

# THE OWENS VALLEY DISPUTE

### The Story of Owens Valley, Its Dealings With the City of Los Angeles and the Dynamiting Attacks Upon the City's Aqueduct

By DON J. KINSEY

(Editor's Note—This is the tenth of a series of short articles revealing the facts in connection with the Los Angeles-Owens Valley water controversy. These articles are published by the Los Angeles Bureau of Power & Light.)

#### REPARATIONS

Appropriating a term that has become well known since the close of the World War, a group of Owens Valley townspeople in 1924 launched a campaign to secure "reparations" from the City of Los Angeles.

Speaking through organizations formed in the towns of Bishop and Big Pine, this group asserted that the residents of these two communities had suffered financial reverses thru the purchases by Los Angeles of the adjacent ranch land. It was demanded that the City pay the townspeople reparations to compensate them for the losses which, it was alleged, had been

pamphlets. It was commonly stated in the Valley, also, that many of the attempts to dynamite the Aqueduct were made by those who selected this method of bringing to the attention of the state their demands for reparation money.

In response to the claims for reparations, officials of the City's Department of Water and Power made two answers.

First, they stated that they did not believe that the Valley towns had suffered any such losses as were claimed. The reparationsists had declared that the Valley was being depopulated; Los Angeles officials produced records showing that 70 per cent of the purchased ranches had been leased to tenant operators, in many instances to the original owners. The claim that the City was permitting the Valley lands to go back to sacbrush was contradicted by the City when it revealed that it had expended more than \$200,000 in one year in improving and modernizing the ranch

## Pasadena Rose Tournament to Be Held Jan. 2d

### Gorgeous Parade at Flower Festival Promised to Break Records

PASADENA.—California's annual mid-winter floral fete, the Pasadena Tournament of Roses, will be held this year on January 2, it has been announced by tournament officials.

The tournament ordinarily is held on January 1, but since New Year's Day falls on Sunday this year, the following day will be generally observed as a holiday and the floral pageant will be staged at that time.

As in the past, the day's program will comprise a gorgeous parade of flower-decked floats in the morning, and an inter-sectional football game at the Rose Bowl in the afternoon.

It has been decided that there will be no change in the starting time or route of the parade this year. The pageant will get under way from Orange Grove avenue and Colorado street at 10:30 o'clock, proceeding east on Colorado to Hill, north on Hill to East Orange Grove and west to Lake, where it will be disbanded. The length of the route is 2.9 miles.

"States and Nations in Flowers" has been chosen as the theme of the 1928 tournament parade. This theme, offered by Miss Hildur Peterson of Los Angeles, was selected as the best of four hundred submitted in a contest held by

tournament association. "Songs in Flowers" was the theme of the 1927 parade. Each float depicting in floral pageantry the title of a well-known song. Many California cities and communities already have sent in signed blanks signifying that they intend to have floats in the coming tournament. Present indications are that approximately forty cities, including several in northern California, will be represented in the 1928 parade.

The Tournament of Roses has been held each New Year's Day since 1889. Started 39 years ago as a small village fiesta, it has grown to large proportions, and its fame has spread throughout the world. Approximately 750,000 persons witness the pageant each year.

#### NOTICE OF PUBLIC WORKS

Public notice is hereby given that the City Council of the City of Torrance did at a regular meeting of said council, held on the 6th day of September, 1927, pass a Resolution of Intention No. 338 to order the following work to be done and improvement to be made, within said city, to-wit: the closing up, vacating and abandoning of that portion of a street described as follows:

That portion of Lot S-3, Torrance Tract, as recorded in Map Book 22, Pages 94 and 95, Los Angeles County Records, described as follows: Beginning at a point in the Easterly line of said Lot S-3, said point being North 0°, 34', 10" West 502.62 feet from the Easterly line of Carson street; thence North 0°, 34' 10" West on a prolongation of the West-

erly line of Block 110, Torrance Tract, to a point in the West-erly line of said Lot S-3; thence Northwesterly, Easterly and Southwesterly along the West-erly, Northerly and Easterly lines of said Lot S-3, to point of beginning.

And said City Council has declared that the district of lands to be affected and benefited by the work and improvement and to be assessed to pay the damages, costs and expenses thereof, is the following described property; all of Block 110, of Torrance Tract, above mentioned.

All of the herein proposed work shall be done in pursuance of an act of the legislature of the State of California approved March 6, 1889, being entitled "An Act to provide for laying out, opening, extending, widening, straightening, closing up in whole or in part, any street, square, lane, alley, court or place within municipalities, and to condemn and acquire any and all land and property necessary or convenient for that purpose," and under all acts supplementary thereto and amendatory thereof.

