



POLICE READY TO RUSH NORTH

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Armed Men Prepared for New Aqueduct Trouble

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Investigation by Grand Jury May be Requested

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State Senator Swing Offers Aid to End Feud

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A clew to the automobiles used by the dynamiters who last Friday blasted out a 460-foot stretch of a nine-foot siphon of the Los Angeles Aqueduct in the first of two successive dynamite attacks in the Owens River Valley was reported to have been uncovered yesterday by Los Angeles police detectives.

Meanwhile the actual work of reconstructing the break was started with the arrival in No Name Canyon of the first of the fabricated steel plates. H. A. Van Norman, assistant to Chief Engineer Mulholland, said that, due to the co-operation of local manufacturing plants, the work will be hurried through and completed in record time. A fleet of trucks is being used to hurry the steel to the spot. Mr. Van Norman will return to the valley tomorrow.

CALLS IT OUTLAWRY

Determination to bring to justice the dynamiters was expressed yesterday by Water and Power Department officials. President Del Valle issued a statement in which he termed the dynamiting "flagrant outlawry and a vicious effort to blacken the name of Los Angeles throughout this State and nation." He said the purpose was twofold – to force the city to buy, at exorbitant prices, ranch lands in the valley and to pay "reparations" to business interests in the communities in the valley.

In the valley former Dep. Dist. Atty. Clark was directing the efforts of six Los Angeles city detectives in their search for clews. Mr. Clark announced he would co-operate with Sheriff Hutchinson and spend "two years, if necessary," in tracking down the dynamiters.

JURY TO INVESTIGATE

A rumor was current that an investigator for the Federal Department of Justice was in the valley. Another rumor indicated that the Los Angeles county grand jury might be asked to investigate certain local aspects of the case.

State Senator Ralph Swing, whose district includes Inyo county, the scene of the dynamiting, arrived in the valley yesterday and offered to render what assistance he could in ironing out the feud between the valley faction and the water bureau.

A squad of fifty-three picked policemen, all heavily armed, was maintained constantly at Central Police Station all day yesterday prepared to leave for the valley immediately in case of further trouble. Nineteen automobiles were held in readiness for their transport. They were under command of Chief of Detectives Cline.

Work looking toward the repair of the damaged penstocks leading to the Big Pine House No. 3 was begun yesterday. The powerhouse supplies energy to the valley and the damage thee did not affect the aqueduct system. Bureau officials repeated yesterday that a large supply of water is available to the city from the immense reservoirs south of the break.

Mr. Del Valle's statement follows: "The criminal attacks made by dynamiters during the past few days upon the city's water and power systems culminate a campaign of violence and threats that has been conducted against this city and its Department of Water and Power for more than three years. From the beginning this campaign has been characterized by flagrant outlawry and a vicious effort to blacken the name of Los Angeles throughout this State and nation.

"A small group of persons in Owens Valley, aided and abetted by certain outside interests, have been the active forces in this campaign. Their purpose has been two-fold:

- (1.) To force the city to buy, at exorbitant prices, ranch valley land in the valley still held in private ownership.
- (2.) To compel the city to pay them many additional millions of dollars as 'reparations' for asserted injury to business interests in the valley resulting from the city's land purchases in that region.

In an effort to support their demands for unreasonable land prices and 'reparations' this group ;has broadcast the false charges that Owens Valley is being devastated and its business interests ruined by the city of Los Angeles.

We believe the time has arrived when the people of this city and State are entitled to know the truth of this situation, and we therefore submit for public consideration a statement of the facts.

WATER FORMERLY WASTED

Owens River and its tributaries in the valley are the water supply sources of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. Prior to the construction of the Aqueduct a large share of this water was unused by the valley ranchers and was wasted into Owens Lake.

Before the city constructed the Aqueduct it obtained its rights to appropriate water from Owens River trough filings granted by the State of California and the United States government. On the basis of this right it has proceeded in good faith to invest more than \$44,000,000 in the construction, development and maintenance of a water storage and supply system.

Never in its history has Owens Valley prospered and increased in wealth as it has in the past twenty years during which time the city has been operating its Aqueduct in that territory.

VALLEY PROSPERS

Owens Valley, practically the only portion of Inyo county under development, was settled as an agricultural region in the early seventies. In 1905, two years before work began on the Aqueduct, Inyo county had an assessed valuation of \$2,487,000. In 1915, two years after the completion of the Aqueduct, Inyo county's assessed valuation had increased \$7,628,000; today Inyo county has an assessed valuation of \$11,347,000. Such a steady and relatively great increase in assessed valuations does not indicate that the valley has suffered at the hands of the city of Los Angeles.

When the city entered Owens Valley to construct the Aqueduct it found that region largely a raw frontier territory without even a railroad connection with the cities and markets of Southern California. The city, requiring rail transportation to handle its construction materials, entered into an agreement with the Southern Pacific Company, which resulted in that company building a standard gauge railroad from Mojave to Lone Pine in the valley,, a distance of 120 miles. Thus, through the city's efforts, was Owens Valley given its first standard railroad connection with the outside world.

