

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL
AND
REPORT OF W. F. McCLURE, State Engineer
CONCERNING THE
OWENS VALLEY--LOS ANGELES
CONTROVERSY

TO
GOVERNOR FRIEND Wm. RICHARDSON

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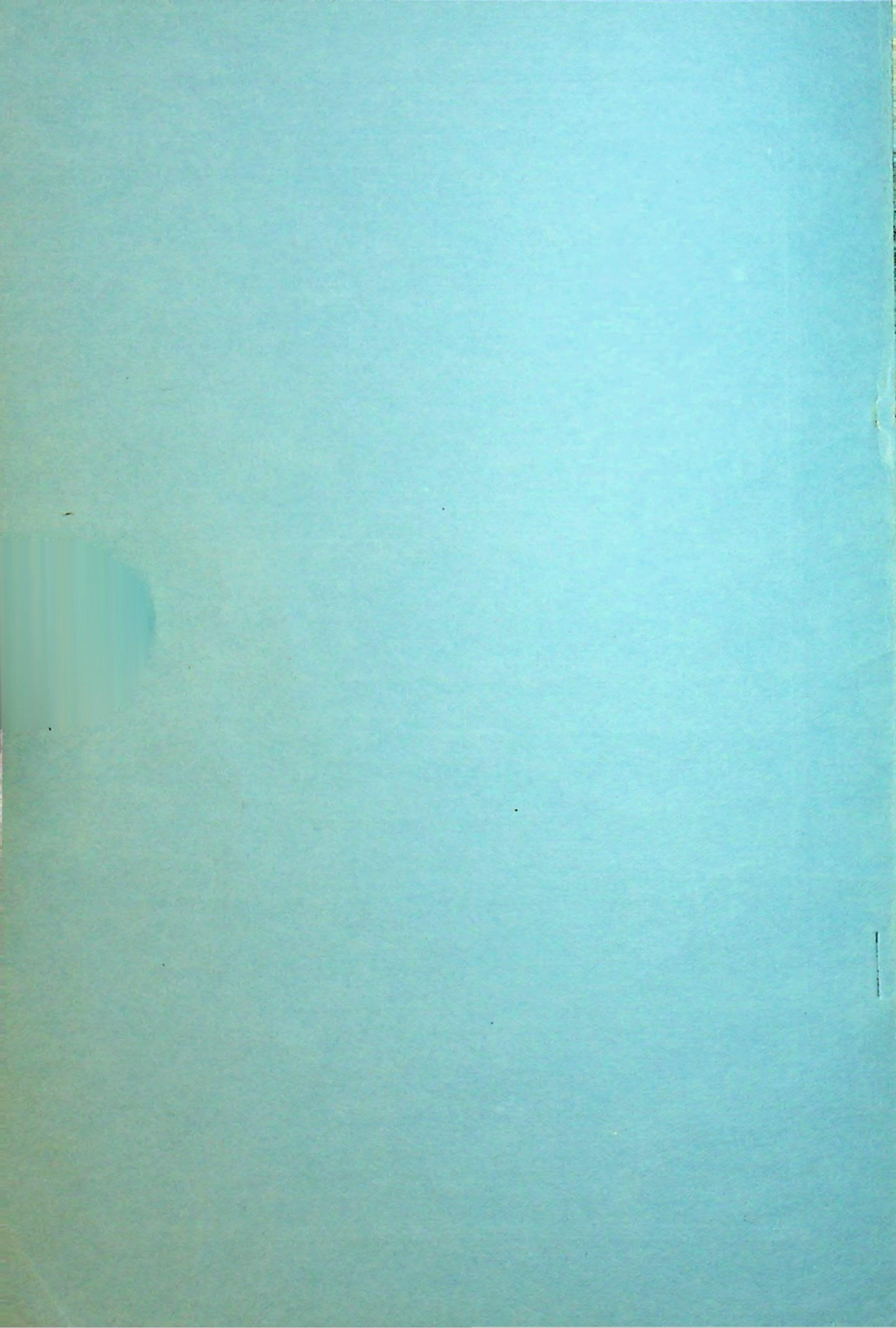
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Secretary



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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
SACRAMENTO

January 9, 1925.

HON. FRIEND W. RICHARDSON,
Governor of California,
Sacramento, California.

Subject: Owens Valley.

DEAR GOVERNOR: In submitting this report in the matter of the Owens Valley people opening the Alabama Hills Waste Gates of the Los Angeles Aqueduct on November 16, 1924:

No attempt is made to pronounce judgment concerning the motives of said people in so doing and thus causing a waste of water. Whatever notions of justification, censure or excuse that may be formed by readers are to be gathered from a statement of facts and a reading of valley history during the past eighteen or nineteen years.

The people of the valley are not anarchists, criminals, or thieves, as has been stated, but, on the contrary, are ordinary industrious American citizens.

To grasp any fair idea of present conditions and troubles, we must go back some nineteen or more years to the time when the United States Reclamation Service gave serious consideration to plans looking to a project of irrigating some one hundred thousand or more acres, the major portions of which lands are near the town of Bishop and south toward and near the town of Big Pine.

No one need argue with the Owens Valley people that such improvement would not have been made but for the coming of Los Angeles into the valley for additional water. They are confident such project would have been fostered and that there would have been before this time some seventy-five to one hundred thousand acres of highly improved territory in the valley because of such improvement, and some two to three times the present population.

During the attempt of the city of Los Angeles to secure the passage of the proper measure by Congress approving and consenting on behalf of the Federal Government to the conditions of a measure outlining the desires of the city to secure water from the valley, criticism was made by the valley people to the action of President Roosevelt in striking out of the aqueduct bill all limitation regarding the use to which the waters of the valley might be put by the city.

The valley people claimed that the language used would permit "*the municipality of Los Angeles to use the surplus of the water thus acquired beyond the amount actually used for drinking purposes, for some irrigation scheme.*" (Quotation from letter from President Roosevelt to the Secretary of the Interior.) Mr. Roosevelt desired to assist the city in securing additional water but did not want such action to, incidentally, open a way for any scheme of water use that would give the valley people cause for complaint.

The irony of the situation is that that is just what has been done. The San Fernando Valley before 1912 was as arid as Owens Valley. A portion of the water supply of the valley that was to irrigate the one

hundred thousand or so acres in Owens Valley has been transported to and applied to San Fernando Valley lands to the immense financial value of the latter and to the pitiful crimping of the improvement of the former.

Present condition appears to be as follows:

The Los Angeles Public Service Commission seems determined to put into operation the plan submitted to the valley people in October, 1924, of leaving an area of 30,000 acres of selected territory adjacent, principally, to the towns of Bishop and Big Pine, and giving a guarantee that such area shall not be encroached upon by the city. The valley people will not consent to some of the conditions attached to this proposal and question the ability of the commission to give adequate guarantee that such 30,000-acre area will not be invaded by the city, and to make such agreement so solid as not to be attacked by future commissions.

This suggested 30,000 acres is a less area by some ten or fifteen thousand acres than have heretofore been irrigated.

The valley people object to having their producing territory restricted. The commission insists that it shall be restricted and that the entrance of the city has been of great advantage to the valley.

The valley people admit that the building of the Southern Pacific Railroad to Owenyo has been of material advantage to the valley and that said road would probably not have been built but for the aqueduct project, and that during the construction period of the aqueduct and for several years following, there was decided improvement; but, that beginning with years of scant rainfall, and, especially, since the attempt of the valley people to control the matter of keeping their land and water properly united and protected by organizing an irrigation district, has been frustrated by the purchase by the city of some 24,000 acres with attached water rights within the boundaries of said district, the net result is quite to the disadvantage of the valley.

The commission's attitude seems to be that of playing the part of big brother to the valley. The valley does not desire to be big brothered but go its own way and insists that if the parental idea plan is to be insisted upon, the would-be big brother should be willing to pay well for the privilege of exercising such domination.

Some forty-five to fifty thousand acres have heretofore been irrigated in the valley.

The irrigation district contains 53,900 acres.

The city has purchased in excess of 24,000 acres within the bounds of the district, mutilating it so as to make operation impracticable.

The city needs additional water, and such need will be emphasized very soon unless we have two or three years of generous rainfall.

No storage has been provided for city water above the intake of the aqueduct.

Two hundred and twenty registered voters have signed deeds or agreed to do so to lands within the irrigation district. Some of them have left the valley, to their sorrow and disappointment.

Present conditions are such that some neutral agency is needed to make further examination and report.

Very truly yours,

W. F. McCLURE,
State Engineer.

OWENS VALLEY— LOS ANGELES

REPORT MADE AT REQUEST
OF

GOVERNOR FRIEND Wm. RICHARDSON

FOLLOWING THE OPENING
OF THE

Alabama Hills Waste Gates of the Aqueduct

BY THE VALLEY PEOPLE
ON NOVEMBER 16, 1924.

BY
W. F. McCLURE, *State Engineer*
DECEMBER 26, 1924.

OWENS VALLEY
LOS ANGELES

THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

GOVERNMENT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

ALABAMA HILLS WATER GATES
OF THE AQUEDUCT

ALABAMA HILLS WATER GATES
OF THE AQUEDUCT

BY THE CALIFORNIA PEOPLE
ON NOVEMBER 10, 1911

W. E. MILLER, JR.
COUNTY CLERK

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
SACRAMENTO

December 26, 1924.

HON. FRIEND W. RICHARDSON,
Governor of California,
Sacramento, California.

Subject: Owens Valley vs. City of Los Angeles.

DEAR GOVERNOR: Upon receipt of information here on the eighteenth of November last that the Alabama Hills Waste Gates of the Los Angeles Aqueduct had been opened on the sixteenth by the people of Owens Valley, you requested me to make a visit to the valley and report upon conditions.

Upon my arrival at Lone Pine station about 9 o'clock in the morning of the twentieth, I learned that at about 2 o'clock the same morning the gates had been closed and the water was again flowing in the aqueduct toward Los Angeles.

On November 18, Mr. W. W. Watterson, a resident of Bishop and president of the Board of Directors of the Owens Valley Irrigation District, secured a conference with a committee of the Los Angeles Clearing House. He made a statement before said committee after which Mr. J. A. Graves, chairman of said Clearing House Committee, dictated a statement reciting that conditions would be investigated and efforts made to bring about reconciliation and justice.

Upon securing a copy of said resolution of the Los Angeles Clearing House Committee, Mr. Watterson wired his brother at Bishop, as follows:

"M. Q. Watterson,
Bishop, Cal.

If the object of the crowd at the spillway is to bring their wrongs to the attention of the citizens of Los Angeles then they have done so one hundred per cent and further defiance of law will injure the Valley cause beyond all possibility of remedy. The press and minds of the people here will be open from now on and I feel sure that the wrongs done will be remedied. The hands of the business men here are tied so far as helping us clear matters in face of the unlawful situation. I therefore earnestly plead for everyone having influence with the people there to get them to return to their homes today. I have the assurance that strong influences here will be brought to bear on the situation to see that justice is done."

The people of Owens Valley have a real grievance against the city of Los Angeles. In referring to the city in this report, and in quoting statements coming to me from the valley, it is to be understood that reference is made to the Public Service Commission, representing the city, and not, of course, to the city at large.

I was very familiar with the affairs as touching the valley because of the organization in 1922 of an irrigation district. Said organization was provided for on December 26, 1922, by a vote of the citizens—599 for, 25 against. Area, 53,990 acres. The following comment was made by the agent of the California Bond Certification Commission under date of May 29, 1923:

"The unfortunate trend of conditions and the lack of results agreeable to either side may be defined as follows:

(A) *Upon the part of the local people:*

- (1) Inherent fear of a dominating corporation;
- (2) More or less well founded fear that local water rights are imperiled.

(B) *Upon the part of the city:*

- (1) Necessity to complete their water rights promptly;
- (2) Possible tendency to favor a minority local group;
- (3) Possible distortion of local facts, fears and conditions from the time originally received to the time they reach, through several agencies, the final authority within the corporation;
- (4) Natural differences of opinion as to the destruction of one value to create another value;
- (5) Positive objection, whether well founded or not, to deal with certain individuals.

"Because of the confusion created by reason of the above sets of conditions the tendency is for the local people and the city officials to grow further apart, with consequent detriment to both sides."

The organization of the district was resorted to by the citizens of the valley not so much for the purpose of providing a medium of irrigating their lands, for, as a matter of fact, most of the territory embraced in the district had already been irrigated, but in order to better tie the water to the lands and for the purpose of affording a central body which might more efficiently deal with the city of Los Angeles, which city has been securing the surplus water from the valley for the past twelve years. The organization of the district was encouraged by Mr. Mathews, counsel for the Los Angeles Public Service Corporation.

Soon after the organization had been completed, agents of the city appeared on the scene and succeeded by purchase of ditch stock and lands to seriously cripple the operation of the district, and by their methods of dealing to encounter the bitter enmity of some of those from whom they were purchasing.

"The greatest good to the greatest number" will certainly be made to apply in this instance, and this to the detriment of Owens River Valley. The people of the Valley after some nineteen years of uncertainty as to the future have been insistently and consistently urging the city to state frankly just what action the city proposes to take. They are accepting the situation with a fair degree of forbearance, and it is but fair to them that some definite agreement be entered into at an early date.

What appears to be a reasonable statement of complaint of the people of Owens Valley against the city of Los Angeles is to the effect that in 1903 there was outlined a fairly complete plan by the United States Reclamation Service of placing water on about 125,000 acres of land. It is probable that had this project been followed to completion, it would have proven one of the most economical projects of like character constructed by the said Service. However, upon the matter having been turned over to the city of Los Angeles, the opportunity of improving the 100,000 acres or more, which it is fair to assume would have reached a fair degree of development by this time, have been largely sacrificed in the interest of approximately the same in the San Fernando Valley, which latter lands have profited to a very extraordinary degree by the use of Owens Valley water.

In 1903 the value of the lands in the two locations were not, as a whole, widely dissimilar—say from \$50 to \$100 per acre. San Fernando Valley lands are now said to be worth anywhere from \$400 to \$1000

per acre, and, of course, this does not take into consideration the large value of towns built within the valley since 1903.

Judging from the value of lands as evidenced by purchasers other than the city of Los Angeles during the three or four years prior to the organization of the Owens Valley Irrigation District, and placing said figure at \$250 per acre and assuming that 100,000 acres in said Valley would have been improved within a period of twenty or twenty-five years from the inception of the reclamation project, the value of said valley lands would now be \$25,000,000. Assuming an average valuation of \$750 per acre for San Fernando Valley lands a fair contrast may be drawn as to what might have been the comparative conditions now if the city had not gone to the valley for water.

Owens Valley people would not have felt their losses so keenly had the water been taken direct to domestic consumers in Los Angeles, but to have it applied on a large area of land to the advantage of San Fernando land owners and to the assured disadvantage of the valley land owners is, in their minds, a just cause of grievance.

Favorable sites for impounding and conserving water have a greater value than equal areas not so shaped and suited. Los Angeles went to Owens Valley for extra water because it was the best available source. She should be willing to pay a premium for such advantages to those in possession of what she needs. This has been done in some instances in the purchase of valley lands. No opinion is offered as to the merits of controversy between the parties as to land values. In one particular instance pointed out the suggestion is ventured that the city paid several times the real value.

The hoped for improvement of the valley could not have been realized in the absence of the storage of surplus waters.

The continued irrigation of San Fernando Valley can not be maintained without a larger and more dependable supply of water. Owens Valley is the best available source from which to secure such supply.

No assured program of improvement of either valley can be assured without storage. Los Angeles controls storage sites and intends to use them. Such action limits the possibility of the improvement of the valley. No community can have a limit so placed upon its water supply without suffering.

Considerable speculation has been made as to what action should be taken by the city against those who opened the waste gates.

It is reported that legal action has been begun against two men who were seen on the aqueduct bank near the waste gates while the water was running to waste. These two men may have been among the number that opened the gates.

Assuming that they were and that it may be proven in court that they assisted in opening the gates and found guilty of some stipulated offense and sentence of imprisonment be pronounced? With a movement as popular as the opening of the gates was it is but fair to assume that some hundreds of other citizens of the valley would come forward and take some active part in the proceedings.

If one hundred or more men came before the presiding judge and confessed to participation in the act and they were all given prison sentence or fine, it is interesting to anticipate what might be the net result as affecting the city.

With over 200 miles of conduit in desert, uninhabited country, a whole community antagonistic,—some injury occasioned in May last to the aqueduct by explosion,—the opening of waste gates in November,—both acts in protest against the policy of the city,—what may come next?

No penalty that may be imposed upon any two men or upon any two hundred men can in any way compensate the city for the loss of confidence and friendship of the people of the valley.

If harsh measures be resorted to by the city then may we not anticipate a backwash of action of such character that would occasion some substantial inconvenience to the city.

The opening of the gates was a most popular move—if we are to gauge it by the number of valley people who visited the place during the four days the gates were open.

Men, women and children were there, 500 to 800 or more in number.

Business and professional men left homes and business and repaired to the place, some five miles or so north of Lone Pine. A prominent sign was erected at the intersection of the main streets of Bishop upon which appeared, in large letters, the caption "*If I am not on the job, you will find me at the aqueduct.*"

The people of the valley were, as a whole drawn closer together in sentiment during those four days than they have been for years.

Is it consistent or reasonable to expect an American community of 3000 or more souls so united in sentiment to be content with the seemingly determined program of a city situate 200 or more miles away being put into operation without protest?

Is it consistent upon the part of the city to refuse the proposal of the valley to refer their differences to a neutral tribunal?

In the fine report of Hill, Lippincott and Sonderegger, compiled for the Board of Public Service Commissioners under title "Report on the Water Supply for the City of Los Angeles and the Metropolitan Area, August 14, 1924," appears a very interesting study of water requirements, from which I quote:

<i>"Water requirements of metropolitan area in 1950"</i>		<i>Acre-feet per annum</i>
Domestic use for that portion of the metropolitan area where the density of population is equal or greater than fourteen persons per acre.....		386,000
Industrial use.....		150,000
Domestic, irrigation and other uses on balance of area.....		823,000
Total gross requirement, metropolitan area in 1950.....		1,359,000"

This report also states that "the future growth of the city of Los Angeles and of the metropolitan area is dependent upon the water supply. Assuming a full supply, by 1940 the city will have about 1,720,000 inhabitants and the county about 2,740,000. By 1950 the city will have 2,180,000 and the county 3,270,000 population.

"The available local supply for the city of Los Angeles is about 139 second-feet continuous flow. In addition 400 second-feet can be delivered by the aqueduct from Owens Valley during the driest years and leave 30,000 acres under irrigation in Owens Valley. It is assumed that adequate storage is provided at both ends of the aqueduct and pumping rights acquired."

Prophecies and dreams of the most optimistic character have, during the past forty years, come far short of anticipating the rapid growth of

the city of Los Angeles. The population of the city at the present time is about 1,000,000, and, comparing this with the population of 1920—577,000 and in 1900 of 175,000, we do not wonder that the agents of the city have been driven to their wits ends in order to properly care for such rapid increase.

Keeping in mind the failure of every one concerned to properly measure the increasing needs of the city at this time, and taking a long view it appears quite consistent to assume that southern California west of the Colorado River drainage area will within the next forty or fifty years need water from the Colorado River and that on or before such time as such waters may be available, all the supply in the Owens Valley and Mono Lake Basin will be needed, and

It is my conviction that were the waters of the Colorado River available at this time and in use, it would be good business to secure the supply from Owens Valley and Mono Lake Basin because of superior quality and delivery by gravity.

MEMORANDUM OF OWENS VALLEY—LOS ANGELES CONTROVERSY AS AFFECTING THE OWENS VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT.

Location—Inyo County.

Organized—December 26, 1922, by vote of 599 for to 25 against.

Area—53,990 acres.

On March 1, 1924, the city of Los Angeles had purchased 24,759 acres within the boundaries of the Owens Valley Irrigation District. District valuation of same, \$237,200.

Options have been taken since March 1, 1924, on additional 1982 acres. District assessed valuation of same, \$11,860.

Average assessed value of district lands, as a whole, \$90 per acre.

Average assessed value of city property purchased by city and under option, \$87 per acre.

Options on the 1982 acres were secured on or before September 1, 1924. Deeds and stock certificates signed and delivered to city agents but no payments other than option payments made up to November 20, 1924.

The irrigation district advertised sale of bonds as required by law in amount \$1,600,000, which bonds would have been sold at or near par but for a restraining order signed at the request of opponents of the district.

At a subsequent date, at private sale, bonds in amount \$470,000 were sold at 88½ cents on the dollar, causing a loss on the amount sold of over \$54,000.

The purchasing agent of the city of Los Angeles is reported to have listed the apparent financial condition of every person owning land and receiving water from the McNally Ditch, by scanning the county records of mortgages.

Several Federal Land Bank loans were made in the district a number of years ago, but no loans by such bank have or can be secured since the

city has taken option on the waters of the McNally Ditch and made purchase of certain lands under same.

Two hundred and twenty registered voters, residing within the bounds of the irrigation district, heads of and members of families, are parties to sales of lands to the city since January, 1923. A small part of these sales have been made by residents of the towns nearby.

These two hundred and twenty registered voters represent families or parts of families, totaling not less than 300 souls.

In most instances the land sold by these parties to the city has already or soon will be abandoned.

EFFECT OF PURCHASES ALREADY MADE ON VALUES AND DOMESTIC LIFE.

"Mrs. A., a widow past the middle age of life, was left with a good ten-acre ranch, which, as a home, was well improved, having a modern house, garden, orchard, etc. Her health is far from good, yet she has had to work on this place to keep up living expenses. She wishes to sell her ranch and purchase a house and lot in town, but, there are no buyers of land at any price and she is forced to continue to keep it going. She is caught in the maelstrom of land depression.

Dr. B., a young veterinarian, who has a family consisting of a wife and three small children, made a payment on a piece of land. He was prepared to practice his profession here, but, when this exciting situation developed, his practice fell off to such an extent that he was unable to keep up living expenses, nor to meet the payments on his land purchase. Half of the ranchers have sold, and the remaining ranchers are butchering, killing or otherwise disposing of young stock and the sick or crippled, as the latter, at this time, are not worth the expense it would take to save them. Hence the veterinarian feels the effect of this policy.

Mr. C. and Mr. D., brothers-in-law, one a carpenter and the other a cement worker, had built a modern home for their widowed mother and their families. For more than a year they have been compelled to leave their families for months at a time to go outside the valley to earn their living. No rancher is repairing, improving, or building a house or barn since this trouble with the city of Los Angeles came upon us, and these young men find that it is impossible to stay here and make a living at their trade, neither can they sell their place so they can live with their families elsewhere.

Mr. E., a young soldier, settled here about three years ago and made arrangements to purchase a small fruit ranch. He made application for a loan under the "Soldiers' Loan Act" and was told he could have up to \$7,500 to be used in any county in the state of California *except Inyo*. Here is a state benefit denied to one of its own soldiers. This act is an injustice as gross as that we are receiving at the hands of Los Angeles.

The Federal Land Bank, through Mr. Wilson, announced to us that there would be no more loans made in the county until land values here were stabilized. This published to the world our real condition and made money harder to get. The ranchers need long term loans with a low rate of interest, instead of which they are compelled to take short

term loans at a high rate of interest, and even these are hard to get. This has worked a great hardship on all who need to borrow money.

Mr. and Mrs. W. came here about four years ago and purchased thirty-two acres of land; ten acres they set out to pear trees; the place has a very good house. The first year they did a business of \$8,500 dealing in nursery stock; two years ago their business amounted to only \$1,500 and last year not a tree or shrub did they sell as no one in the valley would invest a dollar to improve property whose value has been reduced to nil by the effect of the method of purchasing by the city of Los Angeles. He has left the valley, leaving his wife here."

Mr. S. made a sale to the city of lands within the bounds of the irrigation district, moved his family temporarily to the town near the coast line and took a trip of inspection, attempting to find a new location. His trip took several weeks' time, passing through portions of Texas, Arizona, Kansas, Missouri, Idaho and Utah, and the results were discouraging. He is now again in California and still looking for a location, but states that he does not expect to find any place where he could or would have done so well had he been permitted to keep his property in Owens Valley.

"Will a man leave the snow of Lebanon which cometh from the rock of the field? or shall the cold flowing waters that come from another place be forsaken?"

The philosophy of homesickness is here expressed—the experience which some sellers to the city have had in attempting to purchase land and locate elsewhere.

NAMES OF PROPERTY OWNERS AND ACREAGE WITHIN BOUNDARIES OF
THE OWENS VALLEY IRRIGATION DISTRICT SOLD TO CITY OF LOS
ANGELES SINCE ORGANIZATION OF THE OWENS VALLEY IRRIGA-
TION DISTRICT.

Prepared December 15, 1924.

	Acres		Acres
Jean Blanc	560	Lester L. Linscott	160
J. A. Cashbaugh	80	Wm. Symons	605
S. G. Albright	480	Wm. Symons	880
Fred P. Alpers	320	Wm. Symons	1,355
T. E. Amlin	880	W. H. Mason	40
West M. Amon	52	Meyer Bros.	120
F. M. Andrews	320	Mrs. C. L. Meyers	160
Maude Beall	160	J. C. Miller	82
C. W. Beckman	160	W. F. Muffleman	26
A. E. Benedict	10	Garfield Robb	80
Mrs. Mary Bigelow	200	Annie McCrosky	40
J. S. Benner	160	J. W. McMurry	160
Geo. J. Brovo	160	S. G. McMurry	80
R. E. Burdick	110	H. H. McMurry	120
Bertha and John Byer	160	J. F. McMurry	40
I. B. Barrass	320	E. H. Nelson	55
F. J. Charlesworth	160	Harvey W. Otis	187
L. W. Clark	40	H. W. Otis	182
Walter T. Clark	40	Julius Otto	40
U. G. Clark	80	Geo. and H. Partridge	200
Ira O. Clark	440	Frank Perego	80
E. Cartmell and Son	40	Pioneer Livery and Lumber Co.	120
Geo. A. Clarke	400	S. W. Pittman	20
Cuddeback and Rossi	137	H. G. Plumley Estate	155
Robt. L. Currie	320	Geo. Reinhakel	60
Catherine Dehy	80	A. and R. Rossi	310
Ed. L. Dehy	17	Lola Smith	80
John A. Dehy and Wm. D. Dehy	640	W. A. Sanger	438
Wm. D. Dehy	240	Wm. Schrimpf	40
Mary E. Deyo	40	Stewart Brothers	280
W. G. Dixon (under contract of pur- chase and sold by Geo. B. Warren)	55	L. E. Stroud	120
Lura Dorrance	160	John Summers	240
L. H. J. Ehlen	196	Fred Symons	640
H. W. Ehlen	60	Hattie and Tom Crandall	160
Arch Farrington	320	A. A. Van Fleet	280
Arch Farrington	1,200	Geo. B. Warren	40
J. A. Farrington	160	Geo. Watterson	320
W. R. Ford	1,356	Harry W. Watson	640
C. W. Geiger	340	Wm. L. Wells	240
Joseph L. Giroux	520	C. S. Wilson	160
Clarence S. Green	160	Leota Wilson Estate	160
O. Hampton	240	Roy D. Willis	200
Orville E. Hampton	80	Lunsford P. Yandell	240
Louis Heitman	80	E. J. Young	40
Grover C. Hert	53	R. B. Young	640
Lovell Hert	20	D. C. Cormode Estate	80
W. F. Hines	160	Jennie Forbes	240
Miramonte and Louedestel	680	Paul Given	240
A. P. Jacobson	28	C. C. Pierce	35
John Jones	14	E. G. Rudolph	40
Karl P. Keough	200	D. Rupp	100
James Lane	238	Schnake Estate	80
M. K. Lansdale	108		
Mary A. Leary	320	Total	24,684

EFFORTS OF OWENS VALLEY PEOPLE TO SECURE ASSISTANCE.

On May 29, 1924, Mr. W. W. Watterson, chairman of committee from the Owens Valley farming and business interests, addressed a communication to the Power and Reclamation Committee, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, offering terms of settlement, and,

Again on June 26, 1924, Mr. Watterson addressed a communication to Mr. C. S. Whitcomb, Chairman, Sub-committee of the Power and Reclamation Committee, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, in the following words:

"This is to confirm recent statement made to your committee by myself here and by water owners in Owens Valley to your committee while there that if it is necessary for the city of Los Angeles to acquire the natural flow of the waters of the Owens River now being diverted for irrigation purposes, in the Owens Valley Irrigation District; the owners of the lands and waters are willing to leave the determination of values of this property to a 'Valuation Commission' composed of not less than five disinterested business men to be mutually agreed upon."

