

EDITORIAL

May 3, 1947

VENTURA COUNTY Star-Free Press

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SO, WHY SURPRISE NOW?

COULD the collosally expensive Matilija dam fiasco have been averted? Should somebody have foreseen the possible sidewall troubles that have developed?

Well, one man did foresee the possibility. His name is John P. Buwalda. He is head of the geology department of the California Institute of Technology and a widely recognized consultant in his line.

In a report made for the county, he wrote:

"With exposure now available, it is not possible to state that the north abutment is sufficiently strong to support the dam.

"The abutment should be explored by tips or trenches, or, better, by stripping, before final design is decided upon. Exploration will cost a little money, but it is very necessary."

That report was made March 5, 1946, three months before the contractors started work. The report went to the Donald R. Warren Co. and the county supervisors. The exploration, which the geologist warned was "very necessary," simply was not made.

THIS TIME, LOOK FIRST ⁵⁻⁵⁻⁴⁷

THIS is a suggestion to the county supervisors: That before a contract is let for construction of the Casitas dam, more urgently needed now than before, the site be carefully explored.

Let Zone One have no repetition of the Matilija blunder.

The disregarded recommendation of John P. Buwalda, geological consultant on the Matilija, was that—

"The abutment should be explored by tips or trenches, or, better, by stripping, before final design is decided upon. Exploration will cost a little money, but it is very necessary."

In the case of an earth-fill dam, such as the Casitas is to be, the foundation question is not quite so urgent as for a concrete arch type dam. Nevertheless, the people of this area will not be content, we feel, unless it is determined that the site is satisfactory before the contract for the dam is entered into.

In fact, it appears to us that the soundest idea would be to have the entire site stripped right to the foundation point at once. Buwalda advised that procedure as preferable on the Matilija.

In the unlikely event that this showed up fatal flaws, we'd be out that much cost. However, if the excavation showed up O.K., the precaution would have cost nothing additional, inasmuch as the site would have to be stripped for construction in any case.

* * *

STATE REPORT TO BE STUDIED

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County Surveyor Robert Ryan and District Attorney M. Arthur Waite will leave by air Monday for Sacramento to inspect records pertaining to Matilija dam which are on file in the division of dams office. They expect to return the same night, in order to be able to give a report to the Ventura county flood control district supervisors at their Tuesday meeting.

AUTHORIZED TRIP

The two were authorized to make the trip and inspect the records after Gardiner Johnson, attorney for Contractors Atkinson Kier, Bressi and Bevanda, this week told the board that a geologist's report on file in the division of dams office shows "The Matilija damsite is not well adapted for an arch-type dam to the height proposed."

Supervisors and county officials had never before been informed that such a report was on file. The dam contractors contend that if the geologist's opinion is true a major change in design plans will have to be made and the dam may not be built to its originally-intended height.

NOW EXCAVATING

The Star-Free Press learned that the report, made by Chester Marliave of Berkeley, holds that for safety reasons the dam should be cut down in height. Geological conditions at the damsite do not warrant construction of an arch-type dam to the height (165 feet at 1125 elevation) contemplated he said.

Pouring has been stopped at the dam because of the discovery of faulty materials on the left (north) abutment. Contractors are now excavating the material from the abutment. In doubt is whether the excavation can succeed in removing poor clay seam material so that suitable foundation rock can be unearthed on the abutment.

Matilija Safety Viewpoint Discussed: 5-5-47

Geologist's Report Eyes Seismic Activity

As well as taking the stand that it is desirable from a safety viewpoint to cut down the proposed height of Matilija dam, Chester Marlave, consulting geologist of Berkeley, warns that seismic activity of the region is a potential hazard to the dam. This is pointed out in his report to State Engineer Edward Hyatt, a copy of the report received here today by The Star-Free Press shows. Marlave made the report following his geological investigation of Matilija dam site on April 11.

(On authorization of the board of supervisors of the county flood control district, District Attorney M. Arthur Walte and County Surveyor Robert Ryan went to Sacramento today to read this report—and others—on file in the state engineer's office.)

