

San Diego, California.
May 19th, 1928.

Huston
Major Gen'l. Jos. E. Kuhn,
800 "A" Avenue,
Coronado, California.

CARBON COPY

For Mr. _____

.....'s information
ED FLETCHER.

My dear Major General Kuhn:

I see by the San Diego Union you are quoted as saying that the La Mesa Irrigation District must have been stung considering the price that they paid for the purchase of the property from the Guyanaca Water Company in 1926.

I have been manager of the Guyanaca Water Co., sold the system to the District, and I am very sure that you have never seen the engineering reports made by all the State authorities showing the valuation of the Guyanaca Water Company's properties.

The original cost of these properties, which were turned over to the District, was in excess of \$3,000,000, and for which the District only paid \$1,100,000.

As the properties were sold to the La Mesa Irrigation District under the laws of California, no sale could be consummated without the approval of the State authorities.

This included the State engineer of California, who first had an engineering report made, and then made his own personal investigations.

The bonds were certified to by the State Bonding Commission of California for saving bank securities. Before this certification could be made, the State Bonding Commission made an independent investigation to determine values, etc., and they approved it after their personal investigation and the receipt of an independent engineering report.

Both the State Engineer of California and the State Bonding Commission also went into the question of the sufficiency of the water supply and satisfied themselves on this subject.

The attorneys for the Irrigation District, O'Melveny, Millikin & Tuller of Los Angeles, passed on the legality of the contract, also the water supply and the title thereof to the water supply, and rendered an opinion favorable to the District.

The bonds sold for the highest price of any bonds ever sold

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in the State of California issued by any Irrigation District, the price being 97.76.

The above was all for the protection of the Irrigation District in its purchase.

On the other hand, the Guyamaca Water Company was a public utility, and before a sale could be made, the approval of the Railroad Commission of California had to be secured, both as to the legality, fairness of the contract and the protection necessary to the intending purchaser.

All the highest public authorities in the State of California approved this sale as advantageous to the District and under the circumstances you, not having the advantage of all this information, do both the District and the former owners of the Guyamaca Water Company an injustice in making any such statements.

I do not think you had any intention of misleading the public in this matter, but these matters should be taken into consideration by you and a careful study made before giving your opinions to the public.

Let us see what the District did ~~SEE~~ get for \$1,100,000. First: Approximately 1100 acres of land embraced in Guyamaca Lake. The Company paid \$200,000 for this property in 1886. It is a matter of public record. In fact it was a condemnation determined by Court.

Guyamaca Dam itself, with the improvements, could not be built today for \$100,000 more. The District owns the perpetual rights of flow down to the diverting dam from Guyamaca Lake that are worth something and there is possibility of considerable power development as well as a conservation of part of our water supply that is lost by evaporation and leakage down the natural channel of Boulder Creek.

Second: Fletcher Dam site and reservoir lands that will be flooded for the District as acquired would undoubtedly cost \$250,000 more today if it had to be condemned. This is the site at the head of the flume.

Third: The diverting dam and improvements cannot be duplicated for \$50,000. 30 odd miles of flum line, 50 to 100 feet in width, completely graded, 12 feet wide, including a mile and a half of tunnels and benching, which originally cost \$275,000 when the work was done, in 1898, and when labor was \$2.50 a day. This right of

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way could not be acquired today and graded, with tunnels built for less than half a million dollars. The diverting dam has an elevation of 880 feet above sea level. It is the only point where water could be taken by gravity and flow thru the pass at Grossmont into La Mesa, and it is particularly valuable on account of being able to catch the water as it debouches out of the canyons at this point and before it sinks into the sands of the river below. Eliminating the value of any old flume lines, this bench and right-of-way is ready for the immediate reconstruction of a concrete flume in perpetuity that will be invaluable in delivering gravity water, not alone to our back country and the Irrigation District owing to its present and future development, but the tremendous value is the ability to deliver water at an elevation into Murray Dam so that by pressure the gravity water in the winter time can be put over the higher levels of the City of San Diego and to Point Loma, eliminating \$75,000 or \$100,000 a year which we are now paying for maintaining booster pumps to furnish the higher levels with water to the city and in addition the water is brought in a high level so that surplus water by gravity can be stored in Otay Dam during the winter months after Murray Dam is filled. I am of the opinion that Murray Dam and its possibilities along the lines above mentioned is alone worth the entire price to the District \$1,100,000, for the interest on this amount is easily saved annually by taking care of the higher levels of the city by gravity from the storage that can be put in Otay Dam when there is a surplus of water.

