

June 1917

BERNARD BRIDGE MATTER.

The bridge in January, 1916, destroyed Bernard's bridge, at the same location. A citizens committee of citizens organized at a mass meeting held early in 1916 recommended that a permanent steel or concrete bridge be built at the present location. This building was approved by the county supervisor. There was no plan contemplated to build Lake Ridge Dam at that time and the San Bernard Mineral Water Company was not in existence. As travel was impossible to and from during the winter of 1916 without some kind of bridge, a temporary bridge costing \$9,000 was built at the old Bernard site.

The San Bernard Mineral Water Company was organized late in 1916 and the contract let and the plans made to construct Lake Ridge Dam early in 1917. The board of supervisors had an estimate from the county surveyor that a permanent bridge could be built at the new site for between \$40,000 and \$50,000. The water company offered \$7,000 in cash for the old bridge, and in addition waived any claims to the temporary bridge providing the board of supervisors would build a permanent bridge at the old site slightly lower down. In addition, all rights of way were given free of charge to the county by the water company.

All bridge timber and labor has advanced 50% to 75%, and by retaining the ownership of the old bridge the county voted to the county of the present Bernard bridge is easily \$5,000 to \$7,000. This means that the board of supervisors received in cash or its equivalent at least \$4,000 for a bridge costing \$9,000 as well as nearly two years use of the temporary Bernard bridge. The board of supervisors accepted the water company's offer, it is estimated that the cost of the old when the bridge was to be built the bridge materials and labor had increased in price and when the contract was let the new bridge the lowest bid was approximately \$20,000, and the contract was let for that figure.

It is recommended that the board of supervisors be authorized to accept the offer of the water company for the old bridge at the present price of \$7,000, and that the new bridge be built at the present site of the old Bernard bridge.

the inland route to Riverside, which will shortly be paved, and connects San Diego with one of our largest cities in San Diego County. Riverside County has already paved from Riverside to the San Diego County line on the inland route.

The grand jury certainly deviated from the facts, to say the least, when they state the Bernardo bridge will cost \$100,000. The facts are: the contract price is approximately \$73,000; the board of supervisors received \$7,000 in cash from the water company, which reduces the price to \$66,000; the salvage value of the present bridge is easily \$5,000, so that the cost is not \$100,000, but \$60,000. In lieu of this expenditure the county gets a permanent concrete bridge in the proper location, and the board of supervisor's action in building this bridge is in line with their policy of constructing permanent bridges over all the important streams in San Diego County; three other permanent bridges of this character having been built this season. The board of supervisors felt, no doubt, that a worthy project of this kind was a great benefit to the county; that a permanent bridge had to be built sooner or later, and why not build it now. The city of San Diego received in cash and material several thousand dollars more than the county paid out. The state authorities when making a valuation for sale purposes of the water company's system only allowed actual cost paid by the water company to San Diego county plus interest, so that the water company neither asked for nor received any profit from the transaction.

In addition, the water company are spending \$2,000,000 or \$3,000,000 conserving our flood waters, which now go to the ocean, and will irrigate 25,000 acres of new land along the coast - thereby enhancing land values and bringing additional revenue through higher assessed valuations by the county assessor into the county treasury, which revenue within a very short time will more than compensate the county for the building of a permanent bridge.

The board of supervisors should not be criticised for conditions arising out of the war and over which they had no control, which materially increased the cost of the bridge. There is a lurking suspicion that the members of the road committee of the grand jury saw that there was an opportunity for the board of supervisors to sign the water company, and the supervisors are being censured for not having done so; otherwise, why are not the supervisors criticised for building the other three concrete bridges during this last season. It is common knowledge that the business men of this city urged the board of supervisors to sign the contract with the state highway commission, whereby the highway commission were

to build the paved highways and the board of supervisors the permanent bridges, satisfactory to the state highway commission.

It is hard to understand how the road committee of the grand jury can in one portion of its report urge the construction of new bridges and in the same report criticize the construction of the new Bernardo bridge. For, unless it is the San Luis Rey bridge at Bonsall, there is not, in the county, a greater need than the present Bernardo bridge now being constructed at Bernardo.

### Bernardo Bridge Facts.

The floods in January, 1916, destroyed Bernardo bridge. It was a poor location. A committee of citizens appointed at a mass meeting held early in 1916 recommended that a permanent steel or concrete bridge be built at the present location; this location was approved by the county surveyor. There was no plan contemplated to build Lake Hodges dam at that time and the San Dieguito Mutual Water Company was not in existence. As travel was impossible to Escondido during the winter of 1916 without some kind of a bridge, a temporary bridge costing \$9,000 was built at the old Bernardo site.

The San Dieguito Mutual Water Company was organized late in 1916 and the contract let and the plans made to construct Lake Hodges Dam early in 1917. The board of Supervisors had an estimate from the county surveyor that a permanent bridge could be built at the new site for between \$40,000 and \$50,000. The water company offered \$7,000 in cash for the old bridge, and in addition waived any claims to the temporary bridge providing the board of supervisors would build a permanent bridge at the selected site slightly lower down. In addition, all rights of way were given free of charge to the county by the water company.

All bridge timber and labor has advanced 50% to 75%, and by retaining the ownership of the old bridge the scrap value to the county of the present Bernardo bridge is easily \$5,000 or \$6,000. This means that the board of supervisors received in cash or its equivalent at least \$11,000 for a bridge costing \$9,000, as well as nearly four years use of the temporary Bernardo bridge. The board of supervisors accepted the water company's offer. In the meantime the war broke out, and when the time came to build the bridge, materials and labor had so increased in price that when the contract was let for the new bridge the lowest bid was approximately \$73,000, and the contract was let for that figure.

It is remarkable that the grand jury should make no mention or criticism of the board of supervisors for having let contracts at very high figures for the construction of three or four other concrete bridges this year, including the Santa Margarita, Guntay, and Buckman Springs bridges. The Bernardo bridge is on

the inland route to Riverside, which will shortly be paved, and connects San Diego with one of our largest cities in San Diego County. Riverside County has already paved from Riverside to San Diego County line on the inland route.

The grand jury certainly deviated from the facts, to say the least, when they state the Bernardo bridge will cost \$100,000. The facts are: the contract price is approximately \$73,000; the board of supervisors received \$7,000 in cash from the water company, which reduces the price to \$66,000; the salvage value of the present bridge is easily \$8,000, so that the cost is not \$100,000 but \$80,000. In lieu of this expenditure the county gets a permanent concrete bridge in the proper location, and the board of supervisors' action in building this bridge is in line with their policy of constructing permanent bridges over all the important streams in San Diego County; three other permanent bridges of this character having been built this season. The board of supervisors felt, no doubt, that a worthy project of this kind was a great benefit to the county; that a permanent bridge had to be built sooner or later, and why not build it now. The county of San Diego received in cash and material several thousand dollars more than the county paid out for this bridge. The State authorities when making a valuation for sale purposes of the water company's system only allowed actual cost paid by the water company to San Diego county plus interest, so that the water company neither asked for nor received any profit from the transaction.

In addition, the water company are spending \$3,000,000 or \$3,000,000 conserving our flood waters, which now go to the ocean, and will irrigate 33,000 acres of new land along the coast - thereby enhancing land values and bringing additional revenue through higher assessed valuations by the county assessor into the county treasury, which revenue within a very short time will more than compensate the county for the building of a permanent bridge.

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**Ed Fletcher Papers**

**1870-1955**

**MSS.81**

**Box: 73 Folder: 9**

**Writings and Interviews - Draft: History of Bernardo Bridge**



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