MANY FAULTS

"The Ojai valley is traversed by many faults, some of which are seismically active. The writer has not made a study of the activity along the faults in this region, but the many recorded shakes that have occurred in this area suggest the probability of continued activity in this vicinity in the future," he wrote. "The overturned bedrock at the dam site and the horizontal fold down the course of the canyon through the dam site indicate that seismic disturbances such as occurred at Santa Barbara in 1926 might be reflected along the structural weaknesses of the formation at the Matilija dam site.

(Continued from page 1)

"If the foundation were massive, like granite, or if the structure were even continuous straight across the canyon, little concern would be had because of possible differential movements or displacements resulting from earthquakes emanating along faults in the region. The arch type of dam which is being constructed at the Matilija site will not be safe under differential movements of the abutments. A yielding of one-half an inch might be disastrous. An broken continuous foundation

and offer no differential displacements of the abutments, but the arch type of structure combined with the crushed, non rigid and non continuous type of sedimentary foundation as exists at the site under consideration is an unfavorable combination in a region of seismic activity," Marlave stated.

EXTENSIVE REPORT

His report goes into detail on the earth formation and thickness of the dam site. It also describes

5-8-47

WHILE THE DOCTORS CONFER

FOR the next several weeks, or maybe months, Zone 1 taxpayers are unlikely to get any real enlightenment bearing on the future of the Matilija dam. As of today, the expert opinion seems to agree that the dam CAN be completed to the height originally planned—but at an increase in cost, the amount of which nobody is willing even to guess.

The first two weeks or more of the wait is required to allow the contractors to excavate fully the clay pockets on the north sidewall. Their discovery recently caused state authorities to order construction halted.

Not until this abutment is finally stripped clean can engineers determine what can or should be undertaken. Geologist John P. Buwalda's May 4 report indicates one possible remedial program, in three steps. First, "by excavating to sufficient depth to give abutment rock of sound character." Second, to give "Blocks N and O and the gravity blocks above them if necessary" wider bases "to reduce the thrust forces applied per unit area to the rock." Third, for the rock to be "thoroughly grouted to make it monolithic as far as possible."

That is a geologist's opinion of what can be done. It does not deal with the questions of cost or economic feasibility. Such a program or other steps like it will be costly extras on an already expensive enterprise.

Meanwhile, the supervisors have made one decision that we feel is sound and will meet with public approval; namely, to retain one or possibly two consultants of national reputation to review the entire project as it stands and to recommend procedure.

The news story about the meeting where this decision was reached said such engineer or engineers "would be mutually approved by the Warren company," though the district is to pay the fees. It seems to us that the board should select men of outstanding competence in whose recommendations the people of Zone 1 can have confidence quite regardless of the designing engineer's approval.

Only after these consultants have had a long look at the cavities on the sidewall, have reviewed the dam design, the present state of the project's finances, the needs of the district for water, and all other pertinent facts are we likely to be given any clear picture of where best to go from here.

The water needs of the Ojai-Ventura area are more desperately urgent now than when the project was initiated two years ago. Likewise, the cost of obtaining it is obviously going to be far higher than the people were told at that time. How much higher, and how this may be physically achieved, the zone residents will look to these consultants to advise them.

5/8/47

5-8-47?

'K' BLOCK ON MATILIJIA DAM COMPLETED

Matilija dam's K block reached its top height of 1125 elevation yesterday when crews made the final concrete pour at 4:30 p.m. This marks the first block on the dam to be brought to top elevation.

Crews, once again working a three-shift day, are preparing forms for other blocks which soon will be ready for final pours. These blocks include C, G, I and M; they are a portion of the blocks which form the spillway crest. They now are at elevation 1120.

According to reports from Contractors Atkinson Kier Bressi and Bevanda, nearly all blocks on the dam have been poured to an elevation of 1110. Only A, B, F, L, N and O are below that height. Grouting is underway on troublesome N block, where faulty material was found this spring after several pours had been made. State dam inspectors are expected to be at the dam next Monday and at that time to approve resumption of pouring on the block, now at an elevation of 1090.

To date, more than 63,600 cubic yards of concrete have been poured on the dam, which is expected to be completed in October. Roughly, the job calls for 90,000 cubic yards of concrete to be poured on the dam and apron.