The Whitcomb report has not been made public. Valley people are assuming that it made some recommendations toward settlement that will be favorable to them and that the city officials are not willing to approve.

On October 14, 1924, the Board of Public Service Commissioners submitted a proposal to the valley people suggesting an agreement whereby 30,000 acres in the valley should be provided with irrigation supply. It is assumed that this proposal was based upon the statement in the report of Messrs. Hill, Lippincott and Sonderegger of August 14, 1924, that "the available local supply for the city of Los Angeles is about 139,000 second-feet continuous flow. In addition 400 second-feet can be delivered by the aqueduct from Owens Valley during the driest years and leave 30,000 acres under irrigation in Owens Valley. It is assumed that adequate storage is provided at both ends of the aqueduct and pumping rights acquired."

The belief prevails, however, among Owens Valley people that this proposal was made with the proviso that the city should be assured a full aqueduct at all seasons of the year. The valley people are fully convinced that under present conditions without generous storage capacity being provided, such supply can not be assuring during years of scant runoff.

Following Mr. Watterson's appearance before the Los Angeles Clearing House Association Committee on November 29, he submitted to Mr. Graves, as president of said committee, the proposal as follows:

"Bishop, California,
November 29, 1924.

J. A. Graves, President, Los Angeles Clearing House Association,
Los Angeles, California.

Dear Sir:

In compliance with your request, and in behalf of the citizens of Owens Valley, we herewith present in writing as briefly as possible the conditions we feel should be met by the city of Los Angeles in the adjustment of the unhappy situation existing between the two communities.

"The proposition tendered the people of Owens Valley by the Board of Public Service Commissioners of your city of leaving 30,000 acres of land under cultivation in the northern part of the valley with a guaranteed water supply is acceptable to

our people providing proper reparations are made to cover the damages suffered by the property holders in the valley.

"The acceptance of this offer on our part means consenting to the purchase and drying up of an additional 10,000 acres of land near Bishop by the city of Los Angeles; the cutting down of the area of the Owens Valley Irrigation District from its original amount of 54,000 acres to 16,000 acres (as 14,000 acres of the proposed 30,000 acres is outside of the irrigation district and always has been).

"*First*—We will accept this offer if the city of Los Angeles will pay \$5,300,000 to be used for reparations and to compensate the ranchers for shrinkage in values and reimburse property owners for like shrinkage in the five towns of Bishop, Laws, Big Pine, Independence, and Lone Pine. While this amount will not fully cover the losses, it will be acceptable and in return therefor the city will have a free hand in all storage matters on the Owens River, so far as our people are concerned, for power and water and for all necessary pumping rights in the Bishop Basin; this basin being considered by engineers the greatest underground storage area in the Owens Valley watershed, control of which will insure a full aqueduct when proper pumping equipment is installed.

"*Second*—If the first proposition is not acceptable, we will sell all remaining farm lands in the irrigation district excepting approximating 2200 acres, known as the Beckman Ranch near Big Pine, which would have to be dealt for separately, for a price of \$12,000,000. Of this amount approximately \$6,500,000 will be used for land and water purchases from the farmers and \$5,500,000 for reparations to be used as indicated in the first proposition. This will leave the city with a free hand in storage matters and for pumping from the Bishop area as in the first proposition.

"In event the second proposition is not acceptable, we will leave the question of values and reparations in that offer to a disinterested board of appraisers or arbitrators, both sides to bind themselves to accept their findings as final, whether the amount be above or below \$12,000,000.

"Engineers' reports and other data which may be of use to you in the consideration of these proposals will be handed to you under separate cover.

"It is obvious that any delay in settlement of this water difficulty is very costly to Los Angeles. It is equally costly to the Owens River Valley. Now that we have suggested as a basis on which we can both go ahead and have yielded to the further shrinkage of our agricultural area, may we express the hope that action may be prompt, and that a spirit of good will on both sides may take the place of any effort to gain technical advantage, or to raise hair splitting questions. A settlement is more valuable than any consideration which might delay it.

Yours very truly,

(Signed) W. W. WATTERSON,
President of the Owens Valley Irrigation District."

The receipt of this proposal was acknowledged by Mr. Graves, but up to the present time—December 26, 1924—no response has been made to its terms except some caustic criticism in the daily papers.

On November 23, while in Bishop, I received a note from R. F. Del Valle, president of the Los Angeles Public Service Commission, requesting me to come to Los Angeles and to confer with the commission concerning conditions. I was not able to do this promptly on account of pressing duties in my office.

Was in Los Angeles on the morning of December 8 and telephoned to the commission requesting them to meet me at our Los Angeles office, 818 Pacific Finance Building, at 2 p. m. the next day, December 9. Messrs. W. B. Mathews, counsel for the commission; L. C. Hill, consulting engineer and A. H. Van Norman, city engineer, responded to my request. No one of the commissioners were present. A brief discussion took place, and I submitted copies of a statement furnished me by Mr.

Watterson, president of the Owens Valley Irrigation District, containing proposals of settlement. I requested that consideration be given to terms offered and some early response be made.

Not hearing from the commission up to December 24, and realizing the importance of early action on account of the tense condition of mind among the valley people, I requested by wire a conference with the commission on December 29, 1924. To this request came response as follows:

"Los Angeles, December 24, 1924.

Conference all right Monday December 29th, 10:00 A. M. Public Service rooms.

JAS. P. VROMAN, *Secretary.*"

On the same date, December 24, I sent to the Public Service Commission and each member thereof, individually, a renewal of the proposals submitted to Messrs. Mathews, Hill and Van Norman on December 9.

The conference took place as per date arranged and all members of the commission were present, together with Chief Engineer Mulholland, Assistant Counsel Robinson, Consulting Engineers L. C. Hill and Chas. H. Lee and City Engineer Van Norman.

I was informed by Mr. Del Valle that earnest consideration was being given the matter by a committee appointed by the Mayor of Los Angeles, and by a committee of the Los Angeles Clearing House Association, and that he hoped said reports would be submitted to the commission at an early date.

About two hours discussion took place, most of the time being occupied by statements by those present justifying the action of the city in its program of performances in Owens Valley and in condemnation of the acts of some of the people of the valley.

While in Owens Valley I heard some severe criticisms of the chief engineer and Board of Public Service Commissioners, but none of them exceeded in caustic utterance and bitterness statements made around the table in the Public Service Commissioners' room concerning the people of Owens Valley.

I endeavored to convince the commissioners that it would be wise to forget the past and bend our efforts toward a solution of the problem, not only on account of the unrest in Owens Valley, but on account of the good name of Los Angeles.

Fear was expressed by the President of the Commission that some additional act of violence would be committed by the people of Owens Valley at an early date. To such suggestion I stated that I did not believe such fears were well founded.

Speaking for you I emphasized the fact that the press of California and the east look upon the valley as the "under dog" and that in no instance, to our knowledge, has a single publication outside of Los Angeles spoken a word in defense of the city's attitude.

Respectfully submitted.

W. F. McCLURE,
State Engineer.

REPORT OF THE BOARD OF CONSULTING ENGINEERS ON THE PROJECT
OF THE LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT FROM OWENS RIVER TO SAN
FERNANDO VALLEY.

Dated Los Angeles, Cal., Dec. 22, 1906.

Page 125 of First Annual Report of the Chief Engineer of the Los Angeles
Aqueduct to the Board of Public Works.

Dated March 15, 1907.

The Long Valley reservoir, with a dam 140 feet high, has a capacity of 260,000 acre-feet, or 85,000,000,000 gallons in round numbers, which is several times the largest existing reservoir in the state. A study of the records of water measurements by the United States Geological Survey for three years on Owens River, and a comparison with longer records of stream flow on Kings River, on the western slope of the Sierras, indicates that when this reservoir is created, the equalization of seasons of extremely large run-off, with that of dry years, will effect a saving of water which is now lost to all useful purposes, amounting to about 80 cubic feet per second, in addition to the water controlled by the aqueduct, and owned or appropriated by the city. This addition is necessary to the ultimate securing in years of excessive drouth, of the full amount of 400 second-feet, for which the aqueduct has been designed.

The board visited the Long Valley dam site and examined the rock formation of the canyon where the dam would have been built. The river has cut a deep channel through a volcanic rock classed by geologists as tufa, a rock which is much lighter in weight than granite, but sufficiently strong to be relied upon as a satisfactory foundation for the construction of any type of dam which may in future be decided upon after more careful examination and study of all available materials.

In the opinion of the board a stable and safe dam can be built at this site and the selection of the particular type to be preferred is an economic question which it is now premature to discuss or attempt to decide.

The Long Valley reservoir site, which is chiefly embraced within the limits of the lands purchased by the city of Los Angeles, is admirably adapted to the regulation of the river flow, and the substantial increase of the water supply of the aqueduct by equalizing storage, and should be considered as an essential factor in the general plan, to be developed as early in the future as may be possible. For the reason that this regulation of the river is only required when the demand has reached the maximum aqueduct capacity and to provide against a series of dry years, it has not been included in our estimates or considered as an essential feature of the system for immediate construction.

Respectfully submitted.

JOHN R. FREEMAN,
FREDERICK P. STEARNS,
JAMES D. SCHUYLER,
Board of Consulting Engineers.

THE CHIEF ENGINEER OF THE LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT TO THE BOARD
OF PUBLIC WORKS, DATED MARCH 15, 1907.

Page 35 of report.

Long Valley reservoir site is situated in the northerly portion of the drainage basin of Owens River. It has 391 square miles of drainage area tributary to it. A dam 100 feet high above the bed of the stream would impound 83,485 acre-feet, an acre-foot being enough water to cover one acre one foot deep. A 120-foot dam would impound 160,000 acre-feet and a 140-foot dam 260,000 acre-feet. This latter is greater than any existing reservoir in California. The province of the Long Valley reservoir site would be to hold over waters from years of excessive stream flow like 1906, for years of deficient stream flow such as 1898 or 1905. Its function, therefore, is purely annual, intended to meet unfavorable conditions during cycles of dry years. Water from the Long Valley reservoir site when liberated would flow down the natural channel of the river to the point of diversion from the Owens River at Charley's Butte at an elevation of 3814 feet.

LOS ANGELES AQUEDUCT.

Mulholland—1916, page 25.

The city also owns a reservoir site in Long Valley in the northerly portion of the drainage basin of Owens River, having a tributary watershed of 391 square miles.

If this reservoir should be constructed, the flow line would be at an elevation of 6810 feet, the area of its water surface would be 8686 acres, and its storage capacity would be 340,980 acre-feet. This would call for a dam 520 feet long on top and 160 feet in height. A structure of this character would make this one of the notable storage reservoirs in the United States. It may be found desirable to build this Long Valley reservoir when the complete flow of the aqueduct has been utilized. In this event, its province would be to hold over a water supply from years of excessive flow for such years of drouth as may occur once in a generation.

The capacity of the Long Valley reservoir would be sufficient to furnish a continuous flow of the full aqueduct for a period of 427 days, and the Tinemaha reservoir, with the height of dam given, for a period of 159 days.

Page 75 has the following:

The aqueduct proper consists of a series of six storage reservoirs and 215 miles of conduit. The largest reservoir site is on the main stream at Long Valley, with an elevation of 6650 feet at the dam site, about fifty miles above the point where the aqueduct diverts the river. Here, with a dam of 160 feet in height, 340,000 acre-feet of water may be impounded, or enough water to cover 340,000 acres one foot deep, which is 28,000 acre-feet less than the capacity of the Oshokan reservoir constructed by the city of New York. Its province will be to hold over waters from years of plenty to groups of years of extreme drouth, such as occur only three or four times in a century.

The construction of this reservoir has not yet been undertaken and the continuous measurements of the available stream flow have not, as yet, revealed an occasion for its use, except by ignoring the very large available supply that may be recovered, at much less cost, in the artesian portion of the valley below. An artesian well district, approaching fifty miles in length, has been outlined by well borings in the floor of Owens Valley.

Page 273, the following appears:

The city owns the Long Valley reservoir site below the 100-foot contour in Long Valley at an elevation of 6650 feet at the dam site and above the point of diversion of the aqueduct. A dam 160 feet high at this point will impound 340,980 acre-feet of water and a dam 140 feet high would impound 260,000 acre-feet. If it is found necessary or desirable, this Long Valley dam can be built. It will permit of the regulation of the flow of the Owens River to the capacity of the diversion canal and save flood waters, especially during wet years, which otherwise might pass into the lake and be lost by evaporation. By means of this regulation the value of the power plants that may be built in the gorge below the reservoir would be greatly enhanced. The purpose of this reservoir would be to hold over waters from years of excessive precipitation for years of drouth.

The complete system of reservoirs and conduits which is to be known as the Los Angeles Aqueduct will consist of (1) the Long Valley reservoir, at the heart of the Owens Valley, with a 140-foot dam; (2) the channel of the Owens River at Charley's Butte; (3) sixty miles of canal and conduit of capacity varying from 700 to 900 second-feet; (4) Haiwee reservoir, with a 75-foot dam at the lower end; (5) 140 miles of conduit of 410 second-feet capacity; (6) Fernando reservoir No. 1, of 15,940 acre-feet capacity with a 120-foot dam; (7) Fernando reservoir No. 2, of 20,660 acre-feet capacity with a 130-foot dam.

The supply will consist of the Owens River at Charley's Butte as regulated by the Long Valley reservoir plus that of all springs and streams from Taboose to Ash creeks, inclusive, or its equivalent.

This system will be adequate to deliver from the lower end of Fernando reservoirs a continuous flow of 400 second-feet under the most adverse conditions, with the possible exception of a dry period of two or more consecutive years, which may occur once in fifty years.

Respectfully submitted.

CHARLES H. LEE.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement by Bishop Chamber of Commerce, September, 1924.

We recognize and admit the importance of an ample water supply for a great and growing city, and the further fact that Los Angeles has been compelled, to a considerable extent, to look to Owens Valley for that supply.

We do not admit the justice, however, of such domestic and municipal need being made the excuse for despoiling fertile farm acreage of one section in order that territory nearer the city could be built up, whether for the benefit of speculators or for other reasons, and particularly when

this could have been avoided had storage at the head of the famous Los Angeles aqueduct been provided. Such motives may lay claim to being enterprising, but in a moral sense it is on the plane of highway robbery.

The city's dealings within the past year in Owens Valley have been unworthy of a great municipality. By bribery of individuals theretofore trusted by their neighbors, Los Angeles insidiously secured an influence in certain ditches, notably the McNally, as an entering wedge. In some instances in the beginning, the city's agents misrepresented the identity of the intending purchaser. In some others falsehood as to prices paid for nearby property was used, and in others agents claimed to have bought properties when they had not done so, in order to induce persons to sell.

Deception and untruth were freely employed. Owners were surrounded by city-bought lands and by implication, or directly, threatened with loss of water rights, or if not the loss, with alternative of alone maintaining irrigation facilities at heavy and discouraging expense.

Questionable methods were employed to take from the settlers control of the ditch system they had spent the best part of their lives in constructing.

The city's encroachments made the future so uncertain that mortgaged owners were unable either to secure extensions on loans or to negotiate others, the situation extending not only to general banking institutions but to the Federal Land Bank as well. Owners were compelled to sell to the city, the only possible buyer under the circumstances—even to seek the opportunity rather than be "frozen out" at a complete loss, as a result solely of the tactics of the city and its hirelings. The city had created a situation which enabled it to dictate terms and prices.

In the beginning it paid fairly well for some properties—even liberally for places with which went the aid of the owners in its campaign.

Having created virtual bankruptcy for some owners, others were compelled to sell on the city's terms. Those who were obdurate as to selling were forced into line by the fear of having to accept still lower figures before the matter ended. In at least one instance, city agents verbally agreed to a certain purchase price, following which the farmer sold off his personal property necessary for running his business. When the time came to conclude the deal the city refused to pay the agreed sum, and the owner accepted a considerably less amount rather than take a still greater loss by reestablishing himself under such conditions.

In our belief the majority of Inyo residents would rather remain in this valley, feeling that their means or whatever they might derive from selling to the city would go further toward assuring them of natural advantages and matchless surroundings, of comfort and enjoyment, than it would do elsewhere. There would never have been the disposition to sell had the city of Los Angeles permitted the progress of the valley to have gone along undisturbed. The experience of some of those who have already sold, sought elsewhere and sorrowfully returned, confirms their views. But many have been brought to the point of hoping to sell because of the continued uncertainty and its consequences, and their financial stress which the city's methods have brought to a climax.

Admitting a degree of necessity for the city of Los Angeles looking to Owens Valley for its water supply, it is nevertheless clear that its methods of securing a supply have been such as in an individual would be con-

sidered lacking in principle and common honesty; that by fair and square dealing it could have secured the coveted rights with a minimum degree of friction, and on terms of comparative peace, and we are frank to say with no more cost.

Whatever of reprisals may have occurred in the course of events, against the city or its agents, are directly due to the mischievous tactics adopted on its behalf, whether with or without official sanction.

The people of Owens Valley are but defending their homes and their natural rights; and they have been patient and law-abiding to a remarkable degree, considering the long course of provocation and the disregard shown by the city, officially and otherwise, to the wrongs it has inflicted and is inflicting upon our communities.

There is no question but that the present unsettled conditions in Owens Valley, together with the general demoralization of the people here, is the direct result of the attitude of the city of Los Angeles towards the people here. The history of the dealings of the city with the land and water owners is replete with incidents of such a nature that they will forever be a disgrace on the fair name of the State of California. Probably never in the history of this or any other country were such nefarious practices resorted to as have been by the city's agents in the past two years, and it is on this account that the people have been forced to some of the extremities that they have in trying to protect what little remained for them—in other words, they were making a last stand for their homes and their families.

The various underhand dealings of the city with the people here are too well known to go into great detail. Sufficient it is to say that wherever possible the city's agents have assumed the attitude of unscrupulous hirelings, with no sense of decency or right.

In this work they have had some of our local people as confederates, and for some reason these men have sunk to levels as low as the city's agents in their dealings.

The first outbreak of what the city hailed as lawlessness, happened last May when a blast of dynamite was set off under the aqueduct of the city of Los Angeles near Lone Pine. But while this was the first time that the city's way of dealing was shown to the world, it was not the first time in the history of this water trouble that such means had been used. In the summer of 1923 representatives of the city of Los Angeles dynamited the dam at Convict Lake, above any of the ditches, in order to break the ditches on the Eaton Ranch in Long Valley, forcibly doing this in order to get more water for their impoverished aqueduct.

Ditches were then broken by Los Angeles men, who stated they were acting under orders of Wm. Mulholland. Other deeds of similar kind were resorted to by the city's agents, so it was the city of Los Angeles, and not the people here, who first used dynamite in this water controversy.

As a commercial organization, we are not only by business connections, but in every detail of feeling, in thorough accord with the farm owners in their contention for just treatment. Not only are many of the members of this organization interested in agriculture in one way or

another, but upon it the community life depends. The same unfortunate consequences of unsettled values and unsalable property is found in town and farm neighborhoods alike; and, moreover, the depopulation of our farms through their drainage under the city's policy, constitutes a business damage of a magnitude not easily estimated.

We consider that the greatest evil of the situation as it exists is the absence of any defined policy on the part of the city.

Whenever the city will define and irrevocably adopt a just policy as to its course in Owens Valley, then some confidence in the future will be restored and some stability and salability attach to our property.

In the absence of such, the present demoralized condition will exist.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement by Farm Bureau, September, 1924.

The greatest grievance among the ranchers of Owens Valley against the Public Service Board of the city of Los Angeles, is the fact that they have not announced a definite policy regarding the water situation. This has created a feeling of insecurity and caused depression to such an extent that all improvements on the ranches has ceased, values of real estate have declined and all who can do so are leaving the valley. The effect of this is stagnation in business, not only among the ranchers but business men as well.

If the policy of buying individual ranches is continued, the above mentioned condition will become more acute, resentment is sure to follow and outlawry may result.

A member of one of our farm centers has seen the ranches on three sides of his home sold to the city. One of the city agents then came to him, supposing he would feel that he had to sell under these distressing circumstances, and offered him *seventy dollars* per acre for his ranch, the rancher dismissed him with the information that he had not yet reached the place where he had to sell.

It is these tactics which are ruining our valley and which we deplore and condemn.

This is one of the main causes of the unrest and discouragement so prevalent in our midst; now therefore be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of Valley and West Bishop centers of the Inyo County Farm Bureau, expressed through their Executive Committees, that an extra and determined effort be made through the Grand Jury, to have the Public Service Board of the city of Los Angeles, immediately define their policy towards this valley in the water controversy. This we consider to be paramount and vital for the future of our beautiful Owens Valley.

WEST BISHOP FARM CENTER,

(Signed) A. L. BARLOW, *Secretary*.

VALLEY FARM CENTER,

(Signed) W. H. WALKER, *President*.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement by Owens River Canal Company.

Bishop, California, September 22, 1924.

We have, after years of peacefulness and plenty suddenly found ourselves confronted by circumstances which menace our well being and that of our children. To be explicit, let us state that up to a couple of years ago we looked upon our valley as the most desirable location in the entire state of California. We had neither poverty nor riches as most of the other communities experience. We had good will and friendship, broken we admit at times by differences; but usually easily healed.

We anticipated a large development of our arable lands, with the consequent influx of desirable settlers.

Between the years 1921 and 1923, inclusive, one agency in Bishop alone sold over one *million dollars* worth of property.

Our valley stood out unique in many ways and attracted people whose purpose was home building.

This dream of development has been rudely shattered, we find ourselves without a market for our lands, with one exception. We are hedged in by no choice of our own to such a pass that we can not call our possessions our own to barter and exchange, as becomes a free people.

An insidious power has become evident and the underhand working been revealed to an extent. To what degree this power may increase we do not know; but we are today facing the compulsory sale of our homes to the city of Los Angeles, not on our terms but on theirs, and that because we dread the losses we should sustain and the detriment under which we should live did we attempt to resist them. We are faced with a reversion of our valley, or a large portion, to its original state, the dying trees, dilapidated houses, where once families thrived, the vanishing of life in all its forms, cause deepest feelings of resentment and concern on the part of those who are left to witness the workings of the city of Los Angeles in her attempt to secure for herself an adequate water supply.

We have heard from her leaders that "*the greatest good to the greatest number*" must be the rule which governs in such instances, and we agree; but we also demand that the greatest number in their requirements of the greatest good to themselves must take heed that the smaller number suffers no outrage, meets with no injustice.

This, we contend, is where the entire trouble has arisen.

The city of Los Angeles in her demand has uttered a well-worn phrase, to which the world has usually submitted; but she seems to have forgotten the ethical setting of said phrase which permits of no injury to the lesser number. Her attitude, as revealed through her agents in this valley has been one of pure selfishness, regardless of right or wrong and with no consideration for the rights of a smaller people or the good of a smaller community.

We have been surfeited by promises from her agents, we have been assured of the city's interest in our development, only to discover, that her agents have been spies and their assurances but intended to blind. She has employed the basest methods to accomplish her purposes. In the early days of the aqueduct project she bought the powers in whom we had every reason to depend. Her rights were considered paramount,

and her intrigues were justified on that account, "Do evil that good may come" seems to have been her slogan, unexpressed of necessity, as "The greatest good to the greatest number."

Our fears were for a time allayed, when she secured the capacity of her aqueduct, and we were assured that the balance of our valley was to go undisturbed. Our quiet was, however, of but a few years duration. Rumors of increased population of the city beyond all expectations, of increased area, due to inclusion of large farming acreage in order that water might be supplied from the aqueduct, according to the promise of the land speculators who had fostered the aqueduct scheme for selfish purposes; all these and more made it very evident that should the prosperity of the city of Los Angeles continue she must seek for a greater supply of water and that at the earliest moment and at the least cost to herself.

We became alarmed at survey parties, at remarks incidentally dropped, by appeal to Congress for favorable legislation to the city of Los Angeles and we consequently sought for a means to safeguard our rights and protect our homes. We formed an irrigation district, and sought for the protection which such is presumed to give.

We no sooner became busy on this protective measure than we found disloyalty in our ranks. We discovered treachery instead of loyalty. The men to whom we had delegated authority, turned against us and earnestly labored for the city. They acted in the capacity of purchasing agents. They sought earnestly to disrupt our district. They harbored and abetted every opposition to our success. They fostered law-suits and entered into them against us. They permitted no opportunity to pass whereby they might distress us, or cause our people financial loss. By holding out to some the possibility of sale to the city, and by effecting the same they divided our people.

Community good seems no longer a worth-while ambition; but how may we escape? To whom may we sell? To none other than to the city of Los Angeles. We who are in debt find our indebtedness growing larger.

Prosperity is a community affair and not a personal, and we are far from the prosperity for which this section was long noted.

We do not know what calamity may befall us within a day and we wonder how few or how many of us shall be allowed to grow weary and bitter in beholding the destruction of our neighborhood, or who shall sell out to the city and escape from it all, with whatever the city officials and their underlings may be willing to give.

We have tried to forestall all strife. We have reckoned that in the purchases now made, the city has secured possession of the portion of the valley which will make living here less desirable, and we have offered to sell on the figures set by a valuation commission agreeable to us and the city. They do not heed. They offer us a sop in the shape of boosting for our roads, aeroplane landings and such, when what we need is relief for present distress. Many of our people are gone, some of our school districts are abandoned. Those of us who remain see nothing but a long struggle and no likely happy solution.

Every community which prospers must have evident advantages for development, a growing population which added means of enabling people to make a living and create wealth. We have the advantages of water, priceless in its worth, good soil, good climate and fine scenery.

We are increasing in population, our soil being abandoned, and our future shorn of all hope of the natural growth of such a community, all because of the inroads of the city upon our water supply and her selfish methods in seeking to gain her end.

Today, a fear which has become all-pervading, a form of terror which will not rest, has made men ready to sacrifice life before they will submit to outrage and robbery even if it is done by a process obedient to law.

The solution we contend is for the city to declare her policy.

If she desires the water available, let her admit so and also acknowledge that she will agree to pay for what she gets, not its actual worth; but a fair valuation which may be set by a commission agreeable to her and to us. Her encroachments form an injury to a community, her tactics, up to the present, are those of the trader and not those of the buyer, indifferent as to the values the other party receives.

Good will and harmony no longer prevailing, her duty for her injury is to recompense the community for the same and then she removes the possibility of further lawlessness or outrage on the part of our people.

We speak from intimate knowledge and our opinions are based upon our personal acquaintance with the valley and her people for many years.

"Justice long delayed is justice refused."

Remove the cause and the result will disappear.

We look to the south and see a great city in her egotism, her selfishness, her wealth, her power menacing our possessions and our future.

We have no recourse in an appeal to Congress, to the state assembly, because our success is but temporary, and we but stay the inevitable for a time.

One of two things must happen.

The city of Los Angeles must awaken from her self-absorption and do justly and seek by fair dealing to secure the desired end, or there will be no end of trouble and distress amongst us.

Respectfully submitted.

OWENS RIVER CANAL COMPANY,
(Signed) KARL KEOUGH, *President*.
W. L. ROWAN, *Secretary*.

RESOLUTION.

North Inyo Parent-Teachers Association, September, 1924.

Whereas, The purchase made by the city of Los Angeles at Laws, North Inyo, and Poletta have decreased the attendance in the district schools to such a degree that the schools have been entirely abandoned in some localities, and the teaching force greatly reduced in others, and

Whereas, these same purchases have affected the attendance of the Bishop Union High School to such an extent that the trustees have been forced to give up proposed plans for improvements with reference to much needed sanitation and extension because of the fact that a delegation of business men met with the trustees and objected to above mentioned improvements on the grounds of insecurity of business prospects, due to the activities of the agents of the city of Los Angeles in our vicinity, and

Whereas, the failure to make such improvements has necessitated the transfer of classes from the grammar school to the high school, thus upsetting the routine of school life and activities in both institutions and causing undue inconvenience and working unnecessary hardship on teachers, pupils and supervisors, in addition to causing increased expense for janitor and heating service, and

Whereas, the stability of our homes and our schools is threatened, and the condition not only deplorable but entirely unnecessary,

Therefore be it resolved that we, the members of the North Inyo Parent-Teachers Association urgently request that the city of Los Angeles submit to us a statement concerning its future policy regarding Owens Valley, in order that we may be assured of the stability of our homes and schools.

(Signed) MRS. B. E. SHERWIN,
President.

(Signed) MRS. W. S. ELDERED,
Secretary.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement by Thomas Hughes Company.

Bishop, California, September 18, 1924.

On account of Los Angeles coming to Laws and buying all the land and water in that part of Inyo County, I was compelled to reduce the rent on a piece of property \$25 a month and now I am asked for a further reduction of \$25 a month, on account of Los Angeles coming in there and buying all the land and water in that vicinity.

