Clair Engle and the Politics of California Reclamation, 1943-1960

Stephen Paul Sayles

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May 4, 1978
CLAIR ENGLE AND THE POLITICS OF CALIFORNIA RECLAMATION, 1943-1960

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DISSERTATION
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The University of New Mexico Albuquerque, New Mexico May, 1978
CLARK RUGG AND THE POLITICS
OF CALIFORNIA REGULATION
1893-1900

By
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B.A., San Diego State College, 1968
Doctor of Philosophy
May, 1978
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CLAIR ENGLE AND THE POLITICS
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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

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ABSTRACT

Clair Engle, the flamboyant Congressman from California's mountain-valley Second Congressional District, played a key role in the great water and power controversies of the 1950's. As Chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee (1955-1959), he placed his brand on all natural resource development legislation of the period. His interest in water development stemmed from representing a congressional district which contained the source of most of California's water supply. From the 1940's to the 1960's Engle authored every major addition to the great Central Valley Project of California, including such projects as the American River Development, Trinity River project, and the San Luis project. As a consequence, Engle exerted a significant role in the economic development of the Central Valley and the reclamation west.

By the early fifties Engle realized that insufficient water was available to fulfill the goals of the Central Valley Project. Accordingly, he moved to protect water rights of ranchers and farmers in his district and in the Sacramento Valley. He then pushed for the
Trinity River project in northwestern California. His drive to obtain congressional authorization of the Trinity project highlighted his parliamentarian and political skills. It caused him to back southern California's campaign to defeat the massive Central Arizona Project during the late forties and early fifties, to buck the California congressional delegation by supporting the Colorado River Storage Project, and to interject himself in state controversies concerning the role of the federal government in California water development.

The Trinity project controversy of the fifties brought Congressman Engle into the maelstrom of western reclamation politics. The Trinity competed for congressional authorization with such major projects as the Colorado River Storage Project, Fryingpan-Arkansas Project, and Hell's Canyon. His political skills were so acute that the Trinity secured approval during the first session of the 84th Congress. The Trinity issue was complicated by contractual arrangements between the Interior Department and the Pacific Gas and Electric Company to have the latter build and operate the power facilities of the Trinity project. Engle's public power orientation caused him to lead the successful fight against this example of the Eisenhower Administration's partnership program. This dissertation is an attempt to place Congressman Clair Engle in proper perspective in recent political history of the American West.
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INTRODUCTION

Nature presented the Central Valley of California with an interesting, albeit difficult, engineering problem, a problem that expressed itself in political and economic realities. Its topography is stark and dramatic. Ringed on the east by the granite escarpment of the Sierra Nevada, the basin is bounded in the west by the gentler Coast Range, in the south by the small oaks and grass-topped Tehachapis, and in the north by the volcanic formations of the Cascades. This great valley, some five hundred miles long and fifty miles wide, contains an area of rolling hills and flat land of 18,000 square miles. Additionally, the valley floor ranges in elevation from slightly above sea level to four hundred feet. It is drained by two river systems, the Sacramento in the north valley area and the San Joaquin in the south, which intermingle in the fertile Delta peat land near San Francisco Bay. Here the combined flows of the Sacramento and the San Joaquin rivers pass through the Carquinez Straits, San Pablo and San Francisco bays, and past the Golden Gate into the Pacific Ocean.
These two great river trunks of the Central Valley watershed lend their names to their respective drainage areas. In the Sacramento Valley of the north, Cottonwood, Stony, Cache, and Putah creeks rise out of the Coast Range and drain into the Sacramento River. Out of the Sierras come the much larger flows of the Feather, Yuba, Bear, and American rivers. Cosumnes River, like its sister streams to the north originates in the Sierras and is the dividing line between the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys. Tributaries of the San Joaquin River come from the Sierra Nevada, such streams as Mokelumne, Calaveras, Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, Chowchilla, and Fresno rivers. In the southern area, Kings, Kaweah, and Kern rivers are now characterized by internal drainage systems through earlier formed tributaries of the San Joaquin.

Geographical and climatological conditions in the Central Valley create the basic problem. Nature decreed that the alluvial soils of the basin, deposited by the drainage systems through the ages, be of great fertility, but nature also capriciously provided that there be an unequal distribution of these soils and water. Two-thirds of the basin's water supply originates in the Sacramento River watershed while only a third of the irrigable land lies in this northern region. Conversely, two-thirds of the basin's irrigable land exists in the San Joaquin Valley as well as only a third of the basin's water supply.

These profound geographical and hydrological conditions are
exacerbated by an unequal distribution of precipitation. Two-thirds of California's snow and rainfall falls in the north, and three-fourths of this total precipitation comes during the winter months. The consequences have been disastrous. Severe flooding in the Sacramento Valley has been a historical reality, yet there often has not been enough water in the principal rivers to provide irrigation during the hot summer growing months. Navigation on the San Joaquin and Sacramento has been disrupted while saline intrusion from the San Francisco Bay into the Delta has played havoc with agricultural and industrial interests as far inland as Stockton.

How to shift surplus water from the Sacramento River to the parched, semiarid lands of the San Joaquin Valley, while maintaining adequate saline protection in the Delta area, became the focus of attention for engineers, farmers, industrialists, and politicians for nearly a century. Although substantially a problem in engineering, it also vitally affected economic and political interests of the entire state. Water has always been a major issue in California state politics and economy; witness the great struggle between hydraulic miners of the Sierra Nevada and agrarian interests on the valley floor; between metropolitan areas of the coast and the mountain-valley regions for control over water; and the great struggle for equal distribution of water between northern and southern California.

What California needed was long-range comprehensive planning to develop her natural resources. The design agreed upon and com-
pleted as the Central Valley Project was, in the Hollywood hyperbole of a Bureau of Reclamation spokesman, "gigantic, stupendous, and colossal." It involved the movement of surplus Sacramento River water five hundred miles to the dry lands of the San Joaquin Valley, the greatest artificial mass movement of water in history. At the head of the system stood Shasta Dam which stored the waters of the Sacramento, Pit, and McCloud rivers. These stored waters were to be released as required to meet downstream needs and to maintain a steady flow to the Delta for exportation further south. In the process flood control in the north valley area, hydroelectric power development at Shasta and Keswick dams, navigation improvements, and repulsion of salt water in the Delta would also be enhanced.

Surplus water in the Delta would then be conveyed by canal to the huge power generators at the Tracy pumping plant, supplied by power created by lifting it two hundred feet into the Delta-Mendota Canal. A gravity flow canal running 117 miles, the Delta-Mendota Canal provided irrigation water to farmers on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. It ultimately emptied into the Mendota Pool located at the Big Bend on the San Joaquin west of Fresno and then flowed northward in the channel to provide irrigation in the San Joaquin Valley.

This movement of surplus Sacramento River water into the northern San Joaquin region allowed storage of the San Joaquin River in Millerton Lake behind Friant Dam. This water was destined for diversion north into Madera County by way of the Madera Canal,
about 36 miles long, and south via the Friant-Kern Canal into the Kern River, some 152 miles away. Both canals provided supplemental irrigation to farmers and big landowners along the eastern San Joaquin Valley.

And this was only the beginning. By the time that these features were completed in August 1951, additions to the project already had been contemplated. The Contra Costa Canal diverted water from the Delta, from agricultural, industrial, and municipal uses in the East Bay area opposite San Francisco from Pittsburg and Martinez to Santa Clara. American River Development was under construction to provide flood control in the Sacramento area as well as to buttress saline repulsion in the Delta. The Sly Park unit had been added to the American River project as a "suckling pig" to develop agricultural lands in the foothills of El Dorado County. On the west side of the Sacramento Valley, the Sacramento Valley Canals were a legislative reality and awaited appropriation of funds to begin construction. These canals would irrigate 250,000 acres and would require development of the Trinity River or Klamath River watersheds as well. Also contemplated and proposed was the development of the coastal plains in Santa Barbara and Ventura.

All of this awaited the future. In early August 1951 occurred a remarkable ten-day celebration of this engineering triumph, the Central Valley Water Festival. Festivities began on August 1st at Shasta Dam. It was an imposing structure, measuring at 602 feet in
height, and second only to Hoover Dam on the Colorado River in height. It housed the largest hydroelectric plant in the state with a total generating capacity of 500,000 horsepower. Behind the dam and shimmering in the hot noon-day sun was Shasta Lake, thirty-five miles long with a shoreline of 365 miles. A significant chapter of local history lay beneath the reservoir, including the pioneer towns of Kennett, Pollack, Baird, and Copper City.

Work on Shasta Dam began in September 1938 by Pacific Construction, Inc. In the following years, according to Redding newsman Paul C. Bodenhamer, "much good has come; growth, progress, prosperity, a flowering of culture and a broadening of viewpoint. For the construction of the dam brought more than pay-roll; it brought new ideas, their energy and their customs." Project construction created new communities in the area--Central Valley, Project City, and Summit City--that catered to the needs of construction workers. The Redding Chamber of Commerce estimated that dam construction brought at least a million tourists to the area, spending their money in Shasta County, and thus adding another dimension to its traditional mining, lumbering, and farming economy.

Shortly before noon, local residents and the United States Marine Band from San Francisco took their places on the eastern abutment of Shasta Dam. Nearly all the leaders associated with the Central Valley Project were present for the celebration. Master of Ceremonies was Democratic State Senator Edwin J. Regan of Weaverville, who
represented Shasta and Trinity counties in the state legislature.

A greying, solidly-built man, he was a smooth politician not inclined to position himself far ahead of public opinion on any issue. As befitting a mountain legislator, Regan became one of the legislature's most effective leaders on behalf of the counties of origin in water development.

Regan opened the Central Valley Project Water Festival with a gracious tribute to the project. He introduced a host of national, state and local officials, including Samuel B. Morris, head of the Los Angeles Water and Power Department who, during the previous year, was a member of the prestigious President's Commission on Water Resources; Assistant Secretary of the Interior William E. Warne, soon to advance water development in Iran, and the flamboyant, colorful Congressman Clair Engle, representing the area in the sprawling mountain-valley Second Congressional District. As Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, he had been delegated by his chairman, John R. Murdock of Arizona, to lead a delegation representing the full committee. This delegation included Nevada Congressman Walter S. Baring of Reno and Congressman Reva Beck Bosone of Utah as well as Murdock's staff assistant, Mrs. Virginia MacMichaels.

Other politicians present included Republican State Senators Randolph J. Collier, the "Silver Fox" of Yreka, Siskiyou County,
who was making a name for himself in authoring the state's highway program; Arthur T. Way of Eureka, Humboldt County; and Democrat Harold T. ("Bizz") Johnson of Roseville, Placer County, all of whom were intimately concerned with water development in the north state area. Allied with Assemblyman Frank P. Bellotti, Republican from Eureka, Collier and Way led a rear-guard action against Engle's move to "grab" water from the Trinity and Klamath watersheds for use in the Central Valley.

Assemblyman Arthur W. Coats of Butte County and Lloyd W. Lowrey of Rumsay, Yolo County, were also present, the latter being long interested in the development of the Sacramento River and flood control and a close political ally of Congressman Engle's for a decade. Absent from the celebration was State Engineer A.D. ("Bob") Edmonston, California Department of Public Works, due to illness. Edmonston had reservations about the Trinity diversion, preferring to develop the Feather River as a state project to send water into southern California. He also favored state ownership of the Central Valley Project, built and operated by the Bureau of Reclamation, represented this day at Shasta Dam by its Commissioner, Michael Wolf Straus.

"Big Mike" Straus, dubbed "our most arrogant bureaucrat," by a veteran Capitol Hill reporter, had long been a controversial figure in federal reclamation policies. Then in his mid-fifties, he had begun his career as a grain exporter in the Chicago Board of
Trade. He became a fervent promoter of New Deal philosophy and programs as a protege of Secretary of Interior Harold L. Ickes.

Under Straus' leadership, federal reclamation construction continued until he ruled an empire of 17,000 employees, 96 dams, 1,600 miles of canals and laterals, and over 3,000 miles of transmission lines serving some nine million consumers with water and power. Even now, as he stood on Shasta Dam, he fought for still more ambitious and expensive projects to irrigate the dry, fertile heartland of central Arizona and the "sea of aridity," to use Walter Prescott Webb's apt phrase, in the upper basin of the Colorado River.

Yet, for all its prestige and power, in the Central Valley of California and the entire reclamation west, the Bureau of Reclamation had come under a storm of criticism for its policies and enforcement of federal reclamation law, particularly the excess acreage provisions of the Newlands Act of 1902 and its repayment policies under the Reclamation Act of 1939. Resentment against federal dominance in California water development instigated a drive to have project operations turned over to state water agencies. Moreover, the Bureau had engaged in a long, extensive, and expensive fight with the Army Corps of Engineers over development of Kings River and the Table Mountain Dam area south of Redding. What was at stake was no less than the survival of a comprehensive development program in the Central Valley. The Bureau's plan for the Central Arizona Project and the Upper Colorado River Storage Project led
to charges that it was casting a web of federal domination of western water.

Even its promotion of the Central Valley Project Water Festival came not without controversy. Republican Congressman Norris Poulson of Los Angeles demanded an investigation of the funds used to promote the celebration. "If this tidal wave of bureau slush didn't cost more than $200,000," he growled, "then the printers who turned it out were cheated." He concluded, "The bureau has one goal: to secure a stranglehold on all sources of water, all projects, all rights to the use of water. That done, there is nothing the people can do, except pay the bills and genuflect before leering faces of their masters, the mercenaries of Straus, et. al."11

Poulson's remarks, however, were overshadowed by the historic scene at hand. Straus, speaking now, sent the Bureau's message as far as his voice could carry. "Today," he roared, "Today,...we forgive and forget the prophets of doom and the corporals of disaster who cried out the Central Valley Project should not, could not, would not be built. For today we put the completed mighty work to its task." He stressed the potential of this project and its later additions to promote national defense and economic expansion. To the towns downstream, "standby Redding, Red Bluff, Chico, Colusa, Sacramento, Antioch, and Martinez. Be alert Tracy, Los Banos, Madera, Chowchilla, Fresno, Orange Cove, Lindsay, Visalia, Tulare, Delano, and Bakersfield.... Here comes the water. Now we inaugurate the
Central Valley Project and California's dream comes true. Open the valves! Let the water down!\textsuperscript{12}

And the water came. First, a sheet of white water falling down the dam's spillway, then a mighty surge into the Sacramento River. The project water had been dyed green to mark its progress down the valley, losing its color just south of Colusa. At that moment, the air filled with the sound of four F-89 Scorpions and four F-84 Thunderjets streaking low-level across the lake and down the valley. Hardly had the incredible roar died down when a single jet power-dived out of the sky with an ear-splitting screech, pulled out on a level course, and headed south along the Sacramento. Suddenly, silence dominated the scene as spectators marvelled at the gently whirring sound of five power generators pouring out 379,000 kilowatts of electrical power deep within the dam.\textsuperscript{13}

Shasta Dam festivities struck the theme of the Central Valley Project Water Festival as the celebration continued downriver, first in Redding, then in Red Bluff on August 2nd. Controversy marred the festivities in Red Bluff as Congressman Engle discussed federal-state relations in water development. August 2nd was homecoming day for the Congressman who began his meteoric rise in state politics back in the thirties as a tough, no-nonsense District Attorney. He had been honored earlier in the day by farmers on the west side of the valley for his role in enacting the long-sought Sacramento Valley Canals program.
Known to be harboring ambitions to unseat United States Senator William F. Knowland, Republican of Oakland,\textsuperscript{14} Engle precipitated a controversy that reverberated down the valley and gave him wide media coverage throughout the state. The State of California, he charged, had promised the federal government that there would be adequate water to operate the Central Valley Project. When the federal government assumed the project's construction and operation in the mid-thirties, California agreed to hand over its water rights applications to the Sacramento River. In the meantime, however, the state had allocated the same water to farmers in the Sacramento Valley. Thus, Engle declared, "it appears now that the state may have peddled the same water twice." Since his data demonstrated that the current flow of the Sacramento between Shasta Dam and Sacramento was less than its natural flow, Engle opined that "it is very clear that the federal government cannot meet its commitments under the state water plan to put the stored water from Shasta down the Delta-Mendota Canal." He denounced California's failure to protect the water supply as "one of the most flagrant breaches of faith in the history of federal-state relations."\textsuperscript{15}

The water festival arrived in Colusa in the morning and in Sacramento in the afternoon of August 3rd. In Colusa Straus acknowledged that serious inroads had been made in water allocated to the Central Valley Project, but not enough to prejudice the operation of the project. "But it is true such cavalier use of waters along the
way could,” he said, "if carried on indefinitely, ruin the whole system." In Sacramento the State Department of Public Works attempted to refute Engle's charge that the State had placed the project's future in jeopardy. A spokesman for the Department of Public Works declared, somewhat contradictorily, that more than enough unappropriated water existed in the Sacramento to run the project except during the months of July and August.

In Sacramento, as well, L.W. McClellan, chief engineer for the Bureau of Reclamation, sounded another theme of the water festival. He had been with the Bureau since 1911 and had experience in both private and public water development. The recently authorized American River Development, McClellan said, would place about one million acres under irrigation. In addition, the Trinity and Klamath River systems in the northwest offered great potential for agricultural development in the Central Valley, and McClellan did not reject the notion currently expressed by Bureau engineers and officials that water would have to be imported from the Columbia River to meet the growing needs of the San Joaquin Valley and the southland.

On August 4th, the celebrations turned to Tracy in San Joaquin County. For good reason Tracy had been called the "heart of the Central Valley Project" for here are the six huge pumps necessary to lift water out of the Delta into the San Joaquin Valley. California Governor Earl Warren arrived to put, officially, the Tracy pumping plant in operation. About a hundred national, state, and local leaders
were present including Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman, and his lieutenants, Straus and Richard L. Boke, the Bureau's Regional Director in Sacramento, McClellan, Senator Knowland, and Congressman Engle, George P. Miller of the East Bay Region and an early backer of the American River project, Allan Oakley Hunter of the northern San Joaquin Valley, Leroy Johnson of Sacramento, John Shelley of San Francisco, Norris Poulson and Samuel F. Yorty of Los Angeles, and John Saylor of Pennsylvania, the latter being long critical of what he termed wasteful reclamation projects in the west.

Surplus water from Shasta Lake arrived in Tracy that afternoon. At 4:30 PM, Governor Warren threw the switch which put the gigantic Tracy pumping plant into operation. A few seconds later a small charge was set off a mile away in the dry hills to announce the rush of water into the Delta-Mendota Canal running along the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley. Speaking beneath a canvas canopy atop the pumping plant, Governor Warren dedicated the project to "the enrichment of our state, to the strength of our nation, and to the usefulness of California to a world in need." Secretary Chapman stressed that the cost of the project would be born by those who benefitted from it. Therefore, he said, "the citizen...loses neither his sense of responsibility nor his self respect. These projects stimulate individual initiative rather than cripple it. They open up new opportunities for the establishment of family farms and small business enterprises where such opportunities did not exist before."
The controversy initiated by Engle in Red Bluff continued in Tracy. Governor Warren referred obliquely to the affair when he remarked: "How we do the job of conserving this water will determine the future of California. We must do it systematically, we must do it promptly and above all we must do it cooperatively." Engle, sitting a few feet from the Governor, seemed stung by the statement. "I knew I was lighting a fuse," he told reporters later, "but I didn't realize how short the fuse would be." However, he refused to back down, again charging that the state "overcommitted the water supply" and "is now trying to back out and let the Federal Government untangle the mess they got the river into."21

On August 6th, attention turned to the tiny hamlet of Los Banos near the terminal of the Delta-Mendota Canal deep in the San Joaquin Valley. Here, such large landowners as Charles Kaljian, J.E. ("Jack") O'Neill, and Russell Giffen desperately sought water to supplement their rapidly depleting underground supplies and looked to the proposed Trinity River diversion as a logical next step for water development. Assistant Interior Secretary William E. Warne called for an end to bickering over the project and for federal-state cooperation in water development. He suggested that state development of the Feather River Project would be the next step to relieve the parched west side of the valley below Los Banos. "The state and federal government in partnership with the people of California must work together in the development of water supplies to serve Californians
of the future," he said. "There is no room for competition and jealousy, for this house divided will not fall—it simply never will be built at all."\(^{22}\)

Celebrations in the San Joaquin Valley began in earnest on the evening of August 7th as thousands lined the shore of Millerton Lake behind Friant Dam. Spectators on the northern shore witnessed the release of water into the Madera and Friant-Kern canals.

Assistant Interior Secretary Warne informed his audience that the Bureau intended to integrate the upper Kings River hydroelectric power into the Central Valley Project. By so stating he had interjected himself into a long-standing dispute between the Bureau and the Army Corps of Engineers in which local residents tended to support the latter in hopes of avoiding the restrictive features of basic federal reclamation law.\(^{23}\)

There had been a tendency throughout the Central Valley Water Festival to embroil presidential politics into the celebration. This was particularly evident in the Bay Area where the San Francisco and Alameda County Democratic central committees decided to celebrate the Central Valley Project as a Democratic achievement. Accordingly, both central committees held respective luncheons in San Francisco's Fairmont Hotel and Oakland's Athens Club in which Interior Secretary Chapman and Ohio's Congressman Michael J. Kirwan were featured speakers.

Chapman denounced an unnamed "special interest" which had
fought the Bureau of Reclamation to a stand-still in the matter of distribution of public power. No doubt he referred to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, headquartered on Market Street in San Francisco which opposed all efforts of the Bureau to establish an independent distribution system of Central Valley Project power to its preferred customers in the valley. This titanic struggle between public and private power development had entered its last stages as each sought to negotiate a compromise settlement.

Actually, state investigations leading to the establishment of a State Water Plan and the Central Valley Project were initiated by state Republican administrations; the project itself became the law during the Republican reign of colorful James ("Sunny Jim") Rolph, Jr., of San Francisco; and the Bureau of Reclamation took the project over during the administration of Republican Governor Frank Merriam. These little details of history were ignored as Mike Kirwan, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee dealing with Interior Department matters and currently Chairman of the Congressional Campaign Committee of the Democratic National Committee, took the floor at the Fairmont and proclaimed: "True, it was God who constructed the Shasta mountains--gave the snow, rainfall and everything that made this huge reclamation project possible--but the instrument He used to bring it to you was the Democratic Administration." It was truly one of the finest Democratic political speeches I have heard in some time," gushed
Congressman Shelley, whose power base in San Francisco rested on labor support, to President Truman. "Mr. President, it is not at all a misstatement to say that on both occasions in San Francisco and Oakland the audience literally fell in love with Mike Kirwan, and, in each instance, applauded him for 12 or 15 minutes." 26

On August 8th, the water festival moved south down the valley to Fresno, Orange Cove, and Lindsay on the Friant-Kern Canal, catching popular enthusiasm as it went. In Lindsay Congressman Engle regained the spotlight as he spoke to five hundred persons. He called upon the state legislature to enact water laws to govern the administration of the Central Valley Project and for distribution of other project's irrigation water. This, he thought, would terminate criticism of the Bureau's role in diverting water to irrigation districts in the southern part of the San Joaquin Valley. Under this procedure the Bureau would act as a "service agency" for the state. Engle called for federal and state cooperation in managing the project and suggested that his Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation and the Joint California Legislative Interim Committee on Water Problems study the necessary legislation. 27 This suggestion found favor with State Senator J. Howard Williams, chairman of the latter committee and in whose district Engle was speaking. Commissioner Straus also liked the idea, satisfied that the Bureau would not lose any of its established authority in the central basin. Straus was further mollified by Engle's intention to retain the excess acreage limitation
and reimbursement features of basic reclamation law. 28

By August 9, water from Millerton Lake had traveled a hundred miles south of Friant Dam, to Delano, a small agricultural center which occupied the driest portion of Kern County and which produced grapes, cotton, and potatoes. The highlight of this phase of the celebration was the public disagreement between Straus and Engle over integration of the Kings River power facilities with the Central Valley Project. Engle said that the idea was not feasible because the Kings River area was basically water deficient. He thought that the federal government's investment of $53,000,000 on the Pine Flat Dam on the Kings River might give it a prior right for power development on the river's north fork. But, he added, cost of this development would be exorbitant because the steam plant would have to be built to maintain a steady water flow to generate power. Straus, however, declared emphatically that he not only favored integration of the Kings River development with the Central Valley Project, but that it was also inevitable. He predicted that such a course would establish a firmer flow through the system and greater economic returns. 29

On August 10th, the long journey of the Friant Dam water ended in the dry Kern River near Bakersfield, the conclusion of the water festival. At the confluence of the canal and Kern River, Governor Warren and Commissioner Straus watched as water flowed into the dry river bed. Warren declared that there were fifteen-to-sixteen million acre-feet of water in northern California which could be
developed for areas in need. Kern County, he said, could be made "the garden spot of the world" through proper development of state water resources. He agreed with Straus' pleas for further expansion. Urging immediate planning to meet future water needs, Straus declared: "One of the basic facts of economic life in California is that this project must continue to grow as the state grows. It is not big enough today--its inauguration--to do its job. It is not big enough for the simple reason it does not meet California's water needs of today, much less the needs of tomorrow." 30

The themes and issues of the festival reflected past decades of controversy over California water development, including such issues as public versus private power development and distribution, state versus federal ownership of the Project itself, enforcement of basic federal reclamation law established under the Reclamation Act of 1902 and subsequent congressional legislation, and the titanic struggle for power in the Central Valley between the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. By August 1951 Congressman Clair Engle had begun to establish preeminence in California reclamation policies by authoring legislation to expand the initial features of the Central Valley Project. Key to his reclamation program was the great Trinity River project in northwestern California to bring additional water into the Central Valley. The struggle to build the Trinity project brings into sharp relief the nature of the politics of California reclamation during the 1950's.
FOOTNOTES


5George Kirov, Shasta Dam (San Francisco: P. Balakshin Company, 1941), pp. 7-8.

6Redding Record-Searchlight, July 31, 1951.

7Ibid.


9Ibid.

Redding Record-Searchlight, July 9, 1951.

The Sacramento Bee, August 1, 1951; San Francisco Chronicle, August 2, 1951; Red Bluff Daily News, August 1, 1951; The Bakersfield Californian, August 1, 1951.

Sacramento Bee, August 1, 1951; San Francisco Chronicle, August 2, 1951.

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Chapter I

WATER DEVELOPMENT IN CALIFORNIA, 1849-1949

That this mass movement of water, hailed as the greatest project of its kind in the world, occurred in August 1951 was not without controversy and bitterness. The Central Valley Project was the product of a century of dreams, private initiative, local, state, and federal investigations, and haphazard, short-range planning. Its social, economic, and political implications had long interested policy-makers and became clear to all in the first years of its operations.

The scope of the Central Valley empire may be illustrated from data supplied by the Bureau of Reclamation during the mid-fifties. These studies corroborated Congressman Engle's faith that "relatively small federal expenditures in our reclamation program constitute the Nation's wisest investment. Not only are the moneys returned to the Federal Treasury but new areas are developed and new wealth is created which strengthens materially the economy of the project area and the nation."
The Project, according to this statistical data collection, benefitted contractors, laborers, and thousands of companies in the nation that supplied material and machinery necessary for construction. Project funds were channelled through federal procurement agencies. Thirty percent of all purchases were made in all but the eleven western states, of which 23 percent were made in the Middle Atlantic and Great Lakes region. West Coast states handled building items, such as lumber and cement, where short hauls were most economical. Other purchases included tools made in New England, paint brushes in New Jersey, and electrical equipment in Pennsylvania and Illinois. Fourteen states contributed parts to the great 96-mile-long conveyor belt used at Shasta Dam. Project payrolls were distributed all over the country. Not only did payrolls include engineers, skilled mechanics, clerks, and truck drivers working directly on the project, but also industrial workers in Schenectady, Milwaukee, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Chicago and Birmingham. These workers assembled turbines, generators, transformers, cranes, and provided raw materials for construction sites as well. ²

In 1954, some five million acres were in irrigation in California, sixteen percent of the national total, producing fruits and nuts, vegetables, cotton, and rice along with cattle, milk, and poultry products. The Central Valley produced $1.3 billion in agricultural production, more than any state in the Union except Texas, Iowa, and Illinois. This tremendous effort meant $6,984 in cash farm
income per farmer, nearly twice that of the nation. In 1953, the Project generated a total of $3,509,234,000 total personal income, coming to $1,794 per person. While this figure was lower than the State average of $2,039 due to higher incomes in the San Francisco and Los Angeles areas, it was greater than the national average by far. This higher personal income also translated into equally higher state and federal income taxes every April. 3

Federal reclamation also created trade by increasing purchasing power of project farmers and those making a living in the Project area. The Central Valley Project provided an annual market for a million pair of shoes from Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, and Missouri; it consumed $10 million in tobacco products from North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, Florida, and Pennsylvania; and provided a ready market for 8,000 vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, ranges, washing machines, radios and televisions, each from Ohio, Maryland, Illinois, Connecticut, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. 4 Add to this expanding market 15,000 new cars from Detroit and South Bend, along with car assembly plants in California utilizing parts made in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, and Wisconsin; and, finally, in the initial years, the Project provided enough water to establish over six thousand new farms, requiring 8,000 tractors from Pennsylvania, Illinois, and Wisconsin; over 7,500 trucks from Michigan, Wisconsin, and Indiana, and about a thousand more hay balers, spray outfits, and combine harvesters from Illinois, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania,
Tennessee, Iowa, and New York, and thousands of plows, cultivators, and mowers from the Great Lakes, East Central, and South Central states.\footnote{5}

Such was the nature of the Central Valley Project's impact upon the State and the nation. The wealth of this empire was enormous and was enhanced by the Project. Yet, controversy raged throughout the valley and State as to who would receive the benefits of increased land values and low-cost public power. As the Bureau of Reclamation labored to complete its water development program, it faced attack upon its enforcement of federal reclamation policies and federal domination of state water development. To place this conflict in perspective, a brief examination of California's water development is needed.

In the Spanish and Mexican period of the state's history, California's economy was largely pastoral. Drawing from experiences in Spain and Baja California, these early pioneers introduced irrigated agriculture into the area with emphasis on fruits, vegetables, and grain. Water development received great impetus with the inundation of Americans into the Sierra Nevada during Gold Rush days. By 1870 cattlemen in the San Joaquin Valley had begun to divert water from streams to irrigate thousands of acres of pasture land during the dry summer and fall. In the eastern foothills abandoned water ditches were used to bring water to agricultural fields. The push of immigration into the state during the 1850's and early 1860's
accelerated the demand for domestic food production. Consequently, artesian wells were sunk throughout the valley for domestic purposes, livestock watering, and irrigation.  

During the 1850's and 1860's attention focused on the area's burgeoning hydraulic mining industry in the Sierras. In the nearly thirty-five years of their existence, these "Little Giants" of the Sierras blasted a tremendous amount of earth from the rocky mountainside. Tailings and slickens from these mines poured down mountain streams and into the major tributaries of the Sacramento and San Joaquin rivers, destroying river beds and surrounding farm land. By the early 1860's, flooding ravished the Central Valley, notably in the Marysville-Yuba City area. Angry valley agrarians who found their El Dorado in grain fields sought redress in politics and the courts. The valley farmers succeeded in 1884 in obtaining a court ruling terminating hydraulic mining.

Water rights litigation generally hampered water development in the Central Valley. In 1850, California adopted the riparian code of water rights in which landowners along stream banks had first rights to the use of water. Those away from stream banks had no water rights at all. In this doctrine, California differed from other western states where the doctrine of appropriation was basic water law. In the 1870's the wheat kings in the San Joaquin Valley struggled over water rights to the San Joaquin River and its tributaries. Of particular note was the confrontation between the Miller & Lux cattle
interests against those of Lloyd Tevis and James Ben Ali Haggin. Miller & Lux constructed a fifty-mile-long canal near Bakersfield to divert water from the Kern River to open a two hundred mile area to irrigation and settlement. Tevis and Haggin proposed similar construction further upstream to irrigate distant lands under the doctrine of appropriation. Miller & Lux subscribing to riparian rights, went to court, culminating in the California Supreme Court decision of 1886 upholding riparian doctrine. 9 Albert N. Williams noted: "The result of this fight was a mass of claims against the water in the Central Valley streams which tangled the threads of the development of California's most valuable resource into a skein which has not even yet been untangled."10

**Miller vs. Haggin** established a collision course in California water development in which development conformed to the doctrine of appropriation while state statute conformed to the riparian code.11 Public reaction to the decision encouraged Modesto attorney C.C. Wright to introduce legislation enabling land owners and voters to organize public irrigation districts. The Wright Act of 1887 met with opposition of large landed interests in the Central Valley for it enabled less affluent farmers to pool their financial resources and build irrigation works. It also provided use of eminent domain to compel these large landowners to share expenses.12

Conflict between riparianists and appropriationists continued into the twentieth century. The Water Commission Act of 1914
established a State Water Commission--later the Division of Water Resources--to administer these water rights, resting on the premise that title to unappropriated water rested with the State. Even so, the Act conflicted with riparian absolutism of the California Supreme Court, as reflected in its *Herminghaus vs. Southern California Edison Company* decision of 1926. Public resentment against the *Herminghaus* decision resulted in the adoption of a constitutional amendment limiting riparian rights to the doctrine of reasonable and beneficial use. This amendment was subsequently upheld by the State Supreme Court in 1935 in *Peabody vs. City of Vallejo*.  

