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BIG RANCHERS USE ATOMIC ENERGY TO EXPLOIT THE PEOPLE

The ingenuity of the big ranchers of California and Arizona in thinking up schemes to get water for irrigation is almost unbelievable. All these schemes have in them a gimmick for exploiting the people of the United States so that the taxes of all the citizens are used to build water projects for the benefit of a small number of big landowners who use the water for farming mainly.

But every water project has another gimmick put in it so that after the irrigation scheme is built, the local citizens are made to pay the operating costs of the project while the big ranchers and big landowners get most of the benefits.

Such a scheme is now being pushed through Congress. It is the atomic energized water desalinization project to cost \$444 millions and to be built on an island just adjoining Orange County, Calif. (very close to Los Angeles). This is a relatively small project so that the Federal Government is asked to donate only \$60 millions. The rest is to be put up by local public agencies and private electric companies for atomic produced electricity the revenues from which the Metropolitan Water District is going to share in the profits.

Now there are certain basic facts that must be known to understand the swindling gimmicks in these water schemes. For example, whenever the big ranchers begin to push such a scheme, they flood the newspapers all over the U.S., the radio and television stations with press releases claiming THAT THE PEOPLE ARE SHORT OF WATER IN THE AREA. They hire writers to push this idea of the people being short of water because the population is increasing. You read this about the Los Angeles and the Phoenix and Tucson regions. These writers put this propaganda into magazines where the unsuspecting public (and that includes U.S. Senators and Representatives) read and believe that the article is true because it is printed in a magazine. Readers can not conceive that writers will put articles in magazines that are full of lies. They believe that the editors of the magazines would not permit this. They do not know that the editors themselves are ignorant of the lies and distortions in magazine articles and even do not know that the writers have been paid by the big farm interests to plant these propaganda writings in the magazines.

Now as to the shortage of water in the Los Angeles, Phoenix, and Tucson areas. THIS IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE AS REGARDS THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE. This matter can best be illustrated by giving examples. The City of New York has a population of 7.5 millions. It uses 1.5 millions acre feet of water yearly. (An acre foot of water is the amount of water which will cover a surface of one acre to a depth of one foot. An acre is approximately an area 210 feet by 210 feet. An acre foot of water is about 325,000 gallons.)

The 1.5 millions acre feet of water that New York City uses yearly includes the water actually used by the 7.5 millions people,

the water used in sprinkling their lawns, the water used in their parks, and the water used in their factories and office buildings, etc. etc. When Easterners and Mid-Westerners read of a water shortage in the New York area, they think in terms of the PEOPLE THEMSELVES BEING SHORT OF WATER. Such thinking is correct as to New York AND ALL THE EAST but is not true as to the FAR WEST LIKE ARIZONA AND CALIFORNIA.

For example, the writer lives in Imperial County in California which is about 150 miles SouthEast of Los Angeles. This county is on the Mexican border and has only 75,000 people. It is now using 2.8 millions acre feet of water yearly which is almost twice the amount of water used yearly by New York City with 7.5 million people. What is the explanation of this tremendous use of water? The explanation is simple--all this water is used for irrigation farming of about 460,000 acres of farmland owned by big absentee landowners. The 75,000 people living here use yearly the amount of water that a 3,000 acres farm (called a ranch in the West) uses for irrigation yearly.

THE SAME EXPLANATION HOLDS TRUE FOR LOS ANGELES COUNTY, ORANGE COUNTY AND THEIR ADJOINING COUNTIES IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. THE SAME IS TRUE IN THE PHOENIX AND TUCSON AREAS. The cry of a water shortage claiming that the people have insufficient water because of big population growth IS SIMPLY NOT TRUE. The big ranch interests put out this propoganda to stampede Congress into building water projects for irrigation so that a small number of big landowners profit because their landholdings become tremendously increased in value when the irrigation scheme is completed and brings water to the land.

In the Los Angeles Times of March 1, 1967 on page 3 is an article showing this type of propoganda. In talking about the \$444 millions desalinization plant on the Orange County island, it says, "The complex's ultimate water production is slated at 150 million gallons daily, enough to supply a city of 750,000 persons". The truthfull statement should read "slated at 500 acre feet daily, ENOUGH TO SUPPLY 30,000 ACRES OF FARMLAND WITH IRRIGATION WATER". If the statement were worded this way, the people would understand where the water was going to be used---NOT IN THE CITIES.

Where the swindling of the citizens of the U.S. occurs is in this way--the farmland benefitted in this water scheme should be under the control of the U.S. Reclamation Law of 1902 whereby the irrigation water is furnished so that one person gets sufficient water to farm 160 acres (husband and wife-320 acres). But no, the water is gotten by a relatively few big landowners like the Irvine Ranch in Orange County (88,000 acres). All this amounts to a private subsidy to a few wealthy persons and corporations.

Los Angeles County (1963) had an agricultural production of \$196.8 millions and ranked 8th in the U.S. in productivity. Imperial County with \$210 millions ranked 4th. Orange County had \$102.7 millions; Riverside County \$204.8 millions; Ventura Co. \$131 millions. San Bernardino Co. \$125.9 millions; and San Diego Co. \$107 millions. All the counties (except Imperial) belong to the Metropolitan Water District. In this District, 70% OF THE WATER AVAILABLE IS USED BY THE RANCHES AND THE PEOPLE IN THE CITIES GET ONLY 30%.

The local swindling gimmick is for the people in the cities to be forced to pay high taxes to the Metropolitan Water District to subsidize the big ranches which get 70% of the water. Councilmen Ernani Bernardi and James Potter of the City of Los Angeles in speeches have protested that the City of Los Angeles gets only 10% of the water and pays 30% of the taxes of the Metropolitan Water Dist. Mayor Minter & Councilman Walmsley of Sanata Monica protest also. In the Orange Island desalinization project, the atomic energy is to be also used to make electricity. This will put the Metropolitan Water District in the power business and give it another way to swindle the city people as is done by the Imperial Irrigation District in Imperial County. This is THE NEW HIDDEN SWINDLING GIMMICK.