And furthermore, I have lost a good deal on other properties that I own both in Laws and Bishop.

In fact it is impossible to sell any real estate for anything near its usual valuation as Los Angeles has, since they bought in there, have scared any would-be buyers of real estate, and as things are now, I consider that I have lost *ten thousand dollars* on my property on account of Los Angeles coming in there and buying the land and water.

Yours respectfully,

(Signed) THOMAS HUGHES.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement of The Women's Improvement Club, Bishop, California.

Bishop, California, September 25, 1924.

In estimating the damages done in Inyo County, either directly or indirectly by the officials of the city of Los Angeles, we beg leave to submit the following:

The spirit of discouragement in the hearts of the people here, inspired by their fear of the great, wealthy and powerful corporation, Los Angeles, the uncertainty of the future in regard to purchase, or refusal to purchase by the city, parcels of land or blocks of water stock; the city using its power and money to further schemes of buying our holdings

as cheaply as possible, caused by the necessity of the owner; or city agents using their power and money to starve out a poorly conditioned rancher, telling him that when he has sat there long enough alone he would come to his right mind and sell at the city's price; all of this has resulted in ruining the business life of the valley and has crushed out the life of every business activity we had going on eighteen months ago.

The Alfalfa Growers' Association, which shipped out of our valley over 7000 tons of hay a year ago, had built a substantial warehouse and employed several men—has been forced to close its doors and will do *no business this year*.

The Pear Association has ceased its business activity all because of the depression caused by our controversy with the city of Los Angeles.

Our ranchers are hopelessly in debt and there are no lines of activity opening up to alleviate their financial distress, no chance to gain extra dollars by public works, or by private enterprise. Everywhere in the valley such interests are at a standstill.

Our business men are reducing the number of employees because receipts are less than half what they were eighteen months ago.

There are no buyers of real estate in our valley except those to which Los Angeles is a party, and in most instances at such prices as Los Angeles sees fit to pay.

No repairs or improvements are being made by the ranchers, and when property is not repaired or improved, it deteriorates in value and is a damage to itself and to its community.

We see no planting of lands to orchards, or to vineyards or in fact no permanent investments on the lands are being made, hence the damages to the owners runs on into the future years.

The women and children in the homes are feeling this financial depression; being obliged to be stinted as to clothes, food and furnishings; they are ashamed and embarrassed.

In social life the activities are reduced to discussions as to what is to become of us, and how long can we endure the tense situation.

The Federal Land Bank, in refusing to continue making loans in our valley, has published our distress to the world, and as a result has made money harder to get.

We can not keep pace with the march of progress with the rest of the world because of the stringency of our money markets. We can not hope to keep up with the outside world, either in club life, educational life, or financial life.

All these facts are damages past, present and future to which the officials of the city of Los Angeles are either directly or indirectly the unmistakable cause.

Respectfully submitted.

WOMEN'S IMPROVEMENT CLUB OF BISHOP,

(Signed) BERTHA I. WINTERTON, *President*.

(Signed) ROWENA VONDERHEIDE, *Vice President*.

(Signed) MRS. ELLEN SUMMERS, *Trustee*.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement of The Rawson Ditch Company.

Bishop, California, September 23, 1924.

It is our desire to briefly state the cause of the antagonism of the people of Owens Valley to the policies of the city of Los Angeles or its representatives in the manner of acquiring lands and water rights in this locality.

In 1903 or 1904, the Reclamation Service of the United States came into this valley and collected data and made surveys at great expense, to determine the possibility of a general reclamation project.

The people of Owens Valley waived certain storage and other rights for the benefits to accrue from such larger reclamation.

The City of Los Angeles, by purchase or otherwise, became the sole beneficiary of the government surveys and data, and the people were deprived of their storage rights and were in a worse condition than if they had never heard of a government project. Then under the promise of the city to store water and prepare for a lesser reclamation, the people were induced to still leave the question of storage in other hands. Suddenly, during this period, the more farseeing citizens here saw a move in Washington, D. C. that did not look good for the vested, much less the storage rights of this valley.

A committee to represent this locality was sent to Washington and in hearings supposed we had solved the question between us and Los Angeles; but once more it appeared that this work was of no avail and our rights were not protected, and again a committee was sent and an extensive hearing was staged in which Congressman Kettner and Judge Raker of California, gave us such unmistakable service.

Trouble followed trouble, and after we had exhausted the services of our friends in Washington, D. C., and our people had become weary, we attempted to form an irrigation district to combine our rights and make a more economic use of the water.

Then the local Los Angeles agents began a course of propaganda to disorganize the people and sow dissension between the ditch owners.

This was so well conducted and so successful that one of the large ditches refused to ratify its former vote to come into the district, and sold a portion of its holdings to the city.

Then, when considerable bitterness was evinced by our people as to the attitude of the city, the higher officials of said city agreed to not purchase any lands or water on the west side of Owens River; and once more we breathed easier.

Then, with curtailed territory and vast injury already accrued from the acts of the city officials, we once more were making progress, when we were met by suit after suit instigated by the agents of the city of Los Angeles to prevent the irrigation district from functioning. These suits are still pending and no one knows if this generation will see their finish, but if not, they will see the finish of this people if they must depend on civil action alone, and moral support does not come to their aid.

A few people in a small valley like this are at a great disadvantage in a legal contest with a great, rich and prosperous city like Los Angeles on account of the difference in financial resources.

Prior to the invasion of Los Angeles in the northern part of this valley, property began to sell and good men with capital bought land and laid our irrigation and drainage systems at considerable expense and were preparing to drain the land and sub-divide for settlement, when once more the attitude of the city caused them to cease this development, and from that time to this no further work was done by them except to attempt to maintain the property as it was. But a propaganda was circulated by the agents of the city of Los Angeles accusing these men of being speculators who, foreseeing the needs of Los Angeles, had entered this field in advance to speculate on the city's needs for water.

Other outside investors had made examination of this country for both purchase and security, but each time, when they came in contact with the policy of the city of Los Angeles, they at once withdrew from the valley and left us with no other competition for purchase except the city of Los Angeles.

Many of the local people did not at first discern that the purchase of the city of Los Angeles was in any way different from the ordinary operation of commerce; but when the land began to lapse into a state of desert and the people began to leave the valley, it was so evident that it did not take a prophet to read the hand-writing on the wall.

If the city of Los Angeles had adhered to its first policy of storing water and thereby insuring us a more perfect system of irrigation, then this valley would have flourished and property values would have grown from year to year; but when this policy was abandoned and that of purchase of lands and water rights was substituted, it left this valley almost helpless and took from it all of the commercial value that it had secured through its past efforts.

We think that most of our people realize that if the great city of Los Angeles needs the water from Owens Valley that it is the greatest good to the greatest number and therefore they should have it; but in acquiring this water some plan should be worked out so that the people would receive a just recompense for that which they must inevitably give up.

The city's policy of purchasing property from individuals has impaired the value to any outside purchaser of any adjoining property, and therefore if the people had been dealt with collectively the results would not have been so disastrous.

In conclusion, we do not think that the people of the city of Los Angeles, as a whole, have intended or do intend to do us a great and irreparable injury and that they will see that we have redress for the injury already incurred and justice in the future in such dealings as we may have with the city.

Respectfully submitted.

THE RAWSON DITCH COMPANY,

(Signed) D. M. LONGYEAR, *President*.

(Signed) By FRED R. SMITH, *Secretary*.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement of Farmers Ditch Company, September, 1924.

In the year 1903 the citizens of Inyo County welcomed the representatives of the Reclamation Department of the United States Government.

They inspired and gained our confidence. They promised and planned storage dams, the development of large quantities of electric energy, the equating of the Owens River at flood times and non-irrigating periods.

Our canals and ditches were all incorporated and carrying water, and had recorded rights sufficient to irrigate all of the lands under the areas of the river ditches north of what is now the intake of the Los Angeles aqueduct. The owners and water users in the Bishop areas agreed to an adjustment of the then existing water and storage rights by the Reclamation Department, as their plan contemplated, and if carried out would have provided the requisite storage.

The question is now frequently asked why the people had never made any provision for the storage of water. The simple answer is this.

After the representative of the Reclamation Department had gained our confidence and had acquired our rights in order that the water of the Owens River could be developed by the Reclamation Department, the proposed reclamation project was discontinued and all the data, maps, charts and other information in possession of the Reclamation Department, together with all the storage rights which were acquired by them from the citizens of this community in order that the Reclamation Department might proceed with its project and reclaim all of the lands of Owens Valley, were, by a special act of Congress turned over to the city of Los Angeles, for a paltry nominal consideration.

The city then succeeded in having legislation passed by the United States Government which made it impossible for any other storage rights to be acquired by the people here.

Statements of the representatives of the city of Los Angeles under which they acquired these rights from the Reclamation Department were that the water was to be used for domestic purposes in the City of Los Angeles, and it was contemplated that the city would be placed in the position of the Reclamation Department to furnish the storage required here. This representation, by later events proved to be deceptive, for it soon developed that the water obtained was to be used principally for the irrigation of lands in the San Fernando Valley, and it is generally known that the promoters of the project reaped an immense harvest of money by the acquisition, and later the sale of lands in the San Fernando Valley. We have always felt that had our government official understood the true conditions and the effect their act was to have upon the lives of our people, and the purpose of the city in obtaining the water, that such legislation could never have been secured.

No storage has been provided for by the City, altho the representatives of the City and the Ditch Companies worked on an agreement for years, which when, finally submitted for acceptance by the Ditch Companies, was such that it would not provide sufficient water for the ditches in the northern end of the Valley during the irrigation season.

The agreement was rejected and an injunction was secured by the ditch companies to prevent further work on the dam, then under construction by the city of Los Angeles, and the consequent interference with the

natural flow of the river until the ditches were guaranteed a sufficient flow for the irrigation of their lands.

A new hope was created in the minds of the people in the northern end of the valley by the formation of an irrigation district, which district was finally formed in January, 1923. The city representatives, some of whom were local people and to whom we will refer later on in this letter, were bitterly opposed to and fought the organization of the district; but in spite of the opposition the election for the organization of the district carried by the vote of 599 for and 25 against.

We felt that the district was going to save our community, but the city well knowing that, if an irrigation district was properly organized and the water transferred to it, the day of piecemeal purchases would be a thing of the past and that the only possible way they could acquire any more of the waters of the Owens River within the irrigation district would be to buy all of the water rights of the district. The district took steps to acquire such rights, and the ditch companies passed resolutions voluntarily turning their rights to the district. The organization of the district, contemplated the acquisition of all of the water rights within the district. As stated by city representatives the city believed that if they purchased the *McNally Ditch*, they would *break the back-bone of the district and prevent it from functioning.*

The day that the city representatives had succeeded in optioning for the city a majority of the land and water rights of the *McNally Ditch*, L. C. Hall, a local attorney representing the city of Los Angeles, made the statement on the streets of Bishop "the right arm of the irrigation district."

Before the purchase of the people of the community a employ of the city; he had b the Associated Ditches, but, with George Watterson and Wm. of the city in negotiating for the purchases, it became generally acknowledged that L. C. Hall had accepted employment for the interests of the city against Inyo County.

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Acting on inside information gained through his association with the city, Attorney L. C. Hall submitted a proposition of exchange of property in the town of Bishop, which he owned, for ranch property under the *McNally Ditch* owned by John Summers and W. L. Wells and the exchange was agreed upon with Summers who was in Los Angeles at the time, and being in poor health was desirous to concentrate his holdings. The other exchange was completed with Wells before it was known by any of the people here that the city contemplated the purchase of the *McNally Ditch*, sold the properties to the city of Los Angeles for cash.

The purchase of the *McNally Ditch* area came like a thunder bolt out of a clear sky to the land owners under the ditch and to the people in and around Bishop. The *McNally Ditch* directors had just previously passed a resolution at the instruction of its stockholders, authorizing the turning of the water over voluntarily to the irrigation district, and no one dreamed that the city would come right into the heart of the district and purchase such a large tract of land with the intention of having the same revert to desert. At the time of the purchase of the *McNally Ditch*,

Wm. Symons was the president of the corporation of the McNally Ditch Company, and we are reliably informed that he offered to sell the same to the city of Los Angeles for the sum of \$1,000,000. Within twenty-four hours after his return from the city of Los Angeles he secured, by various representations and misrepresentations, options for the city from a majority of the stockholders, accepting such options at any price named. They then proceeded until two-thirds of the stock was optioned, and the remaining one-thirds were not approached, and it was generally stated by the representatives of the city handling the transaction that the other one-third would be left high and dry.

With each option a proxy was taken by the representatives of the city and as soon as the city gained two-thirds of the stock a stockholders meeting was called and the resolution previously passed authorizing the turning of the water rights to the district was rescinded.

It was stated at that meeting by certain city representatives, in their great desire to prevent the water being turned to the district, that unless the city was permitted to vote the stock, such individuals refusing to permit the city to vote their stock would not have their options exercised.

The stockholders in the ditch company were so demoralized and so panic stricken because the area would be so badly broken into by what sales would be made, that the owners felt it necessary to permit the program of the city to be carried out. With the exception of two, all who did not vote with the city at that meeting were left unpurchased for a period of a year and a half. Those who did vote with them were negotiated with and bartered with before a final agreement was reached as to price.

The property of those remaining was so isolated by the drying up of the adjoining ranches, the moving away of families, and their property values were depreciated at least 50 per cent, with no prospective purchaser.

Not content with what they had done to the minority stockholders of the McNally Ditch whom they had not purchased, a year later the city of Los Angeles, through self-appointed directors on the McNally Ditch, voted to transfer all of the properties of the McNally Ditch Company corporation to the city of Los Angeles for the sum of \$175,000, paying \$10,000 down and the balance to be paid at a later date. The minority stockholders, in order to protect their rights and to save their properties, were then forced to go to the expense of bringing an action against the board of directors for the purpose of setting aside the transfer. This suit was finally set for trial for August 5, 1924, and it was not until the attorneys representing the city of Los Angeles and those representing the minority stockholders arrived at Bridgeport, in Mono County, to try the case, that the city of Los Angeles finally agreed to pay the minority stockholders a price that was accepted by them, which, however, was a compromise price.

This delay by the city to purchase these minority rights was desired primarily by the city because in the interim they could carry on their work of trying to beat the people down on what they considered to be a reasonable price and to force them to sell on terms to be dictated by the city.

The irrigation district, in spite of the purchase of the McNally Ditch, proceeded to vote bonds in the sum of \$1,650,000 which had been previously authorized to be issued by the California State Bond Commis-

sion after considerable expense had accrued to the district in preparing and submitting to the Bond Commission a plan of their project. The Bond Commission had declared that the plan and project were feasible and had given permission to the district to call an election. After the election was called, L. C. Hall, Wm. Symons and George Watterson, who had always been actively fighting the district, became extremely aggressive in a fight against the district. Over their signatures they issued various circular letters to the voters urging them to vote against the bonds, and privately spread propaganda among the people designed to bring about a defeat of the bonds at the election. After the bond election had carried by a vote of 702 for, and 80 against, it showed them conclusively that the people's paramount desire was to maintain and perpetuate their community and their homes. Permission was then obtained for the sale of the bonds, and on the eve of the day the bonds were to be sold an injunction suit was brought by Fred Heitman and Charles Winters, who had a signed guarantee from Wm. Symons, L. C. Hall and George Watterson guaranteeing all expenses incidental to said suit, and guaranteeing said plaintiffs against any loss or damage resulting from the use of their names in said injunction suit.

These complaints were filed with the county clerk in Independence by W. A. Lamar, attorney for the city of Los Angeles; they were brought from Independence to Bishop by E. F. Leahey, an employee of the city of Los Angeles, and were delivered by him to George Watterson who directed the service of the complaints. In view of all this and many other similar instances, the city still maintains that they are doing nothing to interfere with the functioning of the irrigation district.

A bidder was present on the day of the advertised sale of the bonds, and would have taken the entire issue of bonds at par, but the sale could not be held on account of the injunction. The injunction was lifted after a trial in court, and the bonds were again advertised for sale, and a portion of the issue was sold at a discount. This litigation not only was a serious loss to the district on account of having to sell the bonds at a discount, but the people were forced to spend a considerable sum of money in defense of the litigation.

Not satisfied with their previous aggressive opposition to the district an action was instituted for the purpose of having declared void the proceedings of the Board of Supervisors organizing the district. This proceeding was instituted by Wm. Symons and Rhoda V. Symons, his wife, who were represented by Attorneys L. C. Hall and Wm. B. Himrod, and it is still pending in the courts of Inyo County. If this proceeding is successful, it would throw all of the district's and the people's affairs into a very chaotic condition, from which we would never recover. In view of the connection of L. C. Hall and Wm. Symons with the city of Los Angeles, and from what information can be gained, it is the opinion of most everybody who has given the matter any study that the city of Los Angeles is the real party in interest in behalf of these suits and that the named plaintiffs are mere figureheads.

Following this litigation came a suit which was more injurious and more dangerous to the people of Owens Valley than any other piece of litigation that has ever been filed. The city of Los Angeles filed an action against all of the water users from the Owens River to enjoin them from taking water which it was claimed belonged to the city and to quiet title and adjudicate all of the waters of the Owens River between

the individuals and the city. For years when the water users did not have the city of Los Angeles to contend with, they managed to agree among themselves amicably as to the distribution of the waters of Owens River, and by a system of exchanges were able to so distribute the waters of the river that all friction was practically eliminated. The water users knew that if a suit was filed to adjudicate the title to the waters of the river it would mean such a long fight and such a big burden in the payment of the cost of litigation that it would mean ruination to the community.

When this suit was filed the community was shocked, and the general belief among the people was that the city of Los Angeles filed the suit with the hope of getting the people to fight among themselves. The people felt that as against the big city of Los Angeles, with unlimited resources at her command they would never be able to stand the expense that would be necessary to properly defend their rights, and again that in all probability, on account of the great handicap that such a small community would have in fighting a city the size of Los Angeles, they would not get the complete protection for their rights to which they were entitled and which they had always enjoyed. The suit is now pending in the Superior Court of Inyo County, and unless something is done to avoid, the trial of the same will be brought some time this winter.

Instead of disorganizing the people and making them fight each other, however, the suit had just the opposite effect. It did more to unite the people in this particular regard than any other litigation filed by the city, and was a climax on account of the dire results that the people anticipated it might produce by a long series of assaults by the representatives of the city of Los Angeles. The people were brought to a realization that unless the representatives of the city were stopped in their policy of destruction, disorganization and demoralization, that there would be no limit to the attacks upon the community and upon the homes of the people which they would be forced to submit to.

About a year ago an agreement of compromise of the controversy between the people and the city of Los Angeles was submitted. All of the local representatives of the city, as soon as the agreement became public, became actively engaged distributing propaganda among the people for the purpose of defeating the agreement. While this agreement was under consideration the representatives of the city of Los Angeles were secretly negotiating for the purchase of the Big Pine Ditch, which was one of the ditches in the irrigation district. These negotiations on the part of the city representatives for the purchase of the Big Pine Ditch resulted in a refusal on the part of the Big Pine Ditch people to join with the other ditch companies to accept the agreement, because of the fact that it was necessary for all of the ditch companies to join in the agreement, and because of the refusal of the Big Pine Ditch to become a party to the agreement, it was impossible that the agreement be entered into. This then made it easy for the purchase of the Big Pine Ditch to be made, which carried with it the purchase of property, and the unqualified support of Geo. B. Warren, a director of the irrigation district from that particular division.

In February 1924, an attempt was made to recall J. L. Gish, a director of the irrigation district from the fourth division. The recall was unquestionably the work of city agents, the recall petition having been circulated and signed by people friendly to the city, people who had sold their

property to the city, owners of only small holdings in the town of Laws and *non-taxpayers*, desiring to remove from office a man who had been left by the city, with a large ranch property under the McNally Ditch, and to deprive him and the remainder of the minority stockholders under that ditch of the representation to which they were entitled, and to further make inroads in the irrigation district.

The city representatives are very clever masters of propaganda. We are forced to believe that these city representatives have a leader who is in direct contact with some one controlling the city's policies, and that all of this propaganda is directly authorized from some one holding a responsible position with the city of Los Angeles.

The local representatives of the city who have been most active in advocating the interests of the city of Los Angeles have received very generous treatment at the hands of the city as is evidenced by the fact that they have received very substantial prices for their properties, and their friends have been very well taken care of. It is also a well known and acknowledged fact that for the properties sold under the McNally Ditch to the city of Los Angeles, through the agency of Wm. Symons a commission of 3 per cent was paid by the city to said Symons and his associates, L. C. Hall and George Watterson.

As an illustration of the manner in which the city representatives deal with the people of Owens Valley, we will cite one instance of the purchase of one large holding under the Bishop Creek Ditch.

The parties owning the property did not desire to sell and leave their neighbor with his property unsold and depreciated, as it would naturally be with the city owning the property adjoining. To overcome this obstacle the city representative secured an option from the neighbor, which enabled the city then to secure an option on the property desired. The latter option was exercised, and the option of the neighbor whom they desired to protect was allowed to lapse. Inquiry as to the reason for this brought forth the information from the city representative that this party's option was only taken as a means of securing the option on the larger holding from the neighbors who had desired to protect and not work an injury on him. This party is now left with the city owning the property adjoining him on three sides.

After the city purchased the McNally Ditch property, city officials handling the affairs of the city in this valley promised that no purchases would be made of lands west of the river. This allayed the fear of the people for a while; but this promise was soon violated.

The city came west of the river and did not confine their purchases to any particular area, but made purchases from whomever they thought was willing to sell at a price agreeable to them. The result has been that the city has purchased lands under every ditch in the Bishop area so that the country is checker-boarded into farms, owned by the city, drying up and reverting to a desert condition, with here and there farms fertile and productive, owned by local people.

The city already has acquired the following percentages of the stock in the various ditches around Bishop.

Bishop Creek Ditch Company	23%
Rawson Ditch Company	48%
Farmer's Ditch Company	21%
Owens River Canal Company	2%

The owners in each of these ditches are now in the position they realize and know that the city will do all in its power to get control of all these ditches, and the result will be that every one in minority will be forced to turn his property over to the city of Los Angeles at a price to be practically dictated by the city.

To be in the minority on a ditch controlled by the city of Los Angeles and wherever a majority of the property is drying up or had already reverted to the desert stage, is not a very happy predicament to contemplate for one's self. This danger is ever in the mind of every person owning any property under any of the ditches.

The city now owns nearly 50 per cent of the land within the irrigation district, and the production of the agricultural products within the district, upon which the community depended upon for its existence, has decreased accordingly, and business generally has already begun to feel the effect of the drying up of these lands and their reversion to the desert state. It is not necessary to dwell at length upon the effect of this nibbling and checker-boarding upon economic and social life of the people of any community. Such a policy means devastation; destruction and ruination of the community and all community interests. By way of concrete example, however, as to the effect upon the financial life of the community, we cite the refusal of the Federal Land Bank and the California Joint Stock Land Bank, on account of the condition created by the city, to make any further loans in Inyo County. On account of the policy of the city in dealing with the people of this community, as is disclosed by their acts in the past, the people in and around Bishop have lost all confidence and all faith in any proposition which might be submitted by the city which has for its object the continued ownership of her rights in the ditches with the people. The people feel that their community and their property values have been irretrievably ruined, and that there is no hope for the future. This feeling resulted in the people owning the water in the ditches making an offer to the city of Los Angeles to sell their entire holdings collectively to the city, leaving the price to be fixed by an arbitration commission.

The city's purchases have not only affected the community in the way of production by the destruction of productive farms, but a condition has resulted on account of the shadow of uncertainty which hangs over the heads of the people which has absolutely arrested any development or improvement of the farms that are still owned by residents of the community.

No community which has been in the progress of development and improvement for many years could, without suffering a severe financial and economic blow, withstand cessation of practically all development and improvement.

When you kill the future of any community, you sap its very life blood.

Probably nowhere in the history of any country has one community in a nation adopted a policy in another community of the same nation which has brought the havoc and produced the mental agony and suffering that the policy of the city of Los Angeles and their representatives has produced in the little community in which we live. Probably those of us who are living in the midst of it are so troubled in mind and heart that we do not take the opportunity to reflect on the true aspect of this controversy from a moral and social standpoint; however, we have had

the good fortune, many of us, to talk with visitors to our community not interested in the problem in any way and having an absolutely unprejudiced and open mind.

These visitors, of course, necessarily hear of this problem while here and become interested to know just what the city of Los Angeles has done here and the way it has been done. After the destruction and devastation, and the policy of the city of Los Angeles is explained to these visitors, the visitors invariably condemn the policy of the city of Los Angeles by stating that their conduct is positively inhuman, and that if they were living here, they would resist this policy of the city in every legitimate way.

It was but a few years ago when it was safe to say there was no community in which there was more real contentment, more real happiness than in the community in which we live. We enjoyed together as one large family, we loved our homes, we took pride in our community and our civic organizations, and looked forward to unending progress and development.

Today the picture of community life is entirely different. The people have been demoralized, and the future of the community has been strangled, and all real contentment and peace of mind have been killed, and the shadow of destruction is hanging over our heads by reason of the policy which the city of Los Angeles has followed in the Owens River Valley.

Respectfully submitted.

FARMER DITCH COMPANY,

(Signed) W. W. YANDELL, *President*.

(Signed) IONE Y. SEYMOUR, *Secretary*.

OWENS VALLEY.

Statement of Bishop Business Women's Club, September, 1924.

We, the members of the Bishop Business Women's Club, hereby state our grievances against the city of Los Angeles in regard to the all absorbing topic "The Water Question."

Briefly, our grievances as business women are:

First—The almost complete standstill of all trade in our community.

Second—The depreciation of property values.

Third—The threatening future which may bring failure to those of us who own a business, and

Fourth—The loss of employment by those who work for others.

The anxiety is not for ourselves alone; many of us have others dependent upon us, and we fear for the future of these dependents.

And we furthermore deplore the fact that a cloud of hatred and distrust hangs over this once prosperous and contented community.

We feel that these mental evils, which have been produced by the unfair acts and dealings of the city of Los Angeles, are having a demoraliz-

ing effect, not only on the men and women of the community, but on the minds of our boys and girls.

Respectfully,

THE BISHOP BUSINESS WOMEN'S CLUB,

(Signed) MRS. R. R. REHM, *President.*

(Signed) A. W. BOYER, *Secretary.*

State of California, }
County of Inyo. } ss.

Karl P. Keough, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That, in or about January, 1924, in the presence of Len Summers, William Symons stated to me at my ranch south of Bishop, substantially as follows: "That John T. Martin, right of way and land agent for the city of Los Angeles, had, some time previous, approached John Dehy and requested him to option his property to the city of Los Angeles, and that Dehy replied that he would not do so until his neighbors had optioned, and that Martin had then obtained an option from Fred Naphan, a neighbor of Dehy, and from himself, also a neighbor of Dehy, a bogus option, and returned to Dehy with these. Dehy then optioned his property to Martin whereupon Martin threw the Naphan and Symons options away. And that Martin had secured Naphan's and Symons' options for the sole purpose of getting Dehy to option with no intention of exercising the Naphan and Symons options."

That, in or about August, 1923, at the Istalia Hotel in Bishop, in conversation with John T. Martin, right of way and land agent for the city of Los Angeles, regarding the proposed agreement between the city of Los Angeles and the Owens Valley Irrigation District then being in process of negotiation, he stated to me personally substantially the following: "The wrong people from here are down there trying to make this settlement and will never get very far."

That, in or about February, 1924, in front of the Land Office at Independence, in conversation with E. F. Leahy, local official of the city of Los Angeles, he stated to me substantially the following: "We have the record of each farmer's indebtedness, the amount of interest he was paying, and when his mortgage was due of every stockholder on the Owens River canal."

That, in or about May, 1924, at the Thos. Summers ranch east of Bishop, Wm. Symons, in the presence of Fred Naphan, stated to me substantially the following: "At the time the purchase of the McNally Ditch was contemplated I was asked by city officials to come to Owens Valley and purchase land for them but to represent myself as buying for a fictitious cattle company."

KARL P. KEOUGH.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 1st day of December, 1924.

FRED R. SMITH (Seal)
Notary Public in and for the County
of Inyo, State of California,

Phones: Office 131; Residence 39-M

A. B. WHIELDON, Manager.

OWENS VALLEY LAND COMPANY.

Real Estate.

Office: Shute Building, Bishop, California.

November 28, 1924.

Hon. W. F. McClure,
State Engineer,
Sacramento, Cal.