Work is well underway on the apron, five pours out of 18 on the bottom having been made. Contractors estimate about one third of the work on the bottom of the apron is completed and that the rest will be done in about two weeks. After that, apron pours will advance upward on the slope.

For a time, shortage of freight cars in which cement could be transported in bulk forced a slow-down on pouring. Contractors, still unable to get the bulk cars, are offsetting this lack by having cement hauled in sacks. By meeting the problem in this manner, contractors have been able to resume a three-shift schedule.

WARREN BLAMES COUNTY OFFICIALS FOR TARDY MATILIJA DISCOVERIES

DONALD R. WARREN, Zone 1 project engineer, places the blame for tardy discovery of Matilija dam abutment flaws on the county supervisors, the county surveyor, and county work forces. In a letter dated May 7 to the board (with a copy sent to The Star-Free Press), Warren asserts that stripping

of the dam's left abutment by the county "for exposure to all concerned was done in a superficial manner, and, for reasons beyond our knowledge, the pit for determining the exact location of the bedrock was not dug." In the letter, Warren, who had appeared before the board Tuesday to go over the serious complications which have developed on the dam, declared:

RUSH WORK

"Due to the limited time for the construction of the dam, the urgent need for water supply and the date advertised for the opening of bids, it was felt that the most expedient thing to do was to establish the probable limits of foundation excavation from surface indications. The final excavation showed that it was necessary to go to a greater depth at the base of the right abutment. This resulted in an increase of excavation of more than 25,000 yards and approximately 10,000 yards of concrete."

In giving a recapitulation about the decision of Zone 1 to undertake the Matilija-Casitas dams projects and the hiring of the Warren company for preparation of plans and specifications, Warren points out that efforts were made by his company to prepare such work as early as possible so that it might be possible to have water for the 1947 season.

HIRE GEOLOGIST

At the time of the preparation of the plans, Warren said, his company employed Dr. John Buwalda, head of the geology department of the California Institute of Technology, to inspect the site for the proposed dam.

department of the California Institute of Technology, to inspect the site for the proposed dam.

"The opinion given in Dr. Buwalda's report concurred with that of the engineer; that is, that the best knowledge of the site would be provided by stripping the left abutment, and that at least one open pit should be sunk at the base of the right abutment to determine the depth that might be necessary to excavate in order to bear the dam on solid rock. This request was made to the board of supervisors and was approved. The county surveyor was instructed to have this work performed by county forces," Warren wrote.

PROGRESS UNSATISFACTORY

He then traced the letting of the contract for construction work to Atkinson Kier Bressi and Bevanda, the steps and progress on the dam, with state approval from time to time, and the finding of soft materials, presently being excavated, on the left abutment.

Warren reported on Buwalda's report made after the soft material

"However, it was expressed by this writer at the board meeting that the people of zone one—those who are footing the bill—are entitled to additional

ence and reputation on arch dams. man park the murdered woman's blood-soaked car a few minutes after the murder.

Charges Stripping Only 'Superficial'

6-1-47

5-9-47

SHOULD BE CLEARED UP ^{May 9, 1947}

THERE are several mystifying matters in connection with the unfortunate Matilija dam situation that ought to be cleared up publicly, it seems to us.

One, of course, is why the recommendation of Geologist Buwalda, given on March 5, 1946, was not heeded. In a written report to Consulting Engineer Warren, Buwalda said on that date:

"The abutment should be explored by tips or trenches, or, better, by stripping, before final design is decided upon. Exploration will cost a little money, but it is very necessary."

The abutment Buwalda was talking about is the spot where the costly trouble has now developed.

A second mystery is why the county supervisors, the responsible heads of Zone 1, were not given that report. They, and other county officials concerned, emphatically say they never heard about it until it was mentioned by a contractors' representative a few days ago.

The state people at Sacramento had the report on file; the contractor knew about it; Warren had the original copy. Why were not the supervisors informed?

In a letter to the supervisors, Warren now blames the disastrous situation on the county government for the "superficial manner" in which the abutment was scraped by county crews. It is true the work was only partially and roughly done, but if Warren had Buwalda's warning in mind and the county officials knew nothing of it, where does that leave the responsibility?

