water supply, and sometimes three times for sewage disposal, as the small community systems are absorbed into larger, more economical, and more logical collection and treatment systems. There is an inevitable element of civic disillusionment built into this costly process.

Solutions to the problems of development based on individual water systems are available. Stricter enforcement and stringent land development regulations are needed, particularly the adoption and enforcement of performance standards in the following areas: Local and county zoning and health codes, States health and resource use regulations, and Federal mortgage insurance activities at the field level. Another possible approach is the development of metropolitan water and sewer agencies with authority to regulate individual and small community utilities.

Yet in most areas public agencies have tackled the problem only after the inherent shortcomings of individual systems produce crises. Suburban communities still under development have been lax, in part because they fear to discourage builders. In addition, small communities often lack the resources to command trained personnel to enforce regulations. Further, there is a strong tendency in the suburbs to ignore situations which are going to cost money until they reach the peril point. Then the inclination usually is not toward thorough reforms, but to solutions which focus on short-range considerations. For example, in the suburbs of Minneapolis and St. Paul, when it became apparent that well pollution from septic tank effluents was widespread, many communities agreed to permit the State health department to survey wells for pollution only if the information was not released to the press, thus protecting them from adverse publicity. In 45 suburbs in the Twin Cities area, nearly half—22—took no action after being informed that their water supplies were contaminated. Nineteen sought to remedy the situation, in almost every case by contracting with one of the central cities or by developing a community ground water supply. Only two undertook to replace septic tanks with sewers, the required long-range action.[12]

CENTRAL CITY-SUBURBAN CONTRACTS

The chief feature of water and sewage service in the core cities is the existence of centralized systems. Except for a few private municipal water systems, both utilities are in public hands in the central cities. Almost all the larger cities draw their water from surface sources. Most central cities provide sewer service to the majority of their residents, although sewage treatment ranges from none to the maximum 90 percent reduction in organic wastes feasible under present techniques.

The water problem is generally not seen as a pressing issue in the average central city, although it may well be an extremely serious problem in the metropolitan area. The central city resident experiences the problem spasmodically, usually during a drought or a bond referendum. Inadequate sewage treatment, the principal weakness in the central city, is much less likely to inconvenience the city dweller than his neighbors downstream. If insufficient treatment results in

[12] Minnesota, Department of Health, "Water Supply and Sewage Disposal in the Minneapolis-St. Paul Metropolitan Area" (December 1961), pp. 14–16.