, the mosquito was dead. If not, the individual had a lump and a scar marking the lost fight. But today the plan has changed and it is a fight between the public collectively and the mosquitoes collectively.

Herb In other words, we've ganged up on them.

Riley Yes. The swatting method didn't accomplish much. Where one mosquito was smashed, a flock of new ones was on hand to take over. So now the plan has been developed to swat a million or perhaps even a billion at one swatting and do the swatting before the mosquito ever has a chance to grow wings or stinger.

Herb        We'd imagine, with all the new housing projects down in the lowlands along the Willamette and Columbia rivers where mosquitoes breed, the job of killing them off would be quite a chore.

Riley       It will require very careful planning and a lot of hard work for quite a force of people, Herb, but I don't think the people in these lowlands need fear. I don't think they will be bothered with mosquitoes.

Herb        Suppose, Mr. Mayor, you go right ahead and tell us the story about plans for a mosquitoless Portland this coming season.

Riley       All right. It's quite a story, and I'm going to introduce the man who has charge of the campaign - Mr. Ed Gavin, head of the city's mosquito control division, to give all the details.

Gavin       Good evening.

Riley        Now, Ed, Herbert Johnston and maybe some of our listeners have visions of swatting mosquitoes this summer. What do you say?

Gavin       I can only say that I hope there won't be any mosquitoes to swat.

Riley        They won't get to the swatting stage?

Gavin        No. The campaign now under way undoubtedly will exterminate virtually the entire crop. Naturally, occasional mosquitoes might slip through . . . or a high wind might blow some in from long distances at one time or another - but as far as a big crop is concerned, there isn't much chance. There's only one worry we have now and that is to get sufficient manpower, funds, and diesel oil to do the job. Also, we have some fear of possibly being unable to control mosquito growth in some military areas where civilians are not permitted to go.

Riley        Suppose, Mr. Gavin, you go ahead and explain just how this control work is done.

Gavin        Mosquito control, Mr. Mayor, is an activity of both city and county. This year we have an added advantage of help and cooperation promised from the shipyards and from the government and from other sources interested in preventing mosquito trouble. They are especially interested and ready to spend money in the fight for protection of the health of workmen and for saving of time that would otherwise be lost by individuals in fighting

mosquitoes. The attack is one of attack of breeding grounds with oil.

Riley What kind of oil?

Gavin Just plain diesel.

Riley How about rationing restrictions?

Gavin They won't apply. We've already gotten an allotment of enough oil to do a thorough job and we can get more if it is needed.

Riley Spreading this oil on stagnant water does what?

Gavin It chokes the mosquitoes. Before they take wing, the mosquito floats in the water with his tail on the surface. He breathes through his tail and the film of oil clogs up his breathing apparatus and suffocates him.

Riley The mosquito fight has started within the last few days and will continue until midsummer. Is that correct?

Gavin Yes.

Riley How do you know when to start?

Gavin We keep an inspector or two on the lookout with the first signs of Spring. These men make the rounds of the swamps and stagnant pools and dip out the water. The minute they find signs of mosquito life they report in and our work starts. By signs of mosquito life I mean - when they see the mosquito larvae wriggling about in the water with their tails pinned against the surface of the water, we know it is time to start because mosquitoes in this stage are rapidly on their way to growing wings and setting forth on their hunt after human and other blood.

Riley How do you reach these stagnant pools all at the same time?

Gavin We have the entire territory within 20 miles of Portland mapped out, and know where every mosquito-breeding place is. When oiling time comes, we put a large crew of men in the field each carrying a tank ~~about~~ and an oil spray gun. These men wade about these pools and spread the oil. The wind helps to distribute it.

Riley It must take a lot of oil to do all this.

Gavin At least 10,000 gallons. Probably more will be used this year because we are going to do the job more extensively this year. The extent to which we go spells the extent to which the city will be free from mosquitoes.

Riley Well, now, Mr. Gavin, if you make a good job of it and kill all the mosquitoes in a year, where does the crop for the next year come from?

Gavin Nature seems to take care of that, Mr. Mayor. We are never able to kill all the mosquitoes and those that are left lay their eggs. The eggs lie dormant in the mud, or in the grass, or in the water all during the year and when the right time comes, they quickly come to life and start in the process of making mosquitoes. If we were to do nothing for just one year, we would have the answer about whether the supply of mosquitoes might be gone. Except for the mosquito control work each year, the pest would be serious. Some years it would be worse than others, of course, but any year would be bad. This is just as a natural result of the number of pools and breeding places which are found in any territory where there is lots of water -- lots of rainfall. Another thing to bear in mind is that the most common type of mosquito -- the type the most numerous in this locality, is the floodwater type. Its eggs are laid after the floodwater recedes and they lay dormant until covered by flood water the next year. They can remain dormant for years if there is no flood water. This type is our worst problem because they are the most numerous, have the longest flight range and will seek human inhabitation. Their breeding place comprises several thousand acres of lowlands along the Columbia and Willamette Rivers which are visited almost annually by Spring conditions.