Dear Sir:

Some years ago—six or seven—my attention was called to the advantages of Owens Valley, as a section worthy of one's consideration for a home. I came to investigate and found it all I had heard it to be and decided to settle. After a couple years of ranching I decided there was a good opening for a real estate agency, and having had several years' experience in such work and with a wide acquaintance amongst realtors in the south, I opened an office in Bishop. My expectations were more than realized. I found business exceedingly good. During the years 1920, 1921 and 1922 I personally sold over a million dollars worth of property. To be exact, \$1,089,800 representing an acreage of 4797½ acres at an average of over \$227 per acre. Since the city of Los Angeles has begun her active campaign to purchase lands and water rights in Owens Valley, I have been unable to continue my work here, being compelled to look elsewhere for saleable lands. This is due to the fear on the part of prospective purchasers that the city will through her purchasing agents continue to destroy values by buying separate properties, leaving other properties to remain as oases in a desert of lands reverting to their original state through neglect or abandonment by the city. There is therefore at the present time but one customer for any of the lands around Bishop, and that is the city of Los Angeles. A prospective purchaser can see no possibility of seeing a property should he buy, and decide to change occupation or location. He realizes he would be placing himself in an exceedingly unhappy position. Then again, the city has brought a multitude of lawsuits in Owens Valley undoubtedly believing that the fear engendered thereby will the more speedily and effectively drive the property owners into a sale to them at terms to their satisfaction. The ranchers here are burdened with financial difficulties and have no credit to secure relief since the city has operated in such a way that all federal loans have been withdrawn from lands with the Owens Valley Irrigation District, and local financial institutions are burdened to the limit in an effort to sustain their people. You will therefore see that not only has a once prosperous business such as mine been annihilated, but a prosperous community has been outraged by a policy adopted by a great city, which is more to be condemned than the methods of a highwayman. I submit this information to you hoping that it may be to the advantage of a people with whom my relations have been most pleasant and who, I assure you, are worthy of every just consideration.

Respectfully yours,

A. B. WHIELDON.

State of California, }
County of Inyo. } ss.

White Smith, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

My name is White Smith, and I reside in Owens Valley, county of Inyo, State of California, and have resided here most of the time for over forty years.

I am a lawyer by profession, and am the resident attorney for the Owens Valley Irrigation District.

I am familiar with Owens Valley, with Owens River and its tributaries, and the water flowing therein, and with the water and land conditions in said Owens Valley.

I am familiar with the water controversy between the farmers and residents of Owens Valley and the city of Los Angeles and have been ever since Fred Eaton bought the first land in Owens Valley with water rights for the city of Los Angeles.

That ever since Fred Eaton bought the first land and water in Owens Valley, up to the present time, there has been constant trouble over this matter, and we have had many conferences with the agents, attorneys, officials and employees of the city of Los Angeles trying to devise some plan or method, either by storage of water or otherwise, by which we could settle this water controversy with the said city so as not to destroy this whole community, but at no time and in no way have we been able to reach any agreement with the said city which did not require the farmers and residents of this valley to make other and further concessions as to their water and water rights, storage and storage rights, and other and further costs to protect the present rights of the said farmers and residents as the price for said settlement, and the said city has at all times refused to enter into any agreement of any kind to secure the said farmers and residents from any further encroachments by the said city upon the remaining water rights and interests of the said farmers and residents.

I have known W. B. Mathews and William Mulholland and other agents and employees of the city of Los Angeles for many years, and W. B. Mathews personally urged us to organize an irrigation district so that the said city of Los Angeles would have an organized body with which to deal in the settlement of this water controversy, and our people acting on such suggestion, with a desire to reach some final settlement of such matter, voted almost unanimously to organize and did organize said irrigation district.

That before the completion of the organization of said irrigation district, and at all times since the agents and employees of said city have openly, notoriously, and publicly fought said irrigation district and have gone to great trouble and expense to prevent the functioning thereof and the said agents and employees of the said city have tried by every means to divide or separate the people whose lands are situated within said irrigation district.

That the agents and employees of said city have threatened the residents of said district with costly litigation and have encouraged, aided and abetted such litigation, and have tried and are still trying by litigation and otherwise to invalidate and overthrow the said irrigation district.

That in pursuance of said plan, or policy, the said city of Los Angeles bought large blocks of the capital stock of several of the ditch companies

which said ditches irrigated the lands situated under said ditches, and then tried by such means to recall the director or directors of said irrigation district.

That the said agents and employees of said city bought the larger part of the stock of the McNally Ditch and then tried to recall Director J. L. Gish so as to prevent a bond issue being issued for the purpose of buying the waters appropriated by such ditch company for the irrigation of the lands situated in said irrigation district.

That all of the acts or facts above stated are of common, open and public knowledge. That the said agents and employees of the said city of Los Angeles engaged openly and publicly in negotiation with another director of said irrigation district in the purchase of the lands lying under the Owens River and Big Pine Canal situated in said irrigation district together with the waters belonging to said lands, and said lands were bought by the said city of Los Angeles pursuant to said negotiations and the said agents, employees and officials of the said city of Los Angeles have at all times since sale was consummated conferred with and treated the said director as one of the advisors, agents, and assistants of the said city of Los Angeles in the purchase of other lands situated within the boundaries of the said irrigation district.

That all of these acts and facts are public, open and notorious, and at least one agent or employee of the said city of Los Angeles has stated to me that the city could not help it, that the city was growing so fast that it had to have the water.

That in conversation with W. B. Mathews he stated that he would like to reach some permanent settlement of this water controversy between the city of Los Angeles and the farmers, and that if this could be reached that the suits now pending against the ditch companies and farmers, and other suits pending, could be dismissed.

That it is a matter of common and general knowledge here, and is supported by the acts and actions of many of the agents and employees of the city that all of the litigation brought to destroy or invalidate the said irrigation district is aided and abetted by the said city of Los Angeles through its several agents.

That at no time during this whole controversy has the city in any way made any offer of any kind, either to protect the people here in the rights they now have, nor has said city at any time offered any reparation for the damage which has already been done to said community.

WHITE SMITH.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 2d day of December, 1924.

LAMBERT ANDERSON,
Notary Public in and for the County
of Inyo, State of California.
My Commission expires November
21, 1926,

State of California }
County of Inyo. } ss.

W. W. Yandell, being first duly sworn, deposes and says: That at the beginning of the formation of the Owens Valley Irrigation District many of the people here were of the opinion that W. B. Mathews was favorable to the formation of said district from statements which he had made to different persons. While Mr. W. B. Mathews was in Bishop conducting the adjudication of the rights of the Bishop Creek water users with the Southern Sierras Power Company he stated to me: "You people should organize an irrigation district. In case of litigation, which is likely to come, you would be in a better position to defend your rights; and, further, should the city of Los Angeles want to do business with you people regarding water rights we then would have some organized body with whom we could do business. I would suggest should you decide to organize a district that you use as your boundaries the map prepared by Charles Lee, which map was made about the year 1912." Said map was used in forming the boundaries of the district when it was organized in 1922.

W. W. YANDELL.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 29th day of November, 1924.

FRED R. SMITH,
Notary Public in and for the County
of Inyo, State of California.

State of California, }
County of Inyo. } ss.

AFFIDAVIT^d AS TO SALES OF PROPERTY IN OWENS VALLEY DISTRICT AND THE EFFECT.

Geo. W. Garner as President, and Alton L. Hall as secretary, of the Bishop Farm Loan Association, of Bishop, California, each as such officers, depose and say: that through said association, there was loaned to the farmers in the territory of the association some \$270,000, before the city of Los Angeles began to purchase lands in the Owens Valley Irrigation District, but there have been no loans made by said association since said purchases began, although many applications with good security were presented which have not been allowed by the Federal Land Bank of Berkeley; and on interviewing the appraiser and other representatives of said bank, they invariably told us that owing to the uncertain conditions involving the Owens Valley Irrigation District, from purchases by the city of Los Angeles, that loans would be suspended for the time being; they also stated that loans might be allowed in territory not so involved, but neither have loans been allowed in such other territory. The representative of the California Joint Stock Land Bank

of San Francisco, informed the mortgagees under the loans to that system (Joint Stock Bank) that if they sold the water involved in the loan, to the Owens Valley Irrigation District, that said bank would have the right to cancel the loan, and if such sale was permitted, that the funds so received most likely would be applied on the mortgage loans: We further depose, that no loans have been consummated since the invasion of the city by its purchases, either by the Federal Land Bank or by the California Joint Stock Land Bank, and the consequence is that a great hardship has been worked on the people of Owens Valley, and all values have been diminished to the vanishing point.

BISHOP FARM LOAN ASSOCIATION,

GEO. W. GARNER, *President*.

ALTON L. HALL, *Secretary-Treasurer*.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 29th day of November, 1924.

FRED R. SMITH,

Notary Public in and for County of
Inyo.

Bishop, California, Dec. 2, 1924.

My name is E. M. Nordyke, and I own property under and stock in the Owens River Canal. My property is about 6 miles south of the town of Bishop.

During the latter part of the year 1905, upon hearing that the city of Los Angeles had purchased some lands in the Owens Valley I went to see Mr. Wm. Mulholland with the idea of inquiring as to the leasing of some of their purchases here. He discouraged my intention stating substantially as follows: "Do not go to Inyo County. We are going to turn that country dry."

I then mentioned the fact that Geo. Chaffey, with whom I was well acquainted, had purchased the Shepard ranch south of Independence and asked him if there was possibility of their acquiring that place. He replied to this effect: "Has Geo. Chaffey purchased that ranch? If he has we will certainly turn that back to sagebrush."

I visited the valley, however, and was so impressed with the fertility of the soil and the apparent abundance of water that I came to the valley have remained here since.

E. M. NORDYKE.

State of California, }
County of Inyo. } ss.

Fred Naphan, being first duly sworn, deposes and says:

That, in or about January, 1924, in conversation with F. W. Heitman, one of the plaintiffs in an injunction suit restraining the sale of bonds of the Owens Valley Irrigation District on January 1, 1924, at Heitman's ranch east of Bishop, I asked him if he was not afraid of being sued for damages by the district, and he replied, in effect, that he was not afraid

of that as he was guaranteed by contract that the city would secure them against damages in that case.

Later Heitman showed me this contract which was signed by George Watterson, L. C. Hall and Wm. Symons and which stated, in effect, that the signatories would guarantee any damages which might be secured.

FRED NAPHAN.

Subscribed and sworn to before me
this 1st day of December, 1924.

FRED R. SMITH,

- Notary Public in and for the County
of Inyo, State of California.

Laws, Cal., December 13, 1924.

Mr. W. F. McClure,

Dear Sir:

In compliance with your request I am submitting the following facts in regard to the transaction with the city of Los Angeles concerning my property.

The city agreed to buy same about August 15, 1924, at prices agreed upon and to pay as soon as my certificate of title was ready, this I had some delay with on account of the Manzanar deal being just ahead of mine. Consequently I had to await my turn to have my title certified to, and which I received about October 1, and was then at once turned over to the city's attorney.

They have told me that the Board of Public Works approved the sale and their attorney has passed on the title.

Mr. W. B. Mathews has told me that he would recommend to the board that they settle up. Also Judge Lamar, who also is their attorney, told me the same thing.

I sent to the Federal Land Bank, from which I have a loan, to have my papers released and sent to the Inyo County Bank. They have recently received word that if the loan was not taken up they wanted the papers returned to them by January 1, 1925.

I have also been instructed by the Federal Land Bank that I must proceed to spend \$600 of the loan I received to be used for a pump and improving ground above the ditch, which is absolutely throwing money away as far as any benefit to me, if I am compelled to proceed with this at this time.

I was intending to build a home on lots which I own in Laws and which they would not take in their deal with me, but I have been unable to do so until I receive my money. Now the freezing weather will prevent putting in cement work until spring.

If you can do anything to help bring things to a settlement, it will be greatly appreciated.

I am,

Very respectfully yours,

J. L. GISH.

From the Los Angeles Times, November 18, 1924.

THE AQUEDUCT CRISIS.

A crisis was reached in the Owens River Valley water dispute on Sunday when 100 residents of the valley forcibly opened the Alabama waste gates of the Los Angeles Aqueduct five miles north of Lone Pine and turned practically the entire flow of the aqueduct into the bed of the Owens River, of water, while not imperiling the city's supply, is serious.

This illegal act was the climax of a conflict that started years ago, and in the last twelve months has assumed a more serious aspect. The ranchers of the Owens Valley declare that their farms and homes are being gradually destroyed by the various steps taken by Los Angeles in connection with the maintenance of an adequate water supply for the city. They bitterly resent the manner—to them harsh and confiscatory—in which this end has been attained.

On May 21 of this year the feeling culminated in the first overt protest of violence when the ranchers dynamited a section of the aqueduct near Lone Pine, apparently not with the intention of inflicting serious damage on the city's property but to call public attention forcibly to the situation. A second lawless act, following further legal delays, was the kidnapping of a Los Angeles attorney, sent to Bishop to represent the city. He was sent away with a warning that he had better not return.

A commission of city officials and citizens visited the valley and listened to the farmers. They looked the situation over from a more or less neutral standpoint and made recommendations as a result of which the city formulated an offer to the ranchers. This proposition was fair enough from the city's standpoint, but was not acceptable to the ranchers. The next move was the "seizure" of the big ditch by the Owens Valley farmers on Sunday and an appeal by the sheriff of Inyo County to Governor Richardson for troops. This the Governor has wisely refused, pending developments to show that troops are actually necessary.

It is to be remembered that *these farmers are not anarchists nor bomb-throwers but, in the main, honest, earnest hardworking American citizens who look upon Los Angeles as an octopus about to strangle out their lives.* They have put themselves hopelessly in the wrong by taking the law into their own hands but that is not to say that there has not been a measure of justice on their side of the argument—so long as it remained an argument and not an appeal to dynamite and force.

It is to the hard work of such men as the ranchers of Owens River Valley that California largely owes its present wealth. It was such pioneers who by settling up the back country laid the foundation for rich and prosperous cities. Many of them were in the valley before the aqueduct was built. *Without water their homes are ruined, their towns must be abandoned, their valley return to the desert. They must move elsewhere and start again.* Under such conditions they are hardly to be blamed for seeking as high as possible a price for their lands and for resenting methods of acquisition by the city which, under other circumstances, would be merely businesslike.

The conflict between the city of Los Angeles and the ranchers of the Owens River Valley must be one between right and right, not between

might and might. It must be settled on the principle of the greatest good to the greatest number with the proper safeguarding of the poorest as well as the wealthiest contestant. *For the city to use its immense power to gain an unfair advantage over the settlers in the Owens River Valley is as intolerable as for the settlers to resort to violence.*

If the city of Los Angeles needs all the water that flows from the melted snows of Mt. Whitney it is rich enough to compensate amply, *even generously, every rancher who will suffer by the transaction.* It is not a time to drive the hardest possible bargain. *The city can afford to be liberal in its settlement with these pioneers whose work of half a century it will undo.*

The present tactics of the ranchers are, from their own standpoint, the worst they could adopt. Lawless violence has never yet accomplished an enduring right and never will. The farmers complain with justice of the law's interminable delay in handing down equitable decisions on the legal points involved, declaring that in the meantime Los Angeles is draining the lifeblood of the valley. Yet it is only through disinterested adjudication of the issues, either by the courts or by a commission alike acceptable to the farmers and the city, that justice can be done.

The Times believes that the situation is susceptible to such a solution and that both sides would consent to such disinterested arbitration, agreeing to abide by the result.

In the meantime, The Times counsels moderation on both sides—a spirit of restraint on the part of the ranchers and one of generosity on that of the city. One more hot-headed mistake may precipitate a situation that will be a blot on our record for the rest of time. There are few differences which reasonable human beings can not compromise.

There must be no civil war in southern California.

From The Bee, Sacramento, November 19, 1924.

GOVERNOR SENDS STATE ENGINEER IN TROOPS' STEAD.

McClure Will Report on Inyo Water Situation; Can Not Understand Sheriff's Helplessness.

Governor Friend W. Richardson today dispatched State Engineer W. F. McClure to Inyo County as a "messenger of peace" in the water war that is on between the land owners of the Owens River district and the city of Los Angeles.

In a statement, in which he reiterated his stand that nothing has occurred to date warranting the sending of troops to Inyo County, Governor Richardson said:

"So far nothing has occurred to warrant any aggressive action on my part. The sheriff has power to maintain the law and carry out the orders of the court. He admits in a telegram to me that the citizens are all without arms.

"Surely a sheriff and his deputies can control men without weapons. I feel hopeful that the sheriff will do his duty fearlessly without regard to political consequences. In the end a sheriff must gain in respect by being a man and bravely carrying out the orders of court.

"It seems strange that those who are aggressors should ask for troops, while those who are injured have gone into court. It seems equally

strange that a sheriff should want guardsmen to suppress an alleged mob of unarmed men.

"I have sent State Engineer W. F. McClure to Inyo County to investigate and report to me. He is thoroughly familiar with the water problems there. He goes as a messenger of peace to observe and make recommendations.

"The responsibility of settling the controversy between Inyo farmers and the Los Angeles city water district rests with the courts and not with me. McClure has no authority in the premises. He simply goes to investigate for me."

From the Inyo Register, December 4, 1924.

HOW A CITY'S MIGHT HAS PREVAILED FOR RUIN OF FARMING COMMUNITIES.

Nearly Twenty Years Marked with Injustice—Even Government Functions Perverted for Los Angeles.

A Summary of History of Noted Aqueduct. During Nearly Twenty Years City's Record Shows Bad Faith, Duplicity, to Win, Regardless of Right.

While a large number of extra copies of last week's issue were printed, they were not enough to meet the demand. The review of aqueduct history is therefore reprinted, and copies can be supplied while the extra supply of papers lasts.

Owens Valley has been in the limelight of publicity of late, because of the seizure of the Los Angeles Aqueduct spillway by citizens, a step designed to secure some sort of settlement of issues which have lasted nearly twenty years. Before entering into an explanation of the situation, it is well to have a view of the valley.

Owens Valley.

Bordered on the west by the highest of the Sierras, Owens Valley is roughly 100 miles long and of widths varying from eight to fifteen or more miles. It is watered by a score or so of mountain creeks, and by Owens River, which runs along its eastern side. The visitor entering from the south first reaches Lone Pine, surrounded by lands most of which have been bought by Los Angeles and which are reverting to primitive wastes. Next to the north is Manzanar, a large body of fine level land on which many orchards were thriving before Los Angeles bought the streams used for irrigation, but now doomed to destruction. A two-teacher school will next year have but seven pupils. Independence, the county seat, is no longer the central point for many fine farms; the ground is there, but from beneath it, the water is being forced by power pumps and from the surface the streams are being taken to pour into the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Camp Independence and Aberdeen are two or three miles and a dozen miles, respectively, beyond; Aberdeen is defending itself against ruinous subdrainage; the other is already in transition from productive acreage to the waste that ownership by Los Angeles has come to mean. Here and there along the way through the valley are other abandoned farms, decaying and neglected houses. Big Pine

is next, its business men facing loss of all they have built because the city has bought the surrounding farms. Once fine orchards and splendid fields bordered the roadside, the trees dying, the fields destroyed for usefulness by the taking of their irrigation supply for the aqueduct. Across the valley spreads the blight of Los Angeles, until gradually the Bishop area is entered. Here many other farms and homes are doomed as elsewhere, but here also is the only section in which the city's influence is not predominant. And even here it is in one way predominant, for values and credit have largely been destroyed by the uncertainty of the future. In Bishop is found a thoroughly modern town of 1500 or more population, a \$200,000 high school, said to be one of the three best in details west of Salt Lake City, and every advantage of many much larger places. And here is the center and strength of the antagonism to the course of Los Angeles domination.

American Communities.

This is but the merest sketch, omitting columns which might be told to give a right idea of the section which has been driven to defense of its rights. It is a valley of high productiveness, and which but for its plundering by Los Angeles would be supporting several times its present population. The population is American; no foreign element has colonized or invaded here. Intelligent, sound citizenship is the rule; education high in average. Fine school buildings are found from one end of the valley to the other—some of them, alas, doomed to be almost unused in the future. It has been said by observers that in Bishop more collegians are to be found than in nearly any other California town of equal size. Inyo has a reading, studying people. Churches, fraternities and clubs are many. This is the class of people who lately seized the Los Angeles aqueduct; and appreciating these facts of population, a reasonable conclusion must be that "there's a reason."

Water Not for Municipal Use.

One more fact is to be understood in considering the controversy between Los Angeles and Owens Valley, to wit: The city is not after more water for meeting its own corporate needs, but for irrigating lands nearer to its own borders, or taken within them in order to give the color of municipal use to such irrigation. It has water enough for every use that is legitimately a part of city government. Let that not be forgotten.

A Twenty-Year War.

The issue between city and valley makes a long story, impossible to fully tell within the limits of any newspaper article. Can one tell the story of the World War in such space? Without intimating that the local matter parallels that cataclysm in details of magnitude, it is not easier to fully cover the twenty years of contention, of injustice, of broken faith, in small limits in the one case than in the other. So in what follows, lengthy though it may be, there are important omissions; mere assertions may have to answer for matters, details of which could be supplied and verified to chapter length.

The Reclamation Project.

In 1903 the Reclamation Service began investigations for a project in Owens Valley. It was welcomed by the citizens, among whom were those who had located storage sites at mountain lakes. Officers of the service said that public cooperation was essential, and in consequence an agreement was circulated and generally signed, in effect placing the valley's water rights, acquired by years of appropriation and use, at the disposal of the service when the project should require them. The storage locations were also placed at the command of the government, to be incorporated in the big plan which would develop these resources on a scale utterly beyond any private enterprise. The service preliminary plan was to provide two high-line canals, covering all farm lands; to drain lowlands which had been overwatered, and in general a development project of the highest importance.

The project was found feasible in all respects; and it was estimated that it could be completed at a lower cost per acre than any other that had been constructed by the service. A board of engineers was called to pass upon it, as was the practice. J. B. Lippincott, then at the head of reclamation affairs in California, agreed as to the feasibility, but advocated that the whole enterprise be placed at the disposal of the city of Los Angeles for a domestic water supply. The board denied this and recommended following the original plan. Mr. Lippincott's position was somewhat peculiar, for while acting as the state head of an important government function, he was at the same time being paid by the city of Los Angeles to report on the finding of a water supply, and his report in that matter was diametrically opposed to the fulfillment of reclamation purposes.

What Uncle Sam Did.

Lippincott was near to F. H. Newell, government reclamation head. Newell was enlisted in the city cause, so effectually that the water board of Los Angeles passed a resolution of appreciation of his help. However proper that may have been, it is a notable fact that the official holding the copy of the letter to him was directed to destroy it "in order that it might not be used to the detriment of the city and those who had aided it."

A few of the more important facts of that period of aqueduct history will suffice. The Los Angeles water board maintained that their purpose was to provide water for domestic and municipal use. A report by Lippincott showed that 2500 inches in addition to the supply then available would suffice for the anticipated population in 1925. Congressman Sylvester C. Smith, representing the Inyo district, proposed this plan: The water of the Owens River watershed to be allotted, first, to the owners of vested rights in the valley; second, 10,000 inches to the city for its municipal and domestic use; third, to irrigation in Owens Valley; and fourth, any surplus then remaining to belong to the city. Secretary Hitchcock approved this but the Los Angeles forces then in Washington, then as now including W. B. Mathews, objected. Newell, already mentioned, was a friend of Pinchot, who was one of President Roosevelt's "tennis cabinet" and by use of these and other influences the President was induced to command the striking out of the aqueduct bill all limitation on the water allowed to the city. The adoption of a bill granting

the aqueduct right of way, and the final turning over to the city of all the documents and maps of the Owens Valley reclamation project gave the city full possession of the field. It should have been stated earlier that the first work toward the great enterprise was the purchase of some 70,000 acres of land in the southern part of Owens Valley. With other acquisitions, the city succeeded to the storage filings of the citizens; that is, the latter's rights had been abandoned, and the service left these sites open for the city.

City Made "Over Lord."

The Forestry Bureau also served a purpose in the plan, for Pinchot, its chief, withdrew all agricultural land in Owens Valley on the preposterous pretense of its being "forest"—this in a valley where one could look for miles without seeing a tree unless it had been planted by a settler. This stopped land locations and settlement, for the city's benefit. Unreasonable and unjust as this was, it was not until 1912 that the land was again opened for settlement. True, in the meantime certain homesteading was permitted, but every such application was referred to the city of Los Angeles for approval. For all practical purposes, the city of Los Angeles became the national government in relation to Owens Valley land affairs. Where there was no law to cover some desired point, a rubber stamp order from a department served the purpose. Los Angeles was the suzerain of Owens Valley.

Long Valley Dam.

One of the early plans of the aqueduct was to construct a dam 140 feet high in Long Valley, controlling the headwaters of Owens River. Purchases made by Fred Eaton for the city included a large acreage in Long Valley, and that acreage Eaton retained in the final settlement. He gave the city an easement for the land which a 100-foot dam would flood. Building the dam to 140 or 150 feet high would, of course, flood much more land, to which the city has no right—and to the fact that the city has no easement for the added area, that it is owned by Fred Eaton, the present situation is largely due, but of that, more hereafter.

Three of the most noted engineers of the country, Schuyler, Freeman and Stearns, were employed by the city to report on the aqueduct and on the proposed Long Valley dam. Mulholland acted with them and concurred in and signed the report, which was unanimous in approving the dam site as safe for a dam of the maximum height proposed.

But Mulholland built his aqueduct and did not build the dam—an error from which came subsequent trouble.

City Breaks Promises.

Los Angeles defined no policy toward Owens Valley, and repeated urgings were barren of results until 1913. In that April a conference was held in Bishop, those participating being local ditch representatives and Mulholland, Mathews and Shenk, of Los Angeles. Various points of differences were discussed and an agreement reached satisfactory to all concerned. A friendly suit was to be brought by the city and the agreed points given force by a court decree. Months passed along, without action, and finally the Valley people were informed that a suit

had been brought by a Los Angeles taxpayer to prevent the agreement being made. In view of the manner in which all other propositions have been handled by the city, it is not strange if some questioned the bona fide nature of the suit; however that may be, the whole matter died in some Los Angeles pigeonhole.

Finally the city wanted another aqueduct bill passed, ostensibly to correct details of the right of way grant. The people of Inyo were informed that the bill was identical with one which had been introduced at an earlier Congress and then lost in the mass of last-hour legislation. It was found that there were material differences, however; these were adjusted to the satisfaction of Inyo. Mr. Mathews promised explicitly that if Inyo would withdraw the opposition which had been effective in holding up this new bill he would see, on his return from Washington, that the long sidetracked agreement would be taken care of. The opposition was withdrawn. Nothing was done toward the agreement for months, until finally Inyo succeeded in getting a new proposal. Its details were not all acceptable, however, and the effort came to nothing. Two of the men who had represented Inyo later became agents of the city in Owens Valley.

Then work began on the proposed storage dam in Long Valley. It was found by the Inyoites that it was proposed to build a dam which would store but 68,000 acre-feet of water. Included in the plan was a power project which would require a flow of 300 second-feet daily, which would continue during the non-irrigation season as well as at other times, and therefore leave but a comparatively small amount of stored water for dry seasons—in fact the figures of engineers showed that this would mean a short supply of water one-third of the year. The Inyoites desired a dam not less than 140 feet high, which would provide a reservoir meeting all needs at any time for which records were available. Without such assurance the valley ditches did not propose to have their water supply under the city's control, and by suit enjoined interference with the river's normal flow by any inadequate dam. Though Mulholland had reported, with his more eminent associates, that the site was suitable for the higher dam, he now took the ground that it would not be safe. The real reason for this is generally believed to be a personal feud between Mulholland and Eaton, some of whose land would have to be bought if the larger reservoir were built.

Another factor entering into the storage of Owens River water is the possession by the Southern Sierras Power Company of a mile of the Owens River gorge. This channel was the property of a company largely owned by Edson F. Adams, of Oakland. The city of Los Angeles held an option on this property at a comparatively low price, but failed to exercise it. There's an interesting story in this, too, but for this article suffice it to say that the power company snapped up what the city neglected. Los Angeles brought suit to condemn the power company holdings, which were part of the system supplying electric current to Riverside, San Bernardino and other southern counties, but this effort was in vain. At present the company holds a mile of canyon of importance in the city's power program, and holds it only because the city neglected an opportunity.

Local Traitors.