Also, if the stripping was superficially and improperly done in the spring of 1946, why wait until now to say so?

Another mystifying piece of business is the plan for a rock-fill dam, in addition to the plan for the concrete arch type that, it now develops, Warren prepared. This was submitted, it seems, in April of '46, long after the people had voted for the concrete dam, "for informational purposes only." For whose information? And why?

Still another question that no doubt is bothering some Zone 1 people is why a rock-fill dam was not undertaken in the first place instead of the concrete arch. Other engineers considering the Matilija canyon problem previously had favored the rock-fill idea.

* * *

WARREN REPORT REQUESTED FOR USE OF PROPOSED NEW ENGINEER

Ryan Strikes at Buck Passing, and Says That Left Abutment Was Stripped Last November But The "Condition" Has Just Been Revealed; To Recommend Competent Engineers

5-9-47 Ventura Co. News

The question of the stability of the geological formations at the right abutment of the Matilija Dam, having been brought to the forefront by recent grief at the left (or north) abutment, Sanford Butts, County Supervisor of this First Supervisorial District, this week said he believed the right abutment should be carefully rechecked. To this end, he has addressed a letter to Don Warren, engineer for Zone 1 water district asking for an opinion.

On Tuesday of this week, Supervisor Butts introduced a motion, which the supervisors adopted, embodying the plan he had urged for many months—namely the hiring of an outstanding and competent engineer of wide experience on dams, who would serve as a consulting engineer. The record shows that Butts, while not opposing Warren's excellence as an engineer, nor his integrity, had opposed Warren from the first on the grounds that Warren was not a man with wide experience on dams. Butts voted against Warren's appointment on this ground, and on no other, he said.

In preparation for the ultimate coming here of a consulting engineer who knows dams, and safety, Butts wants a report from Warren on Warren's observations on the right, (or South) abutment, which up to date has not given trouble. This report would be for the use of whatever engineer might eventually come in.

Tuesday's resolution makes it possible for Engineer Bob Ryan of Ventura County, to check up on high grade, consulting engineers with experience in dams, and to recommend those who are available to the County Commissioners for their consideration.

Several months ago, when Butts was on a trip to Sacramento he took up the matter of the Dam with Mr. Holmes of the State Dam Dept. "I suppose you are here to urge speed on the Matilija project," Holmes said. "No," replied Butts. "I am here first of all in the interest of

(Continued on Page Seven)

the left abutment and for the pit for determining the exact location of bed rock," Ryan said. "To say at this time that the stripping was superficial, and to just be discovering it now when the stripping was done last November is very unusual. It seems that all this was properly in the sphere of the engineer in charge."

Ryan, who said he would reserve full comment on published reports of Warren's comments and writings, said that he proposed to have ready for the Supervisors at their next meeting, Tuesday, the names of competent engineers with outstanding experience on dams. "Everyone knows who these men are," Ryan said, as there are only a handful of them in the United States. "I will of course do immediately as requested."

Warren this week had been quoted, publicly, as writing that stripping of the dam's left abutment by the county "for exposure to all concerned was done in a superficial manner, and, for reasons beyond our knowledge, the pit for determining the exact location of bed-rock was not dug."

At the same time, Commissioner Butts wrote to J. Kimber of the County Road Department as follows on the \$3,400,000 Zone No. 1 Bond Issue:

May 8th, 1947

RE: The \$3,400,000

Zone No. 1 Bond Issue.

Mr. J. Kimber,
County Road Dept.,
Ventura, Calif.

Dear Sir:

Recently considerable interest in the Matilija Dam has developed, so that some of the people are wondering how much money we have expended.

Of course my answer is that anyone is entitled to that information by contacting the County Auditor's office, but the Auditor in turn informs me that you have the breakdown of the \$1,165,657.73 expended thus far.

Will you be kind enough to forward to me five copies of the breakdown or your itemized account to date.

Yours truly,
SANFORD D. BUTTS

5-9-47

County Engineer Bob Ryan decried efforts to place in some quarters to pass the buck in connection with the dam. "The County hired the engineering firm to be in charge of the dam (he referred to the Donald Warren Company,) and that included investigation of stripping for

Matilija Dam

(Continued from Page 1)
safety of that dam."

