

7-5-48

July 5, 1948

WHEN OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

NEIL STIVER, Zone 1 manager, and Lawrence Olson, Ventura city manager, have discussed the possibility of the city's buying a stated quantity of water from Matilija dam.

Five hundred acre-feet a year was the volume tentatively mentioned.

This matter should be of great interest to the citizens of Ventura, who face a pressing present and future need for water. Only a few weeks ago, the word from the courthouse was that there might not be any of the Matilija supply whatever available for this community. It is encouraging to find this forecast apparently not borne out.

The Star-Free Press believes the negotiations should be earnestly pursued, and concluded on the best basis possible. The zone authorities have not adopted a final price policy. It may turn out that the zone tax rate will be fixed to carry a portion of the dam's charges, with water users paying the rest. You may be sure that the service charges on the bonds will be paid, by property owners if not by water users, and this city will be paying its proportionate amount whether it receives water or not.

If we can obtain a share of the Matilija water, by all means let us obtain it, without too much quibbling over price. Then pitch in with the rest of the zone people to go about developing still further supplies for future needs from whatever sources the board of consultants recommend.

7-2-48

Ventura May Get Water From Zone One

July 2, 1948

The zone one flood control district has taken preliminary steps to see if the city of Ventura is interested in buying water from Matilija dam, it was learned yesterday.

At an adjourned meeting of the Ventura city council late yesterday afternoon, Councilman Charles Petit said he and City Manager Lawrence Olson had met with Neil Stiver, zone one manager, to talk about the city's purchase of Matilija dam water.

The water meeting was nothing more than a general conversation, Petit said, and no commitments were made. He said he and Olson suggested that the city might take 500 acre feet a year if the cost was not too high. Stiver suggested that the price may come down from \$60 to \$50 per acre foot, Petit said.

Petit told the council that 500 acre feet a year was about one-fifth of the city's normal requirement. He added that at \$50 per acre foot, the 500 acre feet of Matilija dam water would add about 10 percent to the city's present cost of procuring water from its own wells.

He said the dam water would be distributed on a first-come-first-served domestic need basis instead of an area basis.

Petit reiterated his statement made early this week that he could see no immediate need for the construction of Casitas dam. At a meeting of the council Monday night, Petit asked councilmen to consider a resolution urging a delay in construction of the Casitas project.

Outlet In Dam Urged

July 6, 1948
A low level emergency opening to take care of overflow waters in Matilija dam was recommended to the flood control supervisors today by the dam consulting board.

(The consulting board consists of Dr. Charles P. Berkey, geologist, A. W. Simonds, engineer, and Dr. Thomas L. Bailey, geologist.)

"Evidently there is no other way to ease a dangerous situation such as might arise if a major flood were to come without any provision at all for regulating and lessening the overflow," the consulting board told the supervisors.

DANGER TOLD

"If such an overflow occurred, there would be danger of a destructive attack upon the apron. This raises the question of the competence of that structure (the apron) as it now stands."

The board said it was "concerned" about the stability of the apron in an event of an overflow. The swirling waters which would accumulate at the base of the apron might destroy a portion of it by undercutting its foundations, the board asserted.

This highly churned water would tend to erode the slightly consolidated, crushed and leached sandstone that supports the apron, the board warned. It recommended improvement of the apron as an additional measure.

GROUTING SATISFACTORY

The grouting which has been conducted recently has greatly improved the strength and tightness of the foundation, the board reported. The bentonite treatment of the floor reservoir above the dam has been beneficial. Both of these improvements are indicated by recent salt tests which showed only insignificant leakage, compared with earlier tests.

The board told the supervisors that the dam was sufficiently tight to store water to the half way mark (elevation 1029), and said it saw no further need for more grouting until the water level is raised or new leaks show up.

The county has not as yet received permission from the state to store water to the full capacity of the dam, but there would be no way of preventing full storage (See OUTLET, Page 2)

7-6-48

Recommend Low Level Opening

(Continued from page 1)
during flood stage unless an emergency outlet is provided.

"We have indicated that such a rise in the water level is likely and recommend that new procedures be planned to cope with them," the board stated.

No additional core holes are required for the present, the board continued, and suggested that further bentonite treatments be suspended. These can be resumed, the board advised, when the water level goes up next year.

The board said it was "hesitant" to recommend an up-stream blanket for the dam because of the expense involved. (This is a permanent protective coating stretched across the floor and up the sides of the canyon to prevent water from seeping into the dam).

"This blanket should not be built unless competent and experienced engineering consultants say that present measures are unsatisfactory", the board advised. The go-slow warning was underlined with the reminder that the question of how an effective blanket could be put in would have to be solved before any decision on the question could be reached.

The supervisors decided to hold a meeting with their special counsel and the engineers on the project to study the report and chart future moves.

Warren Company Asks Information on Dam

Request of the Donald R. Warren company for some information in regard to Matilija dam was referred today by county flood control district supervisors to their special legal consultant, S. V. O. Prichard, for his approval or disapproval.

The Warren company, ousted Matilija dam engineers, asked for geological data on core borings at the dam.

UNKNOWN
DATE

MATILIJA DAM WATER REPORTED UNDRINKABLE

Before a drop of water in the \$2,500,000 Matilija dam can be made fit to drink, approximately \$40,000 more must be spent, flood board supervisors learned yesterday.

Both the board and Hydrologist Harold Conkling agreed that because of an oversight of design, no provision was made in the massive structure to treat the water to make it potable. Water taken from the dam at present would not taste pleasant and probably would smell, the board revealed. Cause of the problem is the growth of algae in the water behind the dam, Conkling informed the supervisors.