Moving on to another high point in the story, Owens Valley leaders decided that organization of an irrigation district would protect Owens Valley rights, and such a district, covering about 54,000 acres, was organized in January, 1923, by a vote of 599 to 25. Its purpose was to "tie the water to the land" by acquiring title to the ditches. Before further action was taken by the district, George Watterson and William Symons, two of the supposedly loyal Inyoites who had helped to negotiate one of the rejected agreements, and L. C. Hall, an attorney, busied themselves in buying lands under the McNally Ditch, one of the older canals of the valley. In this buying, as in many other instances, lying as to the purpose and identity of the buying interest was used. About two-thirds of the McNally Ditch area was first optioned, each option carrying the voting of its water stock. The minority owners were ignored, at this stage, their property isolated by drying up adjoining ranches. Many families moved away. Values of the remaining properties were depreciated at least fifty per cent—in fact left with no possibility of sale except to the city. Owners in some cases were mortgaged; the unsettled condition and the city menace destroyed the borrowing value, and as mortgages became due there was no choice for many, but to make the best terms they were able with the city. They could not remain and keep up a continued fight with the city for water through the ditch they had helped to build.

The McNally Ditch Board had earlier agreed to turn over its water rights to the irrigation district, with the other ditches of the valley. Symons, already mentioned, a large beneficiary from sales of land for good prices (he being one of those well favored in the buying) as well as from commissions for his work for the city, was unfortunately president of the McNally Board. The majority of stock, being held by the city, was voted to oust all but one of the loyal Inyo directors, who were replaced with city figureheads. The board, thus shaped for Los Angeles purposes, rescinded its action favoring the irrigation district, and proceeded to vote to sell the ditch with its 7000-inch right for \$175,000—\$25 an inch for water—the city being the buyer.

In the meantime, notwithstanding the conquest of the McNally area by the city, the irrigation district voted 702 for, 80 against, to issue \$1,650,000 of bonds with which to secure the water of the ditches. This was a nominal figure, being only a consideration for turning over control to the district, the water to be by it distributed to the same users as before. It simply served to guarantee that the water could not be taken away from the district.

City Schemers.

When time came for selling the bonds, injunction suits were filed by two dummies, whom the city hirelings guaranteed against loss or damage. W. B. Mathews and others of the Los Angeles circle had maintained that they desired the district to function; this case, as well as others, proved the hollowness of their professions. Their minions operating in Inyo served as the ostensible objectors, but surely would have assumed no

such responsibility without the sanction of their superiors. A permanent injunction was denied, but the damage had been done. Though bidders had come to take up the entire bond issue at as favorable rate as any sales in the state, the existing complications damaged such prospects. Later some four or five hundred thousand dollars of the bonds were sold at a considerable discount.

Then suit was brought by Symons to declare the district void. Another procedure was filed more directly by the moving powers, the city, to prevent the ditches of the district taking water from the river as they had done for years, the city claiming it all. This was an effort to compel the several ditches to fight out the question of prior rights, thus creating local dissensions for the city's benefit. The prevalent custom in the valley, for many years, has been one of give and take; in low water seasons the river flow has been used by one ditch or another as the need happened to be greatest, and apportioned without standing on points of priority but of neighborliness. This last suit, obviously only a means of harassing Owens Valley owners, has been postponed from time to time at request of Los Angeles.

In the extremely dry season of 1923 the river's flow was insufficient for the ditches. The city had paid a large amount of money for lands under the McNally Ditch, expecting to leave the lands dry and run the water down the river to Haiwee Reservoir. A little lower down, the headgate of Big Pine Canal was ready to receive whatever river flow came that far, and no water went past it. At this junction, city forces began digging a cut-off across the neck of land at the point of which the Big Pine headgate was located. Had this gone on, the river would soon have cut a new channel and left the irrigators high and dry. A guard of riflemen soon put a stop to that scheme.

Came another offer of agreement, on terms which all ditches except the Big Pine canal were ready to accept. That company refused its assent, and the matter fell through. It was afterward found that city agents had been busy in the Big Pine vicinity for some days. One of the conditions of the proposed agreement was that the city should buy no more west of Owens River. It developed that at the very time the agreement was being presented by city men for local consideration John H. Martin, city land buyer, was busy trying to do business in the forbidden area.

The continued uncertainty was undoubtedly the fact which brought about the dynamiting of a small section of the aqueduct in May. That the affair was meant only as a notice to speed up on action is a certainty; the damage done was very slight, though the perpetrators could have put their shot in a dozen places where real harm to the aqueduct would have resulted. The city made great talk about punishing somebody but was satisfied with talking. The incident served to broadcast the situation over the coast, and had a somewhat stimulating effect on the dilatory policy of the city.

Report Suppressed.

Ere long the committee of fairminded men came from the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce to investigate for themselves. They had every facility for acquiring knowledge, and their expression in Inyo proved that their eyes had been opened to facts not before known to them. Some results were hoped for, but at this writing nothing further has been

heard of a report. Says the Los Angeles Record in relation to it: "This report favorable to the farmers of Owens Valley . . . was made by the committee. Because the report was unfavorable to Mulholland, the water engineer's friends had it tabled despite its obviously truthful presentation of the facts."

City's Alleged "Policy."

The next ambassadors were engineers Lippincott, Hill and Sondereger. Their report, while having the appearance of editing by Mulholland, outlined a plan for leaving an untouched area of the Bishop section amounting to 30,000 acres. In October, the Public Service Commission adopted a so-called "policy" which was brought to Bishop recently. It proposed that 30,000 acres of land should remain undisturbed; but Mathews, as chief negotiator, made it clear that the city expected to remain free to pick and choose property here and there as it might desire. No positively undisturbed area would be defined. One of the locally damaging features of the present situation is that no one can tell what part of the valley will be invaded by the city buyers, what section will be lessened in value by drying up part of its lands and reduction of its population. One of the contentions has been that the city should make its purpose clear—say that it does or does not intend to buy, and if buying further, in what section. Some guarantee on this point would relieve the rest of the valley and establish some degree of value and confidence. The people want an end of the checkerboard system of buying that has proved so disastrous; but the offer mentioned, to which certain Los Angeles men point as an offered "fair settlement," is in reality no promise of any policy different from that pursued in the past. It amounted to nothing.

On this occasion, the Los Angeles delegation, though first professing to have full power to act, could not negotiate on any line different from one exactly laid down for it. "When will you come back with an answer?" Mathews was asked when he said certain matters must be taken under advisement. "Before I go to Washington, I hope." "You are not sure?" "No." "And when do you go to Washington?" "About the first of December, to stay for a month, at least." While men and women are distracted by financial troubles caused by the city's method, and requiring immediate solution, they are expected to await the convenience of the southern lordships.

Conditions during the past year especially have not only damaged business through removal of many families from the city lands, but have virtually destroyed values and made all property, town and country, unsalable. The credit of the valley has been so crippled that the Federal Land Bank and the State Land Bank, while admitting the splendid merit of Inyo farm property, has refused to make more loans. Other money lenders want their money from owners who, because of the untoward situation, are unable to profitably work their places or to turn elsewhere for relief. The final shock of this series of facts came when a World War veteran, owning a fine piece of land sought a loan from the state's veteran's fund. He was informed that a loan could not be made because his property is in Inyo County. Under such a situation, many men and women who had hoped to spend their remaining days in this valley of their choice, this community which in some cases their parents helped to win in Indian warfare and when they dug canals that made

desert into oasis, see no way out except to give up the unequal struggle against a ruthless, unscrupulous and powerful enemy. And enemy is what they term the officials who misrule the destiny of Los Angeles. No one holds the least faith in any promise emanating from the water management of that city.

Patience was nearing its end. Promise after promise by the city has been broken and there has been no belief that a different policy would prevail so long as the present dynasty rules there. Thus came about the seizure of the Alabama Hills spillway. How many did it is unimportant—there were enough. They were but the representatives about whom immediately rallied a practically unanimous public sentiment. During the time of holding the gates, from 300 to 1000 persons were there daily, the men to watch if need be, the women to provide for them. The town of Bishop was practically closed for business purposes for there days while its business and professional men shared in the vigil with their farmer neighbors. When the Clearing House Association of Los Angeles promised to use its best effort for an immediate adjustment, the gates were closed, and the aqueduct current went on its way to Haiwee reservoir. But the concession to the promise was not made without argument; and it is more than probable that if the untruthful report printed in the Los Angeles Examiner of November 21st had been foreseen, the water would still be wasting into Owens River and lake.

The Inyo grand jury made an extended inquiry into the situation this fall, having before it statements from practically all the civic organization of the valley. Its report condemned the methods of the city of Los Angeles, attributing the mental and financial evils existing to the "unfair acts and dealings of the Public Service Commission of the city of Los Angeles," and demanded a definite statement of policy of further actions toward Inyo County.

The city of Los Angeles has shrewdly done its work under color of lawful proceedings. It is horrified at the actions of men who invoke a law higher than the statutes, and its officials feel duty bound to mouth threats as to consequences to the disturbers. That is all sound and fury, signifying nothing. They knew better than to add fuel to the flame. They must talk to save their faces.

The same city, so shocked at a demonstration outside of written law, did not hesitate, or its agents did not, to dynamite an irrigation dam, nor did it hesitate, until rifles commanded a different course, to try to ruin a valley irrigation system as has already been mentioned. It drilled many wells to pump water from beneath and drain and ruin the lands of farmers whom it has not bought out. A sample of its regard for law and justice: The daughter of a pioneer Indian fighter lived on a tract she had inherited from her father, located over fifty years ago. It was watered from two creeks. There she and her husband spent most of their lives, and they and ten children won a living. The husband died. The city came along and bought adjoining places, but the widow did not wish to sell. Soon she found that she could not obtain water for irrigation; when the streams were turned upon her land, as for years, they were interfered with. The last year she remained there she could not get irrigation water enough to raise feed for one cow. Could she fight the city of Los Angeles? She sold, under this compulsion. "We have dealt fairly," say Mulholland and others. Just such samples of

the city's fairness can be matched in many cases, differing only in details of meanness or pettiness of the paid agents.

Governor Richardson has seen fit to reflect on the courage of Inyo officers in dealing with a group of unarmed men. The Governor has no understanding of the situation. Inyo's public buildings would not have been large enough to hold those who would not have stepped forward to take the places of whoever might be taken from the scene. An arrest might have met only passive resistance, but to drag one dead-weight prisoner to a car, and another, and another up to several hundreds would have been preposterous—if there had been submission to such a program. There might have been—there might not. Nobody at the aqueduct gate was unwilling to share the penalties of his neighbors—and nobody there had the least idea of tamely standing punishment for defending his livelihood and his home. There was not a firearm on the hill; but any attempt to force eviction by any authority except on the people's own terms would have meant bloody battle. Nor would that have been all; beyond question it would have meant a blow to the aqueduct that would have dwarfed all earlier happenings. For do you think that men who have been driven to the last ditch by schemers who have openly said they would get the property for half price would lay down? There were men on the hill at the spillway who practically face ruin because of the city's machinations; men who are seeing the work of a lifetime destroyed. These men and women are Americans of one of the most thoroughly American communities in California—add that to your other information about those whom mouthpieces of the city officials term “mob,” “anarchists,” and so on. They are people intelligent, well informed, resolute and determined. The rest you can supply for yourself on this foundation.

These people are as law-abiding as are to be found—else their protests against the injustices of the city would long ago have taken other forms. They have been remarkably patient under the most trying circumstances. I have written “they,” make it “we,” for this community has no division in this matter.

Owens Valleyans did not “lay down” in peacefully departing for their homes after receiving a promise from a responsible source that their wrongs would receive attention. They were willing to wait a little longer—but not too long; let that be borne in mind. Pur-blind officials who have trifled with and almost destroyed prosperous communities should make no mistake as to the continued seriousness of the Owens Valley situation. Withdrawal of valley men from the seized gates has not settled the issue.

Last summer's dynamiting of a small bit of aqueduct wall was nothing serious; it was merely a warning, just as was the aqueduct seizure. “Press agent stuff,” said a Los Angeles official. If so, it did something worth while toward making conditions known. And “press agent stuff” again parrots the same officer. Very well; nothing less would have shown the Los Angeles people that perhaps after all their gods may have feet of clay. The city is getting a little of the sort of advertising its methods richly deserve.

Inyo has no resentment at the city, but at those who are permitted to lord it over Owens Valley for a score of years. The development of one of the best parts of California has been crippled, possibly killed, by the whims and the contemptuous faithlessness of those men. Surely the

affairs of Los Angeles can be put into the hands of individuals who believe in keeping faith and in decent justice and fairness; if not, then upon Los Angeles must fall the blame.

The first Inyo announcement of the aqueduct scheme, published in this paper August 3, 1905, was headed: "Los Angeles Plots Destruction—Would Take Owens River, Lay Lands Waste, Ruin People, Homes and Communities." These words were only too prophetic. And another article, headed "In Unity is the Only Hope," pointed out a fact which, neglected, accounts for Owens Valley's present plight.

And this is all only too true.

From Owens Valley Herald, December 27, 1922.

IRRIGATION DISTRICT CARRIES BY 599 TO 27.

People Decide to Form Irrigation District by Nearly Unanimous Vote—Means Future Prosperity of Valley.

The most important event in the development of Owens Valley was written into history on Tuesday of this week when the voters of the Big Pine and Bishop sections placed their stamp of approval on an irrigation district for this part of the valley—the vote being 599 for and 27 against. The vote for the district was more overwhelming than even its most ardent supporters had dreamed of.

From the Owens Valley Herald, January 24, 1923.

THE CRISIS.

The solution of our water problem, both as regards local litigation among the different ditch companies, and the danger of Los Angeles' further encroachments, appears to rest entirely with the turning of all the water of the different ditch companies over to the recently organized irrigation district. In that way both of these dangers will be avoided for all time to come. If there is any other way to secure the protection that is needed it has never been made public. It appears that this is the only way that this country can be secure in its water rights, and without this security the future of this section is nothing but black.

* * * * *

That the owners of the different ditch companies are looking at this matter in the right light is shown by the action of the Big Pine Canal and the McNally Ditch Company in the action both of these companies took last week in voting to *turn their water over to the district*. That the lead they took will be followed by the rest of the ditch companies seems to be an assured fact. And when it is all over, and the water is owned and controlled by the district, Owens Valley should enter upon a period of prosperity such as those who live here never dreamed of before.

From Owens Valley Herald, March 21, 1923.

FRIENDS.

The action of Geo. Watterson, L. C. Hall and Wm. Symons, in being parties to securing of options for the city of Los Angeles, can be justified in no way. The fact that their action in this matter has probably been the biggest benefit that has ever accrued to this section is in spite of the fact that they did this—not on account of them doing it. For what they did was not done for the good of this valley as a whole, or for the good of the water and land owners under the McNally Ditch. Had they tried to protect these people they would have secured a blanket option, whereby everyone could be protected, instead of leaving the future of forty-nine per cent of these people in the hands of the city—provided that it takes up a part of these options and not all of them.

The people under the McNally Ditch have land and water for sale. They can not be blamed for selling it. But for the three men above mentioned to put these people in the fix that they now are—absolutely at the mercy of the city—is nothing short of criminal.

Had they wanted to play the game square with all concerned they would have protected these people.

In not doing so they have forfeited every right that they have ever claimed to the respect of the people of this entire valley.

From Owens Valley Herald, April 4, 1923.

IRRIGATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS TAKE FIRM STAND.

A meeting of the directors of the Owens Valley Irrigation District was held last Tuesday afternoon and the matter of protecting all of the land owners under the McNally Ditch Company was discussed at length.

There was absolutely no question about the stand that the directors of the irrigation district would take in this matter. They agreed that if the land and water owners under the McNally Ditch wished to sell their holdings that they had a moral right to do so, and that the only thing that the irrigation district would insist on was that the city purchase all of these lands, if it purchased any of them, thus giving the people of the east side every protection that the irrigation district possibly could give them.

From Owens Valley Herald, April 4, 1923.

McNALLY DITCH MEETING SHOWS PEOPLE ARE PROTECTED.

The meeting of the stockholders of the McNally Ditch Company at Laws last Saturday afternoon was a wonderful and fearful affair. It was called ostensibly by Los Angeles' local representatives to have the stockholders in the McNally Ditch rescind the action they took in January in voting to sell their water, ditch rights, etc., to the Owens Valley Irriga-

tion District. And during the afternoon a vote was taken on this question but whether it carried or not is still in doubt—and it makes little difference—for under the laws governing irrigation districts it will take much more than a two-thirds vote of the stockholders of any ditch company to undo the work that has been done in the formation of this district and the tying of the water to the district.

H. A. Van Norman and E. F. Leahey were at the meeting as the accredited representatives of Los Angeles, while all of the officers of the irrigation district were also present. In addition to these men there were many of the stockholders of the McNally Ditch and other ditch companies on the west side of the river present.

After the first preliminaries were over L. C. Hall took the floor and made as dirty and disgraceful a talk as was probably ever made at any meeting. His talk throughout was well worthy of the man who made it—dirty, vindictive, malicious, insulting and insolent. He worked himself into a frenzy on the chances that the people of this section were talking with the men who were now representing them, instead of casting their fortunes with the "Moses" of Los Angeles, who he pictured as the only ones who would lead them out of their present troubles into the haven of prosperity. He launched a tirade against the directors of the irrigation district, against the Owens Valley Protective Association, against the "subsidized press," as he lyingly called it—in fact against everyone whom his "brain storm" could conjure up as against the interests that he represented. His talk throughout was absolutely disgusting—to say the least. In no way did he stay on the subject that the meeting was called for, and many times was interrupted for transgressing; but Wm. Symons, who presided, allowed him to continue in his abuse without calling him down.

W. W. Watterson was the spokesman for the directors of the irrigation district, and if there ever was a contrast between the two speakers, the contrast was shown in this case. Mr. Watterson in a gentlemanly way explained to those of the McNally Ditch present that the only object that the irrigation district had in this matter was to protect the people of the east side, in every way possible, and that the directors of the irrigation district did not intend to stand in the way of the McNally Ditch owners selling their property if it was advantageous for them to do so, and all of them could sell, and that the irrigation district would stand squarely behind the land and water users of the McNally Ditch in protecting them against any harm. And he made it plain, very plain, that ALL WOULD BE PROTECTED, not merely a few.

H. A. Van Norman, speaking for the city stated that it was the intention of Los Angeles to buy all of the McNally Ditch water, and if any of the owners had not been approached for an option that he was ready to sign up these options at once. He stated that the City would buy all of this water at a proper price, but this price would be determined by engineers and appraisers. He also stated that the city would not touch any of this property as long as there was a cloud on it, and that they would buy all of it or none.

When questioned, Mr. Van Norman admitted that the only one protected in any way by the options that were recently secured on this water

was the city of Los Angeles—that the land and water owners were in no way protected by these options either as to price or in any other way.

Withal, the meeting accomplished little, unless it was to show the differences between those who are working for the best interests of the people of the McNally Ditch, and the bitterness and hatred of L. C. Hall and others with whom he is at present training.

From Owens Valley Herald, May 30, 1923.

CLAIMS MADE THAT CITY WILL PAY OUT ONLY \$300,000.

Just why such reports should be circulated by representatives of the city of Los Angeles as are circulated is, in a way, a mystery. In this day and age of honor in business dealings it certainly seems strange that men who are held high in the municipal affairs of a city of the size of Los Angeles should in any way tell things that would tend to impair their honor or the honor of the city with which they are associated.

But from all facts at hand it would appear that the higher up representatives of the city either are not bound by this honor or else they believe that the people here are a bunch of boobs, and do not have to be reckoned with very seriously. In this latter belief they may be right. Time will tell.

When negotiations were first started for the purchase of the McNally Ditch, W. B. Mathews, chief counsel for Los Angeles, made the statement that the city had on hand \$1,000,000 for the purchase of these rights and when that was used up that the city would have the balance of the money ready. That they intended to purchase this entire property. Now comes J. T. Martin, the man who has represented the city in the closing of these deals and in the payment of the money and states that the city will not pay more than \$800,000 for the property. Now here are two statements, made by men high up in the city's employ, which two statements absolutely contradict each other. The purchase price was first figured at around \$1,500,000.

Just why Mr. Martin should make this statement that the city would invest but \$800,000 in McNally Ditch property is, of course, not known to the common herd. But it would look very much like he wanted to frighten the people of the McNally Ditch section into accepting such terms as the city might dictate in the purchase of this property. One thing is certain and that is either Mr. Mathews or Mr. Martin are misrepresenting things to the people of that section.

It is a well known fact that many properties under the McNally Ditch have been purchased by the city at a lesser figure than the owners could have sold the property for a year ago. Then others have received more for their property than they probably ever hoped to get for it under any conditions. Martin's statements seem to be of a "bearish" order to try and frighten the people who have not yet sold to the city into selling at a lesser price than their land is worth—in other words at the city's price.

If this is not the reason, then either Mr. Martin or Mr. Mathews, or both of them, should see to it that this discrepancy in their statements is cleared up.

Ordinary decency demands it.

From Owens Valley Herald, May 30, 1923.

THREATS OF WATER LITIGATION MADE BY GEO. SHUEY.

The most brazen piece of propaganda that has ever been put out in this section by the representatives of the city of Los Angeles—and that is going some—were the threats made by Geo. W. Shuey last week that unless the water owners of this section would turn over the distribution of the water used here to some state representative that the water users could look out for a law suit. Shuey did not say exactly who was to be back of this suit but the supposition was that it would be the city of Los Angeles.

Just where Shuey got the authority to make such statements we have been unable to find out, but he probably has about the same right to make them as many other of the city's representatives have had to make other threats that have been made. Probably Shuey has decided that on account of the purchase of some of the McNally Ditch that the city is now in a position to absolutely dictate how all of the water of this section is to be distributed. He will probably find out some day that he and the city are not the two most powerful factors in the world, although it will probably be a rude awakening.

Several years ago an agreement was made by the different ditch companies to rotate their water during shortages and this year another agreement of the same kind was signed. Everything has worked fine in past years under this agreement and will probably continue to do so this year in spite of the fact that Shuey is trying to frighten water users by his threats. Shuey, and all the rest of that bunch, should be given to understand in no uncertain terms that the water of this section, and the way that it is handled, is up to the water users without any dictation from the city of Los Angeles or any of their paid emissaries who are trying to ruin this valley. We certainly believe that the people here are able to protect their homes and their water rights and some day such threats as that of Shuey's is very liable to cause something to happen.

From Owens Valley Herald, July 11, 1923.

IRRIGATION BOND ELECTION TO BE HELD ON AUGUST 7TH.

\$1,650,000 Worth of Bonds to be Voted Upon.

When a few months ago, the people of this section voted by a majority of 599 to 27 for an irrigation district they took the first step towards the protection of this country from the city of Los Angeles and the stabilizing of property values here. That was the most progressive step ever taken by the people here—but it was just a step.

Now the call has been issued for a bond election for this irrigation district, and the date set for Tuesday, August 7th. At that time the electors will be called upon to decide the question of whether or not this district shall be bonded for a large sum in order for the district to take over these water rights, as a district, instead of each individual standing alone on his own footing.

That the bonds will be voted by an overwhelming majority seems assured. They certainly will be if the people who have interests here

want to protect these interests. With these bonds voted, and the water controlled by the district, the future of this section would be secure. It would not only be secure from the encroachments of the city of Los Angeles, but it would be secure from the perfidy of the internal enemies of this section—and these latter are the worst of the two.

If every elector who signed the petition calling for this bond election will now devote his time to the success of these bonds, then the majority that will be piled up for them will be as great as was the majority for the formation of this district.

This—the bond election—is merely the second step, but each step makes us more secure and puts the people here in better shape to protect the rights they have left.

The people of Owens Valley Irrigation District are now on trial. Upon the decision they give in this matter on August 7th will rest the future of this section. If this decision is favorable by an overwhelming vote it will mean that the bonds issued will find a ready sale and that the future of this country is secure.

If, instead of hewing to the line and making the carrying of this bond issue the paramount consideration for the next month, people decide to bicker back and forth—then the curtain might just as well be dropped, as far as Owens Valley is concerned.

But if the people will stand together for this one big issue—then we will see one of the most highly developed countries in the west within a short time—secure from the cloud that has hung over it for years past.

August 7th will decide the fate of Owens Valley.

Are you for it, or against it?

It's time to take your stand.

From the Owens Valley Herald, August 1, 1923.

WELL-KNOWN MAN CLAIMS VALUE OF WATER SHOULD BE \$500 INCH.

The statement of W. D. Longyear, the well-known Los Angeles banker and capitalist, that water in this section right today has a value of at least \$500 an inch should be given very serious thought by the water owners of this section. Mr. Longyear naturally placed this value on the water provided this section was properly organized and not suffering from its present state of uncertainty. He based this value on the fact that water in the San Fernando Valley is rated at around \$3000 per inch.

In this statement is a thought that it would be well for all who are being frightened into selling their water to the city of Los Angeles at around \$200 per inch to consider.

The future of this section—and this \$500 an inch value of water—rests absolutely with the people here.

If they continue to "mill around" as at present, scared of their own shadow when the matter of Los Angeles is even mentioned, then this \$500-an-inch value will never be realized. The present price of whatever the city can get it for will be gradually lessened until it will become more of a gift than it now is.

On the other hand with a concerted effort of the people here to co-operate in the protection of their water this price will be assured. The stabilizing of all values here, which can be done only by the voting of the

proposed irrigation issue and the acquiring of the water by the district, will put a value on land and water that up until the present time has been unheard of.

Today this same water which the city of Los Angeles is acquiring here is worth practically \$3000 an inch in the San Fernando Valley. That is, it would be if the city was able to get it down there. That seems to be a difficult matter at the present time.

Now, when the people here sell their water and move away, where are they going? Are they going to the San Fernando Valley and pay \$3,000 an inch for water that they sold here for \$200? Go wherever you may in the state of California where the same conditions prevail as regards the quality of land and the abundance of water as do here and you will find land value many times what they are in this section.

Those who are so anxious to make a gift of their water to the city of Los Angeles will probably live to see the day when they would like to have it back at double the price.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 8, 1923.

PEOPLE DECIDE BY ENORMOUS MAJORITY TO ISSUE THE NECESSARY BONDS

THE VOTE.

	Yes	No
Sunland.....	125	14
Laws.....	42	12
Warm Springs.....	64	28
Big Pine.....	52	1
Bishop.....	419	25
Totals.....	702	80

At the election held on Tuesday the voters of the Owens Valley Irrigation District, by the overwhelming vote of 702 to 80, put their stamp of approval on the issuance of \$1,650,000 for the acquisition of the water of the different ditch companies of the district by the district itself. Their decision in the matter marks the beginning of an era of development and prosperity for this section that will steadily go forward until Owens Valley will be known throughout the West as one of the most prosperous communities in the entire state of California.

While those working for the interests of the bonds were confident that they would carry by a large vote, still very few could let their optimism bring them to believe that the bonds would carry by such an overwhelming majority. There were those who worked against the issue, a few because they really believed that it was not a good thing, but most of them because they were smeared with the brush of Los Angeles, and for venomous reasons wished to see this country turned back to a desert. The answer that was given by the people shows that the many who live here, and want to continue to make this their home, intend to protect their country and their homes.

A good vote was cast throughout the entire district, and every division of the irrigation district rolled up a very substantial majority, varying from 52 to 1 in the Big Pine division to 42 to 12 in the Laws district, where the city of Los Angeles recently acquired the majority of the

McNally Ditch that waters that section. The town of Bishop, which will pay approximately one-eighth of the taxes of the entire district rolled up a majority for the bonds of a little over sixteen to one, while the Sunland district came through with a majority of practically nine to one. The Warm Springs district, where much work had been done by the emissaries of Los Angeles against the bonds, rolled up a majority for the bonds of 64 to 28, showing that even there, where nothing was left undone to defeat the issue that the people were in favor of it.

The vote was all counted by a little after 8 o'clock, and telephone calls from all over the county rolled into Bishop asking about the result, as the county in general took a great interest in the matter.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 8, 1923.

SHOULD CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE VALUE OF THEIR WATER.

Truly something that the city of Los Angeles as a whole should be proud of.

And they have accomplished their purpose in some instances. On the McNally Ditch they purchased water at from \$125 to \$250 an inch, which was worth more than double that amount. They did not pay the same price for it in dealing with the several owners, and these representatives well knew that the water was worth the same to the city, whether it came from Bill White or John Black.

Now they are going about in other sections trying to buy this water at a fraction of what it is worth, and unless the people absolutely unite they will succeed. The man who sells his water today to the city for any such price as they have yet offered in this valley is merely making them a present, for with the water put into the irrigation district the price will gradually increase and there will be a ready sale for land and water at the price which it is worth. For this country has no superior in the state of California and the prices obtained for land and water in other places can be obtained here provided the water is protected.

Just where our people intend going to better their condition when they sell out their water here is a mystery. There is lots of territory to go to, that is true. But when they make the change they will find out that to duplicate their holdings here will take many times the amount that they get for their water, and they will be worse off than if they had stayed with the ship. Selling water at \$250 an inch and going to the San Fernando Valley and paying \$2500 an inch for the same water sounds like foolishness, but that seems to be what some wish to do.