While water rights litigation proceeded in state courts, water development proceeded slowly in the late nineteenth century. Empty placer mining ditches and flumes were converted for irrigated agricultural use; and, in 1869, the transcontinental railroad opened California agriculture to the big eastern markets. In the following three decades irrigated agriculture expanded slowly in the Central Valley until by 1900 less than a million acres entered cultivation. In 1939, four and three-quarter million acres were irrigated, and in the late forties, World War II and its opening of new and steady markets sparked an increase of three-quarter million irrigated acres in just four years (1945-1949). But, as Professor Paul S. Taylor of the University of California at Berkeley, an authority in reclamation law, observed, the character of this progress has been "partial, or piecemeal," not "comprehensive development;"
that development was accomplished by the merging of public and private interests; that it marked a failure of local, state, and federal agencies to unite; and that it involved political issues rather than engineering technical competence. 15

Much evidence exists to substantiate Taylor's charges. The 1850 state legislature authorized the Surveyor General to prepare a comprehensive plan for irrigation, drainage, and navigation in the Central Valley, but it also failed to appropriate funds to carry out the study. 16 During the 1850's irrigation construction was accomplished by individual ranchers and farmers. In 1856, for example, a company was organized to provide irrigation for the wheat fields near Woodland in Yolo County. By the 1870's irrigation construction was well under way by private land developers and cooperative colonies along the Kings River near Fresno, Selma, and Kingsbury. Numerous wooden and stone diversion works were built, and miles of canals and laterals were scooped out by the "Fresno scooper."

The 1866 legislature provided money to conduct a survey of a proposed canal route from Colusa to Cache Slough near Rio Vista for flood control and irrigation purposes. Canal construction began northward from the big bend of the San Joaquin River, sparking a newer, more grandiose scheme for a two hundred mile long canal extension into Suisun Bay using Tulare Lake as a storage reservoir. In 1873, Congress authorized the War Department to study the feasibility of this project, and a team of three engineers under
Colonel B. S. Alexander studied the problem for a year. The Alexander Report of 1874 provided "the first comprehensive plan for full utilization of the water resources of the entire valley." It established the basic outlines of the Central Valley Project Act of 1933 and made the rather novel suggestion of federal-state cooperation in Central Valley water development.

Further efforts to develop state water resources occurred in 1878 with the creation of the State Engineer's office. The first state engineer, William Hammond Hall, early saw the necessity for a comprehensive plan for irrigation, drainage, and navigation promotion in the central basin area. Hall had been given $100,000 by the legislature to develop this program. In truth, however, the State Engineer never had enough money to complete his studies, and in 1889, the state legislature abolished his office.

Water development in California was part of a western regional movement to seek federal aid in reclamation development. Beginning in 1891 the National Irrigation Congress began to exert pressure on Congress for appropriate legislation. Ultimately, federal reclamation policy was established in the Reclamation, or Newlands Act, of 1902. It provided a reclamation fund program based on revenue from public land sales and mineral rights, and it established the Reclamation Service--later Bureau of Reclamation--to administer water project construction and operation. Construction costs were to be reimbursed by water users over a period of time. The basic
feature of the Act was to "reclaim" arid public land and to enforce the 160-acre limitation in accordance with the Homestead Act of 1862. Unlike most western states, the best lands in California had already been worked by private developers, and many of these holdings, especially in the southern San Joaquin Valley, were well over 160 acres.

About 1900 the federal government had developed a strong interest in the potential of California's water resources. The Department of Agriculture made a series of water studies, including extensive gauging of streams, that were to continue for forty years. Residents in the Sacramento Valley welcomed this attention and hungered for a federal reclamation project in their area. Many of them had read Reclamation Commissioner Elwood Mead's report of Central Valley water resources, and thought that a project on Stony Creek would be quite acceptable. In 1905 many residents applied for such a project, and in 1907 the Orland Project was authorized on Stony Creek in western Glenn County. 21

By 1900 water storage facilities were needed to sustain acreage already under irrigation. By the 1920's dams and reservoirs were constructed on the Mokelumne, Stanislaus, and Merced rivers, with power transmission lines heading into the Bay Area. On those streams without storage facilities, farmers had to pump ground water during the later summer months. The gas engine in the 1890's and electricity after 1900 enabled pumping to great depths.
Irrigated acreage thus expanded tremendously throughout the Central Valley, but in the San Joaquin Valley, tapping of ground water sources for domestic, municipal, and irrigation purposes caused serious depletion of the water supply. By the twenties and thirties water levels declined dramatically, and irrigated acreage was retrenched significantly. 22

By World War I, the limitations of private enterprise and public irrigation districts to continue expansion had been obvious to developers. Cheap sources of irrigation water had already been extensively developed, and costs of further expansion had become prohibitory to private capital. It was now clear that piecemeal planning was untenable, that long-range, comprehensive development of Central Valley resources was vitally necessary.

In 1919, the Irrigation District Association of California published and distributed a report prepared by Colonel Robert Bradford Marshall, former head of the U.S. Geological Survey. Marshall called for a comprehensive plan to build a series of large reservoirs and canals to deliver water from the Sacramento Valley watershed to the San Joaquin Valley. 23 This report, known as the Marshall Plan, formed the basis of the future Central Valley Project. Lending urgency to the controversy swirling about the report was a lengthy dry spell in the state beginning in the World War I years and lasting into the 1930's, building up a steady, growing pressure for some state action in water development.
In 1921 the state legislature authorized a number of water investigations by the reestablished State Engineer's office. The report was made to the legislature in 1923, complete with a thorough inventory of state water resources, amount of water available for irrigation, a general preliminary plan from water conservation and use, and estimates of the agricultural area of the state. In 1921, as well, the Water and Power Act, designed to legislate approval of the Marshall Plan, passed the state senate but failed in the assembly. It was also defeated in 1922 as an initiative due in large measure to the efforts of P. G. & E. and other private utility corporations.²⁴

Between 1920 and 1932 some fourteen reports were made on various aspects of California's water problems including irrigation, flood control, and drought. Most significant, perhaps, was the study of the Hoover-Young Commission, or the Federal-State Water Resources Commission, established by President Hoover, California Governor C. C. Young, and the state legislature to study feasibility of the Boulder Dam project on the Colorado River and the Central Valley Project. In its report of December 27, 1930, the Commission recommended construction of both projects at federal expense. It predicted that some 200,000 acres of developed land, currently producing a crop value of $20 million annually, would return to arid conditions without additional water. The Central Valley Project, in effect, was a rescue operation, "a case of providing water to save lands already developed and which have demonstrated their value."²⁵
By 1931 all of these studies had been grouped into the State Water Plan by State Engineer Edward F. Hyatt, an admirer of his predecessor, William Hammond Hall. Hyatt proposed a daring and costly engineering solution to California's water problems. By adopting the principle that a single watershed was a unit, surplus Sacramento River water could be transferred to the dry land of the San Joaquin Valley. It would cost California taxpayers some $170,000,000, clearly beyond California's financial capabilities at that time. In 1932-1933, events opened the door for favorable legislative action. In that period Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal received a mandate to get people back to work and terminate the national depression. To achieve that end, the New Deal launched a public works program to stabilize the economy and provide jobs. California Governor "Sunny Jim" Rolph, Jr., urged federal aid to solve the state's water crisis, and in 1933 the legislature responded with the Central Valley Project Act. This legislation authorized $170 million worth of revenue bonds to finance the construction. 26

This significant legislation has been credited to State Senator John B. McColl, a personable Republican from Redding in northern Sacramento Valley. 27 During the Republican sweep of 1930 a host of new faces appeared in the state legislature on the coattails of Governor Rolph. They organized themselves into a bloc, the self-styled Tin Pan Alley, 21 of which constituted the majority of the state senate. McColl was a naturalized citizen, a native of Nova Scotia and a veteran
of the Canadian army during World War I before coming to Redding where he operated and owned a soda fountain. In his campaign for the state senate in 1930 McColl rode the issue of a dam at Kennett, north of Redding, desired by local merchants for the payrolls it would bring to the local economy. The Central Valley Project passed the assembly with the passive resistance of public utility lobbyists who did not view the bill as written to be a threat to their interests. In July Governor Rolph called the legislature in for a third session where the state senate added sections authorizing construction of power transmission lines, revenue bonds for financing the Project, integrity for existing water rights, and a "recapture clause" to enable public districts to obtain electrical power for resale even though it had been contracted for by individuals of corporations.  

The astounded public utilities then witnessed the state senate enact the legislation with Tin Pan Alley voting as a bloc. Robert de Roos, a veteran San Francisco news reporter noted that the legislature acted on the certainty that New Deal founds would be available should the Central Valley Project provide for public distribution of power. On December 19, 1933, California voters narrowly sustained the legislature's action by defeating a referendum on the Central Valley Project Act financed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company and other private utilities. Support for the Project was overwhelming in the Central Valley, winning 80.1 percent approval. Only Sutter County voted against the legislation, perhaps
null
due to its competition with the San Joaquin area in peach production and the influence of its anti-project state senator. Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, and Tulare counties in the San Joaquin Valley turned in majorities of 85.5 to 97 percent. Only the heavy pro-project vote on the San Francisco area overcame the opposition in Los Angeles. 30

It soon became evident that California could not finance the construction of so great a water project. It appealed for aid from the federal government. On August 30, 1935, Congress included $12,000,000 in the Rivers and Harbors bill to begin construction on Kennett (or Shasta) Dam, but failed to appropriate the funds. Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes then studied a proposal to build the Project as a federal reclamation project under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration. On September 10, an executive order allocated twenty million dollars to begin construction of the Project by the Bureau of Reclamation, the costs to be reimbursed to the Federal Treasury under provisions established in federal reclamation law. This amount was later reduced to $15,000,000 and then to $4,500,000. 31

On November 20, Secretary Ickes reported that the Project was feasible from engineering, agricultural, and financial criteria and recommended its construction under federal aegis. On December 2, 1935, President Roosevelt stamped his approval of the report. In 1936, congressional approval of the Project was reflected in its
appropriation of $6,900,000 to continue construction. Finally, on August 9, 1937, Congress reauthorized the Project under Bureau of Reclamation auspices in its annual Rivers and Harbors bill, thus completing the process of federal takeover. 32

Construction of the Central Valley Project began in September 1938. In spite of the federal government's alacrity in obtaining construction funds and water rights, it was not long before the concept of unity in watershed development was threatened by a jurisdictional dispute between the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau's position in the Central Valley was more than as a mere construction agency. It also enforced national land policy which promoted small, independent family farms of 160 acres while denying speculative profits resulting from federal reclamation works. It soon became evident that large landowners in the San Joaquin Valley, including the Kern County Land Company with 400,000 acres, Tejon Ranch Company with 17,620 acres, and the DiGiorgio Farms in Kern County with 10,000 acres would be liable to enforcement of 160 acre limitation features of federal reclamation law. As H.L. Lewis, a prominent Los Angeles food broker and grape grower, commented in September 1951, "some 50 per cent of all the land to be benefitted is held by five to ten per cent of the owners." 32

In other words, who was to receive the benefits from increased land values and hydroelectric power production of the Central Valley
Project? This issue lay at the heart of the great jurisdictional struggle between the Corps and the Bureau for control of Central Valley development. Both agencies fought over the Kings and Kern rivers development and the Table Mountain Dam, and each possessed potent political support throughout the valley and the state. Conflict began in the late thirties when a local water users group requested the Bureau and the Corps to investigate the potential of Kings River development. Apparently, the group wanted to see which agency would present the better proposal. As each agency completed its study, their rivalry became so bitter that it threatened orderly water development in the Central Valley and came to the attention of the President. In July 1939 President Roosevelt met with Bureau and Corps leaders in hope of resolving the dispute, but all formulas for cooperation between the agencies ultimately failed. 34

Part of the problem was that the Corps' orientation was toward single purpose works for flood control and navigation and reported directly to congressional committee. The Bureau was an agency of the Interior Department, charged not only to construct multiple purpose projects but also to enforce reclamation law. It was responsible to the Secretary of the Interior and ultimately to the President. "The engineers pride themselves on their lack of philosophy, in the best Army tradition," wrote de Roos. "They simply want to build dams." 35 Given this attitude it was hardly surprising that the Corps found support among the large King and Kern river landholders who
sought irrigation facilities without the 160-acre limitation. The Corps also received support from such anti-Bureau groups as the California Farm Bureau Federation, State Chamber of Commerce, Irrigation Districts Association, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.

The Bureau had strong support in the area from labor groups, religious organizations, veterans groups, and the California Grange. Unlike the Corps it possessed a social philosophy. "The times cry loudly for the engineer with a social conscience, both in the service of the Government and in private practice," declared Bureau Commissioner John C. Page in 1938. The Bureau sought to promote the general welfare through the establishment of 160-acre (or 320 acres for man and wife) farms and low-cost public power to farmers and cities. It held that the family-sized farm was the backbone of American democracy. Large landholdings created social castes and class conflict. "To the extent that the [Central Valley] project leads to more general farming," it declared "more owner-operations, less relative dependence on hired labor, and to a less speculative agriculture, it will promote rural communities which people will find satisfactory to live in and raise their families."

When this inter-departmental warfare resumed in early 1940, the President indicated to the Mississippi patrician William M. Whittington, Chairman of the House Committee on Flood Control, that "it seems to me that the project is suited to operation and maintenance under reclamation law," meaning that the Pine Flat Dam on Kings River
should be constructed by the Bureau. A year later, May 5, 1941, he had not changed his mind: "Good administration continued to demand that projects which are dominantly for irrigation should be constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior, and not by the Corps of Engineers, War Department." "A good rule for the Congress to apply in considering these water projects, in my opinion," he concluded, "would be that the dominant interest should determine which agency should build and which should operate the project." 39

Between 1940 and 1944 the House Committee on Flood Control considered the Kings River matter without conclusion. Bureau-Corps controversy extended to the proposed construction of Isabella Dam on Kern River, Table Mountain Dam on the Sacramento, and Folsom Dam on the American. In early 1944, the President reiterated his position on the conflict to Chairman Whittington: "These suggestions [letter of May 5, 1941] are, to my mind, even more pertinent today for today we gird for peace. Confusion over jurisdiction ought not to be allowed to disrupt the great preparations now being made for postwar construction of vital public works. 40

President Roosevelt's prime concern was for comprehensive development of the Central Valley Basin. Responding to Whittington's note that the benefits of Kings River program were "predominately flood control," 41 the President replied that the Corps projects on the Kings and Kern rivers were "only two elements in a basin-wide
plan for the development and use of the water resources of the Central Valley. The primary purpose of this comprehensive plan was to provide sufficient water for domestic, municipal, industrial, and irrigation purposes, particularly in the San Joaquin area. If fulfilled, said the President, "the operation of all units of the plan should be fully coordinated on a regional basis." This could best be achieved by development by a single agency, and since Congress had already authorized the Bureau to build the Central Valley Project, "good Federal administration" dictated that the Bureau "also be authorized to construct and operate the other multiple-purpose elements," namely Pine Flat Dam and Isabella Reservoir. 42

On May 9, 1944, the House approved the omnibus Flood Control Bill, and the Senate amended, with the President's approval, to provide for the marketing of power and irrigation under reclamation law. The Flood Control Act of 1944, which became law on December 22, 1944, was landmark legislation in reclamation. It authorized the Corps to begin construction on the Kings and Kern rivers, a low-level dam on Table Mountain, and the American River development. It recognized that interest and right of states in developing watersheds within their boundaries. Reports on flood control projects by the War, Agriculture, and Interior departments were made subject to review by states prior to their submission to Congress. Cooperation between states and federal governments were made mandatory. It also authorized administration by federal agencies of activities
related to flood control projects, such as public parks in reservoir areas, disposal of surplus power and water, and irrigation water.  

In early 1945 this power struggle in the Central Valley had alarmed Secretary Ickes to such an extent that he urged the President to intervene directly on behalf of established reclamation policy. His action stemmed from a recent congressional appropriation for the Kings River project in the War Department Civil Functions Appropriations bill. Corps activity in the Central Valley, he said, "show a steady disregard of your policies and orders." It was time for the President to demonstrate that the Corps "are part of the government and are subject to the directives of the President and Commander-in-Chief with respect to civil functions." Ickes urged the President to sign the legislation "reluctantly" and to indicate future proposals for transferring construction and operations of federal reclamation works to the Bureau of Reclamation. The President did so on April 2, 1945. Funds for the Corps to construct features of the Central Valley Flood Control program were later impounded, leading to opposition from congressmen throughout the Central Valley.

The President's death on April 12th did not halt the struggle for control in the Central Valley. His successor, Harry S. Truman, found the struggle to be politically debilitating and sided openly with the Bureau. His Secretary of the Interior, Julius A. ("Cap") Krug, complained in late March 1946 that the struggle over the Kings and
Kern river projects "imperil the whole Reclamation policy in the area." The prospect of local landowners receiving water at no cost to themselves had hampered Bureau negotiations for water contracts in the region, and Krug was pessimistic that reclamation law could be sustained under such conditions. 44

Krug's sentiments were reiterated by President Truman two days later to Senator Alben W. Barkley and House Leader John W. McCormack. He urged the House and Senate to amend the current War Department Civil Functions Appropriations bill so that none of the money appropriated to the Kings and Kern river projects would be expended unless repayment contracts had been negotiated with local landowners under reclamation law. 45 On May 2, 1946, President Truman approved an appropriation of a million dollars to construct the Kings River and Tulare Lake Project while denying similar funding to the Kern River project until cost allocations could be agreed upon by the War and Interior Departments. He acted the following day "to impound" the Kings River project funds until costs were allocated and repayment contracts negotiated. 46

Corps leaders chafed under the President's action, noting that "serious disagreements" between local landowners and the Bureau over repayment contracts meant delay in the much-needed flood control program. Flood control benefits, the Corps insisted, were worth the "entire cost" of the project. Local water users already had spent a million dollars for irrigation work, and the project did not
affect new land but land that already had been developed. "Thus, in my opinion" wrote Lieutenant General Raymond A. Wheeler, "land ownership and farming opportunities in the area make inappropriate the acreage limitation involved in reclamation."47

In the mid-forties concern for California's peace-time conversion needs had grown acute. The Corps and the Bureau were ordered to prepare comprehensive reports for Central Valley development in the postwar period. The Interior Department accelerated studies to further development of the reclamation west, provide jobs and "settlement opportunities" for returning war veterans. Officials expected the state's economy to continue its expansion. The wartime emergency had broadened California's and the western region's economy from its agricultural and natural resource exploitation base to the introduction of basic industries—steel, manganese, aluminum, and chemical plants. Business interests discerned the potential of western water and power development and established branches in rural areas. They hoped to capitalize on a stable labor supply with established homes. To further this trend, the Bureau's objective was "the creation of new farms, the establishment of new homes, and the expansion of agricultural, industrial, and commercial activities looking toward more prosperous... communities."48

The Bureau prepared extensive plans for future construction in the Central Valley and the reclamation west to meet the demands of postwar America. "Water always has been a key control in the
economy of the West, " noted Bureau Commissioner Harry W. Bashore.

"He who controls water in the West controls the way in which men
shall live there." Accordingly, the Bureau sponsored establishment
of basin authorities to coordinate water and power production in
Missouri and Columbia basins.

Such grandiose ambitions extended into the Central Valley.

Bureau and state officials frankly realized that the Project would not
be sufficient to meet postwar needs of an expanding population,
industry, and agriculture. Already extensive acreage in the western
San Joaquin Valley had been surrendered to the desert. California
was at "the end of an era," exclaimed Richard L. Boke, controversial
Director of Bureau Region II. California was facing a future crisis
of cataclysmic proportions. Boke found the era of individual or local
development of streams and ground water to be too costly and
difficult. Serious inroads had been made in the San Joaquin Valley's
ground water supply due to expanded pumping. Boke declared that
future needs required the transfer of water from one watershed to
another, "from areas of abundance to areas of need."  

Key to the Bureau's expansion in California was its Central
Valley Basin master plan. It called for construction of 38 reservoirs
totalling 30,000,000 acre-feet in capacity, hundreds of miles of
canals and laterals to carry water "to areas of need." It called
for a two stage development, an initial fifteen year plan to end in
1960 to add one million acres of irrigation and one million kilowatts
of electric power and then a long-range effort to develop all water resources, add eight billion kilowatts of power, enough for fifty thousand family-sized farms, industry, municipalities, flood control, recreation, and saline repulsion in the Delta. It was unique, claimed Secretary Krug in 1948, in that all dams were multiple-purpose in scope, "to make use of all drops," all works coordinated with each unit working for the locality and the region as a whole, and best of all, it would pay for itself out of power revenues. Krug expected that for every dollar invested in the plan, taxpayers would get ten dollars. The Basin plan recommended delay of the Corps' Table Mountain Dam project on the Sacramento because it would destroy valuable agricultural land and disrupt the salmon run. In its place, the Bureau urged that fourteen tributary dams be constructed on the Sacramento River's tributaries from Shasta Dam to Stony Creek. The plan also proposed to divert surplus runoff in the Trinity River watershed with dams at Fairview and Lewiston. It was expected the 700,000 acre-feet a year could be diverted across the mountains and into the Central Valley for irrigation in the Sacramento Valley and saline repulsion in the Delta.\footnote{51}

Under the direction of Oliver J. Carter, Chairman of the California Democratic Central Committee, California Democrats made the Central Valley Project a potent political issue in President Truman's successful drive for California's electoral votes in the 1948 presidential election. Democrats had made the Bureau's
basin plan a major issue and scored significant successes in the Central Valley. Carter confidently noted that the Corps of Engineers had allowed itself to be identified in the popular mind with the large landowners, private utilities, and the Republican Party. In January 1949 he urged the President to hurry up completion of the report so as to further Democratic fortunes in California.52

Thus, even before the Central Valley Project had been completed, planning construction for additional units was underway. Of particular note was the American River Development as authorized by the Flood Control Act of 1944. It was successfully added on to the Act by a floor amendment offered by California Democrat Senator Sheridan Downey. The Act called for the Corps to construct a reservoir of 335,000 acre-feet with irrigation and power facilities. Yet, the Interior Department never accepted that decision and persisted in its efforts to wrest construction authorization from the Corps or, failing that, to obtain control of the facilities upon completion. Moreover, it recognized that the reservoir capacity was too small and urged that it be increased to one million acre-feet. Congressman Clair Engle supported this increase in reservoir capacity: "The American River is one of the last two remaining large sources of water which can be caught and put into this Central Valley project."53

By late 1947 the Bureau's campaign to take-over the American River project proved "so shocking" that Senator Sheridan Downey launched an unceasing campaign to have Bureau Commissioner Michael
W. Straus fired. On a speaking tour through the Bay Area Straus declared that only Bureau projects could subsidize irrigation benefits from power revenues. This statement led Downey, Senator William F. Knowland, and Congressman Leroy Johnson of Stockton to fear that Congress would delay authorization of the project. Folsom Dam, the major unit was vital to meet the growing demands of California's population which had increased by three million since 1940. If made an unit of the Central Valley Project, Congress could very well decide to place emphasis on early completion of the initial unity of the Project and put additional units at "the bottom of the list."55

In 1945 the Corps and the Bureau agreed that the authorized reservoir capacity be increased to one million acre-feet. In August 1947 a meeting in California among the Corps, Bureau, State Engineer, and Governor Warren resulted in approval of the new figure.

Congressmen Engle and George P. Miller of Alameda County authored legislation to establish the American River project in line with the new reservoir capacity. President Truman decided to use the Engle-Miller bills to resolve the dispute between the Corps and Bureau over ultimate control of the project. In his message to Congress on January 13, 1948, the President urged immediate construction of Folsom Dam and Reservoir in order to meet the urgent need for flood control and population growth. He urged that the Bureau be authorized to build and operate a power plant in coordination with similar installations at Shasta and Keswick dams. President Truman
then urged, "To achieve such coordinated operation the Folsom Dam and Reservoir, once constructed, should be transferred to the Bureau of Reclamation for operation and maintenance."56

Almost immediately the Corps sought to undermine presidential policy. It argued that the President's message conflicted with congressional policy established under the Flood Control Act of 1944. It would thus instigate controversy that would be "detrimental to the flood control program and the cause of water resource development generally." Specifically, the Corps did not want to relinquish control of Folsom Dam operations. The Engle-Miller bills "would circumvent the principle established in the 1944 Flood Control Act" in which Corps and Bureau project proposals had "to be reported upon by the department and submitted to the affected state, followed by transmission to the Congress of the report and the comments of the state."57

The House Committee on Public Lands held hearings on the Engle-Miller bills on late March 1948, but Congress did not act on them during the session. In January 1949 the President repeated his call for early congressional reauthorization. Engle proposed to accomplish this with HR 165 and with companion measures introduced by California Congressmen Miller, Johnson, Richard J. Welch, and Jack Anderson. Engle inserted the Sly Park unit as a Bureau project at the behest of his constituents in El Dorado County. This "suckling pig," to use Engle's phrase, provided water and power
for Placerville, nearby communities, and the El Dorado Irrigation District. He remained "proud" of this maneuver for the remainder of his public career.\textsuperscript{58}

In late February 1949 Engle learned that the Interior Department had prepared a message endorsing the Folsom Dam project, and he urged the White House to send it on to the House in time for the House hearings to "give impetus to the Bill."\textsuperscript{59} Hearings were held on March 1-2, 1949, and focussed on the Sly Park unit. As reported to the House, HR 165 was designed to serve lands in El Dorado, Sacramento, and Placer counties, facilitate flood control in the Sacramento, and lower Sacramento Valley area, and canal construction to deliver water to Santa Clara, Alameda, San Benito, and Contra Costa counties. It authorized Bureau construction of a 120,000 kilowatt power plant on Folsom Dam and smaller power plants downstream as well as a steam power plant in the Delta. During House debate Engle accepted Montana Republican Wesley D'Ewart's amendment deleting the Delta steam plant and other supplemental works included in the bill. This amendment conformed to Pacific Gas and Electric's opposition to construction of public power facilities by the Bureau and its offer to build those facilities itself. On May 4, 1949, the House passed HR 165.

While Engle's bill awaited Senate action, President Truman studied the Corps' and Bureau's reports for comprehensive Central Valley Basin development. He found both to be unsatisfactory in
providing information on engineering and economic feasibility of basin development. However, he concluded that he would apply the "Folsom formula" to the Central Valley. This formula conformed with his message of January 13, 1948, to Congress. The President declared that the Corps would be responsible for those projects emphasizing flood control and navigation improvements while multiple purpose projects were to be developed by the Bureau. Such a policy the President declared, would promote "a sound comprehensive plan without duplication of effort and overlapping of jurisdiction" and to "provide for unified administration and operation of the completed works."\(^6\)

On September 27, 1949, the Senate passed the American River project upon acceptance of Kansas Senator Andrew J. Schoeppel's amendment to have the project's transmission lines hook up with the nearest Project interconnection rather than heading to the nearest power load centers. The Bureau bitterly objected to the Schoeppel amendment because it effectively denied access to the power market in San Francisco.\(^6\) Two days later, the House accepted the Senate amendment, and the President signed the bill into law on October 15, 1949.

Congressman Engle received much credit for negotiating his bill through Congress and for helping his own constituents with the Sly Park unit. He hailed the "Folsom formula" as "of historical importance. It will settle for all time the controversy in the Central Valley
as to which agency should build and operate the multiple-purpose
features of the Central Valley project. In view of his emergence
as a political force in the House of Representatives and in the Central
Valley, Congressman Engle bears some attention from historians
for his role in California's and the western region's postwar natural
resources development policies.
FOOTNOTES


2Ibid., pp. 29-31.

3Ibid., pp. 6-7, and 26-27.


5Ibid., p. 13.

6James G. Lindley, "One Hundred Years of Irrigation in the Central Valley," The Reclamation Era 37(August 1951), pp. 160-161.


8Ibid., p. 243.

9U.S., Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics, Agricultural Land Ownership and Operation in the Southern San Joaquin Valley, by Edwin E. Wilson and Marion Clawson, (Berkeley, California, June 1945), pp. 13-14


13 Harding, p. 552.


15 Ibid., p. 233.

16 Williams, p. 140.

17 Ibid., p. 142.


25Ibid., p. 51.

26de Roos, p. 24.

27Ibid., p. 25.


29Angle, pp. 85-89.


34San Francisco Chronicle, November 25, 1945.


36Central Valley Project, Problem 24, p. 13.

37Maass, p. 223.


40 Franklin D. Roosevelt to William M. Whittington, March 7, 1944, HST Papers, File 620.

41 Ibid.

42 de Roos, pp. 52-53.

43 Harold L. Ickes to the President, March 27, 1945, HST Papers, File 620.


46 Statement by the President, May 3, 1946, HST Papers, File 620.

47 R. A. Wheeler to the Secretary of War, December 2, 1946, HST Papers, Official File.

48 Congressional Record. 78th Cong., 2nd sess., (December 11, 1944), A9701-A9702.


52 Oliver J. Carter to the President, January 6, 1949, Clair Engle Papers, Tehama County Library, Red Bluff, California. (Hereafter, EP).

54Sheridan Downey to the President, December 5, 1947, HST Papers, File 620.


56Harry S. Truman to the Congress of the United States, January 13, 1948, HST Papers, File 620.

57Kenneth C. Royall to the President, February 27, 1948, HST Papers, File 620.

58The Mountain Democrat, May 24, 1962; Clair Engle to Phillip P. Dickinson, January 1, 1962, EP.

59MJC [Matthew J. Connelly] to the President, February 24, 1949, HST Papers, File 620, Box 1515.

60Central Valley Basin Report, p. 5.


Chapter II

CLAIR ENGLE AND
THE SECOND DISTRICT

With the exception of the State of Nevada, California's Second Congressional District was the largest congressional district in the United States, stretching from the Oregon border at the Siskiyou-Modoc county lines south down the spine of the Sierra Nevada to within two hundred miles of Los Angeles. It covered an area of 51,751 square miles and included eighteen of California's fifty-eight counties, of which the seven northernmost counties were the most populous. It was an area rich in the romance and folklore of California history where the famous Forty-Niners panned the streams and blasted the mountainsides of the fabulous Mother Lode country. Clair Engle's grandfather had been typical of this young and lusty breed of men. In the 1940's their descendants formed a similarly
independent and largely mining-oriented mountain constituency.

The political complexion of the Second District reflected the state-wide shift from Republican to Democratic dominance during the thirties. By 1940 only little Alpine County, with less than 250 voters, remained in the Republican column. In 1940, as well, the population of the district was 214,982, a figure that steadily declined during the war emergency. The United States War Production Board's Order L-208, which banned gold mining, had a major impact on this population decline. It sought to induce gold miners to develop such strategic minerals as zinc, tungsten, chromium, manganese, and quicksilver. L-208's success was marginal for these minerals were not in appreciable amounts and the miners themselves were not totally dependent on the industry for their livelihood, being small ranchers with gold mining as a sideline. But L-208 was a major economic blow throughout the mountain counties as the mines deteriorated through inactivity. In any event, the population of the Second District was part of the rural migration to the defense plants and shipping yards on the West Coast and into military service.

The very size of the Second District made it an incumbent's district. A political hero in Red Bluff, Congressman Engle's home town, would be virtually unknown in the middle and southern sections of the district. Since the district had been formed out of the 1910 census, no incumbent had ever been defeated for reelection and, consequently, has achieved great power in the House of Representatives
through the seniority system. The only genuine contests have occurred when the incumbent had been removed from the scene for one reason or another. During these brief periods sectionalism and personalities have dominated the voting behavior of the district's constituency.