"What we must have in Ventura County is speed, but speed with safety. As head of the Elks, I saw the bodies at the Saint Francis dam disaster, and I want no possible repetition of such a thing in the Ventura area."

Butts pointed out that the State has approved the construction as it developed, only to the point where safety ruled. When it was questioned, the report was immediately given.

The difficulty in knowing in advance the cost of dams, was pointed out this week at the office of the Ventura County Commissioners when it was pointed out that their work had been carried out with a view to the greatest possible economy in construction, based on early surveys. It was pointed out that the great Boulder Dam project exceeded its cost by about 4,000,000, and that most others had cost more than originally anticipated. It was in an effort to try to keep this cost down as much as possible that stripping on both sides of the entire project was not done in advance, it was said.

The much discussed Buwalda report from this eminent authority at Caltec has not yet been received by the County Commissioners, it was said at the Court House as this report was one which the Donald Warren Company had ordered on its own volition and funds.

Supervisor Butts' letter to Mr. Warren regarding the right abutment of Matilija Dam follows:

May 8th, 1947

RE: Matilija Dam Project

Donald R. Warren,
500 S. Figueroa St.,
Los Angeles, 13, Calif.

Dear Sir:

In reference to our present trouble under blocks O and N. I have been approached regarding the possibility of about the same difficulty occurring in the right abutment of the Matilija Dam.

Please write or wire your observations.

Yours sincerely,
SANFORD D. BUTTS.
SDB:HEG

5-14-47

Savage Unavailable For Matilija: May 14 1947

\$50,000 More Voted For Dam Project

By MIDGE MOSSBERG

AFTER an afternoon spent in arguments and in hopelessly trying to figure out some way to keep from spending additional funds, supervisors of the Ventura county flood control district finally set up money, not to exceed \$50,000, for further excavation on the soft (and

d Matilija dam, project on zone one. The

afternoon also brought forth a plan—proposed about a year ago—for the flood control district to have a district manager, and new attempts for the county to obtain an expert to go over the dam site and give his opinion on the feasibility of safely continuing building of the dam. The board was informed that J. L. Savage, considered a top notch authority, would be unable to accept the expert assignment because of a trip to Europe.

ASK MORE FUNDS

Donald R. Warren and his partner, Carl Nelson, absent from yesterday morning's turbulent session, came in during the afternoon to request additional funds for further excavation of faulty material from the left abutment of the dam. Nelson explained that the \$42,000 originally allotted for such work would be exhausted as of today. He estimated it would take from a week and a half to two more weeks to complete the excavation, with another week needed to clean off loose material from the dam apron.

Faced with the alternative of having the dam job shut down immediately if no further funds were set up, the board had no choice but to approve expenditure of up to \$50,000. But the action in authorizing the funds was done in anything but an agreeable or peaceful frame of mind.

\$10 A YARD

"Sure as hell we've got a bear by the tail," declared Supervisor Robert Lefever as he demanded to know whether the Warren company, project engineers, would be in again next Tuesday to ask for additional funds. He also wanted

(See \$50,000 page 3)

Famed Engineer Unavailable for Matilija Probe:

\$50,000 More Voted for Dam

(Continued from page 1)

to know, since the excavation is being done on a force account basis, how much of the special funds are going into overhead expenses. After an exchange of words with the Warren company officials, Lefever finally learned that approximately 4,000 yards of faulty material has been excavated at a cost of approximately \$10 a yard. It was estimated that 7,000 yards in all would have to be excavated. Approximately 40 percent of the daily expenses for which the extra funds are used go for fixed charges, Lefever was told. Because the job is beyond the scope of the contract, contractors get additional funds for overhead charges.