If the people here will stay with their holdings, turn their water to the irrigation district, and get behind all of the progressive movements that come up in this country, the time will not be far distant when Owens Valley will become the most famous part of California, and the people will all be prosperous, contented and happy.

The people should weigh this matter well.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 8, 1923.

THE BIG PINE CANAL GUARDS ITS RIGHTS WITH RIFLES.

While the higher-up representatives of the city of Los Angeles have pulled off many questionable stunts in Owens Valley in their frenzy to obtain water, they now seem to have lost every sense of right and justice

and are determined to stop at nothing in order to accomplish their purpose, no matter to what extreme they may have to go.

The latest and most desperate effort that they have made was their attempt this week to cut a ditch around the head of the Big Pine Canal and steal the water belonging to the farmers of Big Pine. The work started on Sunday and continued until Monday afternoon, when it was temporarily called off by the city's representatives pending the result of the meeting held here Monday night between the local water users and some of the city's officials. The stopping of the work did not come any too soon, for as soon as the people of the Big Pine section found out what the city's representatives were doing they sent armed guards down to the Canal to see that the work was stopped—and stopped for good. These guards went on duty Monday evening and since that time the canal has been closely guarded and no further work has gone on.

The city's officials know that their action in this matter is absolutely unjustifiable from every standpoint. Had they succeeded in their work they would have worked an injury to the headgate of the Big Pine Canal that would probably have taken thousands of dollars to repair and that section would have dried up pending the repair of the damage done by the city's orders. But there is no danger now of the work that was started ever being completed. Armed guards will protect this property as long as there is any danger, and the people of Big Pine will decide when this danger point has passed.

When the people of Owens Valley are forced by the city of Los Angeles to protect their property against the actions of the city by armed force it is high time that direct action was taken that would protect the local people against such an unprincipled bunch of men. For the people of this valley are going to protect their rights against the unjust and unlawful encroachments of the city of Los Angeles, and if it becomes necessary to do this by force, then it will be done that way. The people of Owens Valley are an honest, law abiding class of citizens, but when the city's officials decide that the valley's water must be taken to Los Angeles—right or wrong—then the people are going to raise up en masse and whatever happens will be on the shoulders of the city's representatives, and not on the shoulders of the people here.

The people of Big Pine love their homes and intend to fight for them, and in this decision they will have the backing of all of the people of this section who are not tarred with the brush of Los Angeles. While it is a regrettable thing that people in this day and age must protect their homes with guns against a municipality like Los Angeles, still it seems that time has come and they intend to do so.

When the future history of Owens Valley is written the stand that the Big Piners have taken in this matter will stand out as one of the prominent things that saved this valley.

This morning work was given up completely by the city on this proposed canal around the Big Pine headgate, but even so the people there intend to continue to protect their rights and keep a guard always on hand in case of a change of heart by the city's representatives.

It's a cinch bet that none of the officials who are ordering this work done will appear on the ground to do it.

Bully for Big Pine.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 8, 1923.

CITY'S AGENTS GIVEN DECISIVE ANSWER REGARDING WATER.

A meeting of water users of the irrigation district and representatives of the city of Los Angeles was held in the Pinon Club rooms on Monday night last and the water situation as between the people here and the city was discussed at length, W. B. Matthews and H. A. Van Norman putting up the city's side of the question.

After the meeting had been called to order by W. W. Watterson, who explained the purpose it was called for, W. B. Matthews was the first speaker. He made a strong plea for water for the city. He stated that the condition of the water supply there was very acute and that Wm. Mulholland was walking the floor and spending sleepless nights worrying over the situation. Whether the water was needed for domestic purposes or for the irrigation of San Fernando lands, Mr. Matthews did not state. He also took up the matter of the proposed settlement with the city and the irrigation district, and stated that the city was ready to sign the agreement as it had been proposed at any time, without any changes in the boundaries of the lands incorporated in the agreement. This, he said, they would do in spite of the fact that the city had purchased and optioned other lands since this proposed settlement was made public.

When asked as to why the city's representatives had never ceased their activity in this section in the acquiring of lands when this proposed settlement was sent here for either acceptance or rejection, he said that he had been informed that the agreement would be rejected and that they were trying to protect themselves.

Both Mr. Matthews and Mr. Van Norman were asked many questions during the evening regarding the present actions of the city, but their answers were inclined to be evasive.

After the matter of allowing the city to take any water away from here when the farmers needed it so badly had been discussed thoroughly, the meeting was postponed until 2 o'clock Tuesday afternoon, when the city was promised a definite answer as to what the ditch companies here were willing to do.

Meetings of directors of all of the ditch companies were held on Tuesday, and it was unanimously decided that the city should be allowed to take no water away from this section at this time unless the water users here and the city could come to some understanding regarding our water difficulties that would be satisfactory for all time.

When the meeting was called at 2 o'clock to give the city's representatives their answer they were told just what the ditch companies had decided to do—to stand squarely on their rights—and that the city could not expect to get any water until the rights of the people here were satisfied.

Recently the Big Pine Canal section has been very short of water and a plea was sent to Fred Eaton to turn down his water from Long Valley to help them out. Mr. Eaton agreed to do this, but he made a proviso in his agreement that the water turned down should be used by the district here and that none of it should pass the headgate of the Big Pine Canal and go on to the aqueduct. This was absolutely fair on

Mr. Eaton's part. He was perfectly willing to help out the people of the Owens Valley Irrigation District but did not feel under any obligations to furnish water to the city of Los Angeles and the farmers of the San Fernando Valley when the water was needed here.

Immediately after the meeting the city's representatives left for the south, knowing that in dealing with the people here now they were dealing with a unit, and that unless a fair and satisfactory settlement can be made with the people here on this water question that they could expect no favors.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 15, 1923.

LOS ANGELES SHOULD WAKE UP.

Representatives of the city of Los Angeles came to this section this week, begging for water to tide them over their shortage there. They left with the knowledge that their pleas were unheeded as far as the people of this section were concerned. The people here need all of the available water at the present time and intend to keep it for their own needs.

In this decision they are absolutely united. And the representatives of the city know it.

It is nobody's fault, except the city's representatives of the Water Board, that the city has not sufficient water. The people of Los Angeles, in this water shortage, are merely reaping the results of the tactics that have been pursued by their Water Board for years past. Instead of the program of this board being dominated by good business sense and fair dealing, it has been dominated by a series of petty matters, in which neither the people of Los Angeles or the people of Owens Valley have been given a square deal.

There is water enough in the Owens Valley watershed to suffice for the needs both of the city of Los Angeles and Owens Valley if it is conserved. But in order to so conserve this water it is absolutely necessary to store it in the flood water periods and also in the years of heavy snow-fall. There are many storage sites in the mountains that can be utilized for this purpose, and the Water Board's representatives know this. Take for example the Long Valley reservoir site. A 150-foot dam there would impound 340,000 acre-feet of water, and hydrographic maps show that this storage would go a long ways towards the solution of the water situation. Then there are many other sites that are obtainable. And the question might naturally arise with the people of Los Angeles, why these sites have not been secured and the city's danger of a water famine averted.

The answer unquestionably is that Wm. Mulholland has his neck bowed and for personal reasons will not buy some of these reservoir sites that are owned by private individuals. The fact that the owners can only get for this land the price that it is actually worth (for it can be secured under condemnation by the city) seems to have no bearing on the case. He's "furninst" it, and rather than buy the necessary land he allows his home city to go thirsty for water before he will help handle the affairs of the Water Board along business lines.

Surely a fine condition of affairs when the obstinacy of one man would allow such a state of affairs as now exists in Los Angeles over its water situation to continue.

Then take the case of the purchase of a large part of the water of the McNally Ditch at a price of something like \$1,500,000. The city's representatives came in here and by means, both fair and foul, purchased much of the land and water of the McNally Ditch. In many cases their methods of dealing with the people interested were absolutely unscrupulous. Now what is the result? After this money is all paid out by the city, Los Angeles is unable to get a drop of this water. Just a little more bonheadedness on the part of the city's representatives. That's all.

If the people of Los Angeles as a whole knew of the inner actions of their Water Board they would kick the whole bunch out immediately. By their actions they are not only proving themselves unfit for the positions they hold, but they are doing the city an irreparable damage, both in the sentiment they are creating against the city and in the danger they are putting the city up against.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 22, 1923.

LOS ANGELES PEOPLE LEARN OF WATER DIFFICULTIES HERE.

We are publishing in this issue the following account of this trouble as taken from the Los Angeles Times of last Saturday, together with a reproduction of the same photograph with which the Times illustrated its story. The Times is to be commended for this publicity, and it seems that the facts of the underhanded way that the water and power boards are handling the affairs of the city will soon be thoroughly aired in that part of the country.

The article appearing in the Times is as follows:

The battle between the city of Los Angeles and the ranchers of the Owens River Valley for the control of the water rights in that region reached a threatening stage last week when Big Pine ranchers armed themselves with rifles and mounted guard over the headgate of the Big Pine Ditch to prevent the forces of the Los Angeles Board of Public Service Commissioners from digging a diversion ditch above the headgate and turning water claimed by the ranchers back into Owens River to flow into the aqueduct. The city's men had already cleared away the brush preparatory to digging this ditch, the ranchers charge, and were prevented from going ahead only by the arrival of the armed force from the Big Pine region.

Big Pine Ditch is one of the five large irrigation canals which take water from Owens River for the irrigation of the fertile lands of the Owens Valley, where the Los Angeles aqueduct has its rise. About 5000 inches of water flow through the ditch and upon this flow are dependent some 3200 acres of the valley's finest agricultural land lying east of the town of Big Pine in the lower end of the valley.

In addition to seeking to divert water to which the ranchers say the city has no right, the valley farmers charge the Board of Public Service Commissioners' agents with sharp practice in attempting to disrupt the Owens Valley Irrigation District through buying up its water land by individual purchase.

Last fall the landowners served by the five principal irrigation canals, known as the Owens River Canal, Big Pine Ditch, McNally Ditch, Bishop Creek Ditch and Rawson Ditch and several smaller ditches, voted nearly

unanimously to form an irrigation district. Bonds were recently voted by about nine to one in the sum of \$1,650,000 for new irrigation facilities and improvements. In the meantime the city had acquired options on about 80 per cent of the lands served by the McNally Ditch.

Controlling this important unit of the district, the city's agents called a stockholders' meeting of the McNally Ditch and secured votes and proxies sufficient to rescind the action of the McNally interests in joining the irrigation district. By the exercise of the options, calling for close to \$1,000,000, the city has bought outright the McNally Ditch lands and those around Fish Slough so that it now controls practically all the valley land east and north of the river.

The ranchers assert that, despite a sort of gentleman's agreement that the city should confine its purchases of water lands to their side of the river, the agents of the Public Service Board are now buying up lands on the west side in order to get more water, especially that flowing through the Rawson Ditch.

All of this has been done, the ranchers assert, before it was possible for the irrigation district to take legal possession of the water rights owned by those forming the district. The effect of this has been to greatly antagonize the ranching interests against the city. The Big Pine farmers have formed a pool for the purpose of preventing any sales of Big Pine lands to the city.

The available water flow of the valley amounts normally to about 30,000 inches altogether. The city has now acquired about 10,000 inches, paying about \$150 an inch for it. It has 5000 inches in the McNally Ditch, about 4000 in the Rawson Ditch and the remainder it gets through drainage.

About 5000 people residing in the valley north of Big Pine are dependent upon the rest of the water for their existence and livelihood. There are 53,000 acres in the irrigation district proper. What will happen if the water is taken from this land is shown by the 130,000 acres of the valley on which there is now no water and which has reverted to the primitive desert. Farm buildings and residences on this area have been deserted.

The people of the valley say they want no war with the city and are merely asking for fair play. They are willing to sell the city the water, which they realize the city will need as it continues to grow. They will sell this water at a fair price to be fixed by disinterested experts and ask only that it be purchased at points where its loss will not work hardships on others.

From the Owens Valley Herald, August 22, 1923.

LOS ANGELES GETS ANOTHER JOLT.

It seems that the life of the Public Service Commissioners of Los Angeles, including the Water Board and the Power Board, is not one of roses at the present time—and there is really no reason why it should be. When the public officials of any city will play the game that the Water and Power Boards of Los Angeles have, then they can expect the day to come when they will be publicly known for what they are—a bunch of men whose actions are controlled to a very great extent by personalities and not by the duty that they owe to their city.

The lack of water in the city of Los Angeles and in the San Fernando Valley today is caused by the fact that the officials of the city have

proven untrue to the trust that has been placed in them. They have failed to store water in the high Sierras where there is every natural facility for storing it, and they have run water to waste in the Pacific Ocean during the winter months, thus depriving the city and the San Fernando Valley of much needed water during the summer.

This state of affairs exists on account of a personal feeling, principally due to Wm. Mulholland, against certain individuals. Mr. Mulholland knows that this storage is available in the Sierras, but on account of his antagonism towards men who own certain storage lands here he refuses to buy this land. In other words he would rather see the city and the San Fernando Valley suffer for water than to conduct the business of the Water Board along business lines and provide for the protection of the people he represents. Certainly the people of Los Angeles should wake up to this condition of affairs before it is too late and either force their Water and Power Boards to conduct their affairs as they should be conducted, for the general welfare of all concerned, or they should have a thorough housecleaning.

The following article, which appeared in the Los Angeles Times under date of August 17 as an advertisement, shows that some of the taxpayers in that section are getting their eyes open:

To the Taxpayers of Los Angeles City.

"We are going to have our day in court. Yesterday the Board of Public Service answered my amended complaint in my suit to compel them to stop wasting the waters of the aqueduct into the Pacific Ocean. This fight is going on whether you assist me again or not, but I have a clearly defined limit as to what I personally am going to spend, and it will not permit the hiring of an expensive engineer. Can you afford not to have this case properly presented to the court? Pitted against this farmer and his attorney will be all the engineers and all the attorneys of the Board of Public Service, backed by the unlimited money supplied by myself and the other taxpayers to hire anything else they may want.

"Can you taxpayers of the city of Los Angeles afford to let me lose this case by not having money enough properly to present the facts? I think not. On account of the misinterpretation of their trusts by the Board of Public Service Commissioners, the citizens of Los Angeles are today drinking water that smells; the farmers of the San Fernando Valley have been curtailed in their use of irrigating water; the alfalfa growers have been cut off entirely, and there is no water for flooding lands for lettuce, potatoes, etc. Why? Because the Board of Public Service, in its mad endeavor for power at cost, or any cost, has drained away in the winter time the water storages of the reservoirs to make cheap power, and more than that, has wasted these storages of water into the Pacific Ocean, in an extremely dry year. Every gallon of it could just as well have been spread on the gravel beds of the San Fernando Valley, to the great benefit of the citizen farmers; and from these gravel beds it could have been pumped to give you the most excellent drinking water. Only God can now bring back the water that your commissioners have wasted into the Pacific Ocean. If this water had been offered to the farmers of the valley at a price customary for such water southern California, in my judgment, every gallon would have been spread on the valley and would have saved the present situation, by

reducing the need of summer irrigation and by storing the valley gravel from the lower end of the valley into the city mains. The upper end of the valley should be supplied with pumps and the water should be pumped from wells direct into the mains. This pumping from wells would increase the water supply and lower the water table, which in some parts of the valley is too high.

"You the good people of the old city voted the aqueduct bonds so that the city would never again be short of water, and that you might not continue to deprive the farmers of the valley of their own water, as you were then doing by enjoining them from pumping the wells on their own land.

"I remember the issue well; the aqueduct bonds were voted for water, not for power; in robbing the water system to make power your commissioners are guilty of a flagrant breach of trust.

"If you do not like the taste of your water, think of the farmer who has been cheated out of his water by the wanton policy of your commissioners; his water that makes his crops, that makes his daily bread; think of the dairyman who lost the feed for his cows, and remember that when the aqueduct went out by accident in 1917, and there was no water for irrigation for twenty days, there was not one murmur of complaint made by a San Fernando Valley farmer.

"I think that I can make these commissioners stop, look and listen. All further contributions will be used according to the express condition stated in my former letter published in the Los Angeles Times, June 20, 1923."

(Signed) VOLNEY H. CRAIG.

Ford Ranch, San Fernando, Cal., August 16, 1923.

From Owens Valley Herald, August 29, 1923.

FUTURE OF THIS SECTION WILL SOON BE KNOWN.

There has been but little of an exciting nature in the water situation here during the past week, but it really seems that the people as a whole are gradually beginning to realize that the time for some very pronounced action in the matter of turning their water into the irrigation district was now at hand, provided they wish to save their homes and this country from absolute ruin by the city of Los Angeles. They are beginning to realize that without a concerted action along these lines that they will soon be at the mercy of the city, and they know from past actions that this would mean dealing with as heartless a bunch as one will ever be able to find.

The action of the city's representatives in tearing out the ditches of the Eaton Land and Cattle Company in Long Valley this past summer has precipitated a suit between the city and Mr. Eaton, and in this suit the water users of all this section will naturally have to take part. The city absolutely forced this suit on Mr. Eaton by their high-handed actions, and Mr. Eaton will naturally fight to protect his rights. There is no way that the water users of the different ditch companies can keep from being parties to the suit, and unless they band themselves together for the mutual protection of all they might as well pack up the few belongings they may have left and start for other climes. For if they are

brought into this suit, each ditch company standing alone, the result is inevitable. It will mean that after years of litigation, among themselves and with the city of Los Angeles and the Eaton Land and Cattle Company, that they will be in such a position that the city will be able to name the price which it will pay for their holdings, and it is a certainty that this price will be the lowest possible—and that will be a price that will ruin every farmer here.

The people of the Owens Valley Irrigation District have it in their power at the present time to protect their homes, the homes of their friends and neighbors, and this section as a whole, if they will lay aside the differences that now seem to possess them and, in a spirit of give and take, iron out the little differences that seem to control them and bend all their efforts to the settlement of the water rights of the Owens Valley Irrigation District *immediately* by turning over these rights to the district. Any delay is dangerous, and a failure to do this spells nothing but ruin for this entire section. For if the city ever gets the upper hand here it means nothing but ruin for this country, for wherever the hand of Los Angeles has touched Owens Valley it has turned it back to a desert.

Unless the people here do make up their minds to stand together on this water question, and do it right away, they might as well forget it altogether, and allow Los Angeles to take the country and turn it back to the desert condition which its representatives desire to do. For, although there was an upward trend to values here following the recent bond election, this will not be for long unless conditions change. People here who have fought hard for this country are getting tired of the struggle and many of them have about decided that if the people do not wish their rights protected that "their will be done." And when it has continued a little longer, and Los Angeles has picked the ranches here and there, depreciated the values of the others, and made everyone dissatisfied, then the city's representatives, hovering over this country like the vultures, will take the rest at their own price—and that price will be very small.

But if this ever happens, and it will happen unless the people get together, it will be no one's fault except the fault of the people themselves. They have had every warning that anyone could wish for. They know just how unscrupulous the city's representatives are. They should realize that by local cooperation that their homes and this country are absolutely safe. Now, if in spite of all of this, if they still persist in a course beset with nothing except ruin, then they must lay in the bed that they make for themselves, with the knowledge that the country that should belong to their children, and which their pioneer ancestors developed from its primitive state, will go back to the jackrabbit and the lizard—and the city of Los Angeles.

No one can save this country except the people who have their interests here. If they will not do this it can not be helped, but they will all see the day that they will regret their shortsightedness in failing to stick together for the mutual benefit of all concerned.

From Owens Valley Herald, December 20, 1922.

IRRIGATION DISTRICT ELECTION.

On next Tuesday, December 26, the voters of the northern section of Owens Valley will be called upon to decide the biggest proposition

that has ever confronted them. It is the formation of an irrigation district embracing practically all of the farming lands in the Big Pine and Bishop sections. On the verdict that they give will rest in a very great measure the future prosperity of the entire valley.

Owens Valley is peculiarly situated in many ways—especially as regards its water resources. A country very rich in natural agricultural resources, depending exclusively on irrigation for its water, it has laid for many years only partially developed. Originally it was primarily a cattle country and little intensive farming was done. Then the irrigation ditches were built by the land owners and the water was taken from these ditches by the different farmers under each ditch, and general farming started. As a rule water was plentiful, in fact so plentiful that it was wasted. The people as a rule were well satisfied with their condition and lived happily among themselves instead of looking for greener fields.

But it was certain that this condition could not continue forever. It was right before the real intense settlement of California began, when property values all over the state were low and there was much good cheap land everywhere for those seeking it. But finally the eyes of the world were turned to this state with the result that people began to pour into California by the hundreds of thousands, and it would seem that this influx has only started.

Los Angeles, a few years ago only a small pueblo, began to grow as no other city has ever grown, and far-sighted men from there began to look out for an additional water supply, both to supply the city and also for the irrigation of lands near that city that were bound to become immensely valuable if water could be placed upon them. The Sierra Nevada Mountains, from which a practically inexhaustible supply continually poured through Owens Valley attracted these men, with the result that many of the vested water rights of the valley were acquired by the city through the purchase of land, and the famous Los Angeles Aqueduct was built at a cost of something like \$30,000,000 to take this water to San Fernando Valley for irrigation, and a little to the city of Los Angeles for domestic purposes. It is not the intention of this article to go into the details of the numerous transactions, shady and otherwise, that have happened since the time Los Angeles acquired its first rights here. Suffice it to say that they have been more shady than otherwise.

But the coming of the city of Los Angeles into Owens Valley on its conquest for water marked a new epoch in the stability of the vested rights that the land owners here had. Here was a big municipality, which has since developed into the largest city west of Chicago, starting exploiting a comparatively small country for the city's benefit. No sentiment, no feeling in the matter as far as the city was concerned. The mere fact that they might ruin one of the most promising sections in California in order to satisfy their own selfish desires made no difference to those who were manipulating the project.

And so Owens Valley was confronted with a danger of which the people had never dreamed.

The fight with the city has lasted for years—on the one side a bunch of political henchmen on the city, on the other side the land and water owners of Owens Valley fighting for their homes.

This matter came to a head last summer when a suit was started enjoining the city from doing further work in the storing of the waters of

Owens River until such time as the people here should be fully protected in their rights. This suit has temporarily stopped the exploitation by the city, but has by no means disheartened the powers that be among the city's forces.

Now comes the time when the people of the valley can place another safeguard around their interests in this fight with the city. All of the plans for an irrigation district here were carefully laid and now all that is needed is the sanction of the voters to the proposition. With an irrigation district formed and functioning properly the city of Los Angeles will have an organization to contend with that will be worthy of its steel. The unfair and very questionable tactics that have been used in the past on individuals separately will become a thing of the past. Instead, the city will have an organization representing *all of the people* to deal with. It will mean that in all future negotiations with the city that no one need feel an uneasiness as to the valley. Land values will be placed on a more solid basis than they have ever been before and the water rightfully belonging to the water users of the valley will remain here for all time, to build up our wonderful country until some day in the near future it will be looked upon as the most prosperous section of California.

There is absolutely nothing that can be said against the formation of an irrigation district at the present time by anyone who has the future of this country at heart. Maybe there might be some better way out of the present difficulties, but if so it has not assumed any tangible shape. Something must be done for the protection of our country and must be done at once. As nothing else has been brought forward, then it is up to everyone to stand back of this irrigation district. It is the best thing that is in sight at the present time, and being the best thing it should have the hearty support of all.

In the formation of this irrigation district everyone will be better off. There will be a unity that will mean strength. No one can suffer and all will be benefited. The next few months will witness either the absolutely stabilizing of this valley or will see the city gain sufficient foothold so that it will mean a long hard fight even to save anything from the wreck. Every day that passes without concerted action by the people here makes the final settlement with the city, whereby all vested rights here will be protected, just doubly hard. The formation of an irrigation district is the one thing before the people now which will aid in this matter. Nothing personal should enter into it in any way. If the people are not big enough to put aside their petty differences in a case of this kind, then it does not bode any good for the future of this country.

Without question the irrigation district will be carried by an overwhelming vote at the election next Tuesday. We believe that the people here realize that they have played with fire long enough in dealing with Los Angeles, and while they have only been scorched a little up until the present time they know that they will be thoroughly burned some day unless they can present a more formidable front than they have in the past.

The representatives of the city have learned in the past year that the people here are thoroughly on their guard and when the word goes to them next Tuesday night that they have banded themselves together in an irrigation district for the protection of their homes it will be serving them with a notice that from now on they must give the people of Owens

Valley a square deal—something the valley has never been given by the city before.

EXCERPTS FROM OWENS VALLEY HERALD, BISHOP, CAL.

Dec. 20, 1922.—On next Tuesday, Dec. 26, the voters of the northern section of Owens Valley will be called upon to decide the biggest proposition that has ever confronted them. It is the formation of an irrigation district embracing practically all of the farming lands in the Big Pine and Bishop sections. On the verdict that they give will rest in a very great measure the future prosperity of the entire valley. * * *

Owens Valley is peculiarly situated in many ways—especially as regards its water resources. A country very rich in natural agricultural resources, depending exclusively on irrigation for its water, it has laid for many years only partially developed. * * *

Los Angeles, a few years ago only a small pueblo, began to grow as no other city has ever grown, and far-sighted men from there began to look out for an additional water supply, both to supply the city and also for the irrigation of lands near that city that were bound to become immensely valuable if water could be placed upon them. The Sierra Nevada Mountains, from which a practically inexhaustible supply continually poured through Owens Valley attracted these men, with the result that many of the vested water rights of the valley were acquired by the city through the purchase of land, and the famous Los Angeles Aqueduct was built at a cost of something like \$30,000,000 to take this water to San Fernando Valley for irrigation, and a little to the city of Los Angeles for domestic purposes. * * *

But the coming of the city of Los Angeles into Owens Valley on its conquest for water marked a new epoch in the stability of the vested rights that the land owners here had. * * *

And so Owens Valley was confronted with a danger of which the people had never dreamed. * * *

This matter came to a head last summer when a suit was started enjoining the city from doing further work in the storing of the waters of Owens River until such time as the people here should be fully protected in their rights. This suit has temporarily stopped the exploitation by the city, but has by no means disheartened the powers that be among the city's forces. * * *

Now comes the time when the people of the valley can place another safeguard around their interests in this fight with the city. * * *

There is absolutely nothing that can be said against the formation of an irrigation district at the present time by anyone who has the future of this country at heart. * * *

Jan. 3, 1923.—With the formation of the irrigation district a plan has been started whereby the financial condition of the farmers can be materially improved. With the floating of a bond issue to purchase the water from the different ditch companies for use of the entire district much of this locally held indebtedness can be cancelled and in its place a long-term low per cent bond issue. * * *

Mar. 21, 1923.—The action of the directors of the Owens River Canal Company in kicking L. C. Hall out of his position as treasurer in that company, a position which he has held for the past nineteen years, meets with the approval of all the people of this section who are true to this country as against the encroachments of the city of Los Angeles. * * *

Mar. 21, 1923.—The action of the city of Los Angeles in acquiring options during the past week on the large majority of the water of the McNally Ditch Company has brought to an acute point the water situation here as between the city and local interests. * * *

The work of securing the options was quietly done and although there were many reports last week that they were being secured, it was not until Friday afternoon that the real facts were made public. * * *

While it is probably true that the taking over of the land and water of the McNally Ditch Company by the city of Los Angeles, in case the city does exercise these options, would under ordinary conditions, work a hardship on this section, there is every reason to believe that by uniting the people here as against their common enemies it will tend to make this a bigger and better country than it ever would have been otherwise. * * *

Mar. 28, 1923.—There have been few developments here during the past week in the water situation in this section. Geo. Watterson, L. C. Hall and Wm. Symons, are still doing everything in their power to put through the deal of the city of Los Angeles as against the best interests of this entire section, but that is no more than they have been doing for years past. * * *

The latest move of these men is to call a meeting of the McNally Ditch Company for next Saturday afternoon to try and get the stockholders of that company to rescind the action they took a few months ago in voting to turn the water of that company over to the Owens Valley Irrigation District. * * *

In the light of the developments of the past few weeks it seems strange that any of the stockholders of the McNally Ditch Company would give proxies to these three men to accomplish this purpose. * * *

However, we understand that the directors of the irrigation district propose to protect all of the people under the McNally Ditch as best they can. * * *

Apr. 4, 1923.—The meeting of the stockholders of the McNally Ditch Company at Laws last Saturday afternoon was a wonderful and fearful affair. * * *

H. A. Van Norman and E. F. Leahey were at the meeting as the accredited representatives of Los Angeles, while all of the officers of the irrigation district were also present. * * *

After the first preliminaries were over L. C. Hall took the floor and made as dirty and disgraceful a talk as was probably ever made at any meeting. * * *

W. W. Watterson was the spokesman for the directors of the irrigation district, and if there ever was a contrast between the two speakers, the contrast was shown in this case. Mr. Watterson in a gentlemanly way explained to those of the McNally Ditch present that the only object that the irrigation district had in this matter was to protect the people of the east side, in every way possible, and that the directors of the irrigation district did not intend to stand in the way of the McNally Ditch owners selling their property if it was advantageous for them to do so, and all of them could sell, and that the irrigation district would stand squarely behind the land and water users of the McNally Ditch in protecting them against any harm. And he made it plain, very plain, that *all would be protected*, not merely a few.

