



LEGISLATURE TAKES HAND IN OWENS VALLEY ROW

City Board Sponsors Bill Asking Guard for Aqueduct;
Would Make Tampering Felony

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01-20-1925

SACRAMENTO, Jan. 19. – As an aftermath of the dynamiting of the Los Angeles Aqueduct and the opening of the aqueduct control gates by a group of Owens Valley residents, two measures, prepared by the Los Angeles Board of Public Service Commissioners, the first providing for the appointment of State police to guard public works and the second changing the category of such depredations from a misdemeanor to a felony, were introduced today in the Senate and Assembly.

Coincidentally, Senator Ralph Swing of San Bernardino, redrafted a resolution providing for interrogation by the Legislature of the Owens Valley water controversy, striking from his original motion a provision that the State Engineer be made a member of the investigating committee, and substituting authority for the two Senatorial and two Assembly members of the committee to name a fifth member.

Mr. Swing declined to explain his modification, but it is understood he was persuaded that State Engineer McClure's report to Governor Richardson criticizing the Board of Public Service Commissioners for their activities and attitude in the Aqueduct fight has made inexpedient his appointment for further investigation of the matter.

NEW PROPOSALS

The measure designed to protect works from violence provides a penalty not only for all persons destroying the same but for those wasting water needed for domestic or municipal purposes.

Provision also is made that "any person, who in any written or printed newspaper, magazine, periodical, paper, letter, telegram, pamphlet, circular or other writing instigates, advocates or encourages the doing of any acts prohibited" in the proposes in the new law likewise shall be guilty of a felony.

The act providing for appointment of State constabulary especially empowered to police publicly owned property, is drawn, its sponsors say, in such fashion as to obviate the introduction either of political or local self-interest into the official acts of such a body.

OPPOSITION LOOMS

This freedom from improper influence is sought in a clause providing that the State police may be dismissed either by the Governor or by the municipality.

There are indications that both measures, which have been introduced as emergency acts, will receive some opposition.

Proponents of the two measures are prepared to argue that while urged for immediate enactment at this time, each act contemplates the enforcement of law and penalty for violation thereof under conditions generally to the State at large.

NEW CITY CHARTER

Ratification of the new Los Angeles city charter will be sought in both houses tomorrow. Reported opposition to ratification has thus far failed to materialize and Senator Harry A. Chamberlin, who is in charge of ratification plans, expects the proposal to receive unanimous endorsement.

Opponents of a proposed increase of 1 cent to the 2 cent tax on gasoline today threatened to carry the issue to the people by referendum if the additional tax is voted.

“If the present 2 cent tax is increased, and a referendum is had,” by more than \$33,000,000 from Feral road funds.

OPPOSITION INCREASES

Sentiment unfavorable to an increase in the gasoline tax is growing stronger in the Legislature and the proposal has been further injured by a conviction that Gov. Richardson would veto a tax increase if the Legislature should approve it.

Those urging increase base their contention on the fact that available funds for further highway construction have virtually been expended and that all new construction by the State will automatically stop if additional revenue is not provided

It is possible that a compromise may be reached in which the existing law requiring all gasoline tax funds to be expended for maintenance only shall be amended to permit diversion of a part of the revenue for construction purposes. Such a change in the law would make available from \$4,000,00 to \$5,000,000 annually for new construction, it is said, but would reduce in like amount funds available for highway repair.

Opening of a hearing by the Ways and Means Committee of the two houses on the Governor's budget today failed to develop threatened objections. Questions were asked and answered in polite and friendly fashion, the proceedings being in striking contrast to the violent denunciations and personalities marking the budget hearings two years ago.