GE Tells New York Zero PCB's in 1976 Is 'Impossible' Task

General Electric Company last week told the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation that it could reduce discharges of polychlorinated biphenyls into the Hudson River to three and one-half ounces a day by June 1, 1977, and that the department's demand that the discharges be reduced to nothing by next September 30 is impossible to realize.

General Electric says it is now putting about two pounds a day of PCB's into the river. Fish taken from the river have been shown to contain concentrations of toxic PCB's far above the Food & Drug Administration's five parts per million standard. GE made its statements concerning the dis-

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charges at a hearing on its application for a discharge permit.

In a setback for the company last week, one of its experts who testified to finding sharply lower PCB levels that those cited by the governmental authorities, was forced to concede to a number of shortcomings in the quality of his data.

Dr Gerald Lauer, vice-president of Ecological Analysts, Inc., a Middletown, N.Y., consulting firm hired by GE, testified that fish samplings made in October-November of this year showed PCB levels ranging from 0.11 to 2.7 parts per million and that the average in the sample was 0.79 ppm – one-sixth of the FDA maximum.

But he later admitted under cross examination that some of his data were illegible and to misplacing decimal points – for example the contamination in one specimen was stated at 7.25 ppm on a laboratory data card but as .725 ppm on Dr Lauer's control sheets. Moreover, cross examination forced him to concede that the upper level of contamination in his specimens was not 2.7 ppm but 143.2 ppm.

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