H. A. Van Norman, speaking for the city stated that it was the intention of Los Angeles to buy all of the McNally Ditch water, and if any of the owners had not been approached for an option that he was ready to sign up these options at once. * * *

Apr. 4, 1923.—There have been many reports circulated in Bishop this week that the city of Los Angeles intended to purchase water and land under the different ditch companies on the west side of the river. * * *

When H. A. Van Norman and E. F. Leahey were in Bishop on Tuesday they stated positively that the city of Los Angeles had no intention of buying, and were not going to buy, any of the lands or water in the incorporated ditches on the west side of the river. * * *

May 30, 1923.—The most brazen propaganda that has ever been put out in this section by the representatives of the city of Los Angeles—and that is going some—were the threats made by Geo. Shuey last week that unless the water owners of this section would turn over the distribution of the water used here to some state representative that the water users could look out for a law suit. * * *

May 30, 1923.—When negotiations were first started for the purchase of the McNally Ditch, W. B. Mathews, chief counsel for Los Angeles, made the statement that the city had on hand \$1,000,000 for the purchase of these rights and when that was used up that the city would have the balance of the money ready. That they intended to purchase this entire property. Now comes J. T. Martin, the man who has represented the city in the closing of these deals and in the payment of the money, and states that the city will not pay more than \$800,000 for the property, * * *

It is a well known fact that many properties under the McNally Ditch have been purchased by the city at a lesser figure than the owners could have sold the property for a year ago. Then others have received more for their property than they probably ever hoped to get for it under any conditions. * * *

July 11, 1923.—Now the call has been issued for a bond election for this irrigation district, and the date set for Tuesday, August 7.

Aug. 1, 1923.—The statement of W. D. Longyear, the well known Los Angeles banker and capitalist, that water in this section right today has a value of at least \$500 an inch should be given very serious thought by the water owners of this section. * * *

Aug. 8, 1923.—At the election held on Tuesday the voters of the Owens Valley Irrigation District, by the overwhelming vote of 702 to 80, put their stamp of approval on the issuance of \$1,650,000 for the acquisition of the water of the different ditch companies of the district by the district itself. * * *

Aug. 8, 1923.—If the people here will stay with their holdings, turn their water to the irrigation district, and get behind all of the progressive movements that come up in this country, the time will not be far distant when Owens Valley will become the most famous part of California, and the people will all be prosperous, contented and happy. * * *

Aug. 8, 1923.—While the higher-up representatives of the city of Los Angeles have pulled off many questionable stunts in Owens Valley in their frenzy to obtain water, they now seem to have lost every sense of right and justice and are determined to stop at nothing in order to accomplish their purpose, no matter to what extreme they may have to go.

The latest and most desperate effort that they have made was their attempt this week to cut a ditch around the head of the Big Pine Canal and steal the water belonging to the farmers of Big Pine. * * * The stopping of the work did not come any too soon, for as soon as the people of the Big Pine section found out what the city's representatives were doing they sent armed guards down to the canal to see that the work was stopped—and stopped for good. These guards went on duty Monday evening and since that time the canal has been closely guarded and no further work has gone on. * * *

Aug. 8, 1923.—A meeting of water users of the irrigation district and representatives of the city of Los Angeles was held in the Pinon Club rooms on Monday night last and the water situation as between the people here and the city was discussed at length, W. B. Mathews and H. A. Van Norman putting up the city's side of the question.

After the meeting had been called to order by W. W. Watterson, who explained the purpose it was called for, W. B. Mathews was the first speaker. He made a strong plea for water for the city. * * *

Meetings of directors of all of the ditch companies were held on Tuesday, and it was unanimously decided that the city should be allowed to take no water away from this section at this time unless the water users here and the city could come to some understanding regarding our water difficulties that would be satisfactory for all time.

Aug. 15, 1923.—It is nobody's fault, except the city's representatives of the water board, that the city has not sufficient water. * * *

There is water enough in the Owens Valley water shed to suffice for the needs of both the city of Los Angeles and Owens Valley if it is conserved. * * * There are many storage sites in the mountains that can be utilized for this purpose, and the Water Board's representatives know this. * * *

The available water flow of the valley amount normally to about 30,000 inches altogether. The city has now acquired about 10,000 inches, paying about \$150 an inch for it. It has 5000 inches in the McNally Ditch, about 4000 in the Rawson Ditch, and the remainder it gets through drainage. * * *

Aug. 29, 1923.—The action of the city representatives in tearing out the ditches of the Eaton Land and Cattle Company in Long Valley this past summer has precipitated a suit between the city and Mr. Eaton, and in this suit the water users of all this section will naturally have to take part. * * *

WHAT OTHERS THINK.

From Redlands, Cal., Facts, November 19, 1924.

THE OWENS RIVER CONTROVERSY.

The Times has a cartoon this morning on it entitled, "You Let Me Settle This," and it pictures "Right" with the scales of justice in her hand, opposing "Might," represented by a burly individual carrying a gun. Just which the Times wants to settle the controversy, the cartoon does not make clear, nor which side of the quarrel is represented by Right, and which by Might.

Getting back to the elements of the conflict which has arisen, Right certainly should represent the people of Inyo County and Might the

great and populous city of Los Angeles, which legally and lawfully, but deceitfully, despoiled the watershed of the Owens River, impoverished the county of Inyo, and this deceit, and this determination of Might to rule over Right has now brought the people of a peaceful mountain county almost into guerilla warfare.

This paper would not for a moment countenance the defiance of the law by the people of Inyo. There is nothing for them to do but to submit to the constituted authorities, to take back their embittered hearts to their impoverished homes, because the big city has and will subdue them, having the law on its side. But it is a shameful thing that has been done, even if done under the provisions of the law, and many people will go down to their graves with bitterness in their hearts because of it.

This paper would call attention to a statement by W. A. Chalfant, which appeared in *The Facts of Yesterday*, and which we reprint herewith. Mr. Chalfant is the editor of the *Inyo Register*. He has lived at Bishop all his life. His father edited the same paper before him. Mr. Chalfant is a sober, substantial citizen, of highest character and fine mentality. Had he spent his life in a place of large population, instead of in a village, he would have been just as much of a leader among many as he is now among a few. And he writes as follows:

Nov. 18.—We hardly expect the outside world can understand the situation which has led up to a handful of ranchers in this remote valley defying the big city of Los Angeles.

Perhaps the outside world doesn't care, isn't interested. But to us, these are trying days and their outcome means everything.

Los Angeles continues, as it has for years, to trifle with the Owens Valley situation without offering or intending to offer a bona fide solution. Continued delays and broken promises, unsettling values and business, have been worse than any possible settlement could have been.

Our citizens' actions so far have been mere protests against the contemptuous neglect of the valley's rights. The city fails to realize that talk about meeting the situation in court proceeding, and a policy of further waiting, is full of the gravest danger.

Individuals threatened with loss of homes and livelihood may decide on action rather than harmless protests. The sorely tried thread of patience on which the very existence of the aqueduct hangs may break.

If the gravest consequences result, the blame must fall upon the officials who have played with the welfare of the community.

The claim of William Mulholland, engineer of the aqueduct, that those who opened the spillway are not representative is untrue. The Owens Valley is solidly back of the warning just given and the Bishop Chamber of Commerce has endorsed it.

Unless the city promptly defines a policy, with a genuine guarantee of performance, the consequences can not be foretold. Owens Valley has suffered long and patiently, but patience can not last always.

The Editor of *The Facts* knows something about this controversy, having represented Inyo County, as well as San Bernardino County, in the State Senate for eight years and having tried to understand the problems of the people there, at least inasmuch as they affected public policies.

What has been done in Inyo to bring about this present deplorable situation?

The aqueduct was built, taking from a valley of contented farms not only the water which ran to waste in the Owens River, but also much of the water that was used on the desert lands to produce the living for the people.

The people of Inyo County waked up one morning to find that agents of Los Angeles City had been among them and had acquired much land and their water rights and that a great canal was in the building to take the precious water out of the county to Los Angeles. This would have been borne, though not without some bad feeling, had it ended then. But the capacious maw of the great city could not be satisfied. It was not enough that water should be taken for domestic purposes, which is a law of nature, of man and of God; but under false pretense the water was taken from Inyo County farms and placed upon Los Angeles county farms, especially in the San Fernando section. And as the great city grew, the ruthless policy of the city increased with it.

When the Inyo people felt that Los Angeles had taken all she wanted, and were consequently lulled into quiet, although embittered, plausible men appeared among them again. One would represent, as an instance, that he wished to buy two or three farms in some especially well watered place, stating that he proposed to construct thereon a model creamery, and to operate a model dairy; that he would provide for the other farmers and stock raisers a market at home for all their butterfat, and their stock and their surplus alfalfa, and that he, the newcomer, would help to build up and restore the county to its old time prosperity. He would get the properties he wanted, with their water rights, but the model institution would never materialize. Instead, the buyer would scornfully inform the sellers that he represented the Water Department of the City of Los Angeles, and the water he has secured would be turned into the aqueduct, the farm allowed to revert to sagebrush, the dwelling and the barns would fall a gradual prey to the elements. You can go through Inyo County today and almost make a continuous path through such abandoned farms.

Or a corporation owning a ditch of water would find that a majority holding of the stock, and consequently the management of the water, would have gotten into the hands of the outsiders. And then the loss would be greater, for people receiving little, if any, return for their holdings, would find themselves ruined.

Oh, it is a story of despoilation, of ruthlessness, perpetrated in the name of the law, that can not be adequately told. The county has lost its valuation, is reverting to a desert, its population growing less. And all the talk about meeting the situation fairly, at present as is said by Mr. Chalfant, has been words, mere words.

Lawful but despicably unfair has been the treatment of the people of Inyo, by a few authorities of the city of Los Angeles. Might has thus far triumphed over Right. Will Might continue to demand her pound of flesh, or will she change her policy, as she can well afford to, especially in view of the water supply from the Colorado River, soon available, and which can be had without injury to anyone?

From Fresno Republican, November 27, 1924.

LOS ANGELES, OWENS VALLEY QUARREL, BROADSIDED, EACH STANDING ON ITS OWN RIGHTS.

By Ben. R. Walker.

The references made during the last two days at Los Angeles to the dispute as to whether the city or the valley first began the illegal steps and is therefore responsible for the outbreak of overt trouble in the Owens River country, emphasize the fact that it is a broadsided quarrel between city and country, each standing on its own rights—the city to have the water—the valley to keep water—and that any other acts that grow out of this struggle are merely incidental. Both sides have committed “illegal” acts. And whichever side would prove that the other had committed the first “illegal” act would not have thereby established its own purity of intention. For this illegality, on either side, is but a symptom of the greater struggle for the life of the valley and for the future growth of Los Angeles. The city wants to grow. The valley has, up to a few months ago, wanted to grow. Now that it sees it can not possibly grow, it at least wants the city to pay for what it has taken.

These mutual charges of illegality and of violence can be well illustrated by the story of the purchase of the McNally Ditch Company, and its consequences. This takes up the story of Owens River Valley where I left off yesterday. I said that the formation of a defense organization in valley, the Owens Valley Irrigation District, was snagged first by the law preventing the district from buying up water rights, even though the city was buying them up. And secondly, by the campaign of Los Angeles to prevent the consummation of the district, in spite of the Los Angeles attorney, W. B. Mathews, having given his blessings to the proposed district formation.

The course taken by Los Angeles was, undoubtedly, forced on it at that time by the drought, whatever may have been its ultimate intention. The year 1923 was seriously crippled by water shortage, as were several previous years. In building the aqueduct Los Angeles, to take care of what it thought would be a surplus of water, had offered contracts to sell water to ranchers in the San Fernando Valley. The San Fernando people had planted, with this water. Then in 1923 the shortage was acute and San Fernando suffered. They made ranchers there make their complaints long and loud. They were the rate payers, the patrons of the aqueduct as a business proposition. Mulholland and the Public Service Commission heard, and acted. Their cure for the situation was to take more water from the Owens River Valley, and depopulate more Inyo County farm territory for the benefit of Los Angeles County territory.

Martin got busy in the northeast part of the Owens area, to the northeast of Bishop, one of the most fruitful spaces. This was supplied with water by the “McNally” Ditch, with the best water right on the river. It surrounded the town of Laws, which is the rail station for Bishop. It included great fields of alfalfa, orchards and stock farms. Land Agent Martin got very active. He soon had in his possession the deeds or

options to 80 per cent of the land controlling the water in the McNally Ditch.

The directors of the McNally Company, the winter previous, had voted approval of the formation of the Owens River Irrigation District. This in that spirit of general cooperation which had been approved by Attorney Martin. Now the shoe was on the other foot. The city owned 80 per cent of the McNally Ditch, and wanted the water to flow down into the San Fernando Valley. The city promptly had the directors of the McNally Ditch removed, and substituted men of its own picking. These new directors rescinded the act entering the McNally acres in the irrigation district. A suit resulted, to compel the ditch to remain in the district, but this was fine fettle for Attorney Mathews. Fighting suits, either in or out of court is what his law department is for. Suit or no suit, the water which up to that time had been diverted from the river into the McNally Canal, and watered the wide territory around Laws, was now let go on down the river. It never again has spread over the McNally acres.

One can now at any time make a trip over that area, and shed tears. Wisibly, what were once homes are now deserted shacks. Gardens are waste spaces. Trees are dead or dying. Marsh grasses appear in the few seepage places, and desert shrubs in the dry spreads. In the town of Laws, six miles from Bishop and its rail point, the business houses show the decrepitude of economic wastage.

This was the first serious blow to Bishop. It had, with that rather common indifference of us to our neighbors, been more or less unconcerned with the buying up of Lone Pine, of Manzanar, of Independence. But Laws was a different matter. The arteries of Bishop's economic prosperity were being clipped up close. The chief town of the valley would feel itself bleeding to death.

But the town of Big Pine, fifteen miles to the south, took quite another, a more immediate view of the matter. The shortage of water which had pressed San Fernando into complaint, had affected the Owens Valley as well, and had reduced the proportions of river water that each of the dozen companies joining in the proposed irrigation district had felt. The Big Pine Canal Company had felt it particularly. They had been getting the water, but not enough, not nearly as much as their "right" entitled them to.

All at once they saw coming down the river an added "head" of water. It was the McNally water which the city of Los Angeles had bought and had turned back into the river, to be diverted again into the aqueduct intake thirty miles below.

The Big Pine people welcomed this added head of water in the river with open arms, or rather, with open head gates. Los Angeles was bleeding the Laws district for the aqueduct. Big Pine promptly bled the river to get an additional flow of water.

Los Angeles, through its public service commissions, felt justly indignant. They had bought the water and now the Big Pine people were stealing it.

The Big Pine people answered that they were taking their own. "We are entitled to so much water out of the river. The water is now here in the bed of the stream. Why should we not divert it?"

Los Angeles had a prompt retort.

It happens that opposite Big Pine the Owens River forms a "goose-neck," the curve turning to the west, toward the town and farm lands. The Big Pine diversion is in this gooseneck. Los Angeles engineers came on the ground, hired scrapers and teams, and in the flat valley soil proceeded to cut a straight line across the base of the gooseneck. This would have given the river a new, shorter channel, leaving the Big Pine diversion high and dry to the west.

This scraping was begun in the darkness. When the dawn came the Big Pine people saw it. They were helpless to get injunction proceedings, even if injunction proceedings would have helped. Judge Dehy, the only superior judge in the county, was in San Diego trying a case. Whether the law department of Los Angeles knew it or not does not appear. Anyhow, this fact, which should have helped Los Angeles, actually worked to the city's detriment.

For the Big Pine people on the following night got out searchlights on the opposite side of the river, trained them on the spot where the scrapers would return to continue their digging, and in the lurking darkness had men with rifles stationed. When the Los Angeles construction gang appeared they sighted the searchlights. Perhaps their acute ears heard the hammers of the rifles being pulled back. They withdrew and did not return.

Los Angeles did not go to law. This utterly illegal bit of threatened violence on the part of the Big Pine people brought the city to terms at once—brought about the only instance there has been of cooperative marketing of lands by farmers in this county.

Advances were made by the city which resulted in the formation of a committee of farmers to represent the Big Pine area as a selling organization. To this committee Los Angeles offered the lump sum of \$1,100,000.

"Divide up this money as you see fit, but give us the land," said the city. And it was done. The committee shared the money cut, and got the options. True, there have been, in the months since, charges and counter charges of fraud in the awards made by the committee. Los Angeles "lovers" were accused of dominating the committee and getting a lion's share of the awards. One man repeatedly, in print, is charged with having betrayed the district and thereby getting \$45,000 for land worth no more than \$10,000. But these are the details of a situation in which passions, cupidity, fear and revenge, as well as the detail of local feuds, were involved, and to a certain extent are always to be expected. The fact is that in this instance Los Angeles was "held up," was compelled by circumstances to buy in a lump sum, and could not carry on its usual tactics of bargaining with individual owners.

So, the Big Pine Canal went into the aqueduct hopper. The Big Pine water, as well as the McNally water, went gurgling down the aqueduct.

Here was "violence" on both sides. The financing was irregular, the proceedings were all illegal. Big Pine took Los Angeles water, with a color of right. Los Angeles proceeded to retake its water, with the incidental feature of proposing to leave Big Pine without any water whatsoever.

And this buying up of Big Pine put the last nail in the coffin of the Owens River Irrigation District. It is now admittedly moribund,

although it is, as an organization, being made use of as in the later attempts to come to some terms with Los Angeles.

When Los Angeles officials declare that they are being held up by the "irrigators" in the Owens River Valley, they have ground for complaint. They can point out to the Big Pine incident as a clear illustration. Whether it proves anything depends upon whether you see things from the Los Angeles or the Owens River point of view.

In any case, the business men of Big Pine were left outside the pale of the awards. They got nothing. Their clients are all sold out. Their businesses are ruined. They have neither compensation nor future before them.

Tomorrow consideration will be given to the latest proposed settlement, the one on which the Los Angeles Public Service Commission now stands, that to leave 30,000 acres of farms in the valley. What is the offer, and what does it mean to the valley?

From Independence Independent, November 27, 1924.

LOS ANGELES BANKERS ENTER THE WATER SITUATION. AQUEDUCT AGAIN CARRYING WATER.

Tiring of the uncertain, shifting, dilatory tactics of the Board of Public Service Commissioners of the city of Los Angeles in their handling of the water and land situation in Owens Valley, involving the future welfare of the farming, business and home interests of the valley, close to 100 men left Bishop last Sunday morning at 8 o'clock and drove in autos to the spillway of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, four miles north of Lone Pine, and raised the gates, allowing the water of the aqueduct to flow to the lower ground to the east and then on down to Owens River and Owens Lake to the south.

Sheriff Collins appeared on the scene not long after the arrival of the men from the north, but his visit was fruitless so far as being able to induce the "party" to disperse. It was a determined set of men that he met, men with a purpose, from which they would not swerve until their object was accomplished. C. H. Van Norman, in charge of that part of the aqueduct system, endeavored to close the gates, but without result. Ed. F. Leahey, general superintendent of aqueduct affairs in this section, although he made every effort to do so, found himself powerless to get the gates lowered.

S. B. Robinson, assistant counsel for the city, arrived here Monday and asked Judge Dehy for a restraining order against the men in charge of the situation. The order was issued, but revoked on Wednesday, Judge Dehy finding himself disqualified to act in the matter, according to a Supreme Court ruling. Sheriff Collins, on Monday afternoon, served some seventy-nine men with the original order. The men, however, did not leave "the hill," where they remained, with reinforcements coming each day, until Thursday afternoon. The gates were voluntarily closed at 2 o'clock that morning. The Los Angeles Clearing House Association, following a conference with W. W. Watterson, president of the Inyo County Bank, came into the breach and pledged its best efforts to work for a satisfactory settlement of the whole affair. After a consultation it was decided to close the gates, as stated, and wait the result of the action of the Los Angeles bankers.

Fully 1000 people—ranchers, business men and those engaged in other occupations—were present on “the hill” Thursday. It was a representative gathering of both men and women from every part of the valley, from the towns as well as the rural communities. A barbecue, with all the trimmings, made up and served by the women, who, by the way, were “on the job” with the men at all times, characterized the last day. On Wednesday, also, there was an abundance of good things to eat.

Governor Richardson was appealed to by Sheriff Collins to send troops to control the tense situation here, but the Governor refused the request, stating that no one had been injured and no property had been destroyed, and that the sheriff had ample power and should be able to control the situation. District Attorney Hession left Wednesday for Sacramento to personally see Governor Richardson and endeavor to get troops. State Engineer McClure, personal representative of the Governor, was at the spillway celebration Thursday, and is still in the valley investigating conditions.

From Exeter Sun, November 27, 1924.

LOS ANGELES ‘FAIR’ IN DEPOPULATING OWENS RIVER AREA.

Water Thirst of Rapidly Growing Metropolis Turned Toward this Field More Than Twenty Years; Buy Rather than Build Storage.

By Ben. R. Walker of *Fresno Republican*.

It is not difficult to understand why the people of Los Angeles have been deaf to the complaints of the people of Owens Valley. The people of Inyo County are very far away. While the use that the people of Los Angeles have for the water of Owens Valley is very close and very definite.

And they have been getting acquainted with this opportunity, in Owens Valley, for so many years.

The new growth of Los Angeles—the million people perhaps, who have come to that city since the aqueduct was first projected, who regard the “Owens Valley opportunity” as a part of their vested right of settlement in Los Angeles—have, for the most part, never heard of the people of Bishop or Big Pine or Manzanar. They know that they have more than a million souls dependent upon the aqueduct for water. And they mean to have it.

Unless one understands the opposing psychology of Los Angeles and of the Owens Valley, it is utterly useless to try to learn anything about the rights and wrongs of the aqueduct quarrel. You may listen for days to discussions about the price that is paid for land. You will be confused by charges that the city is trying to confiscate the land, and that the valley is trying to extort money from the city. You will hear about violence against the aqueduct and violence against the rights of the valley. If you are elsewhere than here, you will hear about the “mobs” and the anarchists “and the gangs.” Naturally you will hear most of this, rather than about the rights or the indignities of the valley, because over the world, and even in the valley, the circulation of the five little local papers is trifling. And what you hear in Los Angeles

papers is so distorted with the original impulse, not so much of the proprietors of those papers, as of the million of citizens who are behind those papers and whose water thirst is so acute.

Two reporters from one of the metropolitan papers came into the valley this last week with a definite tip from their city desk, that the "Ku Klux Klan" was behind the men who had seized the aqueduct. These reporters soon found so many Jews and so many Catholics among the group of despairing men on the aqueduct that it was ridiculous for them to talk "K. K. K." They sent in stories of what they found. And the stories that appeared in their papers the next day, were utterly different. But the men of Bishop could not make any such distinction. After two days of such distorted stories, "from the valley," the two reporters found it extremely advisable to return to Los Angeles. Another indictment against the "mob."

Every thought of those who are acting for Los Angeles is based on the primary assumption that the Owens River Valley is a free field for Los Angeles enterprise. It is based on the premise that Los Angeles as a city, has a right to buy of any individual in the valley who wishes to sell. It is based on the twenty years thought that here is a means of increasing the wealth of the city. No one, I believe, in Los Angeles thinks that this opportunity is to be stolen. The Los Angeleno expects to pay for it. They want to be "fair." That word "fair" is to be heard on every lip of the agents of "the city." Not only are all the steps that are taken intentionally "legal," but they are "fair" in the beginning understanding that the city has a right, in the end to take as much as it can and is willing to bargain for.

And it is impossible to understand the Owens Valley view, if one accepts this right of Los Angeles to get all it can pay for.

The people of Owens Valley have considered they had a right to exist, whether they could be, one at a time, bought out or not.

The successive steps in the changing of Owens Valley from a growing community to a shrinking district, from a spot like the most of the rest of California in which were to be found chance for community increment to one in which the community decreased for the benefit of Los Angeles or the San Fernando Valley, are fairly clear.

There was first the inceptive idea, as early as 1893, by Fred Eaton, later mayor of Los Angeles, and others, that water might be brought hundreds of miles from Owens Valley to the city.

Then there was the acquisition through members of the United States reclamation board of reversionary opportunities to storage reservoirs that the citizens of Owens Valley had expected to make use of under the Newlands acts.

Then there was the purchase, by Eaton on behalf of Los Angeles, in 1905 and following, of thousands of acres of land in the lower end of Owens Valley. This was done with comparatively little protest from Owens people. The valley was long, and while they showed anger, they felt no fear.

Then there was the drafting of the Mulholland plant, and the building of the aqueduct in the immediately following years.

Then came the need of carrying sufficient water in the aqueduct to pay the interest on the bonds, without building the storage reservoirs that were originally projected. Why this storage was not built, is a separate story. But the Los Angeles Public Service Commission found it

preferable to buy out more and more of the Owens Valley farmers, than to go to the expense of storing and equalizing the flow in the valley.

Then came the drought of the last seven years, six out of the seven being subnormal years. On any equality of rights, the valley should have been secure of its needs. The city determined that it should be secure, and proceeded to make itself secure by buying out and depopulating portions of the valley.

Many pages are being written of the acts of Los Angeles and acts of the valley people. All of these acts hinge, for their impulse, on the two contradictory hypotheses:

“Los Angeles has a right to acquire.”

“Owens Valley has a right to live.”

These can not both be true.

The fact is that Los Angeles has steadily, year after year, acquired.

And the fact is that Owens Valley is bleeding to death, its population either selling out, or being frozen out by the loss of their neighbors and of their water.

What the loss of neighbors means, either in Owens Valley or in Los Angeles, or in Fresno, must be the subject of another paper.

From The Bee, Sacramento, November 19, 1924.

BISHOP EDITOR BLAMES CITY FOR BROKEN PLEDGES.

Bishop (Inyo Co.) Nov. 19.—W. A. Chalfant, editor of the Inyo Weekly Register, in a statement setting forth the ranchers' side of the water controversy, says:

We hardly expect the outside world can understand the situation which has led up to a handful of ranchers in this remote valley defying the big city of Los Angeles.

Perhaps the outside world does not care, isn't interested. But to us, these are trying days, and their outcome means everything.

Los Angeles continues, as it has for years, to trifle with the Owens Valley situation without offering or intending to offer a bona fide solution. Continued delays and broken promises, unsettling values and business, have been worse than any possible settlement could have been.

Our citizens' actions so far have been mere protests against the contemptuous neglect of the valley's rights. The city fails to realize that talk about meeting the situation in court proceedings, and a policy of further waiting is full of the gravest danger.

Individuals threatened with loss of homes and livelihood may decide on action rather than harmless protests! The sorely tried thread of patience on which the very existence of the aqueduct hangs may break. If the gravest consequences result the blame must fall upon the officials who have played with the welfare of the community.

The claim of William Mulholland, engineer of the aqueduct, that those who opened the spillway are not representative, is untrue. The Owens Valley is solidly back of the warning just given and the Bishop Chamber of Commerce has endorsed it.

Unless the city promptly defines a policy, with a genuine guarantee of performance, the consequences can not be foretold. Owens Valley has suffered long and patiently, but patience can not last always.

Bishop, Cal., Nov. 21, 1921.

NIGHT PRESS RATE.

Literary Digest,
New York.

Editorial comment, Owens Valley Herald: The action of the people of Owens Valley in opening up the flood gates of the Los Angeles Aqueduct and turning the water out, is but a natural protest of a truly American community against the unprincipled representatives of that city who have resorted to the most infamous tactics in their dealings with the people here. This action was the only weapon a weak community had against a strong municipality to bring their wrongs to the attention of the outside world. That this was a drastic move can not be questioned, but the moral side of it is with those here who are fighting for their homes. If the people of Los Angeles as a whole knew the unfair methods that their political agents have used in their dealings with the people of Owens Valley there would be an uprising there that would retire these unworthy men to private life and save the name of that fair city instead of holding it up to the world as a black spot, devoid of any of the finer feelings that make for good. The reputation of Los Angeles for decent dealing throughout the *entire* country now hangs in the balance and on the decision that is made there will depend whether the name of that city in the future will stand for justice or unfairness.