PURCHASE NECESSARY

Unable to reach any sort of equitable agreement with valley interests concerning division and use of Owens River water, the city has found it necessary, during the last four years, to make extensive water-land purchases in the valley. Because of the series of abnormally dry years just passed through, these land purchases were required as the only method of safeguarding the Aqueduct water supply upon which 1,250,000 people in Los Angeles are largely dependent.

Since 1923 the city has paid or contracted to pay \$12,000,000 for approximately 70,000 acres of land in the valley. The purchase price paid for these lands was on the basis of 4.1 times their assessed valuation. The properties' actual market value is recognized to be only about two times the assessed value.

More than 70 percent of the ranches purchased have been leased to tenants, in many instances the former owners, and these lands are being retained under cultivation. Additional leases are being made each day.

During the eighteen months between October 1, 1925, and April 1, 1927, the city expended a total of \$202,132 on improvements to the ranch properties it has purchased in Owens Valley.

In the face of the repeated charge that Owens Valley towns are being ruined, here are the facts.

Building and improvement work in the Owens Valley towns of Bishop, Big Pine, Independence and Lone Pine has been progressing steadily since the city began its land purchases in the valley.

Since the city began its land purchases, three new modern hotels have been completed in the towns of Bishop, Lone Pine and Independence. Today two of these hotels are being enlarged.

Garages have been erected or enlarged in all of the four towns during the past eighteen months. In Lone Pine a block of four new store buildings has just been completed.

BANK DEPOSITS GROW

Published statements of Owens Valley banks reveal that the bank deposits in Bishop, largest town in the valley, were 21 percent greater on December 31, 1926, than on December 31, 1922, the year before the city began its land purchases. The deposits for December, 1922, were \$1,972,720 and for December, 1926, \$2,385,411.

Purchase of automobiles has come to be regarded as one of the best barometers of any community's prosperity and buying power. In Inyo county the annual registration of automobiles for the year 1926 is reported to be 435 percent greater than for the year 1921 – the number of cars registered being seventy-six in 1921 and 407 in 1926.

Hundreds of the city's employees engaged in the operation and maintenance of the Aqueduct and on new construction work are stationed in the valley. The city's payroll in the valley now amounts to more than \$100,000 a month, and this payroll contributes materially to the prosperity of a region whose total population is 7,000.

CITY PAYS HEAVY TAXES

The city is by far the largest tax payer in Owens Valley. Its tax bill for the present year amounted to \$144,000 or 43 percent of the total county taxes.

Ever since the Aqueduct was placed in operation, the city of Los Angeles, through its responsible officials, has attempted to work out with the valley residents an equitable agreement concerning the division, storage and use of the available water in Owens River.

In 1921 it appeared that at last an agreement had been reached. The plan outlined called for the expenditure of several millions of dollars by the city of Los Angeles in providing water storage and conservation facilities largely for the benefit of the ranchers. As a part of this program the city, in good faith, began the construction of a dam in Owens Gorge for the purpose of creating a storage reservoir in Long Valley. This work was halted when an injunction suit was filed by a group of Owens Valley residents restraining the Department of water and Power from building the Long Valley reservoir dam.

LIBERAL PRICES PAID

Beginning in 1922, a series of abnormally dry years cut short the water supply in the Owens River basin. The city of Los Angeles was confronted with the threat of a serious shortage of water from Owens River. To prevent such a shortage the department followed the only course possible; it authorized the purchase of water land along Owens River. The prices offered for the land were extremely liberal and were gladly accepted by the land-owners.

At the same time an exhaustive survey of the water resources of Owens Valley was made by a board of engineers composed of Louis Hill, J. B. Lippincott and A. L. Sonderreger. Their findings revealed that in normal years there would be sufficient water available in the valley to irrigate 30,000 acres of land and meet the needs of the Aqueduct as well. Accordingly, the department offered to establish a policy of land purchases that would leave 30,000 acres of the best land in the valley under private ownership. The department further offered

to carry forward such water storage and conservation measures as would assure this 30,000-acre area a 100 percent water supply at all times.

OFFER REFUSED

This offer was refused by the valley people, who asserted that nothing short of the purchase of all agricultural land in their district would satisfy their demands.

To protect its Aqueduct water supply, the city set about to purchase all the agricultural land in private ownership above the Aqueduct intake.

In the purchase of this land the Department of Water and Power, and its officials, were assisted and advised by a special committee of citizens composed of William Lacy, O. M. Souden and James A. Anderson.

To further assure fair dealings with all the land owners selling to the city, the board appointed the most competent citizens of Owens Valley to act as a board of land appraisers. These men are George Naylor, chairman of the Board of Supervisors of Inyo county; Vivian Jones, County Assessor of Inyo county, and Grand Clark, former Assessor.