Fourth: Over 100 miles of distribution lines and pipe lines now installed were turned over to the District and which could not be replaced for several hundred thousand dollars. This included large 30 in. and 24 in. mains from Murray Dam to a connection with the City in East San Diego, a distance of about 8 miles, including all the main feeders to Spring Valley, Lemon Grove, La Mesa Heights, Bestonia, Pepper Drive and other sections. It also included the Eucalyptus and Murray Hill reservoirs, which could not be duplicated for another \$100,000, to say nothing of the 24 in. concrete pipe line connecting Murray Hill reservoir with Eucalyptus reservoir.

Fifth: The District also got El Capitan Dam for approximately \$100,000, although the City of San Diego

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condemned the El Capital Dam site and the jury awarded the Cuyamaca Water Company a verdict of \$600,000, which case is now in the Supreme Court for final decision. The City is buying the El Capital Dam site under this compromise at actual cost to the District.

Sixth: The compromise includes the El Monte Pumping Plant and lands affected by the pumping, which could not be duplicated today for \$200,000, and in times of drought during the summer, it delivers into the flume month in and month out in excess of 6,000,000 gallons that amount by the installation of another plant. The tremendous value of this El Monte Pumping Plant is that it is only a quarter of a mile from the main flume of the Cuyamaca System and no transmission losses in putting the water into the flume with the water at an elevation of in excess of 700 feet above sea level as it empties into the flume.

Seventh: You are also getting in the compromise over 400 acres of riparian lands, a grant deed to the property between Santee and Mission Gorge, which property today is worth on the open market \$75,000 to \$100,000, in my opinion.

Eighth: After and when the Paramount Right Suit is determined by the Supreme Court, in our opinion, the City of San Diego will have no paramount rights to the waters of the San Diego River. The District then will have a clear title to the riparian rights, which they are turning over to the City at no cost whatsoever, which are of far more value than what the City has acquired in San Pasqual, and which they will have paid in excess of \$1,000,000 to acquire.

Last and by no means least is the psychological effect of harmony and cooperation to have this water question settled between the District and the City. La Mesa means as much to us as La Jolla, and yet La Jolla is five miles farther away. We should all be one big city eventually. Already over half a million dollars have been spent in litigation by the Cuyamaca Water Company, the District and the City, and if a compromise falls at this time, it will be another five years, in my opinion, before any of the waters running to the ocean will be conserved ~~and~~ by anybody, to say nothing of the increased hatred and lack of confidence between all parties.

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I shall be very glad to assist you in getting all the facts and if I can be of any service in this matter do not hesitate to call on me.

All the engineers agree that the San Diego River will produce 24,000,000 gallons of water daily. The District is only asking for 10,000,000. The State of California has complete jurisdiction over the District and they will not allow the La Mesa District to make any compromise that deprives the lands within the present Irrigation District of a reasonable supply of water. Why not get together, settle this matter for all time, show a friendly spirit toward your neighbors in the east, invite us to come in to the City and when that is done, there can be no water question for we will be one in thought and action.

The spirit of the La Mesa and El Cajon Valley is one of confidence, but to fight for our just rights to the end. You can be of tremendous influence in settling this question now for all time.

Yours very truly,

ED FLETCHER

Ed Fletcher Papers

1870-1955

MSS.81

Box: 73 Folder: 6

Writings and Interviews - Water History - History of Cuyamaca Water Company in letter to General Kuhn



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