OFFERS COOPERATION

John Kier, projects manager for Contractors Atkinson Kier Bressi and Bevanda, told the board that his outfit wants to do whatever the board and Warren desires. He explained it would cost less in the long run for overhead costs to be added now than to remove part of the equipment and key men—part of the force has been shut down—and then bring them back when concrete pouring can be resumed. Cost of shipping out a large "Cat" alone would mount to \$1,500, he said. He also declared that the contractors are anxious to resume full operations. To hurry the work along, three shifts are being used in the excavation work. He—and Warren—invented the board to frequently visit the dam. Kier said he would feel better if the supervisors did go over the dam site and check the crews and equipment at work.

Lefever, only one to vote no against the new funds, said he did not think the district should be penalized; he thought the excavation should have been done before now. He also wanted to know why the Warren company had not produced an itemized account of the excavation expenditures. At one time, it appeared as if supervisors would appoint Job Kimber, chief accountant of the roads department, to go over the records and inspect overhead and fixed charges and the like.

Nelson suggested that Lefever take the responsibility of shutting down the dam job while records were checked. To that, Lefever re-

my job for me, but I'll do as I damn please."

MENTAL DISTURBANCE

Sanford Butts told Warren he didn't feel like payin' the engineer any fees until the excavation work is cleaned up. Warren said he had no fee for this portion of the work, that he'd had only mental disturbance over the way "we are progressing as a unit."

Warren also presented a letter to the board in reply to the zone one advisory board's request about costs. It said, mainly, that cost factors had changed because of inflation and because of variance in field surveys—which resulted in changes in the dam—from preliminary studies.

"The field surveys reveal the width of the dam site is larger than the width shown on maps used for preliminary reports," the letter said . . . The working stresses for concrete were designed for 1,000 pounds per square inch. The state requested the design units for concrete be confined to approximately 800 pounds per square inch. This was done. It necessitated corresponding additional yardage."

Warren's letter also pointed out that a slip joint, to be placed between the gravity section at the base of the dam and the arch ring to eliminate the indeterminate distribution of the stresses was added at the request of the state. Additional excavation found necessary at the bottom of the channel and present excavation also altered the cost picture, Warren said.

GIVES REPORT

At the board's request, Warren also submitted an Oct. 19, 1946, report by John Buwalda of Caltech, geologist for the Warren

company. The report had not been given to the board at the time it was made. The main portion of the report that the board wished to study was the following statement:

"For a concrete arch dam, the east abutment is thus far the critical portion of the site. The form is not granite or such other old strong rock as is usually desired for the support of an arch dam, nor is it weak material like the sedimentary formations near Ventura. The formation is of intermediate strength. While entirely adequate for an earth fill or rock fill dam, the abutment is not ideal for an arch dam. The abutment will be satisfactory for an arch dam if up to the level that the east end of the arch rests against rock the end of the dam be widened or flared to about four times its normal width so as to reduce the thrust or bearing pressure per unit of rock area.

"The abutment can be satisfactory for an arch dam if its design is adapted to the abutment geologically as well as topographically. This is of course essential in all dam design.

Warren told the board that conditions that had developed at the dam were unpredictable. He said that field maps had been used in the preliminary studies because they were thought to be sufficiently accurate. He asserted that if field surveys had been made that his company still would be working on the preliminary plans.

5-21-47?

Foreman Awaits Union Request

WILL the county grand jury investigate the Matilija dam construction project as requested? Guesses were out today that the layman body would do so, but no official confirmation could be obtained. The request for the investigation of the "fiasco in connection with the construction of Matilija

RICHFIELD TO EXPLORE FIELD

Richfield oil company plans to sink an exploratory well to approximately 10,000 feet on or before July 11 on the L. T. Kraemer property on West Gonzales road, it was revealed today.

The new well is to be located approximately 3,000 feet east of the McGrath No. 3 now being drilled for Standard of California by Rocky Mountain Drilling company. Richfield, which has nearly 1,000 acres in the area under lease, revealed plans to follow the first well with others, one at a time, until the entire leased area has been explored.

OTHER LEASES

Richfield, besides the Kraemer property, has leases on McGrath property, and property of James Leonard Investment company, Mrs. Walter Mckenthaler, Mr. and Mrs. Willie R. Bailard, Mr. and Mrs. Jack M. Roth, Letitia Leonard, and Mr. and Mrs. George Baier.

The Richfield spokesman said that his company is quite optimistic about the Montalvo area exploration and said it was expected that dozens of wells would be sunk there during this summer.