Such stable voting patterns belied a mood of increasing resentment among the district's voters. Deep anger in the Mother Lode country resulted over L-208. Northern counties rebelled over directives from the Office of Price Administration (OPA) which established a price ceiling on the price of milk. Business interests throughout the district felt their economic freedom threatened by OPA regulations and bureaucratic "red tape." The apparent insatiable land hunger of the federal government resulted in a narrow tax base for county governments. Trinity County leaders noted that the United States owned over seventy-five percent of their land and feared that the county could not exist for another decade as a governmental unit. Not only that, some of California's most virulent anti-Japanese feelings existed in several of the mountain counties, a prejudice fanned by construction of the Manzanar and Tule Lake relocation centers in the district.

Such were the issues that brought Clair Engle to Congress in the special election of August 31, 1943. Born in Bakersfield on September 21, 1911, he descended from a line of tough, pioneer stock. After his father failed as an attorney, school teacher, and cattle rancher
in the hill country of Kern County, the family moved to the Battle Creek Bottom region of southeastern Shasta County early in Clair's life. Residents of the Bottom were in the midst of a violence-prone litigation over water rights to Battle Creek which involved the political leaders of Tehama and Shasta counties. Years of litigation impoverished the Engles and made an indelible imprint on young Clair's political development. In April 1922 his father sold out to the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, then in an expansionary phase of its development. A cousin later remarked that Clair "never forgave PG & E for interfering with their home and thereafter lined up the common people against big business."  

Even before the water rights dispute had been resolved, the Engles had moved to Los Robles in Tehama County where Clair developed and honed his political skills in Red Bluff Union High School politics and later at Chico Junior College. In 1930 he entered Hastings College of the Law, San Francisco, where he became friendly with Stanley Pugh and Oliver J. Carter, sons of politically influential men in Tehama and Shasta counties, respectively. He also married a divorcée, Hazel Burney Sheldon, in January 1933 and sired a daughter the following October. A month later he was admitted to the California bar and headed north to begin his political career by running for Tehama County District Attorney.  

Engle sought advice from Stanley's Pugh's father, Fred Custer Pugh, who had been a District Attorney during the twenties.
Pugh had made his reputation earlier in Washington where he prosecuted the famous Spokane "free speech" trial against the Wobblies. He was also a member of a three-man commission which revamped Washington's criminal code and led to the investigation of a locally explosive bribery scandal involving railroads and the Washington Supreme Court. Pugh became attached to the ambitious neophyte attorney and advised him to nail his shingle in Corning, a small agricultural community in the southern part of the county, and Engle followed his recommendation. 8

During the thirties and forties Tehama County politics were basically club politics emphasizing strong community and organizational rivalry between Corning and Red Bluff. This rivalry was symbolized by the relationship between Warren N. Woodson of Corning and Arthur Lee Conard of Red Bluff. Woodson had founded Corning as part of his land speculation schemes during the 1880's and 1890's, and Conard, the proprietor of the famous Tremont Hotel, spearheaded the movement to establish Lassen Volcanic National Park. Both promoters were ardent Democrats and fought hard to keep the Democratic organization functioning in the county. They received substantial aid from the powerful Shasta County Democratic organization under Judge Francis Carr of Redding, during the dark days of Republican rule during the twenties. Democratic fortunes were so low in 1930 that Conard and Woodson could not persuade a local Democrat to run for the state senate and had to push a Corning
Republican in order to have a Tehama County man in the state legislature. 9

Engle moved quickly to become a factor in Tehama County politics. He became an assistant to the ailing incumbent District Attorney and handled many prosecutions. He developed a "feel" for courthouse politics in Red Bluff. He had known many of Red Bluff's political and social leaders since his high school days. His standing in Corning's social and political structure, however, proved to be more tenuous. Not only was Woodson the political leader in the area, but the economic and social power as well. Collected around him were the President of the Bank of Corning, attorney Edwin L. Randall, auto parts dealer Miles G. Ramer, Dr. Fred L. Sutliff, insurance agent Richard Fripp, and State Senator John L. Moran. As a newcomer Engle found it difficult to break into this political and social clique. Not wanting his finances known to these leaders, he deposited all of his money in the Bank of Orland, Glenn County. 10

Slowly, Engle began to establish a power base in southern and central Tehama County. He became friendly with newsman Francis W. ("Red") Mosher, Jr., a tall, gregarious bachelor with ties to Mrs. Buena Maud Harper, publisher of the influential Corning Observer and confidant of Warren Woodson. Through "Red" Mosher, Engle made contacts with members of Corning's Golf Club, Fire Department, Masons, American Legion, Tehama Lions Club, Tehama County Sportsmen's Club, and farm centers throughout the
county. The Rotarians remained beyond his reach largely because of Edwin Randall's opposition, but Mosher was a Rotarian and kept Engle informed on the attitudes of Corning's Old Guard. 11

Complicating the political picture in Tehama County was the Pugh-Wetter rivalry. Young Curtiss E. Wetter had come from humble surroundings in Corning to challenge Fred Pugh as the top attorney in the county. Both men were conservative Republicans and cooperated to keep the county "safe" for Republicans in state and national contests, but both were acknowledged political rivals in the nonpartisan local and county elections. Wetter served as Pugh's assistant District Attorney in the twenties, but "irreconcilable differences" led to their estrangement. 12 When Herbert S. Gans was elected to the Superior Court in 1926, breaking up McCoy & Gans who were Pugh's great rivals, Wetter was invited in as a full partner. Wetter gradually assumed the firm's entire practice and rivalled Pugh for control of eighty-five percent of the county's legal business. This legal rivalry translated itself into city and county politics. As one veteran courthouse observer recalled, somewhat inaccurately, "The town was divided into two sides--they didn't have the personnel for any more--and a newcomer had to decide whether to join the Wetter side (dealing with the Anglo Bank, Doc Frey's Medical Clinic, and be planted by Vic DeRosier when he died) or the Pugh side (Bank of America, Thompson Clinic, Fickert Funeral Parlour)." 13

Engle hoped to avoid the Pugh-Wetter factionalism in his bid for
District Attorney. He was friendly with both attorneys. In fact, he had idolized Wetter as a high school student and had entered law school partially to emulate the career of the Red Bluff attorney. Engle visited Wetter's office early in 1934 to obtain his endorsement. He was stunned to find his idol not only refused to support him, but aggressively sought to dissuade him from the campaign. Engle left the office convinced that Wetter's partner, Marvin Jack Rankin, was going to make the race. He then sought Pugh's support. With Judge Gans on the bench, Pugh was uneasy over the prospects of having as District Attorney a man as close to Curt Wetter as Jack Rankin. He supported Engle and acted as his campaign advisor during the campaign.14

Another significant factor in Engle's political emergence came into play in the Corning area. His association with local fraternal and service organizations in southern and central Tehama County paid off in votes. Moreover, Red Mosher arranged a meeting between Engle and Mrs. Harper to solicit her support. Unwilling to risk losing political advertising from Engle's opponents, Mrs. Harper agreed to back Engle privately and to get Woodson to exert his influence on his behalf. Mrs. Harper and Woodson hoped to use Engle as the vehicle to wrest the dominance of Red Bluff attorneys on the District Attorney's office. Finally, Engle's contacts at the courthouse won him the support of John G. Miller, publisher of the Red Bluff Daily News, and old Arthur Lee Conard. With such careful organization Engle secured a plurality of votes in the August 1934 primaries and
then defeated Jack Rankin overwhelmingly in the November general election. 15

Thus, at the age of twenty-three, Clair Engle became the youngest District Attorney in California. He was dubbed "the baby-faced D.A.," and many Red Bluff attorneys doubted that he had the talent, maturity, and experience necessary to handle himself in court. On balance, however, Engle proved to be a hard working and crusading District Attorney and enjoyed a spectacular record of convictions. His prosecutions sent two convicted murderers to the San Quentin gas chamber. Engle's careful handling of his office reflected his attitude that it was a base for political advancement, and each prosecution was handled to enhance his image as a crusading prosecutor. He easily secured reelection in 1938. During this period he became friendly with Earl Warren, District Attorney of Alameda County, and this relationship helped him advance up the political ladder as Warren moved into the governor's office in 1943. 16

The mid-thirties was a critical period in Engle's political career, for it marked his plunge into partisan politics. He had registered quietly as a Republican in 1934, but county and state political trends of that time moved inexorably in favor of the Democrats. The Democratic organization in Tehama County had been devastated by a succession of defeats since World War I, and old men like Conard and Woodson were too tired to provide effective leadership in reversing this trend. These "old bulls" had made their peace with
local Republicans. What Democratic organizational strength remained in the north valley area resided in the Shasta County organization under Judge Francis Carr. A noted water attorney and counsel for PG & E, Carr nonetheless was a primary force in the writing of the Central Valley Project Act of 1933 and defended it during the referendum of December 1933. Ironically, the referendum pitted him against Arthur Lee Conard in Red Bluff. Conard's dream of dam construction at Iron Canyon or Table Mountain north of Red Bluff had compelled him to reject the Central Valley Project Act since the dam would have been located at Kennett north of Redding and would have developed that area instead of Red Bluff. Shasta County bitterly resisted Conard's dream because it would destroy much of southern Shasta County's economy. Judge Carr was a conservative supporter of Senator William Gibbs McAdoo and acted as the broker of New Deal patronage in northern California.  

In spite of Democratic instability, exacerbated by a revolt of liberal supporters of Upton Sinclair against the regular organization, Engle committed his political future to that party. He realized that with Wetter dominating county Republicans, he had little chance to move rapidly through the ranks. His relationship with Wetter was poisoned beyond immediate reconciliation. Under the wing of Mrs. Harper, Engle moved up the Tehama County Democratic Central Committee. By 1938 he had earned the attention of Judge Carr and his great rival in Shasta County politics, Jesse W. Carter.
Carter had asked Engle to help out in Culbert Olson's successful campaign for Governor, but Engle decided that he should take care of his own reelection first. However, he did find time to campaign for Republican Earl Warren as the latter successfully ran for Attorney General. Late in 1938, Engle attempted to influence Olson's appointment of a northern California Democrat to the California Highway Commission in opposition to Judge Carr's candidate. Engle wrote: "We need an appointment of this character [a Red Bluff Democrat] to make the Democratic leaders in this county feel like they really have some standing in state politics and get in and do some serious work."\(^{18}\) By the early forties Engle became Chairman of the Tehama County Democrats as well as leader of the Third Assembly District Democrats representing Yolo, Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties.

As he gained partisan political prominence Engle's political base suffered a crippling blow in early 1941. On Christmas eve, 1940, Fred Pugh's son, Ted, became involved in a fatal hit-and-run incident. Ted Pugh and Engle had been close friends since the Engle's move to Red Bluff in 1936. Engle requested Attorney General Warren to send in a special prosecutor to handle the case. Warren thought that the Pugh matter was a test of Engle's character and refused the request. Engle accepted Warren's decision and prepared a lackluster prosecution. Fred Pugh was hurt and outraged by what he considered to be an act of betrayal of his friendship. He terminated his feud
with Wetter and together they prepared a defense for his son. Ted Pugh ultimately was acquitted of felony hit-and-run charges, but the elder Pugh neither forgave nor communicated with his erstwhile protege again. 19

The Pugh fiasco, combined with Red Mosher's departure from Tehama County a few months later, upset Engle's preparations to challenge Jack Metzger in the Eighth Senatorial District, composed of Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties. Metzger was a middle-aged, flashy, and tarnished politician whose lack of personal and political principles induced an undercurrent of cynicism throughout his district. He was a crony of the powerful lobbyist, Arthur H. Samish, the self-styled "secret boss" of California politics. By 1942 Metzger had allowed his political organization to become complacent, and his relationship with the fast and easy Hollywood crowd did not improve his image among his rural constituency. In his committee chairmanships Metzger acted capriciously toward Samish's clients and courted political disaster. The most punishing blow to his prestige occurred in July 1940 when he was dumped from the Red Bluff City Council for prolonged absences from council sessions. 20

By 1942, Engle's acute political antennae picked up rumblings of anti-Metzger sentiment in the Eighth District. As Chairman of the Third Assembly Democrats he carefully established an organization in Colusa and Glenn counties. In April 1942 Engle launched a behind-the-scenes drive to keep Metzger from regaining his council seat in
the Red Bluff municipal elections. He saw the election as a test to determine the amount of erosion into Metzger's political base. "If we can beat Metzger for the Council," he said, "I can beat him for the State Senate." In effect, Engle "masterminded the whole campaign," and "loaned space in his office to several of us [candidates] for addressing envelopes and inserting the letters." In the end Metzger went down to his first electoral defeat, and Engle had all the encouragement he needed to open his campaign for the State Senate.

The Engle-Metzger contest was significant in that it introduced Engle to the water issue that was ultimately to dominate his political career. He had long been familiar with the water problem under the tutelage of Woodson, Conard, and Richfield farmer W. Herbert Samson who was interested in developing the Trinity River. The devastating flooding of the Sacramento River in 1937 and 1940-1941 led to calls for river maintenance and flood control programs. He associated himself with Arthur Lee Conard's dream of a flood control dam on the Sacramento River at Iron Canyon and even championed Jack Metzger's effort to obtain State authorization of the project. Under heavy pressure from Judge Carr's organization, Governor Olson vetoed the bill. As an attorney and secretary of the Northern California Water Control Association, Engle became an authority on the problems of the Sacramento River, and he took up the dreams of Conard and Woodson to build a canal system on both sides of the river to develop intensive agriculture. During the campaign Engle and Assemblyman Lloyd W.
Lowrey, an orchardist from Rumsay, Yolo County, took a highly publicized stroll along the Sacramento near Colusa to view fertile farm land being washed away by seepage, a public relations gimmick that created votes and helped defeat the complacent Jack Metzger in April 1941.22

State Senator Engle became one of the more vocal voices against the return of evacuated Japanese to their homes on the West Coast. In collaboration with Assemblyman Lowrey, he co-authored a series of bills and resolutions to plug loopholes in the California Alien Land Act of 1913. He involved himself on the side of cattle ranchers in their feud with the authorities of the Lassen Volcanic National Park who reversed a twenty-year policy of permitting cattle grazing on park land. He wrote the legislation that provided housing for Mexican field laborers brought into California under a 1942 international agreement. These *braceros* arrived in northern Sacramento Valley in time to prevent a major economic disaster. Engle also involved himself in mining affairs, striking a significant political relationship with Joseph P. ("Jay Pee") Hall of Auburn, editor of the *California Mining Journal*. Engle assisted Hall in Oroville in April 1943 to create the Western Mining Council in an effort to ease the plight of small mine operators oppressed by federal bureaucratic regulations. Political analyst Edward H. Dickson noted that Engle "showed great promise of becoming an effective legislator with progressive leanings."23

Just at this point, the popular Second District Congressman
Harry Lane Englebright, Republican Whip of the House, died on May 13, 1943, creating a power vacuum in district politics. Back-stage maneuverings for the coming special election began as the Congressman's body was brought back to his birthplace in Nevada City. His widow, Grace Englebright, came under heavy pressure from Nevada City interests and House Republican Leader Joseph W. Martin, Jr., of Boston to campaign in order to save her husband's seat for the Republicans. Martin assured her that she could have her husband's committee assignments for the remainder of the current session of Congress.\(^24\) State Senator Jesse M. Mayo of Angels Camp entered the race with strong backing from the state Republican organization. Political observer Richard H. Rodda later recalled, "It's a safe bet that Governor Warren, the most powerful Republican in the state at the time supported him."\(^25\)

In order to exploit the Republican division Assemblyman Alfred W. Robinson, Chairman of the California Democratic Central Committee, ordered Second District county chairman to unite behind a single candidate. Judge Carr implemented these orders by pursuing a two-pronged strategy. First, he called a caucus of the leaders of the seven northernmost counties together in Redding on June 13 to choose a candidate. Then, he made arrangements for a general meeting of the entire Second District leadership in Roseville two weeks later. With the northern counties united behind his candidate, Judge Carr expected that the Roseville meeting would
simply ratify his choice. 26

In addition to Engle, there were two possible candidates in the running for the Redding caucus nomination. Strongest was State Senator Oliver J. Carter of Redding who was a son of Justice Jesse W. Carter of the California Supreme Court. However, he was victimized by the political and legal rivalry between his father and Judge Carr which neutralized his advantage as part of the Shasta County organization. From Trinity County came District Attorney Edwin J. Regan, protege of Judge Charles A. Paulsen and David Edward Ryan of Weaverville. Trinity County's scarce population and relative isolation worked against the erudite Regan. On June 13, Democratic leaders from Tehama, Trinity, Shasta, and Plumas counties arrived to make their decision. The Plumas delegate cast the deciding vote for Engle. The Redding choice was sustained in the Roseville meeting when the Placer County delegation under Roseville Mayor Harold T. (''Bizz'') Johnson put Engle over. 27

Roseville's endorsement sent the Engle campaign into high gear. For Tehama County it was a golden opportunity to put into Congress someone with a special knowledge of Sacramento River problems. Few substantive issues divided the candidates. All opposed the return of evacuated Japanese to their homes; all denounced bureaucratic controls; all sought revocation of L-208; all favored relief for county governments burdened by extensive federal land grabs; and all urged the early completion of the Central Valley Project, although Engle
distinguished himself in his support of Bureau of Reclamation's struggle against PG & E for construction of its own power distribution system in the Central Valley. A significant aspect of the special election was organized labor's unprecedented political action campaign. Mayo fought hard for labor support in the mountain communities, but most AFL and CIO support went to Engle. On August 31, 1943, election returns slowly trickled in. Interest of the national Democratic leaders was revealed when party chairman Frank S. Walker telephoned Judge Carr twice for the latest results. It was not until the next afternoon before the Judge informed Engle that he had eked out a narrow victory. On September 23, House Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas swore Engle in as the newest member of the House of Representatives.

Engle moved quickly to shore up his strength among the miners in the central and southern portions of his district. While waiting for the state to certify his victory, he toured mining communities throughout the district to determine their interests. He also sought committee assignments that would reflect economic interests of his district. Engle was happy to get on the Committee on Public Lands where he intended to ameliorate the burden of county governments whose tax base was steadily eroded by federal land acquisitions. He was also relieved to be assigned to the Committee on Mines and Mining which was preparing a nation-wide mineral resources survey for wartime and postwar development. This committee also provided funds for
an iron ore survey to establish the foundation for steel development on the West Coast. Since more than eighty percent of California's iron ore deposits lay in the Second District, most of the funds would be channelled to Engle's constituents. Engle also moved to revoke L-208, a campaign that became successful in early October 1945.  

As he labored in the House, Engle received political intelligence from Jay Pee Hall and his associates. Along with information supplied by James K. Carr, son of Judge Carr and assistant Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento, Engle discerned that his weakest areas lay in Siskiyou County dominated by State Senator Randolph J. Collier and in Calaveras County where Jesse Mayo's newspapers molded public opinion. Mayo again challenged Engle in the May 1944 primary election and was going nowhere until the old Table Mountain Dam issue threatened to tear Engle's political base apart.  

The Table Mountain Dam controversy reflected the decades-long struggle between Arthur Lee Conard and Judge Carr over dam construction on the Sacramento River north of Red Bluff as well as the bitter jurisdictional struggle between the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation in the Central Valley. On May 9, 1944, the Flood Control Act of 1944 had reached the House floor with a provision calling for the Corps to build a dam at Table Mountain. Jim Carr wrote the Bureau's plan to build dams on the Sacramento's tributary streams in order to achieve flood control in the Sacramento
Valley without destroying a significant portion of Shasta County's agricultural economy. To Engle's chagrin, the Corps of Engineers opposed the tributary dam concept, and the Bureau refused to endorse it without further study. Consequently, Engle backed the Conard position, but he inserted an amendment to guarantee that the dam be low-level in order to minimize land destruction in Shasta County.

Judge Carr, outraged over Engle's action, declared that Engle had misled voters on his true attitude towards the Table Mountain project. In an unprecedented action he bolted from Engle's campaign and endorsed Jesse Mayo. A worried Engle arrived in Red Bluff too late to head off the Judge. The primary results demonstrated that Engle was in good shape as he and Mayo won their respective primaries. In late August 1944 Judge Carr suffered a fatal heart attack, and the Shasta Democrats quietly returned to the Engle fold. Although Engle won overwhelmingly in November, the Table Mountain threat taught him that in the Second District the miners held the key to political success or failure.

Engle worked hard to consolidate his position in the Second District throughout the forties. With contacts in the Western Mining Council, notably Jay Pee Hall and Jack Kempvanee, he made inroads on the independent mining constituency. His greatest threat after the Table Mountain Dam flap in 1944 occurred in the 1948 primaries over his vote for the Taft-Hartley Act of 1947. Taft-Hartley had been passed over President Truman's veto and sought to curb union
abuses by banning the closed shop, limiting union campaign donations, and by giving the President authority to seek an eighty-day injunction to break strikes affecting the nation's safety. Engle was one of the few western Democrats to vote for the anti-labor legislation, but he immediately realized that he had made a major error. He had always enjoyed strong labor support in his campaigns, and the CIO was strong in the many lumbering communities of his district. Organized labor set out to punish Engle by fielding candidates against him in the 1948 primary.

Adding to Engle's political troubles came newspaper accounts of his private divorce from Hazel. Hazel Engle had never been happy with Engle's career and was not at home in Washington society. Their marriage had been deteriorating for several years, and they quietly obtained a divorce in Florida. Suddenly, newspapers all over the Second District published sensational accounts of the divorce proceedings. Engle offered no "public defense" and declined to do anything to encourage discussion in the newspapers. He hoped that the sensationalism of the newspaper accounts would "reflect upon their own truth and their source. Nor, in my opinion, will the coincidence of their publication at this time be overlooked." Jay Pee Hall was upset over the news, but he later concluded, "It may hurt you some with the long-hairs but I don't think it will hurt you politically to any great extent."

Although Collier and Mayo appeared anxious to come out
fighting, their political instincts told them that Engle was still impregnable. Organized labor, however, joined with the Progressive Party (Wallacites) to push Modoc County Supervisor T. J. ("Pete") Laxague of Cedarville who campaigned hard for the labor vote. Two other opponents came out of Plumas County which led Engle to worry about his prospects in that region. The key issue of the campaign was Taft-Hartley, and the railroad workers and "lumber bucks" could make a difference in the primary results. Engle relied on Hall's *California Mining Journal* and Western Mining Council chapters to turn out the mining vote to counter Laxague's expected inroads in Engle's labor support. Engle suspected that CIO personnel were violating Taft-Hartley injunctions on political activity. Hall charged in his journal that Laxague had been given $12,000 by the Progressives to make the campaign, but later investigation revealed the Laxague has spent only $4,600, $3,700 of which came out of his own pocket.\(^{36}\) Collier's and Mayo's reluctance to challenge Engle proved to be wise, for Engle easily secured reelection. Never again did Engle receive a major challenge to his dominance in the Second District, now known as "Engle's Empire."\(^{37}\)

Engle's hold on the Second District was conditioned on what he could deliver in Congress to the miners. He found that "a Congressman is like a man trying to drive 25 stakes in the ground with half enough time to do it."\(^{37}\) Even so, he presented a creditable performance on behalf of the mining industry. Alone of the California delegation he
pushed for all types of legislation to advance western mining interests.
In the 84th Congress, for example, he cosponsored the Multiple-Use Mining Law to prevent fraudulent mining claims. In the past speculators could use discoveries of pumice, gravel, sand, and stone to establish a mining claim and then harvest the timber stands. Engle hoped to end such abuses in order to avoid a disastrous fight between timber and mining interests. If the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest Service "gang up" on lumber men, he said, "they can really take the mining industry to the cleaners."^38

On his first day in Congress, Engle conferred with Nevada Senator James D. Scrugham in order to establish a national program for the stockpiling of strategic and critical minerals. Scrugham urged Engle to meet with Compton White of Idaho, leader of the silver bloc in the House, and with John R. Murdock of Arizona to establish House unity behind the stockpile program.^39 Much of Engle's time during the forties and early fifties was spent forging miner unity both within and without Congress among the silver bloc, the gold and strategic minerals group, and western manufacturing interests, with only partial success. Miners were much too independent for effective cooperative action inspite of attempts by Jay Pee Hall and Jack Kempvanee to unite western small mine operators.^40

Part of the problem during the forties was federal indifference and/or hostility to small mine operations, particularly during the Truman Administration. Miners also were not happy with the Chairman of
the Committee on Mines and Mining, Andrew L. Somers of Brooklyn, who pushed President Roosevelt's gold devaluation measures through the House during the thirties. The fact that Somers seemed more interested in pushing the Zionist cause exacerbated miner suspicions of an international financial conspiracy on Wall Street that appeared from time to time in their correspondence with Engle. 41

Engle himself was not happy with Somers' chairmanship in the late forties. He distinguished himself during this period as a "one man gold bloc" who fought for an increase in gold prices from $35 an ounce to $56, federal loans to miners, reimbursement to gold miners for damages incurred under L-208, return of the gold coin to circulation, and an open world market for the domestic gold miners.

He claimed that gold miners had been discriminated against by federal policies denying them access to higher world prices. High costs of labor and materials made it impossible for the small operator to make a living on $35 an ounce. Engle pointed out that the gold mining industry was unique in that the federal government was the sole customer and could set its own prices. 42

Congressman Engle labored hard for a national mining policy and program that recognized that the development and maintenance of mining and mineral industries were essential to the future of the country. Through his leadership on the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in the late forties, extensive hearings were held on the mining industry from which emerged legislation
that put the stockpiling program into effect through the Defense
Minerals Production Program of 1951, Domestic Minerals Extension
Act of 1953, and the Domestic Tungsten, Asbestos, Fluorspar,
Columbium-Tantalum Production and Purchase Act of 1956. Engle
also wrote the Mining Claims Restoration Act of 1955 to open up
some seven million acres of public land withdrawn for power develop-
ment. This legislation meant that about a million and a half acres
in California would be available for mineral exploitation that had
been closed to miners for nearly a half century.

For all of his efforts Engle rarely completely satisfied the mining
industry. The cantankerous Jay Pee Hall, a McCarthyite admirer of
the right-wing economist Fredrich Hayek, was always a thorn in the
Congressman's side in spite of his undeniable influence among the
miners. Following a characteristic Hall outburst that Engle had not
done enough for the small operator, Engle remarked, "that the
doctors didn't get all of the rocks out of him during the operation [for
gallstones in December 1953]," Engle did not like the idea of being
a "private representative" of anyone. "Percentage-wise mining has
taken more of my time than any other industry in my District," he said, "but I get less thanks from the miners than from any other
group or industry which I try to help." Moreover, he was dis-
couraged at times over President Truman's opposition to legislation
designed to help the small miner. "I don't like to always be the Don
Quixote riding against the windmills," he said in January 1948.
His mining proposals had thus far "an absolute zero record" for success, although he claimed credit for the revocation of L-208 and keeping mining problems before the American public. 45

By January 1948, however, Engle had made impregnable ties to western mining interests, and he began to deal with the issue that made his name synonymous with western reclamation development. His district was the source of most of California's water supply, and southern California and West Coast urban areas vied for its water. As representative of his district, Engle fought to protect his constituents as well as to promote orderly and comprehensive development of California water resources. His emergence in Second District politics saw him side with public power production and the right of the Bureau of Reclamation to build power transmission lines from Shasta Dam to Oroville. He worked to fulfill the potential of the Central Valley Project through resolving the great power struggle between the Corps of Engineers and the Bureau. He co-authored the American River Development program and made the "Folsom formula" a legislative reality.

Engle obtained the Interior Department's finding of feasibility under Section 9 (a) of the Reclamation Projects Act of 1939 for the Solano Project to provide water for Vallejo, Benecia, Fairfield, and nearby military establishments as well as irrigation and flood control on Putah Creek. Early in the fifties Engle defended state water rights against federal encroachment in the Fallbrook affair,
writing the Santa Margarita Project in 1954 to provide water for Camp Pendleton as an outgrowth of the issue. He was wary of Interior Department's efforts to create a California Valley Authority along the lines of the Missouri and Tennessee models. Unlike these authorities dealing with interstate streams, California's watershed was contained within its political boundaries. Proponents for such an Authority, Engle suspected, were motivated by a desire to terminate the dispute between the Corps and the Bureau in the Central Valley.46

During the late forties Engle became concerned that insufficient water existed in the north state to meet local needs before exportation to the Delta and San Joaquin Valley. Combined with suspicions that inadequate legal reservations upon Sacramento River water had been made to protect future development of the area, this concern produced a compelling motivation for Engle's drive to establish the Sacramento Valley Canals program. Interior and Bureau officials assured the Congressman and California authorities that they would abide by the County of Origins Act of 1931, that it would not remove water from a watershed to another until all beneficial uses of that water had been made. On October 12, 1948, Interior Secretary Krug declared in Oroville "that no water which is needed in the Sacramento Valley will be sent out of it."47

By April 1951, just a few months before the Central Valley festival, drought conditions in the San Joaquin Valley had reached its most severe level since the mid-twenties. Conservation groups and dairy
interests became upset over the operations of Friant Dam which 
damaged duck and geese resting grounds and resulted in lack of 
water for pasture land along the San Joaquin River in the grasslands 
area near Los Banos. Representatives Jack Z. Anderson of Santa 
Clara and Allen Oakley Hunter of Fresno asked Engle to hold hearings 
on the grasslands problem. To Engle's amazement, the April 
hearings revealed that there was inadequate water in the Central 
Valley Project to meet the needs of the grasslands. Out of these 
hearings emerged a letter to Governor Earl Warren, dated April 
17, 1951: "This huge transfer of water is unprecedented in our State 
and there does not exist any legal framework or historical precedent 
for determining the equitable distribution of this water nor the 
acquisition of individual rights to it." Therefore, Engle cited "the 
need for more specific State legislation concerning water rights and 
distribution of water under the Central Valley Project." He also 
urged both State and Federal officials cooperate in the writing of 
this legislation "so that the financial integrity of the project is not 
threatened."^48

Congressman Engle brought this issue before the public in Red 
Bluff and Lindsay during the August 1951 water festival. Further 
information on the availability of water for the Project to meet its 
goals was obtained in a joint congressional subcommittee-legislative 
committee hearing held in Sacramento on October 29-31, 1951. Engle 
declared that the purpose of the meeting was "to determine a basic
fact, and second to establish a policy."

The issue was whether the Sacramento River was oversubscribed, and once determining this fact he hoped to establish "a proper division of responsibility between Federal and State Governments in the operation of the Central Valley project."

Assurances of Secretary Krug and Regional Director Boke in October and November 1948 did not carry much weight with Engle in 1951. Federal credibility had been undermined by its position in *Gerlach vs. United States* (1948) that its flood control and navigation responsibilities in Friant Dam operations enabled it to divide San Joaquin River water as it wished. The government's position was not sustained. In the current Fallbrook controversy in southern California the United States Attorney General's office argued that the federal government had "paramount rights" to provide water to Camp Pendleton which superceded individual and state water rights.

"It is a well-known axiom that Federal jurisdiction follows the Federal dollar," Engle remarked in December 1951. To remedy this "Federalization" of water development, it was imperative that State dollars get into the program at the planning stage. Traditional federal recognition of the "supremacy of state law in the allocation of water rights and water uses" was being violated by governmental action in Fallbrook.

A highlight of the Sacramento hearings was an exchange between Engle and State Engineer A.D. ("Bob") Edmonston who argued that
California had the right under the Central Valley Project Act to utilize American River water to meet any deficits in water supply. Engle admonished the State Engineer that he was "walking into a hornsels' nest" on that point, reminding him that the canal features of the American River project had been omitted because of controversy over the final destination of the water. "So," he said, "we just took them all out, and there hasn't been a commitment of one single bucketful of American River water." Edmonston then conceded that without this source of water, commitments on the Sacramento River to implement the Central Valley Project could not be met. 52

The Sacramento hearings convinced Engle that the Sacramento River had been "overcommitted and oversubscribed," and he recommended in his report that additional storage facilities be built as soon as possible "to augment the deficient supply of developed water in northern California, and to firm up the water supply" for the Central Valley Project. The Engle report criticized the "lack of frankness...bordering on bad faith" of State and Federal representatives over the amount of water supplies available to the Project. He urged that litigation be avoided in favor of a practical operating agreement. Litigation would create a "legal Frankenstein" that would delay Central Valley water development for decades. 53

Using the Sacramento hearings of October 1951 as the framework, Engle proceeded to move towards the completion of California water resources development. Perhaps he remembered the Biblical
injunction, "Make this valley full of ditches. For thus saith the LORD, ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water, that ye may drink, both ye, and your cattle, and your beasts." In his compilation of the invaluable Central Valley Project Documents Engle found that "The Central Valley Project is obviously more than a materialistic product of engineering, economics, and bureaucracy." It was, he said, "a vigorous vindication of the American democratic process."
FOOTNOTES

1California County Fact Book (Sacramento: County Supervisors Association of California, 1963), p. 5.

