

Water Becoming Critical Problem For California

By CHARLES E. CHAPEL, Assemblyman, 46th District

A considerable amount of fresh water for drinking, cooking, and other domestic uses, is obtained from wells near the coast of Santa Monica Bay. By "near the coast," I refer to fresh-water wells anywhere from one mile to 10 miles from the coast. When the demand for fresh water results in pumping too much water out of these wells, salt water from Santa Monica Bay enters the wells and eventually it becomes necessary to shut them down.

The salt water reaches the wells through natural underground channels which originally carried fresh water from the land to Santa Monica Bay. Overpumping the fresh-water wells tend to exhaust the fresh

water from the underground channels, thus permitting the salt water to reach the wells. In other words, instead of fresh water flowing into Santa Monica Bay, the process is reversed and salt water comes inland, under the surface of the ground.

In 1950, when I was first elected to the Legislature, water experts explained this to me and told me that the situation could be remedied by forcing fresh water into the existing wells and also by digging new wells for the purpose of injecting fresh water, thus driving out the salt water and restoring the original flow of

fresh water. I read English translations of technical reports by water experts in the Netherlands (Holland) who had succeeded in restoring their own wells by the method explained to me by our California water experts. Therefore, I decided to obtain the help of the State of California.

WHEN I WAS sworn into office in Sacramento in January, 1951, I explained our local salt-water intrusion problems to several Assemblymen and State Senators whose districts are along the Pacific Coast. They said the problem of salt-water intrusion was beginning

to effect their districts and that they would help enact any bill that would result in some practical solution.

With the help of water experts in the South Bay, I prepared Assembly Bill No. 2712, which appropriated \$750,000 of State money to combat salt-water intrusion at Manhattan Beach. The bill was enacted into law without any strong opposition and became known as Chapter 1500, Statutes of 1951.

The \$750,000 was spent on water bought from the Metropolitan Water District, the injection of fresh water into existing wells, and forcing of fresh water into new wells, in

Manhattan Beach. This was a pilot or experimental project. Manhattan Beach was selected for the site on the advice of water experts who believed that the ground near the coast at Manhattan Beach was the best place to begin. Fortunately, the work was successful and the money proved to be a good investment for the State because water experts all over California had a precedent to follow.

NEARLY 14 YEARS have passed since the State provided that \$750,000, which seemed like a huge sum for an experiment in 1951, but

during the passing years many times that amount has been appropriated by the federal government, the State, several counties, and some water districts, to continue the fight against salt-water intrusion in California.

In 1951, we were morally certain that the project at Manhattan Beach would be a success, but even the best engineers and water experts were not absolutely sure that the experiment would produce practical results. Even before all the wells were injected with fresh water, the salt content of fresh-water wells in Inglewood and Westchester be-

gan to drop, demonstrating the far-reaching effect of the work at Manhattan Beach.

UNFORTUNATELY, most people are not the least bit interested in water supply until their pipes are dry. There has been a vast amount of publicity about the so-called California Water Plan, originally known as the Feather River Project. Eventually, probably more than 10 years from now, Los Angeles County will receive water from the north through the California Water Plan. Meanwhile, people in Southern California must depend upon other sources of water, including the aqueduct from the Colorado River, the

conversion of sea water into fresh water through the use of nuclear energy or other methods, and even the reclamation of sewage to supply water for industrial use.

If no new people came to California, the normal increase in population would create problems, but every day of the year enough people enter California to equal the population of several of the smaller cities of other states. Most of those who come, remain and write home for their friends and relatives to come to the "Land of Hope and Promise." They are coming, and with them they bring demands for more water, more freeways, more schools, and more taxes!

New Teacher Aide Program Established

West High School students have come up with another innovation.

Seven Warrior students, all members of the Future Teachers Club, are participating in a teacher aide program at Victor Elementary School. Miss Catherine Chisholm, sponsor of the club, is in charge of the program.

The seven students, all girls, work under teachers at Victor Elementary School in the lower grades. They participate in well-supervised "teaching" experiences and assist in the classroom.

The students include Diane Jarelle, Kathleen Condon, Linda Zesch, Betty Lou Richter, Suzan Curtis, Peggy Hasegawa, and Ann Patterson.

Law In Action

Tenants complain of the landlord for the lack of heat or hot water. One tenant complained of too much hot water.

Clara, a 61-year-old tenant, took daily baths. She knew that the water was very hot, and she complained to the landlord about it. One night Clara had a pain in her side and decided in the middle of the night to take a bath to relax her muscles.

She turned on the water to fill the tub. As she turned off the hot water, her hand must have touched the shower knob. The water scalded her left shoulder and arm.

Claiming that the landlord was at fault in keeping the water so hot, she sued him, but the court ruled for the landlord. Clara appealed but the higher court also ruled that Clara herself was at fault; her lack of care for her own protection had led to the injury. Clara had used the tub daily for months and knew all about the water. She had inadvertently turned on the shower while the hot water was running.

As a rule when a landlord rents a place, he has no further responsibility if he handed a safe place over.

But the landlord may keep some control over the place: He may supply the heat and water, or some appliances. He keeps control of common stairways or halls—those used by other tenants. In such cases, he has the legal duty to see that they are safe.

After the tenant takes over some defects may turn up in areas solely under his control. As a rule the landlord has no responsibility. However, if the landlord should make the repairs, he must do so with due care. In most cases, the tenant assumes responsibility, and if injuries result from dangerous conditions the landlord is not responsible.

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