Cooke Will Act For Girls School

dam" came yesterday from members of the Oil Workers International union, local 120.

In a letter to the grand jury, a copy of which was sent to The Star-Free Press, the union asked that the grand jury conduct a full probe and bring charges against any and all persons if evidence indicates they have failed to fulfill duties of their offices or their responsibilities.

A. A. Milligan of Oxnard, grand jury foreman, said today that he has not yet received a copy of the union's letter and request and was, therefore, not prepared to comment. If he does receive the communication, he will consult with the district attorney and possibly will call a meeting of the grand jury to consider the matter, he said.

District Attorney M. Arthur Waite indicated that if Milligan does consult with him he will suggest that the whole grand jury meet to consider the investigation request.

Meantime today, contractors carried on with excavation of soft spots on the left abutment of the dam. It was discovery of the soft spots that led the state dam department to close down concrete pouring activities until the bad material has been removed.

CAN BE COMPLETED

Finding of the poor material led to much speculation as to whether the dam could be completed. It can be, Dr. John Buwalda and William P. Craeger, experts called in by the Donald R. Warren company, project engineers, affirmed this week. But the cost of completing the one dam will be from \$1,800,000 to \$2,200,000 (minus land acquisition figures) as against a \$700,000 preliminary estimate. At least, that's what Warren now estimates.

Hoping for another, independent confirmation of the dam's continuance to its original height, county supervisors are bringing in their own consultants. Dr. Charles P. Berkey of Columbia university, geology expert, will be here this week to review the dam site. He will arrive by train in Los Angeles tomorrow morning and will visit the dam either later that day or on Friday, County Surveyor Robert Ryan said.

TWO UNAVAILABLE

Ryan received confirmation of

Dr. Berkey's arrival in a telegram this morning. He still is searching for a top-notch consulting expert to review the dam construction picture for the county. Two authorities have turned down the job.

Still planning to continue with the remaining portions of the dam project, scheduled to be done under the voted \$3,400,000 bond issue, supervisors yesterday afternoon asked the Warren company to submit survey data so that zone one can proceed with acquisition of rights of ways on Casitas dam. Supervisors also bought Casitas property of Sumner Hardison for \$11,450, build-ings on the property to be salvag-ed by the county.

Randall Cremer Gives Views on Matilija

A group of Ojai valley land-owners and numerous other persons interested in the progress of Matilija dam held a mass meeting in the elementary school last night where it was decided to "wait until it is seen" whether or not the zone one board is able to arrive at plan for "satisfactory continuation" of construction before any action is taken.

The "action" referred to apparently was either "elimination" of Donald R. Warren as engineer on the project or a "grand jury

investigation," both of which were placed as motions from the floor but which died for lack of seconds.

RYAN TALKS

The meeting opened informally with discussions on the type of dam being built and an explanation by County Surveyor Robert Ryan as to how the costs grew from a preliminary estimate of \$700,000 to nearly \$2,000,000. Then John Dron, Ojai engineer, was appointed temporary chairman for the formal session to follow.

Randall Cremer, recently appointed to the zone one advisory board, and who has an extensive background in engineering, pointed out that in his opinion the future of Matilija dam centered around economics. It was his opinion that the dam can be continued to its projected height with safety, but that considerable precautionary measures and extensive safeguards must be taken.

BLAMES SPEED

Called upon to present his views on the dam, Cremer said it was his belief that "the mistake was in rushing ahead on the dam" without sufficient exploration. "Apparently the pressure was on to begin storing water as soon as possible," Cremer said, "and Warren proceeded too rapidly."

"As far as I can determine," he told the valley residents, "only visual observation of the site preceded the start of excavation."

He added that the site was a peculiar one from an engineering standpoint. "I have seen other similar sites, but none quite so bad," he stated. He explained that the formations are irregular, that layers of rock have been pushed up in all directions to bend over and lay each other. In such geological formations, Cremer said it was his opinion that extensive exploration and testing should have been done.

NOT TOO LATE

"It is not too late for boring of test holes," Cremer continued. He said by boring holes, coring to determine structures beneath the surface, and by scientific grouting that the left abutment could be completed on the present plan. Widening of the abutments should be done, he added.