2Redding Record-Searchlight, December 6, 1956.


4Harry J. Englebright, Interview, August 19, 1972.

5San Francisco Chronicle, August 11, 1943.


8Letter from Stanley Pugh, December 11, 1972; Frances W. Mosher, Jr., Interview, June 24, 1972, and July 1, 1972.

9John L. Moran, Interview, August 11, 1972.


11Frances W. Mosher, Interview, June 24, 1972.

13. It appears however, that the Fickert Funeral Parlour was with the Pugh faction and Victor de Rosier associated with the Wetter group. Letter from Lewis Hamburger, June 1, 1972.


15. Tehama County Supervisor's Minutes, Statement of all Votes Cast at the Primary Election Held August 28, 1934, p. 270; Ibid., Statement of all Votes Cast at the Primary Election Held November 6, 1934, p. 4; Darrell Conard, Interview, July 13, 1972.


17. Laurence W. Carr, Interview, March 5, 1974; Ray D. Siler, Interview, March 6, 1972; Hayden Saunders, Interview, July 14, 1972.


24. Harry J. Englebright, Interview, August 9, 1972; Placer Herald, May 29, 1943.


28 Statement of the Vote, Second Congression District, August 31, 1943.

29 Clair Engle to J.C. Kempvanee, January 18, 1944, EP.


31 Redding Record-Searchlight, May 15, 1944.


34 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, March 12, 1948, EP.

35 J.P. Hall to Clair Engle, February 28, 1948, EP.

36 J.P. Hall to Clair Engle, June 10, 1948, EP.

37 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, August 5, 1948, EP.

38 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, June 27, 1952, EP.

39 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, September 25, 1943, EP.

40 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, July 28, 1949, EP.

41 John E. Kelley to J.P. Hall, September 23, 1945, EP.
42 Clair Engle to H.H. Bondshu, November 3, 1945, EP.

43 Clair Engle to E.G. Lane, March 23, 1954, EP.

44 Clair Engle to F. J. Young, April 2, 1954, EP.

45 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, January 13, 1948, EP.

46 Clair Engle to J.P. Hall, May 7, 1945, EP.


48 U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Grasslands Water Problem, San Joaquin Valley, California, Hearings before a subcommittee of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House, 82d Cong., 1st sess., 1951, pp. 18-19 and 78.


52 CVP Water Rights, pp. 143-145.

53 U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Central Valley Project, California, Report, of a special subcommittee of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, House of Representatives, 82nd Cong., 1st sess., 1952, pp. 5-8.

54 II Kings, 3: 16-7.

55 Clair Engle, Press Release, November 24, 1958, EP, WFI.
Chapter III

SACRAMENTO VALLEY CANALS
ACT OF 1950

Development of a canal system to water the dry lands of western Sacramento Valley had been advanced since the late nineteenth century by such area residents as newspaper publisher Will S. Green of Colusa, town developer Warren Nichols Woodson of Corning, and hotel proprietor Arthur Lee Conard of Red Bluff. In 1905 a public meeting of government officials and local boosters publicized the idea, and the consequent Orland Project on Stony Creek in western Glenn County was but a small realization of that dream. Although promoted intermittently during the interwar period concomitant with federal and state aid, the final drive for canal systems occurred shortly after World War II, with great significance in terms of future development on the Trinity River.

Proposed canal service area included some 225,000 acres of dry land almost entirely within a four county area—Tehama, Glenn, Colusa, and Butte. Initial permanent settlement consisted of holders of large Mexican land grants on the Sacramento River. With the discovery of gold in 1848, the huge influx of miners created a ready
market for agricultural and livestock products. As the gold fields played out, miners turned to cattle and wheat. Dry-farmed wheat, shipped down-river by barge to the Bay Area, helped make San Francisco the leading grain exporter in the country in the 1870's. Small-scale crop diversification developed on lands adjacent to streams. Through such works, combined with power pumping facilities after 1900, irrigated acreage expanded greatly along the Sacramento.

An early leader of the irrigation movement was Will Semple Green, publisher of the Colusa Sun. Born along the Cumberland River in Kentucky on December 26, 1832, he was induced to come to California by reading glowing letters from his uncle, Robert Semple, a leader in the statehood movement. He arrived in San Francisco in October 1849 by way of Panama. He travelled to the Colusa area in 1850 and helped found the community. He became county surveyor from 1857 to 1867, during which time he acquired the Sun. He wrote several short stories under his nom de plume Simeon Snugg. He also helped found the California Democratic Party and introduced it in Colusa County in 1862. Late in the 1860's he served a term in the California Assembly.

Green's public life was dedicated to the irrigation movement. He experienced failure in his early farming ventures due to drought and realized the potential of irrigation development. His work as County Surveyor emphasized irrigation promotion. In the Assembly he introduced legislation to finance a survey of a proposed canal from
Red Bluff to Suisun Bay not only to facilitate shipment of grains but also to enable lumber products from the Sierras to reach Bay Area saw mills. He helped formulate and then lobbied for the Wright Act of 1887 which authorized the formation of irrigation districts. He immediately led the movement to establish the Central Irrigation District. He became head of a canal construction company and then began to build the Grand Central Canal. He never lived to see his dream a reality primarily due to financial problems and litigation.

For all of his difficulties, Green never ceased pushing irrigation not only in the Sacramento Valley and the state, but in the nation as well. He attended the National Irrigation Convention in Salt Lake City in 1891, a movement that culminated in the historic Reclamation Act of 1902. He organized and led the Sacramento Valley Development Association that pushed for water development in the north state. In late 1905 he accompanied a touring congressional committee seeking sites for federal reclamation projects to Red Bluff. In the Tremont Hotel, Green, Woodson, and Conard urged that a federal project be established in the area. The Red Bluff meeting led to the Orland Project on Stony Creek, the first federal reclamation project in the state. Shortly after, Green died in a San Francisco Hospital on July 2, 1905.  

The dream for a canal system in the area was taken up by Charles F. Lambert, a young surveyor-engineer who arrived in Willows two years after Green's death. By this time canal construction
initiated by Green had been completed, and under a nine million
dollar investment by Kuhn Brothers of Pittsburg, the Sacramento
Valley Irrigation Company had the entire area south of Tehama
County under intensive development and settlement. Lambert
was an enterprising youth and made the most of his opportunities.
By World War II irrigation had become of great significance,
particularly after rice had been introduced and became the economic
mainstay of Colusa and Glenn counties. In the early stages of
the rice boom, Kuhn Brothers went broke, and a period of decline
in irrigation promotion ensued. "That meant," Lambert said,
"a lot of people were sitting around hollering for water."^4

Lambert had already made a reputation organizing several
local irrigation districts, and local rice growers turned to him
to organize the much larger Glenn-Colusa Irrigation District.
They also wanted him to enlarge the canal's carrying capacity
by two-thirds in time for the 1920 rice planting season.
Lambert accomplished this feat in less than a year. During
the twenties and thirties Lambert dabbled in land speculation
and then made a state-wide reputation in refinancing irrigation
districts and water companies. He often took land in lieu of
money, and by 1942 had acquired 16,000 acres of prime irrigated
land. In the final years of his life, he devoted himself to public
causes without fee, notably on behalf of public power production.
He acted as the middleman for irrigation districts along the
Sacramento and spearheaded formation of the Upper Sacramento Valley Water Users Association to determine the water rights with the Bureau of Reclamation. Edwin F. Davis, editor of the Willows Journal eulogized: "He forged into solid reality the dream and the engineering plans of Will S. Green...he left a structure of achievement which will endure as long as water is diverted from the Sacramento River to nourish the soil, produce a wealth of crops and enrich the region's economy." 15

In spite of the best efforts of Green, Lambert, Woodson, and Conard, much land on the west side remained without irrigation, especially the higher lands beyond the reach of gravity canals. Failure of private efforts to water these lands led to public investigations for more intensive development. Beginning in 1902, the Reclamation Service--later called the Bureau of Reclamation--made intensive studies of proposed reclamation programs. Original plans called for construction of a large reservoir at Iron Canyon on the Sacramento and at Big Valley on the Pit River. With proper canal facilities, these reservoirs could add 100,000 acres under irrigation. In 1913, a cooperative investigation by the Iron Canyon Project Association and the federal government led to more accurate estimates of projects designed to irrigate 300,000 acres on the west side of the valley. Later plans included a high line gravity canal down the west side from Iron Canyon; other plans stressed alternate low level canals to be pumped from the Sacramento River. In 1925,
the Bureau presented a report to California for gravity canals from Sacramento at Red Bank Creek south to Putah Creek on the Yolo-Solano county line.  

Yet, little federal action toward construction had been achieved. Movement toward that end began on January of 1946 when James K. Carr opened the Bureau's District office at the Waterland-Breslauer Building in Chico, a placid, shady college town. This office added an annual payroll of $125,000 to $150,000 and employment of fifty people to the local economy. Yet, as Carr himself noted, this payroll would be insignificant should the area take full advantage of the Central Valley Project. Accordingly, he began to tout the potential of massive canal construction on both sides of the Sacramento River. A.W. ("Bill") Bramwell, influential publisher of the Chico Enterprise-Record, credits Carr as "more responsible for the Sacramento Valley canals than anyone else."  

Demographic realities lent urgency to Carr's promotion of local canals construction. Pressure from a great and unexpected increase of population in California had developed during the war emergency, and several areas on the west side had doubled in population since 1940. In the postwar period the population had risen from 79,139 in 1940 to 110,457 in 1950, an increase of 39.5 percent. Most of the people lived in towns or on irrigated farms while population in dry-farm areas remained sparse. Concomitant with this population growth came the need for greater agricultural output to help provide
more agricultural, commercial, and industrial opportunities for the new arrivals. By 1948, the west side remained largely dry farmed, primarily barley, wheat, and other grains, and men like Carr, Woodson, Engle, and Don Smith thought that west-side canal construction would lead to a more intensified and diversified farming economy in Butte, Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties.

Operation of the Orland Project, servicing 20,000 acres of alfalfa, Ladino clover, citrus fruits, and nuts, seem to prove their point. Carr noted that between 1942 and 1949, the total crop value generated by the Orland Project was $22 million, or about five times the original federal investment in 1911. To put it another way, income per acre of dry land reached $22 an acre while that of Project land came to $102 an acre. A prominent Colusa County farmer claimed that in his experience "1 acre of irrigated land is of equal value and productivity with five acres of dry land."

In early April 1946, the final push for the Sacramento Valley Canals began with a two-day meeting sponsored by the Chico Bureau's district office. Topics of discussion included the work schedule of the Shasta and Keswick dams, the Oroville-Sacramento transmission line currently being built, proposed construction of the Bidwell Bar dam on the Feather River, and status of engineering studies on dam sites under the "tributary plan" alternative to the Iron Canyon Dam. Much of the discussion concerned the outlined long-range plans for the Vina-Chico Canal, Chico Canal from the Feather River, and the
Red Bluff-Dunnigan canals. It was noted in the meeting that the Chico-Nelson-Durham area had fifty thousand irrigable acres while at least another 100,000 acres were in the Feather River service area to be supplied by the proposed Bidwell Dam. This was part of Carr's problem in selling the Vina-Chico canal to Butte and Chico farmers because they felt that they had enough general water even for lands adjacent to the project.

Two days later, as a consequence of the session, Carr reported that studies and planning of the Vina-Chico, Red Bluff-Dunnigan, and other Sacramento Valley canals would begin as soon as possible. By late May 1946 Bureau engineers began reconnaissance surveys of the Vina-Colusa canal and other proposed irrigation structures in northern Sacramento Valley. Surveys also were to be made of the Tehama-Yolo canal on the westside, and the Oroville-Chico canal transferring Feather River water to Butte County south of Chico. Carr later noted that engineers from the Chico office were making preliminary surveys on the Vina-Chico and the Red Bluff-Dunnigan canals, but because of limited funding, the progress would be necessarily slow. As a result of these moves the Chico Record pleaded for expediting the funds necessary to survey canals on the east and west side of the Sacramento River.

Members of the Bureau's Chico office pushed for canal surveys and construction during the late summer and fall of 1946. Jim Carr led the publicity drive. Before the local Chico Boosters, for example,
Carr recited facts and figures to show that a Vina-Chico canal would irrigate 50,000 acres of currently non-productive land, and thus support hundreds of additional families in the Chico area. This acreage was split evenly north and south of Chico. Since the average farm size west of the Sacramento River is fifty acres, he predicted that there could be a growth of a thousand farm families. Besides, he said, for every farm family moving in, at least two families in the community trade centers are supported by their trade, thus adding some 3,000 families into the area.13

Carr, however, was careful not to hold out hope for immediate realization of this dream. He thought that it would take five to ten years to get a canal bill through Congress. Not only that, rough economic studies had to be made to justify the project before congressional committees. This would be followed by congressional authorization with preparation of detailed plans and specifications and appropriations for construction funds. But, even before the construction could begin, Carr cautioned, those farmers and ranchers who wanted water had to establish public water districts in order to contract with the federal government to bring the water and distribute it.14

Bureau and local communities pushed the latter point hard. The Chico Record argued that a canal system had to be constructed to insure the area's "rightful share of Central Valley water."15 The Williams Farmer agreed to the need to organize water districts:
"Farmers of the San Joaquin Valley have been organizing districts for several years past, seeking to secure the valuable water and the supply will soon be gone if action is not taken."16

In early April 1947 hopes for early engineering investigation and surveys were dashed by reports that the House Appropriations Subcommittee was about to recommend drastic reductions in Central Valley Project funds. This failure to allocate funds for canal surveys was thought to delay the project "for years, if not permanently."17 A group of Sutter, Yuba, and Butte county delegates later met in Marysville to protect Sacramento Valley water supplies in order to prepare for essential future Sacramento Valley development. First District Congressman Clarence F. Lea, Democrat of Santa Rosa, and his fellow representatives were urged to fight for the canal survey funds. Jim Carr himself noted that the cuts in planning funds placed the completion of the canals project further into the future. That was a shame for, according to his statistics, sale of Central Valley Project power made water cheap, estimating that 61 percent of the cost could be met by sale of Central Valley Project.18

By early fall 1947 and early 1948 a determined effort to break through this congressional road block was launched. In Red Bluff, Tehama County Farm Advisor Donald M. Smith wrote Jim Carr twelve questions relative to the Central Valley Project and the Sacramento Valley Canals (SVC). Smith's interest in the problem began a few months later when Warren "Woodie" Woodson, son of the
county founder, informed him that farmers in the valley wanted to
know when they were going to get water out of Shasta Dam.19

William M. Carah, publisher of the Red Bluff Daily News and formerly
with the Bureau of Reclamation, urged Smith to drive down to Chico
and meet with Carr. Together, they worked up a "Q & A" sheet,
indicating the problem of getting water from Shasta Reservoir.20
Carr answered the questions, sent a copy to Smith, who mailed
copies to valley newspapers. Smith wanted to use possible reservoir
water in the mountains west of Red Bluff to store water for the west
side, but Carr, after studying the proposal, decided "that there wasn't
any inexpensive way to store water."21 As Smith later told it, "I
was upset but he said don't worry. I'll see you again. He came
up to [Red Bluff] in a few days and said let's put water on the whole
damn west side."22 As both men knew, some 300,000 acre feet of
water in Shasta Lake had been set aside for the project, but no application
for its use had yet been made. This was the beginning of the Tehama-
Colusa Canal.

In February 1948 forty planning commissioners from Yolo,
Glenn, Colusa, and Tehama counties met in Hotel Willows, and
made plans to push for a Westside Canal. Carr appeared to say
that although a preliminary survey of the proposed Red Bluff-Dunnigan
canal had been made, further work on the project awaited interest
shown by the area and also congressional authorization.23 A four
county organization, consisting of four planning commissioners
appointed by their respective Board of Supervisors subject to the approval of Governor Warren, was to spearhead the effort to utilize the 300,000 acre-feet of Shasta Dam irrigation water.

Ancillary efforts by neighboring communities to protect their interests followed. The Chico City Council and Chamber of Commerce Water Conservation Committee informally agreed to initiate a survey of irrigation needs in their immediate area. The survey was designed to determine what lands would be irrigated, canal routing, and costs to the landowners. But, both organizations postponed consideration of a proposal submitted by the Northern Counties Water Conservation Association to oppose further diversion of Sacramento River water to other areas, such as southern California, their stand being that local water needs be determined before a flat stand against delivery of water to needy areas be taken.24

In Tehama County, William Carah applauded local efforts to survey portions of southwestern Tehama County for irrigation and the filing of water rights from the Sacramento River. Carah's enthusiasm stemmed from two developments in which Don Smith had played a critical role by working closely with the Tehama County Planning Commission for several months. First, money for an irrigation canal on the west side from Red Bluff to Willows became available and second, the planning commission prepared engineering data as a prelude to recommending that the Tehama County Board of Supervisors file for Sacramento River water rights for Tehama County
and for water stored in Shasta Dam. Carr notified Smith that primary attention would be directed to the Red Bluff Pumping Canal, beginning with a pumping plant at the mouth of Red Bank Creek and ending at Rice Creek southwest of Corning. C. Marshall Jones, formerly assistant to the Regional Planning Engineers in Chico, was in charge of the survey, including a possible canal north of Squaw Hill Bridge to serve southern Tehama County and northern Glenn County. Congressman Engle made the funds available, and Tehama County's action in the matter was the first of its kind from any Sacramento Valley county. By pushing the Tehama County survey funds through Congress in the summer of 1948, Engle had served notice that he wanted to go for the full project, to make the old Green-Woodson dream a reality.

Once Carr and Smith decided to put water "on the whole damn west side," they held a meeting in Bill Carah's home in Red Bluff to map out strategy. Among those present were Engle, Carr, Carah, Tehama County District Attorney Ed Moor, County Supervisor Tom Kees, and Smith. They decided to schedule a meeting in the basement of Hotel Maywood in mid-November and invited all landowners in Butte, Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties to attend. They also selected the men to serve on the proposed Sacramento Valley Irrigation Committee (SVIC). Engle asked Moor to nominate Max Vann of Williams, a well-known and respected farmer, to head the group. "I don't know Max Vann," protested Moor. Engle replied,
"You nominate him and when he stands up, you'll know him." 26

Other SVIC members selected were Tom Kees, Bill Bramwell, George Otterson of Willows, Marshall Lane of Orland, and Alex J. Atran of Colusa County. Otterson and Lane were both members of the Glenn County Board of Supervisors. All were informed of the pending action by telephone and agreed to serve. Smith also agreed to be presiding officer of the Hotel Maywood meeting since he knew most of the men elected to serve. 27

The stage was thus set for the decisive meeting in the basement of Woodson's Hotel Maywood in Corning on the evening of November 16, 1948. Those 36 who attended the meeting included representatives from Yolo, Butte, Colusa, Glenn, and Tehama counties, Bureau of Reclamation, California Water Project Authority, California Water Resources Board, and Republican Congressman Hubert Baxter. Scudder, a Sebastopol insurance agent and a veteran of the state legislature who succeeded Lea in Congress. Scudder was there at the invitation of Engle since part of his district encompassed the west side of the valley. Engle was in top form as the principal speaker. He declared that the Tehama-Colusa canal "is just as much a part of the Central Valley Project as the Friant-Kern canal." Water for the canals already existed in the Shasta Dam. "It is imperative," Engle said, "that we authorize and construct these canals as soon as possible so that the Sacramento Valley's rightful share of water can be put to use on Sacramento Valley land at the
earliest possible date." To that end, Engle pledged to introduce legislation in Congress to authorize construction of the Vina-Chico-Durham canal and the Tehama-Colusa conduit or any variation of these plans. 28

Engle presented a colorful, folksy posture to his farmer-orchardist audience. Seeing Jim Carr in the back of the audience, he declared that power revenue from Shasta Dam facilities should be given to repayment of the canal project costs on the same basis as they are used in the San Joaquin Valley. He quizzed Carr on this point; and Carr, knowing full well that Engle was playing to his audience as well as making a valid selling point, responded that with power paying 62 per cent of the cost, water from Shasta Dam could be available to valley agriculturalists for as low as $3.50 per acre foot. Upon hearing that, Engle shouted, "I want the people of my district up at the pie counter where they too can use this public power." 29

Out of the Corning meeting emerged the Sacramento Valley Irrigation Committee to promote all feasible upper Sacramento Valley water projects without mentioning any single project or the policies of any federal agency. Max Vann, a Williams farmer and Democratic leader became Chairman and Don Smith Secretary. Reflecting upon the scene, the Oroville Mercury-Register editorialized that the Hotel Maywood confab was a call for Sacramento Valley agriculture "to wake up.... They admitted the obvious fact that the Sacramento Valley has been unprogressive, falling behind the San
Joaquin Valley and other areas in agricultural development." Look to our own area, make sure that any water from the Feather River be used to irrigate foothills and valley land. "Unless we do that," concluded the editorial, "we shall find ourselves in the same predicament as those in areas downstream from Shasta Dam—a big project, but with interest centered in power development and little or nothing done to develop the agriculture of the area."  

In late November 1948, Congressman Scudder telegraphed Don Smith that he would take a leading role in the canal fight and co-author with Engle the SVC legislation. Scudder's profession of support was timely since the State Water Project Authority refused to consider the proposed measure until it had time to study it. This was a mere formality, and in Red Bluff Engle said he would rush the copy of the bill to Sacramento. Since his bill had identical provisions contained in the State Water Plan, there would be little problem in obtaining state approval. This followed the usual procedure of obtaining state approval of the project before introducing it to Congress.  

Meanwhile, local communities organized to enlist popular support for the SVC under the leadership of Max Vann and Don Smith. Born in the Sycamore area east of Colusa, Vann was then in his late fifties and a life-long Democrat. In 1932, he organized the farm credit system in Colusa County and currently served as President of the Colusa-Glenn Production Credit Association. He owned 700
acres of irrigated land and 800 acres of dry land.  

In mid-December 1948 the State Joint Interim Committee on Water Problems, popularly known as the Crittenden Committee, toured the north valley area. Headed by State Senator Bradford S. Crittenden of Stockton and Assemblyman George Butters of Brawley, the committee heard a strong presentation in Willows and Red Bluff for a canal system in the area. In Willows, Assemblyman Lloyd W. Lowrey pledged to introduce a resolution in the state legislature requesting Congressional inclusion of a canal system in the Central Valley Project. He was immediately backed by Republican State Senator Louis G. Sutton of Maxwell, and Assemblyman-elect Arthur W. Coats of Sutter County. At Red Bluff's Tremont Hotel, about 150 representatives of the SVC, state and federal engineers, and farmers heard Vann and Smith plead for inclusion of the canal system, and they received able support from old Charles G. Lambert. Lambert stressed the need for additional water storage in Shasta Dam and to create water and irrigation districts to contract for water that would become available for farmers.  

Vann and Smith preached unity as the best means to win congressional and state support for the SVC. Other issues, however, threatened to destroy this vital unity. North Valley leaders, for example, were perturbed over the stand of the Irrigation District Association of California in favor of state ownership of the Central Valley Project. According to the Orland Unit, the dangers of such a
course were blatant. Federal ownership of the Central Valley Project was essential "or our campaign for passage of the Engle-Scudder bill will mean nothing. Turning over the Central Valley Project (CVP) to state control at this time would freeze the project just as it is--with the San Joaquin Valley getting all the water at the price of this region's future for all time to come."

Support for the Engle-Scudder bill mushroomed in the early months of 1949 as Vann, Smith, H. K. Shirk of Corning, and Alex J. Atran of Arbuckle worked tirelessly to obtain resolutions of support from local farm groups and business organizations. Shirk was particularly active and was influential in Butte County efforts to protect their rights to the water stored behind Shasta Dam. Atran pursued the Sacramento Valley Council of the California Chamber of Commerce to accept in principle the Engle-Scudder bill. Moreover, the influential Sacramento Bee also provided editorial support. $^{35}$

Engle introduced his SVC bill as HR 163 in January 1949, and Senator Sheridan Downey introduced a companion measure in the Senate. Engle's bill provided for federal authorization of irrigation canals in the Sacramento Valley under the Central Valley Project. It authorized the main canals only, but it did not carry a request for appropriation. Should the bill pass Congress, the Bureau of Reclamation would have to allocate funds this year to complete the engineering studies of the SVC. Groups of farmers desiring water would have to form public water districts and construct their own
distribution system separately to bring water from the Bureau to the main canals. Downey's measure was identical to Engle's except that it failed to provide use of CVP power revenue in its repayment schedule. Downey later informed the SVIC that he favored the CVP power revenue provision in Engle's bill.  

With support pouring in from Engle's and Scudder's districts Bureau officials attempted to dampen excessive hopes for immediate benefits. Marshall Jones, District Planning Engineer out of the Chico office, spoke at Corning's Hotel Maywood and Red Bluff's 20-30 Club. Shasta Dam, he said, will supply about half of the water needed for the area. Since the normal Sacramento Valley water supply was 19-20 million acre-feet and since 90 percent of the rainfall arrives when crops were not growing, the only answer to the problem was additional storage dams, such as Table Mountain which almost equalled the capacity of Shasta Lake. Other sources for irrigation water, Jones added, were 1.5 million acre-feet from the Trinity and Feather rivers.

Not only that, since no appropriation moneys were provided in the Engle bill, Jones predicted that it would probably in 1950 before an appropriation bill could be passed. Then it would take six months to a year before specifications and bids could be prepared, which would mean 1951-1952 before actual construction could begin. Jones estimated that it would take from two to four years to build the main canals and even longer for the distributing
canals to the farmers. Since there was inadequate water storage in Shasta Dam, the Table Mountain Dam and a tunnel through the Trinity Alps to the top of the Trinity River might also have to be built. 38

On March 1, 1949, with massive local support and evidence of Yolo County's interest in extending the canal to its area, Engle announced that the House Public Lands Committee would hold hearings on his HR 163 as soon as it concluded its hearings on the Folsom Dam. Development on the American River was of great significance to Sacramento Valley farmers because it would free more Sacramento River water for local use. Power from Folsom Dam would add more income to defray repayment costs of the SVC unit of the CVP. On March 2, Congress re-authorized the Folsom project with increased capacity from 350,000 to one million acre-feet and the transfer of jurisdiction of facilities from the Corps of Engineers to the Bureau of Reclamation. Committee approval was assured when Engle and Montana Republican Congressman Wesley W. D'Ewart worked out a compromise to put a steam plant under study. D'Ewart had wanted to remove the steam plant. Engle also agreed with D'Ewart's statement that it would "firm up" Folsom power output by integrating it with the Bonneville system instead of building a steam plant. 39

Smith, like Engle, saw the potential of Congressional approval of the Folsom project in approving the SVC. The Engle-Scudder measure now had a good chance of passage, he said to the Orland
Kiwanis Club. Water from the Folsom Dam reservoir would provide water for the San Joaquin Valley and thus provide an allocation to the Sacramento Valley. Moreover, he said, proposed dam construction across San Francisco Bay held great opportunities for more water from the Sacramento River. Since almost a third of the Sacramento River flow goes into the San Francisco Bay to keep salt water out of the Delta, Smith said, the Rieber Plan would do the same and more water from Shasta Dam could then be used on land. ¹⁴⁰

In late March 1949 Smith summed up the state of the Engle-Scudder bill to an audience gathered in the Blue Gum Lodge north of Willows. "We've carried the ball on the Engle-Scudder bill as far as we can carry it for the present. We've done everything to support it that we know how to do.... It's up to them Engle and Scudder to get a hearing on the bill before the Public Lands Committee of the House, and let us know if there is anything more we can do out here." ¹⁴¹

At the same time, the executive committee of the SVIC rejected a suggestion that the group push for the Table Mountain Dam. Its strategy was to get the Engle bill through Congress before paying attention to other projects. It was generally agreed, however, that once the SVC became law, it would be helpful to work for more storage dams. Charles Lambert also bitterly attacked power utilities for backing a bill to prevent power revenues from being used to help pay off amortization costs of irrigation projects. It was thought that the bill had come out of southern California in a
move to halt further construction of the CVP. If that bill became law, Lambert predicted, the price of water from these projects would be unconscionably high. 42

House hearings on the Engle-Scudder measure were set for May 4, 1949. Smith was confident that two thousand resolutions and newspaper articles would be available for presentation. 43 He also felt that a few members of the SVIC would attend if Engle thought that local testimony would be necessary. Lambert and Bill Bramwell had already expressed a willingness to attend the hearings. Meanwhile, Jim Carr and Marshall Jones were instructed by Boke to travel to Washington to discuss details with Bureau officials in preparation for the hearing. Shortly thereafter, timed to provide impetus to the legislation's passage, the California Chamber of Commerce and the California State Federation of Labor (AFL) endorsed the SVC. This endorsement occurred on the same day as the state's Democratic leadership met, and State Democratic Chairman Oliver J. Carter sent a message to President Truman requesting that he include the canals in the legislative program. 44

The SVIC met in Chico a week before the House hearings were to begin in order to determine strategy and appoint a delegation to give testimony before the Public Lands Committee. The delegation consisted of Bill Bramwell, Fred Shanks, Max Vann, and it was thought that Tom Kees would represent Tehama County. Due to pressing business concerns, however, Shanks withdrew from the
delegation in favor of P. V. Harrigan who had been Agricultural Commissioner of Glenn County for the past twelve years. This revised delegation would be available should Engle need their help in committee. Vann remarked that if Engle's bill were defeated in sub-committee, "we'd be whipped for this session of Congress, and have to start all over for the next one." He also thought that such a delay could be disastrous in view of the scramble for northern California water by areas further to the south. 45

Local unity as expressed by the four-county delegation impressed subcommittee members, and before the day was out, HR 163 was brought to the full committee and sent on to the House floor. Engle informed his contacts in Red Bluff that he would bring the measure to a vote as soon as he could. The vote was unanimous. As passed, the Engle-Schudder bill was an enabling act; it provided no money, simply an authorization to construct the SVC as part of the CVP with repayment funds coming from CVP power revenue. The Bureau of Reclamation was authorized to make detailed engineering studies of proposed canals, determine their routes, areas to be served, and potential benefits and costs. Upon this data landowners were to decide whether canals were to be built. Once Congress authorized the bill, Engle then would ask for appropriations to begin construction, these funds being repaid in a long-term payment plan. 46

The Engle-Schudder bill then went to the House Rules Committee. In late July 1949 Majority Leader John McCormack of Boston scheduled
the bill for House debate, although the Rules Committee had not yet acted. With Congress nearing adjournment, Engle appeared to be racing against time. The Bureau of the Budget complicated matters by insisting on a complete, highly technical study of the SVC, and Jim Carr was detailed to finish the report and send it on to Washington. Engle was anxious that the bill get through the House and into the Senate before Congress adjourned in September. Congressional rules state that a bill passed by the House and submitted to the Senate does not die if Congress adjourns before the Senate had acted. If this happens, Engle said, the bill would have a "running start" next session.  

Engle managed to steer the SVC bill through the legislative logjam and on August 1, 1949, it was approved by the House and sent on to the Senate. This meant, according to the Chico Enterprise-Record, that "the first spike has been driven in 'nailing down' water 'reserved' behind Shasta Dam for use in this area."  

Interior Department and Democratic Congressional leaders predicted little trouble in Senate. Assistant Interior Secretary William E. Warne and Ohio Congressman Michael Joseph Kirwan, a Democratic public power advocate, assured the SVIC and farmers meeting in Hotel Willows and the Oroville Chamber of Commerce of this fact, but they also warned against overconfidence.  

