

Water Threat Minimized

San Gabriel Valley to Be Served First, Official Says

BY JACK JOHNSON

State water may be available to districts in the San Gabriel Valley by 1971 despite a request by a Metropolitan Water District agency that priority be given the San Fernando Valley.

Thomas Stetson, engineer with Stetson, Strauss and Dresslhaus, said he was aware of a recommendation by the MWD Water Problems Committee requesting the west branch delivery system be completed first.

If this were done it would mean water for the Castaic Basin by 1971 but would delay delivery to the Antelope Valley — and the San Gabriel Valley — until 1980 or later.

Stetson said he has talked recently with an engineer for the Department of Water Resources and been assured the Antelope Valley supply will be available by 1971. This is the target date for districts in the San Gabriel Valley to connect with the Feather River Project.

Delay Costly

Any delay in the delivery date may force several districts into MWD. Since all back assessments and taxes must be met by any district joining MWD this could mean millions of dollars to taxpayers.

In the Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District taxpayers would have to pay \$46.2 million if MWD were voted in now. If taxpayers could not obtain state water and had to join MWD after April 1, 1963 the cost would jump to more than \$70 million.

Stetson said his company is still certain the east branch delivery will be made as promised. "William Warne, director of the Department of Water Resources, told newsmen and water officials in San Bernardino this week the east branch delivery would be completed first," Stetson said.

Stetson's firm recently completed a survey of all sources of supplemental water for the San Gabriel Valley. His firm found it would be more economical for the Upper San Gabriel Valley Water District and the San Gabriel Valley Water Dis-

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trict ~~now build~~ a tunnel
through the San Bernardino
mountains and contract for
state water.

Share Project

He and his fellow engineers set the cost of such a project at \$41 million. The Upper Valley District would pay \$33 million with the smaller district paying \$8 million.

The engineers point out that MWD will receive water from both the east and west delivery routes. "They can request which route they want constructed first, but the state is not obligated to build it first," Stetson said.

He said one district (San Bernardino) has already signed a contract with the state calling for delivery by January, 1972, and 10 others are now negotiating.

Decision Needed

In order for the San Gabriel Valley Districts to obtain state water they must decide the quantity they want by June 11, 1964, and negotiate a contract by Jan. 1, 1964.

A water supply survey completed last year predicted the San Gabriel Valley's upper basin would need supplemental water in 1977 at the latest.

Thus the Valley could wait for a 1977 or 1978 delivery date (not much later).

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