To combat this problem, Hydrologist Conkling told the board that some steps must be taken immediately to assure a quality of water suitable for domestic use. He recommended that:

(1) A tower with 10 steel gates be constructed at an estimated cost of \$40,000 to regulate the flow of water from various water levels. This method of taking water has proved successful in combatting algae.

(2) Copper sulphate treatments of the stored water.

(3) Strict control of algae growth.

Conkling said to construct the (See CONKLING, page 3)

steel tower, all the stored water, some 160 acre feet, would have to be released. Chairman R. E. (Sam) Barrett expressed the opinion he was not in favor of releasing all the dam water.

Conkling replied that the time to construct the tower would be now, when not much water would be lost as the level is low.

Treatment of water with copper sulphate would kill the trout, Conkling told the board. This the supervisors felt would bring strong protests from the state fish and game commission as well as local sportsmen. It was generally agreed that in the issue of fish or water, that the need for water in the county would be upheld in the courts.

In addition to his recommendations, Conkling said that a filter plant may still be necessary if the initial steps in clearing the water of algae do not improve the quality of the water. No estimate on this project was given.

Supervisor Lester Price said he wanted nature to test the dam before any more money is spent on the structure. Upon a motion of Supervisor Richard Bard, however, Conkling was authorized to make a complete report of the situation.

Engineer Robert L. Ryan commented that a permanent headache is apparent in the operation of the dam. Conkling replied that he felt it was no more headache than any other city reservoir.

July 9, 1948

OF IMPORTANCE TO ZONE 1

WE'D like to call the special attention of all our upper Zone 1 readers to an important meeting that is to consider a timely topic, for them, next Wednesday evening.

The topic: How residents in the various communities can best go about organizing water districts for the distribution of supplies delivered from Matilija dam.

The time and place: Eight o'clock July 14 at Camp Comfort. The invitation applies to those living east of the Ventura river, but including Live Oak Acres, and from Foster Park north to and including Ojai and the valley.

Zone Manager Stiver and a representative of the district attorney's office who is experienced in the legal organization of the districts will be present to set forth the facts and to answer pertinent questions.

It is true that Matilija dam right now has very little water behind it. Also, that to date no state permission has been given for storing a capacity amount. However, much genuine progress has been made in correcting the dam's shortcomings and there is indication that the remaining problems will be solved in reasonable time.

Also, it is certain that some day the rains will come, the stream will run heavily, and a lake will form behind the concrete arch. The zone has gone through a long period of troubles, but a day lies ahead when there will be valuable water resources for distribution to the homes and ranches. The supervisors now are taking steps for the construction of necessary conduits to convey the water to the areas that need it. However, the zone will wholesale the water; individuals will need to cooperate through legal districts in order to acquire their supplies.

This meeting ought to equip citizens with the facts on which to base their plans. Later the people of each area can form large or small districts to suit their regional needs. It is not too early to be organizing for this purpose.

Council Debates Casitas

7-13-48
THE Ventura city council's stand on the construction of Casitas dam may depend upon whether or not the city of Ventura can develop an adequate, independent water supply of its own, it was revealed last night.

Casitas Dam Issue In Council Debate

(Continued from page 1)

Whether or not the city's underground supply would stand up under constant draining. He said he thought, as did Pate, that the city should use its wells as a safeguard against emergency and utilize the Casitas project as a main source of water supply.

DOUBTS \$50 PRICE

"Besides," Helling said, "I doubt that the water will be as high as \$50 an acre foot. But if we are going to pay for the dam anyway, let's get the use of the water."

Petit suggested that the council meet with Dr. Thomas L. Bailey, Ventura geologist who selected the Pierpont water sites, and get his estimate of how long the supply in that area will last.

"If he told you would you believe him?" Pate asked.

The councilmen shook their heads. "No one can know the answer to that," Pate continued. "All he, or anyone else, can do is guess."

TASTE SCORED

"Even if that supply were inexhaustible I wouldn't want another well down there if the water is going to taste like it does now," Helling remarked.

The council agreed, however, that a meeting with Dr. Bailey was a good idea. The thought it would be worthwhile to include James M. Montgomery, Los Angeles consulting engineer, and get an overall picture of the Ventura water condition.

The meeting, set informally for Friday night, will include discussions on the Pierpont water supply and a study of Montgomery's suggestion that the city assume a bonded indebtedness of nearly a million dollars for water development.

Montgomery's recommendations include the drilling of at least one more water well in the Pierpont area, the renewal of some of the city's worn out water mains, the construction of a reservoir to increase water pressure in the east end and consideration of water

Matilija Dam Issue:

July 25, 1948

Flood District Gets Right to Sue Warren

THE Ventura county flood control district today was granted the right to sue the Donald R. Warren company as a corporation, as well as a co-partnership, in the suit over Matilija dam.

The district's motion to name the Warren company as a corporation in its complaint was approved by Superior Judge J. T. D. Warne of Tuolumne county, who will hear the breach of contract action.

EARLY DECISION

Judge Warne took a motion asking for the Warren company's cross-complaint to be termed a counter-claim under submission. He promised he would give an early decision. Another motion, to have stricken certain portions of the Warren company's answer to the district's action was taken off calendar. The judge said that in granting the district the right to amend its complaint the Warren company then received the right to submit a new answer. This motion, therefore, won't be considered until after a new answer, if any, is filed.

FOURTH MOTION

The district's fourth motion was to be heard this afternoon. The district is asking the judge to give permission for the district to inspect and obtain field notes, topographic maps and other data collected and made by the Warren company prior to and during the erection of Matilija dam.