This theme continued in mid-November 1949 when Bureau Commissioner Michael Straus appeared in Maple Hall, Orland, for a
meeting jointly sponsored by the SVIC and the Orland Chamber of Commerce. Present at the meeting were Bureau bigwigs like Goodrich Lineweaver, director of Operations and Maintenance, Assistant Regional Director Phil Dickinson, and Marshall Jones, as well as such local politicos as Scudder, Sutton, and Lowrey. The SVC and the Black Butte Dam were the leading topics of concern since they were thought to be the two most significant Sacramento Valley developments since 1910. To an audience of over two hundred, Straus predicted that the CVP would be completed in July 1951, and if the SVC bill pending before the Senate became law in the spring of 1950, the canals could be completed within three years.  

Congressman Engle responded several days later that his prime objective in the next session of Congress was the enactment of the SVC bill. But, he realized that two outstanding obstacles remained to be hurdled. First, approval of the Bureau of the Budget, the fiscal agency of the President that recommends to him and to Congress all authorization and appropriation bills; and second, Senate passage with Senator Downey on the Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee that considered the measure.

Downey's attitude and support was critical. Now old and ailing, this controversial politician met some twenty members of the SVIC in San Francisco in early December 1949 where he held hearings on the Rieber Plan. Included among his audience were Vann, Smith, Kees, and Bramwell. He assured them that his "unqualified support" of
canals was undiluted; he urged them to send a delegation to Washington in support of the bill. Although he was currently engaged in his crusade against enforcement of the excess acreage limitation of federal reclamation law in California, he doubted that it would adversely affect the chances of the SVC's passage. Don Smith held strong reservations about the Senator's enthusiasm believing that he opposed use of Shasta Dam power revenue to lower water prices to farmers. Faced with a strong challenge from Mrs. Helen Gahagan Douglas in the spring primary, Smith thought that "Downey [was] forced to agree." The Orland Register shared Smith's doubts and urged its readers to send resolutions and personal letters to bolster Downey. Then, noting the activities of Engle, "we confidentially look forward to the day when he will be just that; the Junior United States Senator from California." 

The Bureau of Reclamation eventually completed its SVC report and sent it on to the Bureau of the Budget in late January 1950. Engle immediately arranged a conference with Budget Director Frank Pace and asked Senators Knowland and Downey to attend. He also requested a meeting with the President in order to determine his attitude on new reimbursible projects such as the SVC. The Congressman revealed a few days later that his bill "is having a bit of rough-going."

Apparently, the Bureau of the Budget was uncooperative; it insisted that although the SVC bill had been cleared by the necessary state agencies, it had also to be cleared by the Army Corp of Engineers
in spite of no flood control features in his bill. Engle thought that this provision could be obtained quickly, but then the Bureau of the Budget demanded clearance from the Department of Agriculture. Additionally, Budget officials inferred that the Bureau of Reclamation report was too general and speculative, its statistical data "too preliminary," and perhaps additional detailed data might become imperative. There was a chance, Engle thought, that with the aid of Senators Knowland and Downey, he could bypass the Budget Bureau and get Senate action without the former's approval. 55

Accordingly, Engle advised California Democratic Chairman Oliver J. Carter and Vice Chairman George Luckey to request White House approval of HR 163. Carter stressed the political implications of the bill, reminding the White House that the Sacramento Valley canals had long been a plank in the state party platform. "It is the performance of the Democratic Administration on this promise that has consistently kept California in the Democratic column." Moreover, he added, "we are in fine position to unseat Hubert Scudder in the First Congressional District."56 The Bureau of the Budget continued to delay a final decision due to insufficient information in the Bureau of Reclamation's interim report. The canals bill would authorize distribution of water in the Sacramento Valley while the Central Valley Project was to transfer water to the San Joaquin Valley. The Budget Bureau found "indications...that there is not" enough water to serve both goals, a problem that Director Pace brought to
the attention of Downey and other Californians on February 1st. 57

On February 6, 1950, during a conference with Engle, Downey, and a representative from Knowland's office, the Bureau of the Budget agreed to send to the Senate Interior Committee a Bureau of Reclamation interim project report. Budget Director Pace emphasized that this release in no way meant its formal approval of the canals project. Engle immediately declared that he would seek an early Senate committee hearing on his measure. He also charged that the Bureau of the Budget was "dragging its feet" in not giving formal approval of the bill. The problem was, as Engle and Pace well knew, that if the Senate failed to act on the canals bill during the current session, the process would have to begin all over. "This is a typical case where a bureaucratic obstacle course has been set up which delays necessary and beneficial legislation," Engle charged. "We intend to force them into speedy action by getting Senate hearings and approval as soon as possible." 58

Wyoming Senator Joseph P. O'Mahoney, Chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, scheduled hearings for April 17, 1950. The SVIC moved into action as it had for the House hearings eleven months before. In Corning Tom Kees opined that top California officials might be requested to testify. There was even some talk of Governor Warren going to Washington on behalf of the SVC. Glenn County Supervisor George J. Otterson went to Los Angeles to meet with George Luckey, and Oliver J. Carter was to go to Washington to lend
his influence behind the project.  

Reports, however, came back to the Sacramento Valley that its two Senators were "dragging their feet" on the issue. Knowland was touring Korea; Downey seemed obsessed with his fight against excess acreage limitation. But Assemblyman Lowrey introduced a joint resolution requesting that the Senate Interior Committee, President Truman, and the California delegation give early approval to the Engle-Scudder bill. The state legislature approved the Lowrey resolution on March 28, 1959. Even Governor Warren, whom Don Smith found to be "very helpful," 60 sent a wire to Chairman O'Mahoney and Knowland's office in support of HR 163.

O'Mahoney appointed Senators James Murray of Montana, Herbert Lehman of New York, and George P. ("Molly") Malone to hold the hearings. Malone's selection was encouraging to Engle and his allies since the Nevada Senator had worked on the Central Valley Project as an engineer. In a telephone call to Max Vann, Congresswoman Helen G. Douglas took credit for O'Mahoney's action. As she told it, Charles Lambert had requested that she telephone long-distance to Interior Secretary Oscar L. Chapman and O'Mahoney to urge early hearings on Engle's bill. Douglas also prevailed upon Chapman to assign Assistant Interior Secretary Warne to the task of persuading O'Mahoney to appoint the necessary subcommittee to hold the meeting. 61

To prepare for the Senate hearings, the SVIC selected a seven-man
delegation to represent local interests in Washington. This meeting was held in Willows. The delegation consisted of Vann, Otterson, Smith, Kees, Bramwell, and Marshall Lane of Orland. SVIC leadership did not expect as easy a time under the Senate as it had experienced during the House hearings, primarily because of a lack of strong leadership in the Senate. Downey was in the hospital with peptic ulcers, and Knowland appeared uninspired in spite of Warren’s prod. 62

Senator Lehman presided over the hearing to study HR 163. Senator Murray, hero of doctrinaire Senate liberals, who was most familiar with western irrigation problems, did not attend due to illness in the family. The four-county delegation asked for speedy action on HR 163, and they were backed by expert testimony from Straus, Warne, Carr, and Bureau official Leland K. Hill of Sacramento. Stories of declining water tables and of cost-benefit ratio of 2:1 were made in defense of the bill. Lehman inquired of Straus whether Secretary Chapman had endorsed the project. Under instructions from Chapman, Straus replied that his superior had not, that he was waiting for action from the Bureau of the Budget, which, in turn, was awaiting the final Bureau report. Engle interrupted with the observation that former Interior Secretary Krug had endorsed the SVC unit in the House eleven months before. 63

Lehman seemed unpersuaded of the economic feasibility of the project, noting that the full committee might desire more
information from the Bureau of Reclamation. For example, the proposed legislation authorized a $35 million pump lift canal system or a $65 million gravity-flow canal system, depending upon which the Bureau found more feasible. In the end, the two main canals, plus a distribution system, would cost $75-150 million. When asked which alternative was the better, Jim Carr declined to answer without a final report due September 1950.\textsuperscript{64} It had seemed to the White House that Murray and Lehman were not inclined to report HR 163 as a consequence of the Interior and Budget positions. "Molly" Malone, however, "fully supports the bill."\textsuperscript{65}

When he returned to California in mid-May 1950, Engle had become pessimistic over the future of his bill. But, he told a Chico audience that he was more than willing to use "political muscle" to get his bill through the Senate even without the recommendation of Budget Director Pace.\textsuperscript{66} In a caustic note to Mike Straus, he stated that he expected a "complete and convincing" feasibility report by the first day of September. He also remarked that "many people in the Sacramento Valley have felt the Department of the Interior has been giving lip service to the valley canals with no bona fide interest in pushing them." He distrusted some Bureau officials. Engle sensed an inclination on the part of the government agencies to tie valley canals to the Trinity River diversion project." But, he concluded, "opposition is\textsuperscript{7} brewing to the Trinity project... There is not use mixing the canals into this controversy which I
hope we can get settled. It would be the height of folly to tie the two together and I anticipate it will not be done."67

Engle's fears on that point were not misplaced, and even the White House had doubts as to whether the 300,000 acre-feet of water stored in Shasta Lake was adequate to the needs of the Sacramento Valley canals. In the Bureau of the Budget, David E. Bell conceded the availability of water for the Sacramento Valley canals in northern California, "but it may take additional storage, not yet authorized, on the Trinity, the Feather, or other northern rivers to assure a water supply for both the canals". According to Bell, Engle found the matter to be "largely academic" since the canals could not be built for several years when additional storage would be available."68

Engle also continued Oliver Carter's emphasis on political implications of the canals in the state elections of 1950. He told Bell that Sacramento Valley residents "are being stirred up" by Republicans who claim the Truman Administration is taking away their water for California's southland and reneging on the "original concept of the Central Valley Project which included canals for the benefit of the northern valley." Helen Gahagan Douglas, having won the primary after Downey declined to stand for reelection, informed Bell that presidential endorsement of the canals was of "considerable importance" in her campaign against Nixon. Engle also felt that the Sacramento Valley canals made a difference in the race against
Scudder, although the latter's opponent, Roger Kent, was well behind in the polls. 69

Bell placed the "crux of the political difficulty" on Engle for having "introduced his bill before the basic studies had been finished." Political reality dictated that defeat of HR 163 would be submerged by Republican charges of "bad faith," not that the Bureau's project report had been delayed. Thus, Bell went along with Engle's view "that these canals are sure to be authorized some time in the future, so why not do it now, when it will have good political effects." 70

During a lengthy meeting with Bell, Engle urged the administration to inform Murray and O'Mahoney "that it has no objection to the bill being enacted, and that the President would not veto it." In return, Engle would accept "any reservation we think desirable." After talking it over with Secretary Chapman and Fred Lawton, the former agreeing with Engle on its political implications, Bell urged the White House "to give O'Mahoney an informal go-ahead on the bill at this time, with whatever reservation Fred [Lawton] would like to see written into it assuring that the President must later approve a satisfactory project report before any money may be made available." 71

In late August 1950 it was reported that although President Truman was not happy with the bill, he would not oppose it. 72 Congresswoman Douglas made public on August 28 that she had O'Mahoney's assurance that action would be taken on the canals legislation. She met with Chapman, O'Mahoney, and Bureau of the Budget officials to resolve
outstanding issues swirling around HR. 163. Her Northern California campaign chairman, Matthew O. Tobriner, recalls that her major interest in the general election was the 160-acre limitation issue and that the canals were "ancillary" to that controversy. 73

When the Senate Interior Committee voted the bill to the Senate floor, Douglas cautioned valley residents that imminent construction was not in the offing due to limited funds of the national defense program. 74 The Senate committee, however, tacked one addition to the bill which authorized no actual expenditure on construction until the Secretary of the Interior, with the approval of the President, submitted a complete feasibility report to Congress. 75

With the Senate amendment in place, the only hope to get the bill through the Senate during the current session was by placing it on the consent calendar, requiring the unanimous consent of the Senate. Engle was to work the Democratic side while Scudder worked on the Republicans. With Knowland leading the Senate forces behind the Engle-Scudder measure, it was passed without objection on September 13, 1950. The House approved the Senate version the following day and sent it on to President Truman. Scudder provided yeoman service by scotching a GOP revolt with the aid of Minority Leader Joseph P. Martin, Jr. On September 22, Engle and Douglas called on the President, and Engle told reporters that the President would sign the bill. 76

Truman signed the bill on September 26, and in his message
to Secretary Chapman, the President stressed the Senate amendment
to the bill. He advised Chapman, "in the event the works contemplated
in this enactment do not meet a finding of feasibility under the
provisions or reclamation law, this fact should be clearly set
forth in your report to me." 77

Back in Chico Jim Carr outlined the steps that had to be taken
before canal water could be delivered to individual farmers;
creation of more water districts to distribute water under state law,
construction appropriations, negotiations of water service contracts
between government and local irrigation or water districts, ratification
of control by elections and its validation by state courts, and, finally,
completion of the canals themselves. 78 However, Carr's sober
analysis did not dampen the enthusiasm of local leaders. The Chico
Enterprise-Record thought that it gave impetus to local efforts to
build Oroville Dam; Smith envisioned green pastures, fields, orchards,
and rural community development in the north valley area. "It is
the beginning of an empire," he cried, "The Sacramento Valley
is coming into its own." 79

In mid-October 1950 a victory celebration was held in Corning's
Hotel Maywood. Engle was the guest speaker. He credited Warren
Woodson who "inspired him to do battle for the legislation, and his
Woodson example and vision should be an inspiration to the younger
generation in carrying the battle to its ultimate conclusion." Then,
he went to the heart of the SVC fight. There were three significant
aspects: it gave legality; it preempted water for canals; and canals became an integral part of the Central Valley Project. Engle also gave special credit to Don Smith, to whom he presented the pen that President Truman used to sign the bill into law. 80
FOOTNOTES

1U.S., Congress, House, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, Sacramento Canals Unit, Central Valley Project, California, H. Doc. 73, 83rd Cong., 1st sess., 1953, p. 18. (Hereafter, Sacramento Canals Unit, H. Doc. 73).


3Ibid., pp. 7-13.


5Ibid., p. 2.

6Sacramento Canals Unit, H. Doc. 73, pp. 23-26.

7A.W. Bramwell, Interview, June 30, 1976.

8Sacramento Canals Unit, H. Doc. 73, pp. 18-19.

9The Orland Unit, May 22, 1947.


11Chico Record, April 9, 1946; Chico Enterprise, April 8, 1946.

12Chico Record, August 24, 1946.

13Ibid., September 5, 1946; Williams Farmer, February 21, 1947.

14Chico Record, September 5, 1946.
15 Ibid., September 28, 1946.

16 Williams Farmer, February 21, 1947.

17 Chico Record, April 9, 1947.


20 Letter from Ibid., March 14, 1976.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.


24 Chico Enterprise, March 26, 1948; Chico Record, March 30, 1948.


26 Letter from Don M. Smith, March 14, 1976.

27 Ibid.

28 Chico Enterprise, November 17, 1948; Chico Record, November 17, 1948; Colusa Daily Times, November 17, 1948.


30 Oroville Mercury-Register, November 18, 1948.


Chico Enterprise-Record, February 12, 1949; The Orland Unit, February 14, 1949.


The Orland Register, March 10, 1949; The Orland Unit, March 10, 1949.

Chico Enterprise-Record, March 31, 1949; The Orland Register, March 31, 1949.


Ibid.

Ibid., April 21, 1949; April 22, 1949; April 28, 1949.

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Oroville Mercury-Register, July 20, 1949.

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Chapter IV

TRINITY RIVER DIVISION, 1950-1953

The Trinity River is part of the Klamath River Basin in northwestern California, and until 1963 it flowed uselessly into the Pacific Ocean after converging with the Klamath. It drained an area of 2,930 square miles, of which eight-five percent was in Trinity County in the mountains and the remaining fifteen percent in Humboldt County on the coast. Its estimated annual run-off was 3,850,000 acre-feet as frontal storm systems moved in from the ocean and dropped forty to eighty inches of precipitation. Since the Klamath River Basin contained nearly twenty percent of California's surface water, it had been endorsed by federal and state agencies as a logical extension of the Central Valley Project for years. Demonstrated need for additional water supplies in the Central Valley provided the necessary political pressure to construct the first transmountain diversion of water into the Sacramento Valley.

As conceived and constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation, Trinity diversion provides irrigation, power, recreation, fish and
wildlife conservation, and water quality control programs for the north state region. Project facilities include the earthen Trinity Dam and Reservoir to store the waters of the Trinity and to provide hydroelectric power for northern California consumers. Water released from the Trinity Dam is regulated a few miles downstream in the smaller Lewiston Dam and Afterbay. Here water is released to meet downstream commitments and surplus water is sent east through the Clear Creek Power Conduit to Whiskeytown Reservoir in western Shasta County. From Whiskeytown Reservoir, supplied by surplus water from Trinity and Clear Creek, water rushes through the Spring Creek Conduit to Keswick Reservoir on the Sacramento River and down the Sacramento Valley.\(^3\)

Public opinion in the Klamath Basin during the forties and fifties was not united on the Trinity diversion. In Trinity County, Judge Charles A. Paulsen and his protege, District Attorney Edwin J. Regan, argued that the project was inevitable and encouraged Trinitarian residents to make the best deal possible with the flatlanders on the valley floor.\(^4\) Yet, this sentiment faced much opposition in Trinity County. Some Trinitarians reflected the localism so prevalent in mountain politics and tended to oppose developments not directly beneficial to their communities. For that reason, Weaverville business interests backed Judge Paulsen and Ed Regan, for they expected to prosper from the nearby Trinity Dam construction, while the Hayfork area further south
seemed apathetic about the project. Moreover, there was genuine resentment that the Project would benefit the powerful Shasta County area, and this feeling reflected a sense that they were an economic satellite of Shasta County. Shastan interest in the Trinity project was predicated on future industrialization in the Redding area, a prospect requiring huge outlays of power generated by Trinity power plants.

Trinity County was typical of the mining, lumber, and agricultural constituency of "Engle's Empire." Gold-mining during the 1850's provided the early economic stimulus. Such communities as Trinity Center were also major suppliers and stage stops on the Old California-Oregon Trail until the railroad completed construction along the Sacramento River in the 1880's. As gold mining began to play out, the area's economy revived under extensive development of chromium and manganese minerals and agriculture. After World War II, the population steadily increased due to the expansion of logging operations and forest product industries. Between 1930 and 1960, the population of Trinity County rose from 2,800 to 9,700. 

Yet, Engle's strength in the county had never been strong. The problem grew out of his prosecution in 1940 of William H. Simmons, charged with a blood feud killing. Such violence was not uncommon among these proud and independent mountain people. Attorney General Earl Warren appointed Engle special prosecutor, and Engle's zealous efforts to make a good impression on the
Attorney General made for friction with the area's residents. His investigation produced a dramatic confrontation with angry mountain men when Engle declared that Trinitarians could no longer handle their problems by themselves. Engle ultimately convicted Simmons on a manslaughter charge, but the relations with the Trinitarians never completely healed. They were further strained in the midst of the Trinity diversion fight when a *Saturday Evening Post* article treated the county residents as feuding and fighting hillbillies to whom Engle introduced law and order.⁷

During the early forties Judge Carr moved to get the Bureau of Reclamation to study and construct the Trinity diversion in order to provide irrigation water for his county and to fulfill the potential of his cherished Central Valley Project. Shasta County had traditionally backed the Clickapudi Project to divert Pit River water into the foothill country around Millville and Bella Vista, but Bureau feasibility studies negated this approach.⁸ Consequently, Shasta County leaders looked for help from the Klamath River watershed.

Jim Carr prepared the resolution endorsing the Trinity project that was adopted by the Redding Chamber of Commerce and delivered to President Roosevelt in person by Judge Carr. As Chairman of the Shasta County Trinity Diversion Committee, the Judge pressured the reluctant Commissioner of the Bureau, John C. Page, to investigate the project's economic feasibility. Fully cognizant of Carr's clout in the White House, Page and the Bureau's Denver office agreed to
begin the feasibility study in the fall of 1943. C.W. Birmingham, Planning Engineer from the Denver office, headed the local investigation.  

While Judge Carr brought in the Bureau of Reclamation to design the Trinity project, the Corps of Engineers moved into the picture late in 1944 and early 1945 by investigating a proposed water diversion project from the Klamath River to the Pit River watershed and then down into the Central Valley. Alarmed at the prospect of an imminent clash between the Bureau and the Corps, State Senators Randolph J. Collier of Yreka and Oliver J. Carter of Redding introduced a resolution requesting the termination of the Corps' investigation until the end of World War II. The resolution, as passed by the state legislature, created a Joint Legislative Committee to investigate the proposed Klamath and Trinity diversions. The Committee quickly found unanimous public opposition to the schemes in hearings conducted in January and February 1945. Judge Pauisen, however, reminded Collier that the Trinity County Board of Supervisors had endorsed the Bureau's study of the Trinity diversion, but he urged that any action on the project be delayed until the Bureau's plan had been submitted.  

On May 12, 1945, before the Joint Committee had completed its study, the state legislature accepted Eureka State Senator Irwin T. Quinn's amendment to the Water Code removing the Trinity diversion from the State Water Plan. The Joint Committee then submitted its
report and declared that the Corps' study of Klamath River diversion was "untimely and uncalled for" and without local support. It urged that the Counties of Origin Law (1931) be strengthened to protect sparsely populated rural areas, termination of Corps activity, and supported local desires for a Bureau study of Klamath Basin water needs as soon as possible.  

When Jim Carr opened the Bureau's District office in Chico in January 1946 he found that C.W. Birmingham had mapped out a ten-year study program for the Trinity diversion. Carr rejected such a lengthy timetable, and an angry Birmingham requested a transfer to Klamath Falls. He was replaced by Joseph W. Carniglia who had been friends with Carr since their days at the Santa Clara Engineering School. Together, they re-worked the Birmingham plan and established the basic concept of the Trinity diversion program.

In the spring of 1950, Carniglia and Carr worked closely with Congressman Engle in gathering mountain and valley support for the Trinity project. Indications that insufficient water was available for the Central Valley Project added urgency to Engle's determination to enact the Sacramento Valley Canals program. Once the valley canals program was in place, it would create added pressure to divert surplus Trinity water into the Sacramento Valley to meet local needs, repulse saline intrusion in the Delta, and provide supplemental water to the San Joaquin Valley. How successful they were in rounding up support on both sides of the Trinity Mountains and on the valley
floor would prove critical to the fate of the Trinity project in California and in Congress.

Key to prospects for downriver and coastal support in Humboldt and Del Norte counties was Lee J. Browne of Arcata, President of the Lumberjack's Association. Browne's initial instincts had been to fight any diversion of Trinity River water into the Sacramento Valley, but he slowly came around under the blandishments of Carr and Engle. Opposition on the western slope feared that diversion would damage tourism, recreational activity, and future industrial development. The Del Norte Board of Supervisors requested that the California Water Resources Board survey the water resources of the Klamath and Smith rivers before diverting any water to other areas. In this request they received the influential support of State Senator Randolph Collier who, early in 1949, had blocked Ed Regan's attempt to return the Trinity River Diversion to the State Water Plan. Collier sought coastal allies in his desire to develop municipal water supplies for Yreka and irrigation in Butte and Shasta valleys. ¹³

Winning over public opinion on both sides of the mountain required delicacy and tact, not notable attributes of the Bureau of Reclamation. Newspaper accounts of Bureau activity in the area indicated that it aggressively promoted the project on both sides of the Trinity Mountains. Engle became very upset when the Bureau publicly met with Weaverville leaders, an action which excited suspicions on the western slope and led to organized opposition to
the Trinity project. Engle and Carr angrily debated Bureau tactics, particularly when the Congressman learned that the Bureau would attend a conference in Arcata arranged by Lee Browne to discuss the diversion. Engle feared that the Bureau was too far in front of public opinion; he wanted the Trinity diversion to be promoted by local interests on both sides of the mountain as preliminary to active Bureau involvement in the matter. In a letter to Irwin T. Quinn, who was then practicing law in Eureka, he expressed regret that the project had been publicly proposed prior to general understanding of the nature of the undertaking. He urged that local discussions be held on the premise that the people in the watershed of the Trinity River have the first claim on the water, not only for the use presently made, but also the uses in the future. He also denied any link between proposed Sacramento Valley Canals and the Trinity River diversion, saying that sufficient water already existed in the Valley for the canals service area.

As it turned out, Lee Browne had ulterior motives in holding the Arcata meeting. Political infighting in the First Congressional District, composed of Sacramento Valley and coastal counties, heated up during the summer between incumbent Republican Hubert B. Scudder and young liberal Democrat Roger Kent, son of the early California conservationist, William Kent, and a rising power in the state Democratic ranks. Scudder's opposition to Trinity diversion seriously compromised its chances for Congressional action and
jeopardized ultimate construction of the Sacramento Valley Canals. Kent and Browne believed the Congressman was vulnerable on the canals issue. Browne complained that Engle "had let Scudder off the hook" by denying any link between the two programs. Engle believed that Scudder was already "off the hook" by simply opposing the Trinity diversion. Furthermore, he said, "tying Trinity to the canals would not help the Trinity deal but might tangle the canals up in controversy for years to come." He advised Roger Kent not to be "a statesman" on the Trinity diversion issue, and Kent followed Engle's suggestion to allow only surplus water, water not used for present and future needs to be diverted into the Sacramento Valley. 16

Simultaneous with promoting pro-Trinity diversion strength on the western slope, Congressman Engle and Jim Carr moved to "firm up" their support in the Trinity-Shasta county area. Already they had received disturbing indications from Western Mining Council leadership and local Trinity mine operators that they opposed damming the Trinity as injurious to their operations. Robert E. Cook, publisher of the Trinity Journal in Weaverville, crystallized this opposition with the aid of Supervisor Russell A. Chancellor and Judge John Jess Morgan of Junction City, both representing the old families in the area. Cook resented having local meetings on the Trinity diversion dominated by--and slanted toward--the Bureau's propaganda line. When he published a paper in Durango, Colorado, he had seen Denver "rape the western slope of the Rockies of its water,"
and he opposed transmountain diversions of water on principle. 17

Unfortunately for his cause, Cook's opposition took the form of a personal dislike and distrust of Clair Engle, and the editorial spleen directed against Engle did much to undermine his position.

To counter the impact of the triad of Cook, Morgan, and Chancellor, Engle enlisted the talent of Armon Heffington of Weaver-ville and Mrs. Lorene Melquist of Lewiston. Born in the Red River country of Durant, Oklahoma, Heffington was in his late thirties when he took active leadership in the Trinity fight. He arrived in Weaver-ville from Yuma, Arizona, in July 1939 and was a juke box distributor. He became very active in local civic and fraternal organizations. He began the Toasters Club in Weaverville as well as initiating the annual Gold Nugget Days celebration on July 4th. He was active in the Weaverville Chamber of Commerce and fought a losing effort to incorporate Weaverville as a city in the late forties. 18

Mrs. Melquist was married to a gas station operator and became active in local politics as Secretary of the Trinity County Planning Commission. Her position as Secretary of the Weaverville Chamber of Commerce and on the Planning commission made her privy to the thinking of established business interests in Weaverville and helped her gain valuable political contacts throughout the State. She helped establish an airport near Weaverville and her interest in the Trinity diversion dated from an early association with Jim Carr. Carr had sought her advice for getting a Trinity man to head
up the pro-diversion forces, and she got the Bureau official and Heffington together.19

Heffington and Mrs. Melquist arranged the Weaverville Chamber of Commerce meeting at The Gables, south of Weaverville on October 11, 1950, which began the local drive to construct the Trinity River diversion as part of the Central Valley Project. With Heffington as presiding officer, fifty-one people from Trinity and Shasta counties heard Congressman Engle deliver the principal address. Engle's audience included C. Marshall Jones from the Bureau's District office in Chico, Assemblyman Lester T. Davis of Portola, and Ed Regan. The Congressman declared that people should decide then and now whether they wanted to proceed with the Trinity project. He talked about how he got the Folsom Dam and the Sacramento Valley canals through Congress without opposition. The American River Development Association and SVIC had acted as clearing houses to resolve problems relating to their respective interests. Engle urged that a similar bipartisan group be established in order to study the Trinity project. This group would determine if the Trinity project was desired by local residents and was legislatively feasible. Engle suggested that a joint committee be composed of an equal number of persons from Shasta and Trinity counties. If the committee decided to go ahead with the project, it should then attempt to reason with the people on the western slope.20

As of the October 1950 meeting at The Gables the Bureau of
Reclamation had not completed its report on the Trinity project. Earlier in July 1950 Regional Director Richard L. Boke had been concerned that the Korean situation would affect the entire reclamation program. He recommended the inclusion of the Trinity diversion in the emergency power program as the plan neared completion and could be built quickly and "on short notice."21 Trinity diversion complied with President Truman's order that forbade construction of new reclamation projects unless they contributed to the war effort. Combined with the proposed Bonneville--Central Valley power interconnection, the Trinity project could contribute to a potential hydroelectric power production of twenty-two billion kilowatts a year which was essential to aluminum production for the United States Air Force.22

Engle similarly noted the significance of the Korean War on future federal reclamation programs and huddled with Defense Emergency Power Administration (DEPA) officials in order to seek certification for Trinity project construction as soon as congressional authorization and appropriations had been obtained. Otherwise, he realized, the Trinity project would be shelved for the duration of the war emergency. In mid-May 1951 Engle received indications that DEPA would not grant certification for the Trinity project. "The biggest weakness in the Trinity Project is the fact that it does not produce a high volume of firm power until the Fairview or (Townly) Dam is built," he wrote, "which will take five years, and
makes the project a long-range project so far as the defense effort is concerned.\textsuperscript{23}

Following up on an editorial by the \textit{Sacramento Bee}, the Congressman declared that there were insufficient power reserves to meet full-scale war preparation requirements. Power shortages appeared in the Pacific Northwest during the summer of 1951. A concerned Secretary of the Interior, Oscar L. Chapman, remarked that DEPA planning must "narrow such gaps as rapidly as possible."\textsuperscript{24} In September 1951 Engle feared that power shortages in the Pacific Northwest would divert official attention from "the shaky power situation in California." He urged the Truman administration to include the Trinity project in its 1953 budget as a means to prevent similar power failures in northern California.\textsuperscript{24}

In October 1951 the Trinity project report was completed by local Bureau authorities and sent on to Commissioner Straus. Engle hailed the project, with its high benefit-cost ratio of 3:1 and other easy-to-construct features, as "an answer to the critical shortage in power reserves that exist in Northern California."\textsuperscript{25}

In late November 1951 Engle's persistence on the Bureau's interim planning report was rewarded when the Bureau informed Chapman that the President's budget included the Trinity project. "We believe that this proposed development should be undertaken at the earliest possible date," said the report. "Our studies indicate that serious shortages of both electric energy and irrigation water
will develop within a few years unless new generating capacity is added or a new water supply made available." Not only would the Trinity diversion contribute to the defense effort and "meet the most pressing needs now and in the immediate future for both power and water," it would also aid northern California's economy "where the population is increasing by leaps and bounds, and industry is rapidly expanding." 26

While federal agencies began to act on the Trinity report, local efforts continued to maximize public support for the diversion. In June 1951 the Trinity River Research Committees of Trinity, Shasta, Humboldt, and Del Norte counties met with federal and state reclamation officials at The Gables. State Senator Regan dominated the session as he spoke of the state legislature's attitude toward water projects. It was not encouraging. "We are 25 years too late," he said, "in the State of California regarding legislation which guarantees protection to the counties of their water resources." 27

Much more serious was the mountain-coastal schism in the area which did not make prospects bright for overwhelming approval. Representatives of the Hoopa Indians on the lower Klamath River pleaded that "the years ahead and the water needs of future generations must be considered." Once the water was taken away, it would be gone forever. Humboldt County expressed unalterable opposition to the project. Irwin Quinn urged that the Sacramento River be developed completely before grabbing water for the Trinity watershed. 28
This opposition was to be handled in a December 7th meeting in Eureka arranged by Lee Browne. Browne invited Richard Boke "to clear up confusion and misapprehension" over the Trinity matter. According to Boke, the Humboldt and Del Norte leaders were very concerned over means to protect their future needs for water and power. Boke responded that a positive planning program, which the Bureau would initiate, should be undertaken to determine their future needs. He concluded that coastal public opinion was divided, those who opposed Trinity development "no matter what" and those who would support the Trinity program "if a vigorous job of planning were done for the North Coast area and some kind of assurances could be given them in the report and through legislation that would tend to protect their long-term interests." 29

On January 5, 1952, Congressman Engle arrived in Redding to meet with Heffington's group, Ed Regan, Trinity Supervisors, and others to discuss the preliminary draft of the Trinity bill he intended to introduce in the House. He cautioned against publicity and specifically urged that no coastal opponent or Bureau of Reclamation official be invited to attend. The Redding meeting was co-chaired by Heffington and Alvin Cibula, a Redding businessman. "The time has now come," said Engle, "to either fish or cut bait—hence this project bill." As outlined by Engle, the draft contained six sections: (1) authorization as part of the Central Valley Project, with a provision to divert 600,000 acre-feet annually from the Trinity River and
additional water from Clear Creek; (2) description of the Trinity River development, including dams, power plants, and transmission lines; (3) a guarantee to Trinitarians at least twenty-five percent of the power produced from Trinity and Lewiston power plants; (4) incorporating Bulletins 25 and 26 of the State Division of Water Resources in locating and designing the works as authorized; (5) instructions to coordinate Trinity development with operations of other features of the CVP: and (6) authorizing $190,000,000 in construction funds as well as pay for additional burdens to county governments and education known as in lieu tax payments.