Riley Are there other kinds of mosquitoes beside these flood water types?

Gavin Yes, several kinds, each with its different habits. There is one type that prefers animal blood to that of humans. Another type lays its eggs on the surface of the water and these eggs sometimes are carried long distances and distributed. This type also makes necessary the annual control work because the eggs often come in from places we never reach in our work. And there are several other kinds.

Riley Do we have any of the malaria carrying types?

Gavin Yes -- occasionally we run across some, but heretofore we have had no malaria. What we might get now that we have thousands of new residents here from all over the country is, of course, uncertain. <sup>What I mean is that mosquitoes</sup> gather malaria germs from humans and spread it. Some newcomers to Portland might, of course, be malaria carriers.

Riley How can you tell the different types of mosquitoes?

Gavin Each has its own distinctive markings, shapes or habits. The malaria type, for instance, its scientific name is Anopheles - may be recognized from the way it appears to stand on its head when getting ready to sting.

Riley How far do these mosquitoes fly from their place of birth?

Gavin The range is from 3 to 15 miles depending on wind conditions and the types of mosquitoes. The average length of life of the mosquito is about six weeks. Some types live longer.

Riley What damage do they do other than sting and annoy?

Gavin They affect different people in different ways. Stinging of some people causes serious irritation and even sever swelling and a nauseating feeling. They are a serious menace, of course, to golfers, picnickers and bathers. From a commercial standpoint they drive tourists away, they kill real estate deals, and they cause great loss in berry fields where workers will not stay to pick berries or other crops. Another thing - they often cause a serious decrease in milk and poultry production. Stock and poultry have no chance to rest and sometimes must be kept in barns or sheds, necessitating dry feeding in place of natural pasturage.

Riley Do all types sting?

Gavin No, Mayor Riley, only the females. The males have plumed or featherly beaks and never sting.

Riley So, then, the female of the species is what is bad?

Gavin Yes, the female does the stinging and does the laying of eggs - that makes the battle a continuing one.

Riley What is the approximate area of the breeding places that have to be covered?

Gavin About 4,000 acres.

Riley Will you tell us now just how you proceed to cover this big area?

Gavin Well, one of the most important features of Mosquito Control is the duty assigned to scouts - - a continual test of all streams. This is done by using dippers half screened and the amount of wrigglers per dipper is recorded in the scout's report. The next move is submission of said reports to the foreman in charge, who immediately assigns an oil crew to that area.

These men are equipped with 40 lb. oil pumps which they carry on their backs and operate by hand. Locations that cannot be reached in this manner are taken care of by motor boat from which the oil is sprayed by pumps installed in the boat. At no time is oil put on the water unless we have definite proof that there are wrigglers present. A special crew is used to oil fire barrels on trestles and around railroad yards. We also use a brush cutting crew to cut trails through the underbrush. This in turn cuts down the cost of operation due to the fact that the oilers can get through more easily.

Riley I think, Mr. Gavin, that you have some advice also for the public -- I mean some information as to how the public may help in the fight against the mosquito plague.

Gavin Yes, there are many things the public can do. To enumerate I might mention that it will be of great help in our work if everybody will do all they can to eliminate standing water. If it cannot be drained, just cover the surface with some waste oil. Keep covers on all rain barrels, or other receptacles holding stale water. Clean out the drains on roof gutters regularly, keep cellars dry and stack boxes, pails, buckets, and tubs upside down so that water will not stand in them. Bury or flatten tin cans so they do not hold water. These are a few of the things that will help a lot.

Riley In other words, the more the public can do to eliminate stale water, the less they will have to fight mosquitoes.

Gavin That's correct. You would be surprised at the number of mosquitoes that can come from a tin can full of stale water. And people, by helping in this way, are helping themselves because the home-grown mosquitoes of this kind are apt to stay near home and do their stinging.

Riley In fighting mosquitoes it is not just a case of spreading oil once on the prospective breeding grounds. It is a continuing fight during all of the breeding season.

Gavin Yes, some lakes or ponds or pools have to be oiled several times. Inspectors must keep on the lookout continuously until the season is over.

Riley How far out of Portland do you work?

Gavin We cover an area in some directions as far as 100 miles.

Riley Principally, of course, up and down the Columbia River.

Gavin Yes, starting up east of Multnomah Falls and running many miles below Vancouver and Portland in the river lowlands.

Mayor Well, I guess that tells the story of mosquitoes and the plans for keeping Portland free during the coming season. I want to thank you, Ed Gavin, for coming here tonight to tell us this interesting story of the service to be given by the city and county and the other agencies that this year will cooperate.