District Attorney M. Arthur Waite answered a number of questions from the floor on water priorities and costs. Waite stated that domestic water uses will have priority over storm waters stored

in the dam with agriculture and industry next in line. He added that as much water as would flow normally in the stream will be allowed to overflow the dam.

Ryan pointed out that the cost of water if based on the cost of the project probably would be too great to allow its use on most agriculture.

Dron stated that water at any cost would be welcomed by the zone one district in dry years.

State To Inspect Matilija

5/22/47

POURING of concrete may be resumed next week on Matilija dam!

That was the encouraging word given out today by the Donald R. Warren company, project engineers. Representatives of the company indicated that the state dam advisory board will be at the damsite to inspect excavation of poor materials, recently found on the left abutment either the latter part of this week or early next week.

UP TO BOARD

It will be up to the board to decide whether the excavating is complete and whether pouring of concrete may be resumed. Pouring was stopped at state order after poor foundation material was found around block N. Nearly all that flawy material now has been removed by the contractors.

One state dam official, Wayne Perkins, toured the dam site yesterday with Warren, his partner, Carl Nelson, and with John Kier of Contractors Atkinson Kier Bressi and Bevanda. Perkins, however, could make no official statement.

BERKEY DUE

Meantime today, Dr. Charles P. Berkey of Columbia university was to inspect the dam site as a county geological consultant. Supervisors of the Ventura county flood control district want their own, independent representative to give an official approval of the damsite even though two Warren-called experts already have said that the dam can be completed safely to its originally contemplated height.

That assurance was given Monday by Geologist Dr. John Buralda of Caltech and William P. Craeger of Buffalo, arch-dam consulting engineer. Both said the dam could be completed but referred cost figures for doing so to Warren. He estimates it will take from \$1,800,000 to \$2,200,000 for the entire Matilija project, plus funds for land acquisitions and a road.

JURY GETS REQUEST

A request for a grand jury investigation of the construction of the Matilija dam and its added costs from a \$700,000 preliminary estimate meantime had been forwarded today from the courthouse, where it was sent, to A. A. Milligan, foreman, in Oxnard.

The request for the grand jury investigation came from members of the Oil Workers International union, local 120. It asked for a full probe and for charges to be filed against any and all persons if evidence indicates there has been any neglect of responsibilities.

NOT FAIR TO ANYBODY

WHAT Zone 1 needs, as we see it, is a business manager. What each and every other zone of the Ventura county flood control district will need, as it gets into a construction stage, is a business manager.

Zone 1 needs a business manager right now to deal with owners of property that the county must acquire for its Matilija reservoir. It needs a business manager to carry through a program of disposing of the water that is to be stored. Presumably the city of Ventura, for one, will want to buy water; somebody must be in position to sell that water, not only to the city but to all other potential users. Lateral mains are to be laid; for them rights-of-way will have to be acquired. The zone is going to be—is already—a business of substantial proportions, and it needs some responsible official to manage its affairs.

Presumably, for a good many weeks past, the county supervisors have been engaged in procuring such a man. Nevertheless, after repeated postponements and many maneuvers, yesterday they did something completely different. They simply turned the duties over to the county engineer.

From the first, the board seems to have been obsessed with the idea that it was another engineer, not a business manager, it was seeking. The district already has capable consulting engineering talent, the Donald R. Warren Co. It already has a legally designated engineer of its own, namely the county engineer.

Now it has pushed the business management responsibilities off onto the engineer that it already had. Robert Ryan, the man in question, is a capable engineer and, if he wanted to try managing the affairs of the zone and later of the other zones as well, he might do it successfully. But it does not seem to us that it is fair to Ryan, or to his office, engaged in many other activities, or to the taxpayers of the zone, to ask him to do both. At all times previously the board has taken the stand that it wanted a full-time official for this job, and it would seem to us that a full-time official is required.

As the water project today stands, a contract has been awarded for the construction of a dam on property the county does not own, and no businesslike provision has been made by the county board either for acquiring the property or for operating the water business which the voters of the zone authorized.