Each section was discussed in detail. Engle declared that these provisions were unprecedented except that Arizona obtained one-third of power and in-lieu payments for a specified time. We warned Trinitarians leaders against making too great a demand for power reservations for the county. When the project was completed, this power must be sold to other consumers. To "hold a string" on this power reserve, he suggested, Trinity County should specify a definite time limit on all contracts so that the "string" could be cut anytime Trinity County needed the power. 30

Section two found a major objection from Clair Hill, engineering consultant and member of the State Water Resources Board. Hill had long been interested in development in western Shasta County and the Bald Hills area. The long-sought Clickapudi Project had been a dream of his for years. He objected to a diversion dam on Clear
Creek in favor of a storage dam. Only by developing tributaries on
the Sacramento River could Shasta interests avoid the necessity of
Iron Canyon Dam. Nearly all members objected to section three
whereby they were restricted to only 35 percent of the power from
Lewiston and Trinity dams. They had wanted 25 percent of the
total power produced by the project. The meeting finally agreed to
request 50 percent of the power produced in Trinity County. Engle
"specifically" pledged that if the provisions of the bill were ruined
he would "kill the bill." 31

This meeting in Redding was held amidst growing controversy
about the project on both sides of the Trinity Alps and was itself a
source of major misunderstanding. Don O. Kane, editor of the
Humboldt Times since 1946, provided the catalyst for clarifying
anti-Trinity project sentiment along the coast. In November 1951,
the Humboldt Supervisors adopted a resolution in opposition to Trin-
ity development. A month later Engle responded by a public letter in
which he expressed confidence that the people in Trinity and Shasta
counties favored the project and that, rather than blocking the pro-
ject, Humboldt County should concentrate its attention in developing
its own water resources. Trinity County had 85 percent of the Trin-
ity River drainage area and 85 percent of the annual run-off. "In
all fairness, therefore," declared Engle, "Trinity should have more
to say concerning the development than Humboldt." 32

E. Larry Myers of Klamath, member of the Humboldt County
Road Commission directed Engle's attention to the fact that "there is no shortage of water in the Central Valley--there is an under-development." Myers said that "competent figures" existed--though he did not cite them--to show that more water from the San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers flowed in the Pacific Ocean than from the Klamath River. He also denounced Engle and Scudder for previous comments that the Sacramento Valley canals would not need Trinity water when the recently-released Project Report by the Bureau of Reclamation contradicted those claims. Myers urged that water resources in the Central Valley be fully developed before tapping the Klamath River basin.  

It was in this climate of public opinion that the Redding meeting was held between Engle and Trinitarian and Shasta leaders. An immediate uproar sounded on both sides of the Trinity Alps. In the Trinity watershed, miners led by old John Bergin expressed vociferous opposition to the meeting. Bergin denounced the Weaverville Chamber of Commerce as puppets of the Forest Service and in favor of the project. He berated Armon Heffington, that "no good son of a bitch, a carpetbagger--not even a taxpayer and if he keeps on he will get a ride on a rail out of Trinity." Bergin's anger was matched by that of Irwin Quinn in Eureka who resented Engle's failure to invite Humboldt and Del Norte representatives to the meeting. "It is our opinion from all this," said Quinn, "in attempting to have a secret meeting with only those
counties represented who would be in favor of the diversion of the Trinity River, and to exclude those counties on the West side of the divide, that you have been for the diversion all the time, in spite of your clear and unequivocal statement made at ... the Eureka Inn in November 1950, that unless we were united that the project be dropped and that you would not be a party to the diversion of water from the Trinity River." Quinn stated further that with the Feather River project under review and the conflict between Shasta and Tehama counties over Table Mountain Dam, and "at least 20-30 rivers" in his district that could be developed, why go after the Trinity? 35

Engle responded with a point-by-point refutation of Quinn's charges. He denied that the Redding meeting on January 5th had been "secret," but rather a "private" one. He denied having stated that Humboldt County had "the right to veto what the people in my district want." The unappropriated Trinity River water flow belongs not to Humboldt County, but to the State of California under the Water Code. Provisions in the code gave the county of origin--Trinity County, in this case--the major voice in the development of its water. "If Trinity County supports the Trinity development," said Engle, "I propose to represent their support in Congress and elsewhere, as it is my duty to do as Congressman from that district." He renewed his request to meet with Humboldt representatives to discuss their problem in hopes "we will get along better if reliance
is placed on dealing directly with each other." 36

Meanwhile, input from Shastan and Trinitarian leaders continued to come into Engle's office. He had hoped to receive some advice from the Bureau in a public meeting scheduled for mid-January, but inclement weather forced postponement until February 7th. By this time the team of Heffington and Melquist had made a significant impression upon local attitudes towards the project. By late January 1952 the Trinity County Board of Supervisors seemed united in support of the project, although Supervisor Lloyd Karrer, a widely-respected Trinitarian leader, was wary over having the Board of Supervisors come out in favor of the project before the State of California had made its recommendations known. Mrs. Melquist reported that Karrer "feels that is may be presumptious of the county inasmuch as it is a unit of State government and as such should not by-pass the wishes of the State and assume a responsibility which is perhaps not rightfully ours." 37 Mrs. Melquist feared that Karrer would refuse to take a position on the project and persuade other Supervisors not to do so until the issue was resolved. She also reported that Bob Cook, had experienced "a slight improvement in ye editors [sic] feelings about you and the project." 37

It appeared to Engle that "Our friend Lloyd had democracy in reverse--the Board of Supervisors should advise the State people"; in fact, he said, the fundamental responsibility of the Trinity decision lay with the Supervisors. "It is up to them to move first," he wrote.
"Their action will influence State action in the direction their own people want that action to take." He was glad to hear that Cook "seems to be softening up a little." He also informed Mrs. Melquist that he had spoken with State Engineer Bob Edmonston earlier in January, and Edmonston had shown him fifteen to twenty proposed projects on the Trinity River, including a diversion project identical to that of Engle's. 38

In fact, however, Cook's "softening" attitude had little substance. In his "Kibitzer" editorial column in late January, Cook expressed sarcastically that he was "glad" Engle had "finally acknowledged that Trinity County should have something to say as to whether or not the proposed Trinity River diversion should be built. Before, it was rather 'Their's not to question why, their's but to do or die' attitude." But, if as Engle claimed, Humboldt should not be concerned over Trinity development because 85% of the river was in the county, why should Shasta County have any say at all since it has no Trinity River water? 39

Engle justified Shasta County's participation in the discussions over Trinity diversion because Clear Creek was involved, and the county was a major beneficiary of the project since part of the $190 million necessary to build the project would be spent in Shasta County and more power will be available at Keswick and other power houses. It was not even certain that the project could be built even though all northern California interests were united behind it because
they had to compete with similar projects elsewhere in the reclamation west. He challenged the editor either to support or reject the Trinity project. At the Redding meeting on January 5th, Engle reminded Cook, "it was understood that the proposed legislation should be cleared with Trinity County first. Thereafter, any support and help we can get for the project, especially in the larger and pivotal counties such as Shasta, will be a great help and of course we would like to have the support of Humboldt and Del Norte if we can get it, and later the active help of the Valley counties." 40

On January 31, 1952, the Trinity County Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission and Heffington's Trinity River Research Committee discussed Engle's second preliminary draft. Over the objections of Marsh Jones from the Bureau's Chico office, Supervisor Karrer persuaded the group to delete the section guaranteeing a specific amount of flow below Lewiston Dam. Section three occasioned great debate because it provided only a twelve month renewal provision of power sales, and the meeting agreed unanimously to increase the renewal period to five years. Section four, calling for consideration of State reports, and Section five, relating to roads and in-lieu tax payments, could not be finalized, and the meeting decided to rely on Engle's discretion. Toward the end of the meeting, Ed Regan declared that he favored the Trinity diversion as long as Tehama County was "safeguarded" by Engle's bill. "We must make the best of the existing situation and get all we can," he
said. "If we sleep on the job, we won't get anything. We must help write the legislation governing this project." 41

Engle accepted the revisions and incorporated them into his third preliminary draft. Like Heffington and Mrs. Melquest, he was "very much encouraged" by Regan's qualified support of the project. He also hoped that the Trinity County Board of Supervisors "can very soon approve the project on the basis of preliminary draft No. 3, with the understanding that whatever further perfection is necessary with reference to roads or other matters can be cleaned up before the bill is introduced." 42

On February 7, 1952, in Weaverville another public hearing on the Trinity diversion was held. Marsh Jones attended and reported to Engle that it "will have done us some good." Jones thought that the opposition from Yreka and Klamath Falls and former Senator Quinn did not have "much effect on the Trinity County residents who apparently looked on them pretty much as foreigners coming in and telling them how to run their business." He thought "that we gained some ground in Trinity County itself even though Ed Regan gave a very lukewarm statement in which he ... said that he would favor the Project if adequate safeguards for Trinity County were included in your proposed bill." Concluded Jones: "I think we did the most good with witnesses from the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys. Max Vann, Tom Kees, Orie Breeze and Virgil O'Sullivan gave statements relative to the need for additional water." 43
Opposition from Yreka which surfaced at the Weaverville meeting intrigued Engle. "As soon as we get our ducks in a row in Trinity," Engle wrote, "I intend to ask them to take a delegation to Yreka to deal with the situation up there." He referred to a recent *Sacramento Bee* article reporting that the Yreka Chamber of Commerce opposed the diversion of water from the entire Klamath River watershed until a complete survey is made and demonstrated that surplus water was available. This resolution was drawn up by a Chamber of Commerce committee made up of a Supervisor of the Klamath National Forest and a Forest Ranger, among others. "Where does the Federal Supervisor of Klamath National Forest or State Forest Ranger fit into the picture of opposing a Federal proposal for the Trinity River Project," asked Engle. 44

Engle was committed to speak in Chico on February 21, 1952, and Heffington urged him to come to Weaverville to discuss his bill. Marsh Jones urged the Congressman to do just that in light of his own recent visit to Weaverville. "As you know perhaps better than anyone else, the bill they are forcing on you will be very difficult to move through the legislature, and they have even more surprises for you. From my conversations with many people over there, I think you could do a lot of good by meeting with them and attempting to get the language of the bill made as general as possible," wrote Jones. "After hearing them consider your Draft No. 2, I am fearful they will saddle you with a bill that would be quite infeasible from a
Following Jones' advice Engle paused in Weaverville after he delivered his address in Chico. He spoke before ninety Weaverville residents. He assured his listeners that he would withdraw his bill if at any time the people of the area were not satisfied with its provisions. He quickly read the third draft of the bill—repeating that the water flow below Lewiston would be "at least 175 cfs" unless the Fish and Game Commission approved a lesser flow down to 150 feet; reservation of 25 percent—some 56,000 kilowatts—for preference customers in Trinity County; additional federal payments to the county for roads, education, and county government costs; and in-lieu tax payments for the property to be lost by dam construction. Engle thought chances were "very good" that he could get the bill enacted into law as written and continued to praise the project for adding 190 million dollars to the economy of the area, promoting flood control and increase in taxable wealth. The Trinity "is the best left in the United States," Engle said, "it can pay itself out and help reduce the payout of the Central Valley Project." At that point engineer Clair Hill of Redding expressed opposition not so much at the diversion of Trinity River, but to the plans of the Bureau of Reclamation which diverged from the state plan in ways detrimental to Trinity and Shasta Counties. Hill disapproved of the engineering reports, feared that the shallow Trinity Reservoir, unlike the much deeper reservoir behind Shasta Dam, would warm
particularly since his office had just received a resolution from the Siskiyou County Pomona Grange opposing Trinity development. He suggested that Melquist and Heffington get resolutions from the local Grange in favor of the project. "Somebody is actually promoting opposition in Trinity," observed the Congressman, "and I suspect that it may be Senator Collier." 49

Events broke fast in late February and early March 1952 in Trinity County. The initial Trinity County Research Committee disbanded and reconstituted itself under Heffington's leadership; membership included Ed Regan, Supervisors Holly and Karrer, and Fred Paulsen. Engle's fourth preliminary draft then arrived, including clarifying language over roads. To Heffington's surprise, Engle proposed the following addendum; "provided that the Secretary may dispose of not in excess of 50% of the energy produced at said power plants to preference customers at a rate reflecting the cost of production of such power for the purpose of aiding and encouraging the development and production of the mineral and timber resources of California."

What Engle had done, in effect, was to throw down the gauntlet to P.G. & E. which, Engle expected, "probably will fight it tooth and nail." Even more significantly, this attempt to aid mineral and timber production by reducing the cost of power meant the establishment of a precedent contrary to national reclamation law. This law held the power production was incidental and supportive of irrigation as
the primary motive of federal reclamation. Engle sought advice from Heffington's group, the Board of Supervisors, and the Planning Commission. All three groups ultimately responded by informing the Congressman "to go ahead and do what you think best on this—but just so long as it does not infringe on the 25% already guaranteed Trinity and so long as it will not mean the defeat of the bill." 50

By early March 1952, then, Engle could claim to Don Smith, busy with organizing the nationally famous Red Bluff Bull Sale, that Trinitarians were solidly behind the Trinity project. Smith had become concerned since January 1952 that the project was not making headway in the north state area. He suggested that "a couple of dozen resolutions by different organizations up and down the Sacramento Valley Canals and the acknowledged shortage facing the Bureau in other sections might be helpful." Ever the promoter, Smith thought that the head of the propagandizing committee be located in a water-short area rather than from the area that wanted the dam. He specifically did not want this promotional group headquartered in Redding because lower counties had been aliened by Shasta County's opposition to the Table Mountain Dam or Iron Canyon flood control projects. "It puts a different light on the entire promotion," he said. 51

Engle did not disagree. In fact, he replied that the Trinity backers, including the Board of Supervisors, Planning Commission, Water Committee, and Sportsmen's Association, seemed dominant
in Trinity County, but he also wanted endorsements from all valley counties, SVIC, "and everyone else that we can get hold of. All of these resolutions should be stacked on the Governor's desk."  

Seemingly content with local backing, Engle now had to obtain endorsements from the State of California, which might be difficult if State Engineer Edmonston had his way. To Engle, the idea was to build enough political heat under Edmonston so that he could not do anything "but come along with us." They would begin with Shasta County and then obtain county resolutions down the Central Valley. "We have some trouble in Siskiyou County that is going to have to be cleared up," warned Engle. "I hope Marshall Lane, Supervisor of Glenn County and the Northern California County Supervisors Association can help us with it."  

He wanted to make certain that Siskiyouans understood that the Trinity did not originate in their watershed. "If Siskiyou County asserts some control over the small portion of the Trinity River which is involved in the Trinity River development, a precedent can be established which would enable some other county to upset and oppose plans made by Siskiyou in the use of her own water resources," he wrote.  

Marshall Lane was well-respected throughout the north state, and his position as Chairman of the Northern California County Supervisors Association made him an influential man indeed. This was particularly true since some opposition to the Trinity project existed in the Butte, Glenn, Colusa county area. This opposition
rested among orchardists and farmers along the Sacramento River, upset over the seepage problem created by the generally high river level. If Trinity water was added to the river flow, it would only serve to increase this problem. Additionally, local opposition to the Butte Basin Flood Control Plan as promoted by the Corps of Engineers was also a factor in opposition to Trinity diversion. To assuage this opposition, Engle and others favored the immediate construction of Black Butte Dam on Stony Creek which would hold back the flows for the Orland Project instead of adding to the flow of the Sacramento River.  

Engle's office was besieged with pleas from valley floor farmers to abandon the Trinity diversion project and support flood control and anti-seepage programs in the mid-valley area. Again the idea of a tributary dam program along both sides of the Sacramento River surfaced—a relic of past agitation over Table Mountain Dam. But, Engle had committed himself to multiple-purpose water projects capable of holding flood waters and releasing them during the dry summer months for irrigation. The Trinity project was ideal, he said, because "it is the most economical project now remaining in California" and "the best water and power project remaining in the entire western United States." The Feather River Project, on the other hand, would cost several times as much as the Trinity diversion and would eventually be constructed as a state water project.

In mid-March 1952 Don Smith and Marshall Lane became
concerned with political fall-out from the seepage problem. Lane thought that the Trinity project would only aggravate an already serious seepage problem. Smith found this notion to be nonsensical since the Sacramento Valley canals would use more water than would be diverted from the Trinity. He also wondered if the seepage complaint was factual or just an attempt to undermine the Trinity project. He sighed: "May be I am getting suspicious." While Engle was concerned with Lane's attitude, he did not expect that the Glenn County Supervisor would halt further water development in the Sacramento Valley area because of local problems. 57

Just as reservations about Trinity diversion began to stir in the mid-Sacramento Valley, the triad of Bob Cook, Judge John Jess Morgan, and Supervisor Russell Chancellor continued their rear-guard action against the pro-Trinity project forces. When Engle suggested that Trinity County send a delegation to Washington on behalf of the project, Cook retorted on March 13, 1951, that since the county already had a representative in the nation's capital, namely Engle himself, such a delegation would be expensive and superfluous. Mrs. Lurene Melquist became quite upset with the substance and tone of Cook's editorial and thought that Morgan and Chancellor had put the editor up to it. 58

Judge Morgan was very active in the county's Grange halls. His efforts led to the North Fork Grange's opposition to the Trinity project by a two-to-one majority in spite of personal appeals by
Heffington and Mrs. Melquist. But, the Hayfork Chamber of Commerce endorsed the project, and Mrs. Melquist and Fred Paulsen proselytized the Lewiston Grange members so effectively that they got another pro-Trinity diversion resolution. Even so, the most effective opposition still came from the miners who had the most to lose in Trinity development. They were concerned that the project would lessen water flow of the Trinity to such a level that they could not wash away their debris and tailing piles. If this debris were not washed down river by periodic flooding, the miners claimed, they would have to give up their mining claims and property. Mrs. Melquist sought to mitigate this concern by pledging "to relay their thinking to Engle, but was personally unimpressed with their argument: "They don't mine now and haven't for years."59

Aware of the potential for embarrassment from local miners, Engle advised his forces how to deal with their complaints. For one thing, he said, "there will always be flash floods below Lewiston" sufficient to remove their dumps and tailings. After all, the diversion of Trinity River water involved only 17 percent of the total flow while the remaining 83 percent continued down the river. Not only that, "a major part of the flood waters and flash floods originate below Lewiston." Should this water not be enough to remove the tailings, Engle cited the Gerlach case which provided compensation for people riparian to a stream dependent on water and flood waters which beneficially affect their property, or be
entitled to compensation for the loss of such benefits if attributable to the building of the dam."\(^{60}\)

An ominous development occurred in Shasta County in mid-March 1952 when Clair Hill sought a canal program for the Bald Hills country in southwestern Shasta County as part of the Trinity project. Don Smith reported that the Redding engineer hoped to enlist the support of SVIC by proposing a canal extension into Tehama County. Smith hesitated to commit himself on the proposal, saying that he had all he could handle in getting construction funds and water for the canals already authorized. When pressured further, however, the Red Bluff promoter said that his group would not resist Shastan attempts to get the Bald Hills canal included as an integral unit of the Central Valley Project. Noting that Hill was a member of the State Water Resources Board, Smith then wanted to know if that agency would oppose the Bureau's Trinity diversion plan. Clair Hill replied negatively, declaring the project to be "very sound and feasible," but he personally did not think Engle would introduce his bill during the current Congressional session. "I sort of keep my fingers crossed in talking to him\([\text{Hill}]\)," wrote Smith to Engle, "as I am not sure what his motives are."\(^{61}\)

The Congressman himself was never certain about Hill's enigmatic stance on the Trinity diversion. The Bald Hills proposal potentially could explode the Trinity-Shasta alliance on the entire project by exciting Trinitarian fears of Redding's "economic imperialism."
No engineering data that backed up the Bald Hills proposal existed, and diversion opponents could stall the entire project by citing the need for further study. Hill could not get anywhere without support from Tehama County, said Engle, "and I hope he doesn't get it."  

Engle also did not accept Hill's assessment about the state water agencies, particularly the Water Resources Board and the State Engineer. These agencies recognized the Trinity project as sound, but were not about to accept any project designated by the Bureau of Reclamation. To forstall any attempt to block the project by these agencies, Engle made arrangements with Governor Warren to be heard before the State Engineer's report was approved. Engle thought "it may be necessary for us to take a delegation to Sacramento and get the Governor to straighten out his own outfit." The Trinity bill, he said, would be introduced in Congress within a couple of weeks. "I do not intend to proceed with hearings until we get our ducks in a row which requires the approval of the State Engineer. That is the next big hurdle." With local Trinity backing nearly solid and with the approval of the State Engineer's office, "we will be ready to go.... I don't know whether the State Water Project Authority will butt into the matter or not, but we have to have State approval."

In late March 1952 Engle's carefully laid plans in Shasta and Trinity Counties began to unravel. The Shasta County Board of Supervisors endorsed a resolution in late March approving the project, but with a clause requesting irrigation water for the Bald
Hills area. Hill had written the resolution of endorsement. Jonathan C. Tibbitts, a Redding insurance agent and a pro-Trinity backer on the Shasta County Trinity River Research Committee, complained that Hill had done so without seeking advice from his committee. Tibbitts, surprised over the maneuver, warned that such a project would lessen development of electric power. Hill countered that it would make the Igo-Ono area north of Redding more productive. Tibbitts later groused that Hill's plan would sell the water for $2.50 an acre-foot. "Certainly," he wrote, "those Bald Hills ranchers will not sell us beefsteaks any cheaper if they get $2.50 water." 63

What appeared, then, was a split among Shastan economic interests, those who favored agricultural expansion and those who wanted to develop industrially. Tibbetts was in the latter group, seeking low-cost electricity to bring in industry, such as a magnesium plant. Hill favored continued subsidization of agriculture. Since most of the Board of Supervisors were farmers, Hill's logic appealed to them. Yet, according to Tibbitts, Hill said nothing while attending the Trinity diversion meetings for over eighteen months. "I do not feel he has been fair or above-board at all," he wrote, and hoped that Hill would submit to proper questioning by the Trinity Research Committee so that it could either endorse or reject his ideas. 64

This flap in Shasta County caught Engle entirely by surprise. He had been delaying introduction of his bill for several days to comply
with media requests to give them time to prepare complete coverage of the event. Waiting no longer, he introduced HR 9373 on April 1, 1952, authorizing the Bureau of Reclamation to construct and operate the Trinity diversion project, divert 660,000 acre-feet from the Trinity River across the mountains and into the Sacramento River, including the guarantees to Trinity County discussed previously.

The Congressman did not appreciate Shasta County's attempts to sweeten the deal for themselves. He told Andrew T. (Ted) Jessen, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, that he had issued a press statement which was impossible to withdraw. Moreover, he said, he had to introduce the bill or leave many newsmen "out on the limb. As a consequence, the bill is being introduced today." The bill, however, would be subject to any amendments proposed by Shasta County leaders. As for Hill's proposals, Engle said, it would be impossible since engineering studies of the proposal had not yet been made. If the studies found the change to be feasible, the bill could be amended later. As matters stood, said Engle, the Trinity report had not been approved by Secretary Chapman; he expected it to be cleared soon and then sent on to state authorities for their official approval. Meanwhile, Engle asked Marsh Jones to study the Hill proposals.

Jones submitted a two-page reconnaissance study a week later. He found that the Bald Hills area would "pay for very little more than the cost of construction and operation of their own distribution
system." In other words, construction and operating costs would have to be subsidized by power revenue. Rather than comment on Hill's remark that the Trinity was the first "water hole" for Bald Hills ranchers, Jones thought that storage facilities on Clear Creek or Cottonwood Creek would be more feasible in the future. While the Trinity project could support such an irrigation project, Jones said, it would be difficult to get Congress and the Bureau of Reclamation to go for it in view of far more superior land in the Sacramento Valley and the Delta-Mendota area that need water: "It would be very easy for someone to compare the Bald Hills Report with the Central Arizona Project and attack it with some of the same fine arguments you have used against your favorite project in Arizona." 66

Jones' report delighted Engle. "The initial dope you have is sufficient," he wrote, "it seems to me, to knock this project right into Clear Creek." He urged Jones to get the Bald Hills data read, but "I would prefer not to have the Bureau turn down Clair Hill's proposal." 67 He had been engaged in heavy negotiations with Secretary Chapman to assure Redding businessmen that enough power would be available at low rates to provide for a magnesium plant near Redding. On April 15, 1952, Chapman publicly made those assurances. 68 Engle immediately invited the Harvey Aluminum Company, Reynolds Aluminum, and the Kaiser Company to look into the possibilities of establishing a magnesium plant near Redding. In fact, Engle assured the Harvey Company that he would provide it with a list of influential
Bureau officials and local leaders to see in Redding. Harvey Company officials did seem interested in such a venture if a block of firm power could be guaranteed. 69

If the magnesium plant developed into reality, Engle expected local Redding merchants to be "knocking his Hill's proposal in the head. Economic self-interest should compel them not to reduce the power load and low-cost power for industrial development coming out of the Trinity project. "Before we get through," Engle declared, "we ought to have a big whoop-te-do for industrial development that will run Clair Hill's proposal completely off the scene."' Engle did not want to have Hill "running down to the State Water Board, and the State Engineer and sabotaging us; but on the contrary in the position where because of local pressures he had to support the project as is--lock, stock and barrel." 70

This tempest in Redding did not sit well with Heffington and his people in the Trinity Mountains. Opponents like Morgan and Chancellor warned Trinitarians that Engle's guarantees in his bill did not mean a thing that sooner or later Shasta County would "grab benefits" at Trinity's expense. In a joint meeting of the Trinity and Shasta County Boards of Supervisors Heffington threatened to withdraw Trinity support from the Bald Hills program if it stalled congressional authorization of the Trinity project. Engle, ably assisted by Marsh Jones, offered an alternative irrigation project on Cow Creek near Millville which was more self-supporting than the Bald Hills
idea. Bald Hills development, he declared, would jeopardize industrial development in Shasta County by diverting water before it passed through the last two powerhouses on its way to Keswick Reservoir. He believed that the Bald Hills flap would do nothing to acquire state endorsement of the Trinity project: "This project is such a good gravy train, that I am afraid before we are through, we are going to have so many people trying to climb aboard for some of the benefits that the train will not be able to pull the load." 

While the Bald Hills controversy threatened Trinitarian and Shastan unity on the Trinity diversion, Don Smith labored heroically in Tehama County and southward down the Sacramento Valley in collecting resolutions supporting the project from private and public groups. His efforts were hampered, however, by the seepage problem caused by the high flows of the Sacramento River. By early April 1952 Congressman Engle also became concerned with the seepage problem, which "could be a serious obstacle to future development unless handled very carefully." Don Smith later called Marshall Lane to determine if "the seepage furor had subsided enough down there so that he could go out and get some resolutions urging State approval and Congressional authorization of the Trinity Project." Lane was noncommittal. He thought the seepage crisis was being debated in eastern Glenn County and thought that "something should be done about the situation before he would be interested in trying to get much support for the Trinity."
In spite of his undeniable skills in accommodation Smith found that the seepage problem would not disappear. Engle acknowledged the problem as well, but said "We shouldn't get too discouraged about the way the Trinity Bill is developing. We have a right to expect trouble, but I think we can make it around it all right." Now, Engle said, attention must be focussed on winning state approval of the project. "Without it we will be stymied;" he wrote, "but with it, we can for all practical purposes ignore the opposition from Humboldt. Our Congressional Committee will not give any time or attention to sqawkers who have been overruled by the State water people. In other words, the Congressional Committee will regard the recommendation of the State as the decision of the State on any local conflicts." Concerned as they were by the Redding magnesium plant proposal and the seepage problem along the Sacramento River, Bureau officials and Engle were pleased by the quiet and cooperative attitude of the new Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. Good news from the Bureau that additional water rights applications were made for the Trinity diversion and Sacramento Valley canals added to the good feeling. Engle was willing to wait until they got state approval for the Trinity project before filing necessary applications. He wanted to avoid "certain demagogues out there in the State, a chance to yell about the Federal Government trying to take over the Trinity." In May 1952, Boke found himself in general agreement with Engle's views.
He pointed to the recent request by the Humboldt supervisors for a Bureau study of their area's resources, a response to the proselytizing efforts of Marsh Jones and other Bureau officials. As a result Boke saw "a great deal more understanding over there and confidence in our whole program than we had even five or six months ago." Moreover, contrary to the "terrible small amount of money" appropriated by the House of Representatives for investigation, Boke began to push Bureau study and plans for the Upper Klamath River Basin area in hopes of building "a better background" for congressional hearings on the Trinity in the next year or so. 78

Engle's correspondence, however, indicates his overriding concern in the April-June period to be the acquisition of state approval for Trinity diversion. "Because of certain selfish opposition in the Humboldt area," he wrote to the editor of the Sacramento Bee, "the Project will be in serious trouble unless the Governor and his state agencies support it." 79 Plans for creation of a California Water Committee for Trinity River Development were set in motion at this time. By mid-June these plans had progressed so far that Mrs. Melquist, labelled the "Trinity Firecracker" by an Eureka newspaper, 80 thought it "a foregone conclusion" that Armon Heffington would be the organization's first chairman. 81

In early June 1952 SVIC sponsored a meeting in Weaverville to organize a committee to work for state and congressional approval of the Trinity project. Less than forty people attended, representing
Butte, Glenn, Colusa, Tehama, Kern, and Trinity counties.

Participants included the entire Trinity County Board of Supervisors (except Russell Chancellor), Don Smith, Ed Regan, Max Vann and his son-in-law, Willows attorney Virgil O'Sullivan, and Red Bluff Daily News publisher Marion S. ("Curly") Walker. On Vann's motion a committee was formed under Heffington's leadership, composed of three members from each of the seven interested counties subject to the approval of their respective Board of Supervisors. By late July significant support was obtained in the San Joaquin Valley counties of Fresno, Tulare, Kings, and Merced. 82

This drive for State authorization came at a most opportune time. On May 2, 1952, Secretary Chapman approved the Bureau reports on the Trinity and Sacramento Valley Canals which clearly noted their interrelationship in terms of economic and repayment analyses and of the need for Trinity water to meet long-term water supplies for the canals service area. 83 In June and July the canals service area experienced water shortages. In the Artois area of Glenn County some 450 wells caused a drop in the water table readings. In the Arbuckle area of Colusa County orchardists went into dry production resulting in lower yields. Farmers southwest of Williams were denied access to deep wells by sandy soil formations causing frequent well cave-ins, and much of their domestic water needs had to be hauled in. 84

As the push for State authorization went into high gear during
the summer of 1952, Humboldt County interests, headed by Eureka realtor Richard F. Denbo and the Eureka Chamber of Commerce, wrote a letter to the chambers of commerce throughout the country in opposition to Trinity diversion. Denbo denounced the Bureau of Reclamation for making a grab on the Trinity through Engle's bill (HR 7343). He said that Del Norte, Humboldt, and the north coastal area opposed the Trinity project and urged members of Congress to vote against HR 7343. Engle was taken aback by Denbo's inspired thrust and conceded that the Eurekan realtor "has stirred up action" in Washington. He urged that Heffington work quickly to counter the reaction, and one of the first things he could do would be to write a letter to members of Congress and the national chambers of commerce in favor of the Trinity project. Engle drafted a letter for the Weaverville Chamber of Commerce to use, emphasizing the fact that the project as one of the few existing projects that qualified under the repayment provisions of reclamation law; that it was a multiple purpose project—not merely a power project; that it was designed to irrigate the Central Valley of California; and that it generated electric power to repay most of the project costs and "brace up" power reserves in the north state, provide flood control and improve fishing resources.