(Signed) HARRY A. GLASSCOCK,
Editor Owens Valley Herald.

From the Argonaut, November 22, 1924.

NOT TROOPS, BUT JUSTICE NEEDED.

Doubtless, Mayor Cryer is sincere when he voices a disbelief that the "unlawful acts of the men who have taken possession of the Los Angeles aqueduct represent the sentiment of the people of Inyo County." Other long-distance observers of the scenes in Owens Valley—and they are numerous—hold dissimilar views. It looks to many as if the ranchers of Inyo county, whose farms have been jeopardized by the arbitrary proceedings of the Los Angeles Public Service Commission, were terribly in earnest in the stand they have taken and that their action is reflective of the attitude of a majority of the settlers of the region affected. In response to the appeal of the sheriff of Inyo County to the state executive for troops to dispel the "uprising," Governor Richardson points out that the sheriff has ample power to deputize an unlimited number of citizens to assist him in maintaining the peace and that he sees no reason at this time to send in national guardsmen, whose presence might incite bloodshed and cause destruction of property.

With this dictum the state at large will be inclined to agree. It is not troops that are needed so much as an evidence of good faith on the part of the Los Angeles Water Board. Promises and pledges repeatedly made to the settlers, it is freely charged by the latter, have been broken, until patience has ceased to be a virtue, with the result that the restraining order of court is ignored and occupation of the aqueduct property by

the indignant ranchers, in violation of the law, is the unfortunate sequence. It is not charged that the Los Angeles Public Service Commission has taken illegal steps to acquire the water-bearing lands that feed the aqueduct, to the detriment of the settlers, but, as the Bishop Chamber of Commerce sets forth in a resolution it has adopted, a copy of which has been sent to the Governor, the failure of Los Angeles officials to submit any definite and dependable plan of settlement of differences between the city and the Owens Valley property owners is the chief cause of irritation, since their manana-like procedure has resulted in serious economic loss to the farmers and merchants of the valley.

Absence of a definite policy is directly responsible for the action of the Owens Valley citizens in seizing the aqueduct and until the Los Angeles Public Service Commission formulates a plan that shall do full justice to the settlers—and conforms to it—there is bound to be friction in the valley. We repeat, it is not troops that are needed so much as a performance of delayed pledges on the part of the water board, whose course in Inyo County has not been marked by the best of judgment, due, it is feared, to the poor advice it has adopted in the past.

From Santa Barbara Press, November 27, 1924.

LOS ANGELES AND OWENS VALLEY.

Palpitating visibly with righteous emotion, the Board of Public Service Commissioners of Los Angeles announces it will not purchase all of the ranch lands in the Owens Valley and divert the water appertaining to these lands to Los Angeles. For, says the board, "it would leave the Owens Valley towns standing isolated in the midst of desert country with no agricultural production to support them." What the board has done is to purchase half the ranch lands in the valley, so the towns they used to support will be only half starved. And they must continue to exist on half rations and other communities in California will sooner or later find themselves in the same predicament unless some agency tackles the task of conserving the waters of the state which now go to waste or which are now not utilized as fully as possible. In addition to irrigating our lands or serving domestic needs this water must also provide us with the power needed by the state's industries and must carry its commerce on the navigable streams.

From Fresno Republican, November 28, 1924.

WHY 30,000 ACRES LOS ANGELES PLAN REJECTED BY INYO.

City Insists Its Aqueduct Must Run to Capacity—Plea of Valley to Women's Clubs and to Chamber of Commerce Fail.

By Ben. R. Walker.

Owens River Valley has had no organized means of expressing its rights as against Los Angeles' intrusion, but it has not lacked for active agencies of local public opinion, to shout its resentments and its fears.

Its first resentment was against the loss of its storage opportunities, and then it was almost forgotten that it ever had them.

Its next resentment was against the fact that Los Angeles did not make use of these storage opportunities. Finally it learned that Los Angeles had little intention of using these storage rights, which it was alleged the city had filched from the valley.

Then, for some years, local feeling was wrapped up in discussions of the rights and wrongs of individual, independent transactions. More far sighted citizens doubtless realized that the question of whether one rancher was paid enough for his farm, whether the owner was too high in his figures or the city too clever in its bargaining, was a small matter in the light of the sweep that the city was making of the valley. The city's policy itself, if it ever had a policy, was very slow to unfold. Suspicious Owens Valley people now declare that Mulholland from the very first intended to take the entire valley. But there was no thought of this a few years ago. It is only in the last two years that the valley has reached the verge of despair, a despair based on the fact that a large share of the people, selling out their homes, have already gone, a smaller share, securing interests that have made them dependent upon Los Angeles employment have become Los Angeles lovers, and that the rest see themselves as the mice with which the cat is playing.

The cat will neither eat the mouse, nor leave it alone.

So the energies of the leaders of civic organization in the valley for the last two years have been bent on getting the city to say what it is going to do.

It is quite possible to say this for the Mulholland organization that the state of Los Angeles politics is such that this organization can not say what it is going to do.

The leaders in the valley have begged Los Angeles either to stop buying, or to say that the city would buy out all the valley.

No one supposes for a moment that the city is going to stop buying land with water rights, as long as the city needs water and the rights are negotiable.

And yet, the Mulholland organization does not say, perhaps can not say, that it will buy up all the land that bears water rights.

For one thing such a declaration would carry with it at once the necessity of saying whether or not it would compensate the towns thus to be wiped out.

And it would also carry with it acrimonious disagreements as to whether the city should buy land that it does not want and does not need as well as land with firmly established water rights. There are some lands that have no rights at all; some that have minor rights, some with major rights. We have that sort of difference here in the Kings River Basin, where the Fresno Irrigation District has major rights, the Consolidated, the Alta and the various other districts, secondary rights. And irrigation leaders here for years have been avoiding the best they could litigation among these districts and companies to determine just what right each claimant has. This same sort of difference in rights obtains among the various little ditch companies in Owens Valley. By a rather easy sort of good will among them, they arranged a system of alternation in the use of water that did not depend upon court decision. When, last summer recrimination between Los Angeles and the valley reached its height, the legal department of the city brought out a trump card. It brought suit against all the ditch companies and other water claimants within the proposed Owens River Irrigation District to adjust

water rights. This adjustment proposal was what local leaders had been dreading, much as we here would dread a suit to establish accurately the various rights in Kings River water. It was a new club held over the head of the valley. The city would involve the valley in litigation that would keep the remaining companies at each other's throats, while the city completed its land operations.

But various city agencies have attempted to say what the city would do.

The last and most definite proposal is that stated within the last two months as a result of a visit of the Los Angeles Public Service Commission to the valley.

That visit had been preceded by the visit, in the spring, of a committee of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce. The business men were anxious to avoid inter-district acrimony. They recognized the evil of having Inyo County hatred of Los Angeles. They did not share in the political problems or fears of the Public Service Commission. The committee made a report based on extensive investigations. This report is "on file" in Los Angeles, so definitely filed that no Inyo County citizen has been able to read it. There is a popular understanding that it favors Inyo County contentions. Be that as it may, it is buried.

Another attempt of Inyo to break into Los Angeles pity was an appeal made by the women's clubs of Bishop to the women's clubs of Los Angeles. An extensive statement was made and a pitiful plea for justice. Again, the matter was adjusted. Engineer Mulholland made a statement of his case to the Los Angeles club organizations. There the matter rested.

Finally, in September, the Public Service Commission, under pressure from Los Angeles business men, made its visit in September. It went home. It drew up a plan. This was published.

It said, in substance: The city of Los Angeles does not wish to destroy the Owens Valley as a human institution. It respects its past history, its present rights. We offer to leave to the people of the Bishop district 30,000 acres of land, which are to be farmed by them. And there will be enough water for them, if there is already enough water to fill the aqueduct.

Citizens of Los Angeles were surprised at the rage that greeted this offer, in the valley. They were offering to leave 30,000 acres untouched—quite a respectable area which the city would self-sacrificingly agree not to buy up.

The rage was due in part to that "if"—if there was enough water to fill the aqueduct. It revealed again the colored gentleman in the winter's fuel. It showed that Los Angeles was determined to get its utmost penny of profit on its investment in the aqueduct, at the expense of the valley. If that aqueduct is always to be filled, said the valley leaders, there will be years when we will not be able to moisten our 30,000 acres, let alone get crops off them.

And then the gracious way in which Los Angeles discussed the water as though it all belonged to the city, and in certain conditions would allow enough of it to remain in the valley to irrigate 30,000 acres.

The final anger came when the report was spread that Attorney Mathews, for the Public Service Commission, cautioned certain "friendly" interests among the valley negotiators not to tie themselves up too closely in any agreement. "It may be that you" he is reported to have

said, "will want to sell out later, and will regret entering into a too binding agreement."

Since the only virtue to any agreement was that it might assure to the valley interests that they would have a minimum of 30,000 acres not subject to Los Angeles encroachment, this aside killed any attempt to get the good will of the city and the good will of the valley together in a mutual understanding.

This visit of the Public Service Commission to Bishop and its subsequent "offer" occurred after the first "overt acts" in the valley, the bluff at dynamiting the aqueduct in May and the deportation of Attorney Hall some time later. The visit was followed very shortly by the seizure of the canal this month. That seizure was fairly well planned. It was supported by virtually the entire population of Bishop, but in only a small degree by the citizens in the lower part of the valley. In fact, few remain there, and most of these are dependent for their livelihood in some way, directly or indirectly, on Los Angeles. I found business men in Independence "neutral," which under the circumstances meant good will to Bishop but no overt act against Los Angeles.

These articles so far cover the main points in the story of Owens Valley vs. Los Angeles. Tomorrow there will be given some of the incidental facts and some summing up of the rights and the impulses in the struggle.

From Fresno Republican, November 29, 1924.

OWENS VALLEY IS PAWN IN STRUGGLE AMONG FORCES TO DOMINATE LOS ANGELES.

Colorado Project Has Grown Up Since Mulholland Coveted Inyo Right—Diverse
Water and Power Interests—State's Moral Responsibility.

Many Owens Valley people have come to realize keenly, in the last year or so, that their homes, their fortunes, their entire relation to their livelihood and the land of their birth, form but a pawn in the game that is being played by others. It is a mighty game, this struggle for water, and for power, in California. If we have been considering, in these articles, apparently but two factors of the "city" on the one side and the "valley" on the other, it has looked like a struggle of a giant and a pigmy in which the pigmy is certain to be crushed. But it has much more serious bearings.

And when, as has come to pass in the last year, the leaders in Owens Valley have accepted their fate, that their homes are to become a mere spot on the map, a place for historians to wonder at, a field for tourists to Mt. Whitney to pass hurriedly through, for hunters to spend a few moments among, on the way to more populated preserves, with stray bands of cattle, marked here and there by deserted villages, by the stumps of trees no longer watered, by furrows that once meant water courses to farms—if they realize all this, what wonder that they have decided that they may well now use their strength to get the best bargain they can, for the final sale at once of what they have left?

So, if Los Angeles, on the one hand declares that they do not want to buy all the valley, want to leave some of the farming population, they are met with a sneer.

And if the valley residents declare that they want their remaining farms to be bought at once, and want their town lot owners as well to be compensated for their impending loss—and make this request at the same time that half crazed men threaten to dynamite the aqueduct and expel attorneys subservient to their enemies—what wonder if Los Angeles talks of anarchy and blackmail?

Los Angeles as one man can resent the valley threat of violence. But hitherto Los Angeles has been unable to act as one man to do the valley justice.

The valley has been also unable as one man to agree on any terms to save their homes from ruin. But it came very near to being one man, in the seizure of the aqueduct, early this month.

What are these great gamesters, among which the Owens River Valley is but a pawn?

There are the million human beings in Los Angeles. That is a terrific force in itself.

There is the Public Service Commission, established now for nearly twenty years, a great political machine, with a political reputation to sustain, a great collection of engineers, of attorneys, of civic employees and of minor workmen all dependent upon the spreading of the public ownership program.

There are the diverse interests within this political machine of the "water" men and the "power" men. It is well known that this diversity of interest, while it may not actually produce friction, does lead to conflicting tendencies. Observers point out that Engineer Mulholland, being essentially a "water" man, has never shown any enthusiasm for water storage, even though his original plans called for storage. Storage, as things have advanced since the Owens Valley was first coveted, has come to mean "power" as well as water. And Mulholland has powerful supporters for his water program, who are averse, if not actually hostile, to any power development.

There are the chances of developing from the Colorado River masses of power, alongside which the Owens production would be but a flash in the pan. The growth of Los Angeles that has astonished William Mulholland—he has expressed dread of that growth here in Fresno—has driven him on to new flights of the imagination, which probably makes him think with impatience of the Owens Valley as a minor feature of Los Angeles assets. But minor though it may be, it is still essential, for it is real and tangible while the Colorado River is speculative.

The growth of Los Angeles makes the political factors concerned in the proposal to get Colorado River water and power very forceful factors in city politics.

Engineer Mulholland, during negotiations a year or so ago, expressed willingness to construct a dam a hundred feet high at the foot of Long Valley, as originally planned.

The engineers of the valley said that this would not store enough water to affect the situation; that it should be 150 feet high.

But a dam 150 feet high could not be built, said Mulholland. It would force the water up to side levels that would leak like a sieve.

And he has never undertaken even to build the hundred-foot dam.

One reason is that the city would have to purchase more land in Long Valley. And therein lies a side story.

When Fred Eaton, at one time mayor of Los Angeles, came into the valley to first buy up land, along in 1905, he bought for the city a wide stretch of territory in Long Valley as a storage site. And he proceeded to take the opportunity to buy up many more acres for himself. He still owns those acres. If the city tried to build a dam it would have to deal with Eaton. Eaton stands in the way—whether with the consent of Los Angeles people who do not want to build the dam at all does not appear.

Even the more or less temporary situation that the city created, in order to handle water, is a major factor in the struggle. This is the sale of water for irrigation purposes to the people of the San Fernando Valley.

It is an undisputed fact that men who were active in getting the aqueduct built were also interested extensively in land in the San Fernando Valley. Land bought up in Owens Valley and made desolate, supplied its water to the alfalfa and fruit trees in San Fernando. This transfer has never accorded with the public conscience. But it has fitted the finance scheme of the aqueduct. The income from the sale of water in San Fernando has helped to pay the interest on the aqueduct bonds.

The public conscience on this matter has been well expressed by a disinterested jurist, in a side suit, still in process of adjudication. Some small land owners in the middle reaches of the Owens River Valley some time ago brought suit to restrain the Los Angeles pumping, on the ground that it was interfering with their alfalfa roots. The local judge being disqualified from sitting, Edwin W. Owen, superior judge in Kern, was brought in to sit. He dismissed the application for a temporary restraining order on the ground that no *prima facie* case of reducing the water levels had been shown, a very natural decision. But in so doing, he appended to his opinion, the following statement:

"If the court thought that the pumping of defendants' wells (the city of Los Angeles) was the direct and proximate cause of depriving the plaintiffs of water, the restraining order would be issued. Neither legally nor morally has anyone the right to take water from ten acres of alfalfa at Independence to irrigate ten acres of alfalfa at San Fernando."

Here, indeed, is expressed the crux of the struggle.

For the sake of future growth of life, on a wide scale in Los Angeles County, life in Inyo County is being wiped out.

As a struggle between a million human beings on the one side and 8,000 on the other, there can be but one answer. The million will have their way.

But on the question as to whether the million shall pay to the 8,000, what at the most extravagant estimate would cost no more than ten million dollars (perhaps very much less) for what is capitalized on its income value at more than a hundred million dollars, is a question of justice that the whole state of California, concerned in fair treatment among its own citizens, who are dependent for justice on California law, should have something to say.

From Bakersfield Labor Journal, November 28, 1924.

INYO FARMERS AND LOS ANGELES.

Inyo ranchers have won for themselves nation-wide notoriety. These men, believing themselves to be suffering a great wrong, have rebelled against constituted authority much as those early patriots did when

they threw the tea into the Boston harbor. In their belief that Los Angeles had done them, the Inyo ranchers, a great injustice, they took steps to waste the water which, according to law, belongs to Los Angeles.

We all hope that just as the wasted tea a century and a half ago, brought about a settled blessing, so will the wasted water of two weeks ago. Both incidents were against the law and constituted authority, and shocked the feelings of law-abiding people. The earlier incident was a success. We hope the latter will also be.

The Inyo ranchers had their country ruined by the withdrawal of their water for what Los Angeles termed its domestic supply. These men saw to their dismay that the water taken from them was used from the very first to irrigate lands belonging to the "chief crowd" in Los Angeles. With their own Inyo farms ruined by the action of Los Angeles, and the arid lands of Los Angeles, by reason of Inyo water, increased 100 per cent in value, the Inyo ranchers have a grievance.

They have waited many years for redress. At length, in exasperation, they have taken steps to compel Los Angeles to adopt "a very gracious attitude."

From Fresno Republican, November 30, 1924.

WHAT WILL LOS ANGELES DO?

What is Los Angeles going to do about the Owens River Valley? Is the city going to continue to let the valley die by inches while it takes advantage of its immediate opportunities, or watch calmly the difference among its own citizens as to future public utility policies?

Is the city going to continue to expect the men and women and children of the valley to wait, for years perhaps, while it decides whether it shall do the right thing?

There are ways in which the city can act, and act promptly.

The city can, through its Public Service Commission, declare that it will undertake to buy out the valley, at a fair price.

It can enter into an agreement for the appointment, through judicial proceedings of an arbitration commission, to adjust claims.

It can, if it will, agree to the conduct of inquiries by the State Railroad Commission.

The city can well ignore the "threats" that it is said have been made by certain residents against the city's aqueduct. These "threats" at the worst, are no more responsible, than have been the attacks on the valley's interests by city agents, committing acts for which the citizens of Los Angeles are innocent.

In the Los Angeles Times of May 28, 1924, the following statement appears, quoting William Mulholland, the chief engineer of the Public Service Commission of Los Angeles. Mr. Mulholland says: "Dissatisfaction in the valley? Yes, a lot of it. Dissatisfaction is a sort of condition that prevails there, like the foot and mouth disease. You can't tell where the infection is until it breaks out, and it keeps breaking out in new spots. There are those in the valley, like Tam O'Shanter's wife, who nursed her wrath to keep it warm."

This contemptuous attitude of the agents of the city toward the humble residents of this valley, whose water they have been taking little by little, for years, should be stopped. It is not at all necessary, as is called

for by some of the Los Angeles critics of the commission, that Mulholland resign. He has done his work for the city well, perhaps too zealously.

But it is necessary that the city establish human, not "legal" relations, with their fellow Californians of the Owens River Valley.

As it is, there appears to be little hope for any continuance of the Owens River Valley as an agricultural community. Too much of it has been wiped out already. The remainder is too valuable to Los Angeles as a water resource to suppose that it can be left securely in its communal independence. The threat of city purchase is always present. In a community where depreciation has set in, as in this agricultural part of Inyo, there will be always a proportion of the farmers who want to sell out, and each sale depreciates the value of the holdings of the farmers who try to remain. The valley appears to be doomed.

All that the city can now do, in decency, is to see that it pays for the damage it has done, and buys at, on terms fixed by a disinterested investigation board, the price that it shall pay.

Will the city do this?

From Fresno Republican, December 4, 1924.

OWENS VALLEY PROPOSES.

A definite reply has been made to the suggestion by the Los Angeles Clearing House Association that the Owens Valley interests be expressed in a definite proposition to Los Angeles. This reply, semi-official in that it comes from a banker representative in Bishop, the Inyo County seat, of the farming as well as the mercantile interests of this north part of the county, offers any one of three propositions.

First. Los Angeles guarantee that the city will complete its water resources without buying into 30,000 acres of rich farming territory around Bishop; added to which Los Angeles will pay an indemnity of \$5,300,000 for damages already caused to financial interests in the valley.

Second. Los Angeles buy out all that is left of local interest for a gross sum of twelve millions.

Third. Los Angeles agree to submitting the whole question of further encroachment as well as compensation to an impartial board of arbitrators.

We suspect that the first proposal, that for leaving 30,000 acres outside of the Los Angeles pale, with compensation of five and a third millions, is a diplomatic attempt to meet Los Angeles on its own ground. Impartial viewers of the situation doubt whether Los Angeles, having gone so far as it has, can stop. It will, ultimately, acquire all the land in the Owens River Valley that it wants, bargain or no bargain. It is doubtful whether any such bargain would hold, on either side. And it is doubtful whether, with the city's purchases having gone as far as they have, the remainder of the valley would thrive. And the five and a third millions for compensation, while doubtless accurately estimated from a banker's point of view, would in no way represent the human side of the situation, and will be taken by Los Angeles as a sop to sentiment, not a just fixture of the damage done. But as Los Angeles itself proposed publicly to leave the 30,000 acres, under certain conditions, this counter offer is made.

The proposal to sell out the whole valley, at twelve millions, does more accurately fit into the facts. Whether the twelve millions is too high, or too low, is a guess. The Owens leaders are satisfied that it is high enough so that they can distribute it among their own people, for quit claims to Los Angeles, and are also satisfied that, considering what Los Angeles is getting, it is a good bargain for the metropolis. Whether it can be accepted in Los Angeles without political reprisals against any body of men who propose it, is also a question.

The proposal to have arbitration, by a disinterested body, such as the State Railroad Commission, is the most just proposal, and also the least practicable. It would require an elaborate system of agreements and "consents," and it would take a long time, in which time the city of Los Angeles might decide that it did not want to buy at all, and the Owens Valley might still further fade away.

The proposal for a twelve million settlement is the most effective method of meeting the situation, covering as it does the wrongs already committed, if Los Angeles can assure the twelve millions and the agreement to this settlement of the various antagonistic elements in the city.

From Fresno Republican, December 5, 1924.

DUST FROM LOS ANGELES.

If the statement of J. A. Graves, president of the Los Angeles Clearing House Association, were to be taken as "official" for Los Angeles, it would indicate a very different view of the troubles in the Owens River Valley, a view equally favorable to Los Angeles methods, but opposite to the face put upon the inception of the aqueduct troubles.

Mr. Graves sees the present situation as one worked up for the benefit of a "junta" of Owens Valley malefactors of great wealth, who have taken options on Owens Valley lands and would reap a harvest out of any damages that Los Angeles would pay.

It is but a few weeks since the officials as well as the newspapers of Los Angeles were denouncing the seizure of the aqueduct gates as the act of a "red gang," a "band of anarchists," a mob of farmers, and so on. Now the Graves opinion is quite the other way. Instead of being the work of "reds" it is the work of "whites," bankers and other capitalists, willing to graft equally upon the poverty of the Owens Valley farmers and of the municipal treasury of Los Angeles.

Mr. Graves can easily ascertain the facts for himself, by a visit to the valley and a conference with the official representatives of the city of Los Angeles, at Independence and Bishop. He can inspect the records.

And if what Mr. Graves says were true, it would be very simple for the city of Los Angeles, in the interest of equity and justice, to protect itself from any of the moneyed persons of Inyo County. In the distribution of damages, it could provide that these damages would be paid only in the case where lands or other interests were held as of the beginning, before the present paralysis of values. If any bankers of Inyo County have been going about discounting the titles of poor farmers, with a view to selling these interests later in a hold-up of Los Angeles, a part of the agreement can specifically exclude such options from a share in the damages. And public opinion in Los Angeles, in

Owens River Valley and in the rest of the state will uphold such a provision.

The fact is, of course, that the valley's grievances are real, and not to be dust obscured by any such imaginative conspiracy to make money off of Los Angeles. There are, among the Inyo County complainants, bankers, it is true, and merchants, and farmers and others interested in land equities as well as business opportunities. Just as in Los Angeles or in Fresno, land titles cover a multitude of difference in circumstances.

These incidents do not affect that fact that the course of Los Angeles has virtually confiscated a very large share of the communal values in the Owens River Valley.

And no such diversive argument should be permitted to turn public action from the fact that Los Angeles should go into honest minded conference with the remaining Inyo County interests.

From San Francisco Argonaut, December 6, 1924.

OWENS VALLEY AND THE WHITCOMB REPORT.

With the voluntary retirement of the Owens River ranchers from the west gates of the Los Angeles aqueduct, following a semi-official promise that full justice would be done them if they obeyed the law, the tense situation in the valley has abated materially and sympathy, formerly withheld from the farmers, is, in many quarters extended them. The course of the Los Angeles Clearing House is particularly commendable. Declining to act until a pledge was made by Mr. Watterson, in behalf of the ranchers, that diversion of the water and all forms of lawlessness should stop, a resolution was passed by the clearing house promising to use its best efforts with the business interests of the city to bring about an equitable agreement between the people of Owens River Valley and the officials of Los Angeles. This is to the point and much better than merely passing denunciatory resolutions as was done by the Los Angeles Bar Association and other civic bodies.

Lawlessness, of course, is to be deprecated and condemned, but that alone is neither constructive nor wise. The ranchers have a grievance which, evidently, the Los Angeles Clearing House has realized by the wording of its resolution, and if it will follow that step by the advocacy of a committee formed of business men only, excluding lawyers and city officials, to confer with a delegation from the valley, progress of a desirable nature is certain. Through their spokesman, Mr. Watterson, the ranchers have expressed a willingness to accept the Public Service Commission's proposal to leave 30,000 acres of land, with a binding proviso that reparations to the extent of \$5,300,000 be paid to offset the damage already inflicted upon the valley towns by lack of water. Other propositions are also voiced by Mr. Watterson, all of which the special committee to be named by the Clearing House will carefully consider.

What a pity the Whitcomb report, made to the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce more than three months ago, has not been given publicity. Here was a committee authorized by the Chamber to make a thorough investigation of conditions in the Owens River Valley, with special attention paid to the charges by the ranchers of invidious action on the

part of the Water Board in failing to deal with the Owens Valley Irrigation District as a body, after a promise had been given that its rights should be accorded full consideration. This is the crux of the valley's complaint: That owing to secret buying of lands within the district from needy individuals, the city was able to get control of certain ditch corporations, thereby depressing values to such an extent that the bonds of the irrigation district could not be marketed. Just what attitude the Whitcomb report takes with respect to these allegations is not known since the Chamber of Commerce has kept the committee's findings bottled up for many weeks. If there is embodied a declaration in favor of the irrigation district, then the non-release of the report is greatly to be regretted, since an agreement might have been reached, long ago, that would have avoided the recent lawless action in the valley. The *Argonaut* calls for the publication of the report. Let the people know the decision of the chamber's special committee. It will be a valuable guide in the conferences between the business men of Los Angeles and the Owens Valley delegation, which the Los Angeles Clearing House resolution contemplates. Los Angeles can not permit itself to be accused of refusing to do justice to the ranchers. If they have an honest grievance why not recognize it and arrange for a fair settlement? Let us have the Whitcomb report forthwith.

From Selma Irrigator, December 9, 1924.

Los Angeles is conducting a publicity campaign to set herself right before the rest of the state for her course in Owens Valley. Her writers insist that she has done no wrong to Owens Valley people, but if they can show that she has, the city is able to pay and wants to do right. It is very evident that the people over there believe they have been wronged, and they will unquestionably find many sympathizers in other parts of the state. The pioneers of Owens Valley located there when Los Angeles was a Mexican village. They gave their lives to reclaim the desert and long after they established their homes, the hordes of eastern people that now populate Los Angeles, moved west. They needed more water for domestic purposes, and in casting about for it, they found a whole river of water available with no claimant but a handful of poor farmers and stockmen, whom they could easily dispossess. By buying strategic lands, they acquired most of the water and then set about to quietly buy the holdings that controlled smaller water resources. The farmers found themselves besieged and realized their weakness in such a contest. Those who could and were far-sighted enough, sold out and left, but those who stuck find themselves still in possession of their farms, but without water to irrigate them. They are worthless. A few years ago valley people suddenly awoke to the fact that Los Angeles had surveyed the streams of our Sierra Range and had filed on many locations for power sites. There were more people in the San Joaquin Valley and they raised so lusty a roar that our southern neighbors made haste to disclaim any intention to steal the latent resources for developing this part of the state. The Southern California Edison Company assured valley people last year that they would not rob valley power users of current produced on our streams to supply the south, but it was pretty hard to get power from them last year. The San Joaquin Light and Power Company has been a valley concern but people are now conjecturing about what

the change of ownership may mean to this valley. Modesto is trying to keep San Francisco from taking from Hetch Hetchy the fluid that means life to Stanislaus County farmers and it looks almost as though the big cities think the state and its resources were all placed here for them. If they are allowed to have their own way, they will take away the water through which the farmers made the cities possible and they will have to fall back on the jack rabbits and horned toads for their country trade.

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