For a more particular description of said improvement, reference is hereby made to said Resolution of Intention No. 338, on file in the office of the City Clerk of the City of Torrance.

Dated September 8, 1927.  
WM. GASCOIGNE,  
City Superintendent.

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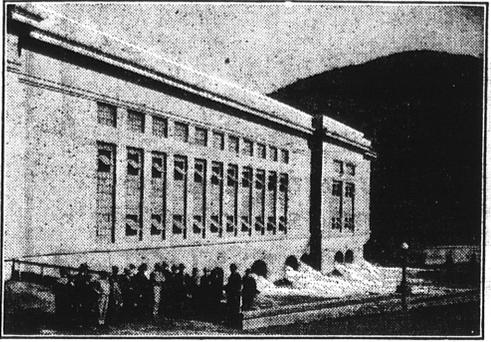
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Group of Los Angeles Business Men Inspecting San Francisco Power Plant No. 1, Operated by the Bureau of Power and Light along the Aqueduct.

suffered by business houses, property owners and the like.

During the 1925 session of the State Legislature, an Owens Valley group caused to be enacted a law under which it was proposed to enforce collection of reparations from Los Angeles. Following the enactment of the law, the City waited for the Valley claimants to file their suits for damages. Months passed by, however, and no such suits were filed. Instead the "reparationsists" devoted themselves to a bitter attack upon the City through various newspaper mediums and through the circulation of

houses in the purchased area. Assertions that the City was cutting down sources of revenue for the Valley towns was met by the showing that the City's Aqueduct payroll during the past several years has amounted to more than \$75,000 a month and that this payroll, in a great measure, is spent in a region with a total population of about 7,000. The City further presented figures indicating that it was paying 13 per cent of the entire Inyo County tax bill.

Second, the Los Angeles officials stated that the Valley towns possessed just grounds for damage claims they should file the proper action in the Courts and permit the cases to be decided on their merits, the same as any other person or group of persons seeking damages. The Water and Power Department officials pointed out that they had no legal right to authorize the payment of any public money for reparations until the legality of the claims had been established.

At last, in 1926, the Valley reparations group filed claims for reparations with the City of Los Angeles. The claims revealed that 518 separate demands for damages totaling \$2,813,355.43 were being made by persons in Bishop and Big Pine. Included among those asking reparations were business-men, garage owners, doctors, dentists, beauty parlors, churches, mechanics, stenographers, Indian farm laborers and a large number of individuals requesting damages for injury alleged to have been suffered by household furnishings through the City's land purchases.

When the claims came before the Board of Water and Power Commissioners, that body declared that it could not pay the damage claims merely upon the demand of the claimants. Before it could authorize the payment of one dollar of the City's money, the Board pointed out, the validity of the claims and the constitutionality of the law under which the claims were made would need be established in court.

This answer was met by a renewed dynamiting attack upon the aqueduct. In the midst of these aqueduct dynamitings, Governor C. C. Young issued a public statement in which he condemned the tactics of the Owens Valley dynamiters and declared that the only reasonable way to settle the reparations dispute was to take the question to the courts.

Following the Governor's statement, the Board of Water and Power Commissioners adopted a resolution declaring that in the event action was started in the Courts on the reparations claims, the Board would do everything in its power to help hasten the hearing of such a suit.

Despite the Governor's position on the question, and in the face of the Los Angeles officials' attitude, the Valley reparationsists, up to the present time, have failed to carry their claims to the Courts for a final and peaceful settlement.

(To be continued)

#### LOCAL NOTES

Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Wells and family of Poppy street were holiday guests of L. T. Wells of Huntington Beach.

Mrs. Ella Tonkin of Beacon street was a holiday guest of her sister, Mrs. Effie Engle of Los Angeles and Mr. and Mrs. H. Lee Johnson of South Pasadena.



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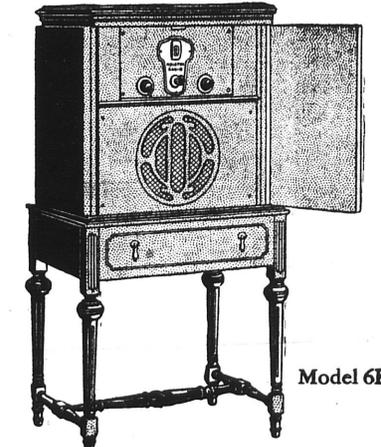


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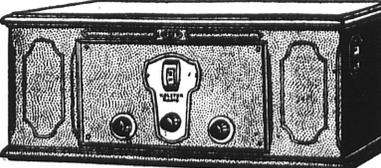
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