Engle's suggested draft was accepted almost entirely, and Heffington and Lorene Melquist acted to get "the ball rolling immediately." Don Smith and Marshall Lane pledged that SVIC would pay for the
expenses incurred in preparing and mailing the letters. Ed Regan, asked for two hundred copies of the Engle Trinity bill to be distributed to the state legislature. 87

It soon became clear that the Denbo letter had backfired on its author. In June the House passed Scudder's HR 6007 to improve the Humboldt Bay Harbor at Eureka and sent it on to the Senate Committee on Public Works chaired by Dennis Chavez of New Mexico. Anxious to adjourn in a presidential election year, the Senate took up only non-controversial items. On Friday, July 2, Heffington, still smarting over Denbo's letter, filed notice with Engle's Washington office that he was "interested in the economics of the harbor project and might possibly want to be heard in opposition." Unless he withdrew opposition by ten o'clock EST on the morning of July 3rd, the bill would not be acted upon in the Senate in the current session. Thus began the evening of July 2nd, with Heffington stationed near his home telephone and talking through the night, one his wife remembers "as a nightmare." 88

Congressman Scudder sounded the alarm to his friends in Humboldt County. A hasty meeting was set up in Eureka, including Chester Petersen, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, Lee Browne of the county's Water Resources Committee, and William Smullin, Chairman of the Humboldt County Planning Commission. Lee Browne was the first to sense a relationship between the Humboldt Bay crisis and Denbo's letter. The group then called Ed Regan and Heffington
for more information. Heffington made it simple: repudiate the Denbo letters to the Chambers of Commerce and members of Congress. Peterson denounced the letters and declared they did not reflect the position of the Humboldt supervisors. Their only concern was the determination of water surplus so that their future needs would not be jeopardized. For that reason, Peterson said, they used the Bureau to make the survey.

At three o'clock on Saturday morning July 3rd, Smullin and Browne called Jim Carr in his Maryland home. Carr was in Washington as Technical Advisor to the Subcommittee of Irrigation and Reclamation studying the Trinity project. Carr also denounced the Denbo letters and remarked that Congressman Engle was very concerned over the affair. Finally, as if to make sure the Humboldt leaders got the message, Regan informed them at 2 o'clock (PST) that something had to be done about the Denbo letters. A very tired Smullin retorted that if Heffington insisted on blocking the Humboldt Bay bill, it would mean "all out war between the two counties which could only spell great damage to both counties!"\(^{89}\)

The Humboldt group finally caved in and so informed Heffington. Heffington withdrew his request at four o'clock (PST). He later remarked that he had acted in response to the Denbo letters; agreed that Humboldt County concern over water surplus was reasonable; and supported Lee Browne's call for a meeting between Trinitarians and the Humboldt County Chamber of Commerce to work out their
common problems.

According to reports received from Engle's office, 90 chastened Humboldt leaders proved to be more accommodating to Trinity people. Mrs. Melquist fairly gloated over the triumph: "What fun--looks like the Humboldt boys are going to sit up and act like little gentlemen for a change. Nothing like giving them a shot of their own medicine to make Christians out of them!" Heffington and Engle were less harsh, Engle thinking that Heffington's action was excellent; "the timing, execution and retreat were perfectly handled to give Humboldt County an object lesson in how power politics can work but without ruining the project and leaving any lasting grudges." 92

Throughout July and August the Trinity forces labored to bring in support to win State authorization. They acquired the endorsement and active aid of a Santa Clara County consumers group led by John J. Thorne of San Jose and Mrs. Grace McDonald of Santa Clara. This support was significant for they were veterans in acquiring funds and molding public opinion behind power and water issues. Their aid was instrumental behind the American River Development Association. It was not lost upon Thorne and Mrs. McDonald, however, that the Trinity diversion was of vital importance to the hard-pressed coastal area around Santa Clara, San Benito, and southern Alameda counties. Heffington and Mrs. Melquist were grateful for their support since they brought in attorney Herbert C. Jones of San Jose to lobby for them in Washington. A noted water rights authority and
a former state senator, Jones was an early backer of the Central Valley Project and lobbied for the American River Development. 93

In spite of accumulating resolutions from the Sacramento Valley and the Trinity mountains, the State Engineer's office was in no hurry to approve the Bureau of Reclamation's report on the Trinity project. In fact, State Engineer Edmonston sought a two-month extension early in October 1952 due to pressing business. Edmonston's action upset Heffington and Max Vann who co-authored a letter to the governor requesting early action on the report. They hoped to maintain priority on the congressional calendar, which involved early approval by the Bureau of the Budget and the President. 94

Partly as a result of Edmonston's hesitance in approving the Bureau's report, Engle, Smith, and Heffington coordinated a major pro-Trinity project meeting on September 16th in Red Bluff. As Engle himself put it: "The meeting should be of key men and committees for purpose of formulating program ahead." 95 He had several purposes in mind when he came back to the state in early September. For one thing he spent several days campaigning with Democratic presidential nominee Governor Adlai E. Stevenson of Illinois, whom Heffington and Mrs. Melquist idolized. Then, after the big September 16th meeting, he planned to go to Siskiyou County and "put a halt to some of the racket Collier is making up there" about Trinity and Klamath water. He requested aid and information from Dick Boke, particularly a draft of the Sly Park contract proposing local management to "offset some of the misinformation about federal
domination of water matters."96

The meeting was held as scheduled in the Tremont Hotel. Don Smith handled the arrangements; Heffington drafted the invitations and Mrs. Melquist sent them out to key people. Marshall Jones managed to get a respectable attendance from irrigation districts in the valley counties, and all twelve counties in the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys represented in the California Water Committee were represented. It was a great success. The Santa Clara County group headed by Grace McDonald reported that organized labor supported the project. A committee was organized to meet with Governor Warren. McDonald later suggested that her friend Herbert Jones be placed on it. She was so enthused over the Red Bluff affair that she urged Heffington and his group to participate in a meeting of Santa Clara, San Benito, and Alameda counties to round up further popular support. Engle thought that it was a good idea, telling Mrs. McDonald that it should be handled by "grass-roots supporters of the Trinity Project rather than by me."97 To Armon Heffington, however, he urged both caution and delay to gain time to seek an invitation from Boards of Supervisors, City councils, or some other public body. In that way the meeting would avoid the taint of being controlled by politicians like Engle who had "an axe to grind."98 The Congressman also promised Heffington that he would see Don Smith to set up financing for his state group. "Except for getting around the obstacles in the State Engineer's office," he said, "that is the most important next thing that must be
In early November 1952 national election results dimmed the fires of Trinity diversion proponents. Engle, while disappointed, sought to "salvage" something out of the "wreckage," namely push the SMUD contract through immediately to provide a new customer for Central Valley Project power, and block state control of the Project movement, and clear the Trinity project through the Bureau of the Budget and send it to Congress before the Eisenhower Administration assumed office. Thus, Engle said, the Trinity "will be another Democratic accomplishment." According to Engle, Mike Straus agreed that "we can certainly salvage this item and he says that the paper work necessary to do it is in good order." Upon that, Engle left the country for three weeks duty with the Fifth Air Force in Korea.

While Engle was in Korea, Jim Carr appeared in Redding and "discussed the election for its effect on the Trinity project, but felt that all is not lost by a long shot." According to some of Engle's political contacts in Redding, it was certain that Governor Warren would have a job in Washington before long. The contact volunteered to write to Heffington to see if the committee formed on September 16th could see Warren and obtain State approval of the Bureau's report on the Trinity. 101 Engle, still in Korea, could not understand why a committee like Heffington's could not reach the Governor, particularly since he spent almost three hours with Warren in mid-
October. He felt certain that somebody in California could set up an appointment for Heffington and his friends.\textsuperscript{102}

As the Truman Administration neared its end, Engle put increasing pressure on Secretary Chapman to report a finding of feasibility under Section 9 (a) of the Reclamation Act of 1939. While sympathetic to the project, Chapman appeared in no hurry to sign this report of feasibility, much to Engle's disgust. At one point the Congressman angrily declared that the Secretary "seems to get the jitters everytime he has to make a decision."\textsuperscript{103} But, Engle's political pressure ultimately induced the desired authorization on January 2, 1953, just days before the Eisenhower Administration assumed power. Chapman's authorization was in accordance with precedents established by the Palisades Dam in southern Idaho in 1941 and the Solano project in California in 1948. On January 3, 1953, Engle introduced legislation to obtain Congressional authorization and appropriations for the immediate construction of the Trinity at a total cost of $190,000,000 including $40,000,000 for power facilities.\textsuperscript{104} He also intended to hold hearings for the Trinity project in Redding and urged Trinitarian supporters to prepare themselves. When Republicans took over the House in January 1953, Engle boasted:

"While you Republicans were out in the living room, leading cheers and slapping each other's backs, I was luggin' the bacon out the back door."\textsuperscript{105}
FOOTNOTES


2 Central Valley Project Documents, pp. 877-879.


5 Ken Loomis, Interview, May 25, 1976.

6 Trinity River Division Features, p. 1.


11 Trinity River Division, H. Doc. 147, pp. 7-8.


15 Clair Engle, Press Release, no date, EP., WF5.

16 Letter from Roger Kent, February 17, 1977; Clair Engle to Roger Kent, July 31, 1950, EP., WF5.


18 Ila M. Heffington, Interview, May 25, 1976; Mrs. Lorene Heffington, Interview, June 16, 1976.

19 Mrs. Lorene Heffington, Interview, May 25, 1976.

20 Minutes of Special Meeting Sponsored by Weaverville Chamber of Commerce, October 11, 1950, EP., WF5.


22 Del Norte Triplicate, December 22, 1950.

23 Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, May 14, 1951, EP., WF5.

24 Oscar L. Chapman to Clair Engle, no date, EP., WF5.


26 G. W. Lineweaver to the Secretary of the Interior, November 27, 1951, EP., WF5.

27 Trinity River Research Committee Minutes, June 26, 1951, EP., WF5.

28 Ibid.

29 Richard L. Boke, Memorandum for the Files, December 12, 1951, EP., WF5.
Trinity-Shasta Research Committee Minutes, January 5, 1952, EP., WF5.

Ibid.

Ibid.

E. Larry Myers to Clair Engle, January 14, 1952, EP., WF5.


The Trinity Journal, December 27, 1951.


Ibid.


Ibid.

51 Don M. Smith to Clair Engle, March 5, 1952, EP., WF5.

52 Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, March 7, 1952, EP., WF5.

53 Ibid.

54 Clair Engle to H. Coggins, No Date, EP., WF5.


57 Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, March 17, 1952, EP., WF5.


60 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, March 18, 1952, EP., WF5.

61 Don M. Smith to Clair Engle, March 17, 1952, EP., WF5.


64 Jonathan C. Tibbetts to Clair Engle, April 4, 1952, EP., WF5.

65 Clair Engle to Andrew T. Jessen, April 1, 1952, EP., WF5.


69 Clair Engle to Keith Linder, April 16, 1952, and Laurence A. Harvey to Clair Engle, April 21, 1952, EP., WF5.

71 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, April 1, 1952, EP., WF5.
72 Ibid.
73 Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, April 7, 1952, EP., WF5.
74 Don M. Smith to Clair Engle, April 11, 1952, EP., WF5.
75 Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, April 11, 1952, EP., WF5.
76 Ibid, April 7, 1952.
77 Clair Engle to Richard L. Boke, April 24, 1952, EP., WF5.
78 Richard L. Boke to Clair Engle, May 1, 1952, EP., WF5.
79 Clair Engle to Walter P. Jones, April 9, 1952, EP., WF5.
80 The Eureka Independent, June 23, 1952.
82 The Trinity Journal, June 12, 1952.
83 Sacramento Canals Unit, H. Doc. 73, pp. xiii-xvi.
84 Sacramento Bee, July 19, 1952.
85 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, June 19, 1952, EP., WF5.
89 The Eureka Independent, July 9, 1952.
90 Jack Matteson to Don M. Smith, July 14, 1952, EP., WF5.
91 Lorene Melquist to Clair Engle, No Date, EP., WF5.
92 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, August 29, 1952, EP., WF5.
Alden B. Campen to Armon Heffington, June 23, 1952, and Lorene Melquist to Clair Engle, No Date, EP., WF5.


Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, September 3, 1952, EP., WF5.


Ibid.

Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, September 24, 1952, EP., WF5.


Charles M. Dicker to Clair Engle, November 18, 1952, EP., WF5.

Clair Engle to Charles M. Dicker, November 22, EP., WF5.


Sacramento Bee, October 31, 1964.
Chapter V

TRINITY RIVER DIVISION,
1953-1955

Secretary Chapman's finding of feasibility for the Trinity project stirred up a storm of recrimination and praise in northern California. Curious about the nature of this response, Congressman Engle asked the Chico office of the Bureau to keep him posted "on the howls, editorial and otherwise, coming out of Humboldt."¹ Perhaps best stated in the pages of the Humboldt Times and in a resolution adopted by the Humboldt County Supervisors, people on the western slope saw their vast stands of virgin pine remaining unexploited with a resulting loss of employment opportunities. They requested that Chapman's finding of feasibility be delayed until the current Bureau investigation of the area's natural resources was completed.²

Engle replied that Chapman's action was fully in accord with federal reclamation law and dismissed as "ridiculous" the notion that the Trinity project would jeopardize future industrial development on the west side of the mountains. Already, he said, thirteen million acre-feet of water escaped into the Pacific Ocean, twice the
consumptive use of the nation's twelve largest urban areas. In addition, eighty-five percent of the Trinity River watershed lay in Trinity County, and its residents should have some say in the use of this water. The Congressman urged them "to take a constructive approach to the development of the now wasting water resources."  

Congressman Engle also requested that Governor Warren provide early State approval of the Trinity project because Congress could not authorize appropriations until California consigned "water rights necessary to the operation of the project." He urged Dick Boke not to make any changes in the Trinity report for the moment. To do so, he thought, would enable the State, no doubt meaning Bob Edmonston, to "use it as a pretext for restudying the whole matter and stalling us for another year." Finally, he urged Paul C. Bodenhamer, the liberal, anti-McCarthyite editor of the Redding Record-Searchlight, to do all he could to get "real, active support" among Shastans, especially chambers of commerce and other organizational support. "Shasta County has the best leadership in northern California when it really wants to get going," he said, "but for some reason or other has never really slugged for the Trinity." Since the diversion project contracts would "funnel" through Redding, it would be "a tremendous boost to Redding and Shasta County" during the construction period and after.  

Reaction in Trinity County to Chapman's action was somewhat mixed, although it was primarily favorable. It spurred Armon
Heffington to continue his efforts to arrange a meeting with Governor Warren. Lorene Melquist noted that a public meeting was scheduled for January 11, 1953, to discuss the Trinity project and feared that opponents "from down river are working around the clock" to stack the meeting against the project. 7

The January 11th meeting reportedly "was very well behaved--no fights or animosity." 8 Dominating the anti-project group was Mrs. Winifred Maker of Lewiston. She owned property that would be inundated by rising dam waters. Born and raised in the Trinity Mountains, Mrs. Maker had spent most of her life on the Trinity River. She brought to the surface the underlying discontent of long-time Trinity residents against the growing political and economic power of the "newcomers" in Weaverville and other communities. These newcomers, said Mrs. Maker, were people on the make, who "have no deep love for the county and little or no interest in its future." These newcomers may be classified as businessmen seeking profit from the expected economic boom, laborers seeking jobs during this boom period, those who wanted to sell their property during the boom, and property owners near the projected dam and reservoir sites who anticipated rising land values. 9

Mrs. Maker's speech, full of rhetorical flourishes and visions of nuclear apocalypse, did not persuade many in the audience. According to Mrs. Melquist the old ranch woman by her constant references to those who are trying "to push this down the throat of
the real Trinitarians! She succeeded in antagonizing all the new-comers (including me and Armon!) plus some of the real oldtimers." Mrs. Melquist suspected that Winifred Maker had been sponsored by downriver opponents. When it was all over, the meeting voted by raised hands, 46-6, to endorse Engle's bill.

Engle took time to reply to Mrs. Maker's concerns. He agreed that Central Valley resources should be utilized to the fullest extent, but pointed out that the cost of such development was not feasible economically. Consequently, construction of the Trinity diversion was "inevitable," and Trinitarians like Mrs. Maker "should take the bull by the horns and make the best possible arrangement for themselves.... Too often the mountain areas which I represent have dilly dallied around until they lost control of the legislation affecting their own water because of the tremendous pressures from the heavily populated areas."

While sensitive to circumstances faced by people like Mrs. Maker, Engle's combative instincts "delighted to hear the howls and shrieks of raging pain from those Humboldt County obstructionists." Other news from the north coast, however, mitigated this pleasure. First, by mid-January 1953 "growls from Humboldt" poured into Congress in the form of anti-project resolutions and letters without accompanying resolutions of support from the Sacramento Valley. Prominent among these "growls" was Richard F. Denbo's letter protesting Secretary Chapman's action, which Congressman Scudder
noted made Engle "very unhappy." Scudder himself sought quietly to prepare legislation to amend the Reclamation Act of 1939 by repeal of the Secretary of the Interior's authority unilaterally to determine findings of feasibility. Finally, members of the California legislature, led by Randloph Collier, moved to set up an interstate water commission dealing with problems in the Klamath River Basin.

The Congressman was much more concerned with the possibility that the downriver opposition may seek Governor Warren's refusal to endorse the project and the necessary water rights to put the project into operation. Therefore, he urged Armon Heffington to prepare "a convincing presentation" for the governor, such as bringing Bureau officials like Marsh Jones to answer technical engineering questions. "Otherwise," Engle concluded, "Edmonston may get into the picture and try to embarrass you." Engle also received hints from the Governor's press secretary, Merrill F. ("Pop") Small, that the Governor intended to give Trinity diversion backers and opponents a hearing "in the near future.”

Pop Small had earlier indicated to Engle that the Governor's hesitancy on the matter was the result of his desire to obtain more data on the project. Additionally, Small said, the Governor's office had received a request from Irwin Quinn to hear the opponents of the project. "The Hearing before the Governor should be organized," advised Engle to Heffington, "with support from the Valley areas. You should take more engineering help along with you in the event
that Edmonston shows up on the other side. This was sound advice, as Heffington well knew, because Edmonston had earlier demolished him during an exchange before a group interested in promoting the Trinity project.

On February 4 and 5, 1953, Governor Warren held a formal conference with opponents and proponents of the Trinity diversion. On the 4th Collier and Quinn led a twenty-man delegation into the Governor's office to urge the Governor to withhold approval of the project. Delegation spokesmen reiterated familiar arguments. They wanted the proposed diversion delayed until the Bureau's survey of the area's resources was concluded; they wanted all water resources of the Sacramento Valley to be developed before seeking water from the Klamath Basin; Trinity diversion might injure future industrial, tourist, fishing, and recreational growth. Governor Warren summed it up by remarking that if the surveys indicated that the western slope had enough water to meet its present and future needs, it "would be willing to share their water with other parts of the state where it was badly needed."  

On February 5th, Ed Regan and Armon Heffington marched their group into the governor's office. Marsh Jones presented a lengthy paper demonstrating that under Engle's bill, water flow down river from Lewiston Dam would rise three times the normal flow of the Trinity during the summer; that the impact on salmon and steelhead spawning would be negligible; that the Humboldt's timber and pulp
industry would not be damaged; and that it was cheaper to divert water from the Trinity than to build a series of tributary dams along the Sacramento Valley and such coastal counties as Santa Clara, San Benito, Alameda, and Contra Costa. Heffington pointed to the near unanimity of public support for the project in Trinity County. Shasta County's representative, Charles Dicker of Redding, indicated the project's benefits to his area in the form of timber and agricultural expansion as well as stimulating industrial development in the Redding area. Max Vann and Marshall Lane emphasized the need for Trinity water to boost lowering water tables in the mid-Sacramento Valley area. Project water, they said, could irrigate 200,000 acres and increase the local growing season without materially exacerbating the local seepage problem. Representatives from Santa Clara and Alameda counties spoke of the dire need for additional water and power supplies to serve the area's industrial base, agriculture in the coastal valleys, and facilitate saline repulsion in the Delta.  

Warren's primary concern appeared not to be with the economic and engineering feasibility of the project, which he readily accepted, but whether the project would indirectly cause injury to residents of the county of origin. Collier broke in to reply to those concerns. He declared that what was at issue was an interstate stream, an interstate watershed, through which the stream flowed past a million acres of an Indian reservation. These Indians had just recently allowed federal officials on their property to survey the water and
other natural resources. "We are determined," Collier said, "before any water leaves that watershed to have a full inventory of our needs. If there is surplus water, Trinity jumped the gun and did not consult her neighbors."¹⁹

"Well, its all over and done with," crowed Lorene Melquist. She thought that Regan, Heffington, and Jones had done a masterful job and made a fine impression on the Governor. As far as she was concerned, Collier had "made a Grade A Fool of himself-interrupted Regan's summary, refused to sit down when the Gove. [sic] shushed him, and finally when Warren really made his displeasure known he sat down very reluctantly, still muttering in his beard." After the meeting Warren took Regan aside and told him that the Trinity was a needed project, but Regan himself thought "that politics may prevent an early indication of State approval."²⁰

During February and March 1953, however, what had appeared as solid opposition to Engle's bill suddenly dissolved, largely through the efforts of Lee Browne who publicized the efforts of Randolph Collier and his allies in Oregon to push through the California-Oregon water compact in hopes of thwarting the Trinity project. Browne had been scheduled to appear at the Governor's conference, but refused to go at the last minute when he learned that Denbo, Larry Myers, and others were also scheduled to testify. Browne had long been persuaded that Denbo's opposition to the project had been motivated by the coffers of private utilities, no doubt P.G. & E. and
the California-Oregon Power Company (COPCO). He sent testimony to the governor by letter. He pointed to the efforts of COPCO and Senators Collier and Way to establish a joint California-Oregon committee as an effort to prevent public power on the Trinity.²¹

Engle himself had his own thoughts about Collier's activities. In late February 1953 he met with Vince Ryan of Weaverville, brother of Vernon and a long time political ally, and both agreed that Collier "may have strong financial support."²² Engle was opposed to any negotiations with Oregon over the Klamath River watershed since interstate water compacts served as a limitation to water use by downstream users. "I suspect that Collier's move is another delaying tactic," he wrote, "very much like his request for more study: he wants to study the Trinity to death."²³

In spite of Collier's harassing tactics in the north, plans were laid to link the Trinity project with the proposed San Luis project on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley. The San Luis service area consisted of some 500,000 acres near Los Banos extending along the eastern slope of the Coast Range from Merced County in the north through Fresno, Kings, and Kern counties to the south. It is an area dominated by large landholders who got the Bureau to investigate the project during World War II by putting up $40,000 for exploratory studies. They organized the Westlands Water District and then fought for Congressional authorization. California opposed the Bureau's project because it proposed to use the San Luis
Reservoir site for its own massive Feather River Project to bring water into the San Joaquin Valley and southern California.  

A significant move toward this union of interests was the meeting on March 16, 1953, of the California Committee for Trinity River Development (CCTRDR) in Sacramento. Armon Heffington had put this state-wide group together a few months earlier and had toured the San Joaquin Valley to pick up support for the Trinity diversion. The Sacramento meeting was to incorporate the group and to establish long range policies. Heffington was elected President while veteran Democratic politician Gordon Garland of Tulare County became Vice President. Mrs. Melquist became Secretary-Treasurer. Named to the Board of Directors were veterans of the Sacramento Valley Canals campaign: Bob Anderson and H.G. Lobdell of Chico and Max Vann of Williams; also, Ken Holly of Trinity County, Robert S. Thomas and Charles Dicker of Shasta County; "Curley" Walker of Red Bluff, and Neshan Tashjian, a Tulare County grower of Armenian descent and personal friend of Mrs. Melquist.  

Engle congratulated Heffington for laying the foundations of an effective public relations organization. He urged Heffington not to forget that the main thing to do was to collect state-wide organizational support to pressure State Engineer and other California water authorities to support the project. Such support would enable them to receive effective aid from California Republican Senators Thomas H. Kuchel and Knowland. "We can't move anywhere now on the Trinity
Bill," said Engle, "and perhaps it is just as well we don't try it. The atmosphere here [Congress] is very unfavorable." He referred to the Solano project, authorized in the same manner as the Trinity, which the Republicans opposed even though Senator Knowland supported it. "So," Engle cautioned Heffington, "we can't be too sure what would happen to us. It makes it more important... to get Governor Warren and the State solidly behind the Project."26

Finally, in mid-April 1953, Governor Warren approved the Trinity project and so telephoned Engle's office. While Engle was greatly pleased with the Governor's action, he now hesitated to push for a hearing, fearing a repeat performance of the Solano project fight. Moreover, the House Interior Committee had to consider two controversial projects already. He promised to take the Trinity before a hearing after "the Committee has swallowed hard and put those out..."27 Even so, with the current hard-nosed attitude of the Committee on water projects, Engle feared that the bill's language might have to be altered.28 Engle also asked State Senator Regan to push through the state legislature a resolution endorising the Trinity project. He thought that it would carry great weight with the Committee as "equalizing" previous action which removed the Trinity from the State Water Plan.29 Regan did so after the protests of Senator Collier and Arthur W. Way of Humboldt County.30

With House Interior Committee Republicans hostile to major
water and power projects, Engle's hesitancy in bringing up the Trinity legislation had dangerous implications. For one thing it risked apathy among supporters in California at a time when the CCTRD sought to widen its base of support and to bring in more money. Engle advised Heffington to seek money from boards of supervisors as Don Smith and Max Vann had done with SVIC. Said the Congressman: "Nothing short of getting some tax money back of the Trinity organization will give it the volume and continuity of financing that it needs."31 Secondly, Engle risked alienating some of his support in the East Bay area, especially Grace McDonald and Herbert Jones. "I do not intend to make my project a guinea pig for determining the new water and power policies of the present administration." He did not expect that the Eisenhower Administration's policies to be substantially different from Truman's, but "until they get straightened out in their thinking, there is a tendency to shoot from the hip and the new Committee is especially a little wobbly and unpredictable."32

A factor in the "wobbly and unpredictable" attitude of the House Interior Committee was similar confusion within the Interior Department. President Eisenhower appointed an early supporter, Oregon Governor Douglas McKay, as Interior Secretary, an appointment which reflected his distaste for New Deal and Fair Deal reclamation policies as "creeping socialism."33 As his under secretary McKay brought in his old friend Ralph A. Tudor of
California. He had more difficulty in filling Mike Straus' position as Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation. Finally, in July 1953 he selected Wilbur G. Dexheimer of Denver, a career Bureau engineer who was a "dead-ringer" for the President.34 Even before the top echelon was in place, Tudor moved to reorganize the Interior Department by eliminating "the philosophers, the public relations people and some others, exclusive of engineers."35 Targeted for immediate action was the Sacramento office which employed some 2100 people under Dick Boke. In May 1953 four hundred workers were handed pink slips with another four hundred due to leave later. The Chico office, directed by Marsh Jones, was abolished over the objections of Congressman Engle and Armon Heffington. They recommended Jones for the Regional Directorship, but McKay eventually tagged Clyde H. Spencer for the post. Another career Bureau engineer, Spencer had just completed work on the Hungry Horse project in Montana.36

Boke, meanwhile, established himself as a resource development consultant in Sacramento advising clients on land investments. To further development of the Central Valley, he promised to seek "better participation" among San Joaquin Valley people on behalf of Trinity diversion.37 Engle suggested that Boke's clients express some desire to invest in land in the western San Joaquin Valley, "provided they get water—and the first place for them to get water is from the Trinity."38 Fresno attorney Gilbert H. Jertberg, a
leader of the National Reclamation Association and a staunch opponent of acreage limitation, represented the Westlands Water District and also contacted Engle about linking the Trinity and San Luis projects together. Engle thought that if Jertberg's people declared that Trinity development was "absolutely necessary" for their future, "it might be the impetus that will put the Trinity over the goal line." 

By December 1953 negotiations to tie the Trinity and San Luis projects together officially had come a long way. Jim Carr, now consulting engineer for SMUD, maintained close contact with Westlands Water District officials in the San Luis area, particularly Jack Rodner, a former Bureau Regional Director in Fresno.

Rodner, now manager of Westlands, urged Carr to use his influence in Sacramento and Washington to get Trinity water down to the west side of the San Joaquin Valley, and he also advocated broadening of the Trinity publicity organization by adding representatives from his district. To get him going Carr suggested that he, Rodner, Heffington, and Engle meet in Weaverville or Redding early in January 1954 to discuss the proposal. Engle was enthusiastic about this effort since it could "provide us the political push, plus the need and the demand for water." He had been in contact with Commissioner Dexheimer about the Trinity and decided to shape the bill up for an early hearing in 1954.

During the summer of 1953 the Eisenhower Administration placed its brand on natural resource development. As a former automobile
dealer in Salem, Oregon, Secretary McKay was fully in accord with
the President's views on reclamation. "We want this to be done
through partnership... bringing in the federal government not as a
boss," said Eisenhower in a campaign speech, "not as your dictator,
but as a friendly partner, ready to help out and get its long nose out
of your business as quickly as that can be accomplished." On
August 21, 1953, McKay outlined the administration's program before
the San Francisco Commonwealth Club. His speech had been cleared
by the White House and had been spiced with "romance" by the
President's advisors. 43

Simply stated, McKay reversed the New Deal and Fair Deal
emphasis on federal responsibility for power development; and with
a businessman's attitude, he proposed that federal monies be saved
by placing primary responsibility for power development and dis-
tribution upon local public and private developers. The federal
government would pay for the dead weight of multiple purpose
projects, such as irrigation, flood control, and land reclamation.
Federal interference would come only when local capital was
demonstrably insufficient to meet power needs of the area. 44 This
new policy meant an increase in power rates largely because of
differences in prewar and postwar construction costs. Some support
was expected from the West as the Interior Department indicated
its backing of the Tri-Dam project on the Stanislaus River in
California, Cougar Dam in Oregon, Priest Rapids in Idaho, Libby
Dam in Montana, and the Colorado River Storage Project in the upper basin of the Colorado River.

Western developers denounced McKay's policy as a "give-away" to private power monopolies. Engle joined several of the other western and liberal leaders in denouncing partnership as "a one horse for one rabbit deal in which the government gets the rabbit." American natural resources belonged to every citizen and ought to be developed for the benefit of all. Federal responsibility for resource development was imperative for it alone possessed the long-term capital and resources necessary to overcome selfish local opposition to multipurpose planning. "Partnership" reversed fifty years of federal low cost public power with preference to municipal and public agencies, a policy initiated under the 1906 Reclamation Act and re-affirmed thirteen times thereafter by Congress. Rather than being a "creeping" socialist, Engle postured as a defender of economic competition against "creeping" monopolistic urges of private utilities. Low cost public power was a yard-stick by which power consumers could gauge private power rates and profits. The Company, declared Engle, was "not free competitive enterprise--it is a regulated monopoly dealing with a necessity of life at a guaranteed profit.... it doesn't hurt the P.G. & E. to have a little com- petition."  

By December 1953 and the early months of 1954, efforts toward Trinity authorization proceeded at a faster pace. For the first time
the President's Budget message to Congress included $100,000
for advanced planning on the Trinity. Partly due to the oncoming
national elections, the climate in Congress for water and power
projects improved for the better, and Engle scheduled hearings by
the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation, chaired by William
Henry Harrison, Republican of Wyoming, to be held in Redding on
April 16, 1954.

By late January and early February 1954 the movement to unite
the Trinity-San Luis group together had reached a delicate stage.
On January 28, 1954, Gil Jertberg visited Engle's office and assured
the Congressman that he wanted to promote actively the Trinity
development and the San Luis unit together. Jertberg also suggested--
and Engle readily agreed--that Jack W. Rodner would be the ideal
man to perform the field work and full-time promotion of the Trinity-
San Luis project. Not only that, Jertberg said, Rodner's salary and
expenses would be paid by the local land association. Engle then
suggested that Rodner's best course of action was "to get our ducks
in a row" in California. To accomplish this, he suggested that
Rodner, Jertberg, and Los Banos Engineer Howard A. Stoddard
travel up the Central Valley and meet with Carr and the people up
in Redding and Weaverville. Jertberg also promised to help raise
promotional money.\(^{47}\) Engle later promised Carr that he would
keep out of publicity regarding the Trinity project.\(^ {48}\)

This move to consolidate Trinity and San Luis forces did not
come without jealousies and misunderstandings, particularly relating to Jack Rodner's role in promotion. Heffington experienced mortification when he read in the Redding Record-Searchlight that a meeting had been called in Fresno for March 24. He "was completely in the dark" about the date of the meeting until reporters called him for verification. He asked Carr to inform Rodner "that future arrangements will take only a matter of minutes to clear by telephone." Lorene Melquist complained that the San Joaquin group "are completely taking over the Trinity" and that it "does not sit too well in the north." Engle and Carr immediately conferred by telephone. Carr subsequently cautioned Rodner to cooperate with the Trinitarians. Both Engle and Carr reassured Heffington and Melquist that it was important that all publicity and meeting arrangements "be handled exclusively" through Trinity representatives. Engle also expressed hope to Rodner "that every effort will be made to keep Trinity people well out in front so far as publicity is concerned." They were "very sensitive about this," and Engle did not want anti-Trinity people to charge that they were fronting for another grab by the San Joaquin Valley for more northern California water.

In early March 1954 the Board of Directors of the Westlands Water District instructed their President, J. E. ("Jack") O'Neill, to work with other interested organizations from Redding to Kings County to begin early construction of the Trinity diversion and the
San Luis project. O'Neill was a millionaire farmer and native of Canada. He warned Senator Kuchel that he would shortly be asked to introduce a companion bill to Engle's measure, and thus get a political head-start on his opposition in the 1954 elections. Within twenty-four hours after giving Kuchel advance notice O'Neill launched a publicity drive to shore up support for these projects just in time to make the Sunday papers. His circular stressed immediate reauthorization of Engle's bill and citing its impact on the Westlands' water table.

A few days later Rodner spoke to the Redding Chamber of Commerce on the Trinity-San Luis proposal where he met with Armon Heffington. He carried with him, according to Jim Carr, invitations for about seventy persons to attend the March 24th meeting in Fresno to be signed by Heffington. Carr also received confidential word that Heffington would ask Regional Director Clyde H. Spencer, to report on the status of the Trinity and San Luis projects in Fresno. Gil Jertberg, wrote Carr, "will call Tudor or Dexheimer to see that Spencer gives a favorable reply to the request."

O'Neill also informed Carr on March 10 that he would telephone Kuchel or his new press aide, "Pop" Small, about the Trinity. Carr also encouraged Engle to get a story out to the press that he and Kuchel "are cooperating on a non-partisan basis because of the desperate need for the project in fast-growing northern California.  

By the time that the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation
held its hearing on April 16, the CCTRD had been reorganized as the Californians for the Trinity, Sacramento, San Luis with the same goals as before. This group and Engle worked hard since January 1954 to organize their presentations for immediate authorization of the Trinity diversion. The current chairman of the House Interior Committee, Dr. A. L. ("Doc") Miller, Republican of Nebraska, refused to pay the way for subcommittee members to attend the Redding hearing and, consequently, Engle arranged with the Colorado River Association to pay "the freight." The Congressman also arranged to have the subcommittee in California for three days, first in Redding, then Fresno and Los Angeles. Jack O'Neill obtained a DC-3 from Standard Oil to fly the congressmen about while in California. Engle also told Shastans that since the Trinity would be "getting into high gear shortly," they had better be ready with a specific proposal to protect and develop their water resources. This proposal must include engineering study data on the Bureau or Reclamation or Congress would not act on their proposal.

With the aid of Jim Carr, Heffington, Lorene Melquist, and Paul C. Bodenhamer, the pro-Trinity diversion forces were ready to place their heavy artillery for the Redding hearing.

Witnesses before the Subcommittee hearing reflected a coastal-valley schism on the Trinity issue. The Trinity-Shasta delegation maintained that as long as the rights of the county of origin were protected, Trinity water should be distributed to areas most in need.
Coastal counties feared that Trinity diversion would limit their economic growth and development and requested additional surveys. Testimony also stressed provisions of Engle's bill to protect the fish, such as releasing stored Trinity River water during the summer months. Engle said that the bill would benefit the river's steelhead and salmon because "there have been times when a fish needed a pair of skates to get up over some of those riffles." Jack Rodner established the link between the Trinity and San Luis projects and dramatized his area's need for water.

But, the big surprise came from Robert H. Gerdes, Vice President and General Counsel of the Pacific Gas and Electric Company. Known as "the Company," Pacific Gas and Electric monopolized private power production and distribution from the Oregon border to Kern County, making it the largest area served by a private utility in the United States. It was an amalgamation of 520 mergers and predecessor companies which extended back to Gold Rush days, a period its publicists hailed as the heyday of free enterprise and initiative. Now in the midst of a billion dollar post-war expansion program, the Company saw these values under attack by "do-gooders" and socialists in the vanguard of the movement toward municipal and state ownership of power facilities. Its economic resources were so vast that it successfully resisted the Bureau of Reclamation's attempts to establish a public power distribution system in the Central Valley.
A native of San Francisco, Robert Gerdes had risen into the top ranks of Company leadership and was intimately involved in its battle against the Bureau. Now, sitting calmly before the Subcommittee, Gerdes proposed that the Company and the federal government cooperate "in the generation and marketing of power developed" on the Trinity. Such a partnership would give the Company control of all power facilities, increase annual federal tax revenue by nearly a million dollars, and forty-four percent of the Trinity County and over fifty percent of the Shasta County tax base would be paid by the Company. Engle was unimpressed. After all, the Company was out to make a profit, and all of the money paid in county taxes had to come from Company rate payers. "Well," Gerdes reportedly replied, "we have to get it from somewhere."61

In early May Gerdes extended his Trinity proposal to include the purchase of all Central Valley Project power facilities for over $100,000,000. Trinity-San Luis backers concluded that these offers were delaying tactics, a suspicion confirmed on August 24, 1954, with the announcement that the Bureau was to restudy the Trinity authorization as granted by former Secretary Chapman. Bureau officials hoped to determine whether or not local public agencies and private utilities could build the Trinity power facilities. Paul Bodenhamer expected that the restudy report would delay the Trinity project at least a year and that it would deny Redding access to cheap public power.62 The Sacramento Bee called the Bureau's
restudy of the Trinity project "a great power give-away" to benefit the Company while denying benefits of low-cost public power to public agencies like SMUD. Engle himself was convinced that there was "deliberate stalling" on the project and was "not too optimistic" that construction funds would be placed in the current budget.

During the remainder of the year, Engle, Carr, and the respective Trinity and San Luis groups worked to finalize Engle's bill and prepare for its introduction in the 84th Congress. The mid-term elections in November proved favorable for Trinity authorization. Former Secretary Oscar Chapman, campaigning in Redding, bluntly stated that the Trinity would be approved only in a Democratic-controlled Congress. This came to pass, making Engle, as the ranking Democrat, the next Chairman of the House Interior Committee. Shortly after the national election trend became known, Engle declared that his program was brief; that if the Trinity was not approved within two years, "I will consider my tenure as committee chairman a failure."

Nearly three weeks later, however, Engle was still tinkering with his Trinity legislation. Acting on Engle's suggestion that they quickly work up a proposal with sufficient engineering data, Shastan leaders proposed a provision calling for irrigation facilities on Clear Creek, as well as irrigation projects on Cow Creek and Stillwater Creek in southwestern Shasta County. Ted Jessen, Chairman of
the Board of Supervisors, urged that Engle's bill "be sufficiently broad" so as to include these possible changes. 67 Engle agreed to Jessen's request on the Clear Creek alternative, particularly since Jim Carr and Bureau officials found the plan to have some merit. As for the Cow and Stillwater streams Engle was less helpful, noting that a previous Bureau investigation had been unfavorable. Therefore, he urged Shasta County leaders to press for completion of the current studies on local irrigation projects and forward them to Congress. 68 In a draft of the bill forwarded to Heffington, Carr, Rodner, and others, Engle buried the Cow Creek item so as "not attach particular attention to it.... That was the way, incidentally, I stuck the Sly Park to the Folsom Bill and no one even raised any question about it. We may not be so lucky this time, but we will try." 69

Engle's office cooperated with Senator Kuchel in preparing the Trinity-San Luis measure. State Senator Regan, who had managed Sam Yorty's northern California campaign against Kuchel, asked the Senator's position on the bill, especially on those provisions relating to Trinity County. Regan thought that Kuchel's reply was rather stiff and evasive. Heffington was upset with this exchange, and Jim Carr smoothed things over with Heffington and Jack Rodner by telephone. Carr thought Kuchel "certainly left the door open" to introducing a companion bill to Engle's in the Senate. Jack O'Neill indicated that he wanted to urge the Senator to reach an
null
agreement with Engle on their bills before they were introduced. Carr thought that the Trinity guarantees had been removed from Kuchel's earlier Trinity bill due to hostile reaction from Under Secretary Tudor. "In any event," Carr concluded, "it will be poor strategy on his part to introduce a bill differing from yours. [Engle's]

It will make your job more difficult." Engle talked the problem over with Pop Small, who didn't like the tone of Regan's letter. "Tommy's a little sore too," said Small. But, Engle concluded that he and Kuchel could "get along all right" on the Trinity Bill."

On November 18, 1954, State Engineer Edmonston declared that he opposed the Trinity-San Luis project because it conflicted with his own Feather River Project. Engle was deeply concerned over this development, so concerned, in fact, that he thought that Trinity proponents like Jack O'Neill should see Governor Goodwin Knight and stop the State Engineer "before he drives any more nails in our casket." Edmonston, Engle declared, "is in a position to absolutely ruin the San Luis Project because a Congressional Committee will not authorize a project opposed by the State Water Agency." At the Fresno meeting of the Californians for the Trinity, Sacramento, San Luis, an infuriated Engle could not resist taunting the State Engineer for delaying a review of the Bureau's restudy report: "If Mr. Edmonston sits on the Trinity-San Luis report like a chicken trying to hatch a door-knob, we'll never get these projects built." Edmonston, stung by that remark, protested that his office had not
yet received the final restudy report. When it finally comes in, he said, "I don't see any reason why we should take more than a month [to review it]." 75

At Engle's instigation San Joaquin leaders moved into action to place political pressure on the Governor and State Engineer. Jack O'Neill led a group of powerful landholders to El Centro to meet with State Senators J. Howard Williams and Ben Hulse about Edmonston's comment. State Senator Hugh F. Burns, Democrat of Fresno and a rising power in the State legislature, accompanied O'Neill's group. Williams was chairman of the Interim Water Committee, and O'Neill impressed upon him the dire need of his area for Trinity water which they could get sooner than the proposed Feather River Project. 76 As O'Neill later phrased it, they acted on the assumption "that any cooperation secured from the State Engineer's office will have to be forced upon them" and "that any action we take must be such that the State Engineer cannot evade the point or secure a reversal through either the State legislature or the Governor's office." 77

By late December 1954, however, Engle had not decided whether to introduce a joint Trinity-San Luis bill or a separate Trinity bill. He ultimately decided to follow Jim Carr's advice to introduce only the Trinity-San Luis bill so as not to "disturb our friends in the Fresno area." 78 Engle had good reason not to "disturb" his friends in the San Joaquin Valley.
FOOTNOTES

2 Fred J. Moore to Clair Engle, January 12, 1953, EP., WF5.
3 Clair Engle to Fred J. Moore, January 23, 1953, EP., WF5.
4 Clair Engle to Earl Warren, January 5, 1953, EP., WF5.
5 Clair Engle to Don M. Smith, January 13, 1953, EP., WF5.
8 Ibid., January 19, 1953.
9 Mrs. Winifred Maker to Clair Engle, January 17, 1953, EP., WF5.
12 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, January 12, 1953, EP.
13 The Humboldt Times, January 30, 1953.
14 Ibid., January 31, 1953.
15 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, January 12, 1953, and January 6, 1953, EP., WF5.

16 Ibid., January 6, 1953.


18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

20 Lorene Melquist to Clair Engle, Sunday, EP., WF5.


22 Clair Engle to Vincent Ryan, February 20, 1953, EP., WF5.

23 Clair Engle to Edwin J. Regan, February 18, 1953, EP., WF5.


25 Sacramento Bee, March 18, 1953; Armon Heffington to Clair Engle, March 31, 1953, EP., WF5.

26 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, April 4, 1953, EP., WF5.

27 Clair Engle to Don M Smith, April 17, 1953, EP., WF5.

28 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, April 18, 1953, EP., WF5.

29 Clair Engle to Edwin J. Regan, April 23, 1953, EP., WF5.

30 Ibid., May 1, 1953, EP., WF5.

31 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, June 25, 1953, EP., WF5.

32 Clair Engle to Grace McDonald, June 4, 1953, EP., WF5.

34 Tudor, Notes, July 6, 1953.


39 Ibid.

40 James K. Carr to Clair Engle, December 15, 1953, EP.

41 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, December 29, 1953, EP.

42 Richardson, p. 74.

43 Tudor, Notes, August 22, 1953.


45 Redding Record-Searchlight, January 6, 1954.


48 Ibid., March 5, 1954.


51 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, Marcy 8, 1954, EP., WF5.


53 J. E. O'Neill to Thomas H. Kuchel, March 5, 1954, EP., WF5.


57 Clair Engle to James K. Carr, March 16, 1954, EP.

58 Clair Engle to R.A. Thomas, April 8, 1954, EP.

59 Hearing on HR 123, p. 9.


61 Hearing on HR 123, pp. 64-65; Redding Record-Searchlight, April 17, 1954.


64 Clair Engle to Jack C. Butler, August 3, 1954, and Clair Engle to Douglas McKay, August 3, 1954, EP.

65 Redding Record-Searchlight, October 13, 1954.

66 Ibid., November 4, 1954.


68 Clair Engle to Andrew T. Jessen, December 1, 1954, EP., WF5.


72 Clair Engle to J.E. O'Neill, December 29, 1954, EP.
74 Redding Record-Searchlight, November 24, 1954.

75 Fresno Bee, December 1, 1954.


Chapter VI

STATE OWNERSHIP OF THE CENTRAL VALLEY PROJECT, 1952-1956

State purchase of the Central Valley Project directly influenced the status of Engle's Trinity-San Luis legislation in Congress. In mid-December 1953 Armon Heffington suspected that the movement was a Republican ploy to block Trinity authorization.¹ Engle tended to agree, but he also felt that the affair was tied to the "current hassle" over the power contract negotiated between the Sacramento Municipal Utilities District (SMUD) and the Interior Department in December 1952.² Such suspicions reflected the attitudes of much of the local leadership behind the Trinity diversion. Uncertainty over the future status of the Central Valley Project could provide Congress with an excuse not to appropriate money for any project unit.

Movement for state acquisition of the Central Valley Project was led by the powerful California Farm Bureau Federation, California State Chamber of Commerce, Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, Irrigation Districts Association of California, Agricultural Council of California, and the Central Valley Flood Control Association
which had grouped together on June 20, 1952, to form the State-wide Committee for California Ownership of the Central Valley Project.

Under the leadership of William M. Harrison, a Delano area farmer, these groups sought to remove the Bureau from the Central Valley and thus obtain relief from enforcement of acreage limitation under the Reclamation Act of 1902 and the 9-E, or utility, water contracts under the Reclamation Act of 1939.

Interests in California had sought a larger role in the operation and management of the Central Valley Project since the early 1940's. Some members of the California Water Project Authority never accepted complete Bureau dominance in the Central Valley. For his part, Interior Secretary Ickes seemed willing to discuss the issue if California would repay the Federal Treasury for construction costs, retain federal reclamation law on low-cost public power and acreage limitation, and complete the original master plan on water development. That his proposals were not taken up by State officials indicated that State acquisition of the Project was not the primary interest of its sponsors.

Movement to oust the Bureau from the Central Valley had been signalled as early as May 1944 by Business Week. Democratic California Congressman Alfred J. Elliott of Tulare had just successfully attached a rider to the Rivers and Harbors bill which eliminated acreage limitation as a feature of federal reclamation policy. Should the Elliott rider fail in the Senate, Business Week reported, its
proponents had other schemes to rid themselves of federal water policies. For one thing, they would seek Congressional authorization to add irrigation and power development to the traditional responsibilities of the Corps of Engineers; a movement to promote state purchase of the Central Valley Project and operate it under state law would have the same effect; or failing on both counts, large landowners would simply sink wells deep into the ground to tap ground water reserves that would be replenished from the project's surface water deliveries to those farms complying with reclamation law. 4

In spite of Senator Sheridan Downey's best efforts, however, the Senate squelched the Elliott rider when Robert M. LaFollette, Jr., Progressive from Wisconsin, bluntly informed the California senator that he would filibuster the rider into the ground. 5 This was the beginning of Downey's great crusade in the Central Valley to kick the Bureau out. In 1947 he published They Would Rule the Valley which violently assaulted the Bureau's water and social policies and the men who enforced them. In 1948, Robert de Roos published The Thirsty Land in defense of the Bureau and attacking the Corps of Engineers and private power development. Downey maintained that enforcement of acreage limitation was useless since large landowners could pump ground water onto their land even though it had been replenished by Project water. The 160-acre limitation, he said, "is a wholly inadequate club with which to coerce the big landowner into dividing their baronies among the serfs. It scares
nobody; it irritates nearly everybody. "6

Not content with attacking the philosophy behind the Reclamation Act of 1902, Downey launched a sustained effort to remove officials charged with the responsibility for enforcing reclamation law in the Central Valley. In the late forties he called for the firings of Commissioner Straus and Regional Director Boke. This effort culminated in the Straus-Boke rider that removed these officials from the Interior Department payroll, ostensibly because they were not professional engineers. 7 Following Truman's re-election in 1948, Congress restored their pay retroactively. Hard on the heels of this failure came reports that irrigation districts in the Central Valley had executed water repayment contracts with the Bureau preliminary to water delivery. The Bureau's Central Valley Basin plan was also revealed, calling for greater future federal water development. To forestall this development, the state legislature approved the Feather River Project as a state project to deliver water to the lower San Joaquin Valley and southern California.

If the Bureau prospered as the Central Valley Project neared completion in August 1951, forces against acreage limitation scored successes elsewhere. In December 1947, Assistant Solicitor Felix Cohen issued Administrative Letter Number 303 that allowed the Secretary of the Interior to lift enforcement of acreage limitation within certain limits; namely, when landowners in a project area paid a lump sum to reimburse the federal government fully for
irrigation costs rather than repaying it over a period of years. Cohen relied on the "Kings Instructions" of 1914 which provided that once the federal government received full reimbursement on project costs, it lacked authority to enforce acreage limitation. 8

Proponents of the 160-acre limitation became alarmed over the implications of Cohen's ruling. Interior Secretary Chapman sought to close this loophole shortly before leaving office in 1953 by ordering Straus not to accept any such lump payment for federal works, nor negotiate such contractual payment arrangements, particularly with the landowners on Kings River. 9 The Cohen ruling caused great uneasiness among many California congressmen who feared it opened "the way to evasion on a large scale." 10 Such fears seemed confirmed on October 21, 1952, when Bureau District Manager Jack W. Rodner of Fresno wrote a letter to the Kings River Conservation District acknowledging their long opposition to the 160-acre limitation and appearing to invite them to act in accordance with Administrative Letter Number 303. 11

Liberals in Congress "crowded" Secretary Chapman to overrule the Cohen opinion, but Chapman refused to do so without a thorough study of the issue. Disappointed Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois complained to a friend: "But I deplore his leaving this booby-trap around to blow up the acreage limitation whenever his successor chooses to explode it." 12

Concomitant with Administrative Letter Number 303 Congress
enacted several exemptions to acreage limitation on federal reclamation projects, notably Big Thompson-Colorado in Colorado, San Luis Valley in Colorado, and Owl Creek in Wyoming. These exemptions were achieved over militant efforts by doctrinaire liberals in both houses of Congress to keep basic reclamation law intact. To men like Senator Douglas, Wayne Morse of Oregon—and later Oregon's Richard L. Neuberger—the attack upon acreage limitation was an assault upon rural values and economic democracy. Family-sized farms promoted efficient, intensive agricultural production. They improved the quality of rural life and healthy, stable communities; they promoted community spirit, schools, churches, and hospitals.\(^\text{13}\)

Large landholding systems, such as those in Fresno, Kings, and Kern counties, led to contrary results. Here, over a quarter of the land was in the control of thirteen percent of the farmers; some twenty-five percent of all irrigated land was developed by twenty-five owners in excess of 5,120 acres each.\(^\text{14}\) Important consequences flowed from this reality. Absentee landownership facilitated the development of the tenant system in which land was rented by an operator specializing in single crop production; it created a weak, disorganized, and exploited transient labor force. Combined with a high degree of crop specialization, these factors made California agriculture highly speculative. Enforcement of acreage limitation would thus "affect a large part of the land but only a few of the landowners." The "optimum" farm size was 160 acres,
large enough to make effective use of productive resources, maximize amount and distribution of income, and create healthy and stable rural communities. 15

Impact of landownership patterns on the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley may be discerned from Walter Goldschmidt's study of Dinuba and Arvin in 1944. Goldschmidt was a young field worker in the Berkeley office of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. He found that Dinuba's population consisted of 34 percent of farmer owner-operators while Arvin had only eleven percent. Dinuba had 29 percent farm laborers and Arvin 65 percent. Dinuba had sixteen percent of the family breadwinners in professional and business occupations and Arvin only eight percent. The average farm size in Dinuba was 57 acres compared to 497 acres in Arvin. Arvin had no fully paved streets and poor street lighting; Dinuba's streets were fully paved with sidewalks and adequate lighting. Arvin had no feeling of permanence; its people were transient and usually moved on. Dinuba had strong community pride as reflected in its schools, churches, lodges, and social gatherings. Its people also enjoyed a higher living standard. Goldschmidt explained these great differences in quality of life in terms of existing land use patterns. Arvin was dominated by large landowners while Dinuba stressed family sized farms. This made Dinuba's citizens largely independently employed and helped stabilize its economy and society. Arvin residents were wage earners and subordinate to the large landed interests.
Goldschmidt's report angered large landholders in the San Joaquin Valley. Along with the California Farm Bureau Federation they nearly terminated the Bureau of Agricultural Economics' existence by urging congressional withholding of budgetary appropriations.\textsuperscript{16}

Clamor for state purchase of the Central Valley Project accelerated during the 1952 presidential election. In March 1952 the California Water Project Authority, responding to a resolution from the state legislature, completed its feasibility study on state purchase. Under State Engineer Bob Edmonston's direction, the Authority's report determined that the state could purchase Central Valley Project's initial features as well as the American River Development, Sly Park, and the Sacramento Valley Canals additions. Estimated cost was $211,481,000, reflecting less than half the federal expenditures thus far on the project due to deductions in flood control and navigation features. Suggested means of purchase were by installments, relying on power and water revenues, or by cash purchase through sale of state bonds. The former required a 95 percent increase in power rates. The Authority's finding of feasibility provided relief from the 9-E contracts by allowing irrigation districts to renegotiate them with state water authorities. It also indicated that excess acreage limitation would not apply under state ownership unless Congress specifically required its enforcement as a condition of sale.\textsuperscript{17}

On receipt of the Authority's feasibility report, the state legislature appropriated $10,000,000 to have it conduct extensive
surveys preliminary to state ownership and operation of the Central Valley Project. On September 11, 1952, the Authority requested a meeting with the Interior Department to discuss its findings. On November 10, the Interior indicated its interest in the report. Acting Secretary Vernon D. Northrop suggested that the Authority present the terms under which it would take over the project; and on that basis, Secretary Chapman would consider meeting with State officials in Washington or "in the field." \(^{17}\)

Congressman Engle has been informed of the impending meeting between Interior and State officials. So long as Chapman controlled the flow of negotiations, Engle did not expect the state ownership movement to progress far enough to threaten his Trinity legislation in Congress. Moreover, political contacts throughout his district indicated that state ownership had problems at the grass roots level. State Senator H.E. Dillinger of Placerville, representing the central portion of Engle's district, feared that the state ownership movement might jeopardize water development by stirring sectional rivalry.

"If we join a state wide Feather--Trinity--What Have Your Program," said Dillinger, "that is even worse, much worse. That would simply degenerate into a log-rolling contest in which we could not hope to hold our own against the great populous areas." \(^{19}\) Engle was gratified by Boke's assurance that his people would stay out of the controversy. In fact, Boke expressed hope that Engle's committee, rather than the Bureau, would analyze the economics behind state
purchase of the Central Valley Project.\textsuperscript{20}

As far as Engle was concerned, the state could not purchase the project without imposing higher taxes and bond issues. If the state did vote the bonds, then "we are sunk on the Valley Canals, the Trinity River, and the Feather. They will not be built for another generation." Water needs in the San Joaquin Valley and in southern California metropolitan areas dictated immediate construction of these additions to the project. Engle opted for an alternative proposal. He suggested that the State take over the operation and management of the Central Valley Project as an agent of the federal government.\textsuperscript{21}

This idea was not novel. In 1939, Governor Olson proposed federal-state cooperation in project operations, but no agreement was executed. Engle also brought the idea up in his Lindsay speech during the Project Water Festival celebration in August 1951.

Engle's proposal to have the state operate the Central Valley Project under federal auspices did not receive immediate favor. Hoping to stem criticism in the Red Bluff area, he informed his friend, District Attorney Bruce A. Werlhof, that he opposed state ownership because "such action would delay for a long time, if not completely eliminate the building of the Sacramento Valley canals and the Trinity River Project. My slogan on the CVP is: 'Operate it, not buy it.'" What the congressman hoped to do was to have the best of both worlds, "to keep a pipeline" into the federal Treasury in order to finance the valley canals and the Trinity diversion while
giving "to the local people the control and autonomy that they should have over the management of their own water resources."22

Forces in favor of state acquisition of the Project went into high gear following the presidential election of November 1952. It was expected that the incoming administration would be amenable to transferring the project's title to the state. Engle found the election results deeply disturbing as the new Congress appeared hostile to future federal reclamation projects. In addition, the Republicans had won control of the House. With this in mind he approached Secretary Chapman to prepare a finding of feasibility of the Trinity project under Section 9 (a) of the 1939 Reclamation Act and simultaneously to complete its negotiations with the Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD) for distribution of Project power. "I can't urge you too emphatically the importance of tying this public consumer to public power at this critical point," he said. "If we aren't careful, we will end up with no customers and the public power located permanently in the grasp of a private utility."23

SMUD had been established in 1923 and served Sacramento and suburban areas. It has built its own power distribution system and contracted with P.G. & E., then in competition with the Bureau to buy power at a low rate. With its contract nearing completion in 1952, SMUD encouraged competitive bidding from the Bureau and the Company and entered into negotiations. The presidential elections of 1952 compelled the Interior Department to conclude the negotiations,
and SMUD signed a contract with the Interior Department on December 11, 1952, to purchase nearly two-thirds of the available project power at very low rates for the next forty years. In effect, Engle claimed, Chapman had blocked state purchase of the project by making reliance on project power revenue to finance the purchase unrealistic.  

Opposition to the SMUD contract flared immediately in the state legislature, Congress, and the newly installed Interior Department. PG & E, Edmonston, California Chamber of Commerce, and the State-Wide Committee for California Ownership of the Central Valley Project denounced the contract's power purchase provisions as too low. With SMUD purchasing 62 percent of project power at low cost, the only other means of financing the project would be by issuing bonds and imposing higher taxes. Under Secretary Tudor seethed over this "terrible contract" and sought to renegotiate it. SMUD was ably defended by Jim Carr before congressional committees; and when the new contract was signed in January 1954, it was in some ways better than the previous one. Tudor had hoped to make the purchase of the project "more palatable" and suspected that Chapman had used SMUD "to make the purchase of the Central Valley project less palatable to the State."  

Significance of the SMUD contract became clear in April 1953 when Governor Warren requested a meeting with Interior Department officials to determine the conditions for ultimate state control of the
project. In May 1953, representatives of the Interior Department, Treasury Department, Department of the Army, Bureau of the Budget, and the California Water Project Authority discussed the issue for three days. Secretary McKay informed the governor that the state must reimburse the Treasury for all costs in project construction and operation. Under Secretary Tudor found some support for the sale in the Bureau of the Budget and less in the Treasury. Tudor wrote: "We are completely sympathetic to the suggestion of State ownership and will certainly explore it as far as possible." In spite of such enthusiasm, however, the conference demonstrated wide differences between federal and state officials on terms for state purchase. A memorandum of understanding was reached in which Interior and Authority representatives would study the matter further and report to their respective superiors.

Meanwhile, as state officials and the Interior Department haggled over an acceptable formula for state take-over of the Central Valley Project, Congressman Engle prepared a bill designed to allow the Senate to operate the project under federal reclamation law. On January 12, 1953, he gave Governor Warren a preview of the legislation he intended to introduce to the House in the next couple of days. "The basic objective of this legislation is to restore to the State active management of its most important natural resource without cutting the State off from federal funds for the future and rapid development of its water resources." The fact was, Engle remarked,
"that the project cannot be part Federal and part State; it will be one or all the other." Accordingly, Engle introduced HR 1716 to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to transfer the operation and management of the project to California or any state agency under the provisions of reclamation law.

HR 1716 met with devastating silence from state officials and those advocating state purchase of the Central Valley Project. It was a pragmatic, political move to give the state a greater role in resource development within its boundaries. It did not address itself to the fundamental issues behind the state ownership movement; namely, to repeal acreage limitation and the utility (9-E) repayment contracts. Perhaps best stated by Secretary McKay, opposition to the utility contracts was "that it implies a perpetual Federal ownership of the water of western streams" and sold water to landowners as a utility service without giving landowners hope of acquiring eventual control of water rights to the stream. In other words, utility contracts were similar to electricity bills in that payments continued indefinitely without hope of termination.

Such issues, if unresolved, held great potential for the ultimate fate of Engle's Trinity-San Luis program and the future of California reclamation as well. These prospects appeared with stark clarity when the Ivanhoe and Madera irrigation districts brought suit against the validity of repayment contracts negotiated with the Bureau. The Fresno County Superior Court found that the United States' operation
of the Central Valley Project placed it in the role of a "trustee of an express trust of which the Ivanhoe District and others were among the beneficiaries." All applications for water were part of this trust, and the Madera and Ivanhoe districts held a "conditional right" for the water. In this sense, acreage limitation was "invalid and unenforceable as conflicting with both State law and the Reclamation Act of 1902." Whenever federal reclamation law conflicted with state law, said the trial judge, state law was predominant. 29

Engle's initial reaction had been that the Bureau "goes too far in demanding the sale of so-called 'excess land.'" The Reclamation Act of 1902 simply required the federal government not to sell water to tracts of land in excess of 160 acres. "The Government can sell the water for 160 acres," he said, "—and he has to dig up the water for the rest himself or let it stay dry." He did not expect the Ivanhoe decision materially to affect project construction since acreage limitation became a problem only after construction had been completed. If the decision was upheld, the repayment contracts would have to be renegotiated in order to eliminate the excess lands provision. 30

By January 1954 Engle was prepared to move to terminate the state purchase campaign and to resolve the troubling acreage limitation fight. The former matter became urgent in December 1953 when Bob Edmonston flew to Washington to discuss the project's sale further. Engle learned that state and Interior officials might be close
to an agreement on a proposal to be sent to Congress. He wanted
to "get enough heat" on Governor Goodwin J. Knight, who had succeeded
Warren in September 1953 upon the latter's appointment as Chief
Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, "so that he will call off the dogs." 31
Moreover, Engle was hopeful that state legislative hearings on the
project sale issue, scheduled for mid-January, might terminate
the movement. In fact, the opponents of the sale of the Project scored
propaganda points as one irrigation district after another publicly
denounced the movement. A week later, Engle was hopeful that the
hearing "should have killed the idea, but I don't know whether it will
or not." 32 The proponents of state purchase received a final setback
in January when terms of the new SMUD contract indicated that the
state could not rely upon project power to finance the transfer of
project ownership.

Meanwhile, Governor Knight hesitated to back the efforts of
State Engineer Edmonston. Engle's move to get the governor to
"call off the dogs" led to an inspired note to Knight. On January 25,
Engle noted that the sale of the Central Valley Project was over-
whelmingly opposed by farmers and farm groups. But Edmonston
and his associates continued to deal with the federal government.
This effort, said the congressman, was "not only a waste of the
State's money... but is a waste of the time of both the Federal and
State officials which could be more constructively dedicated to some
other purpose." He urged Knight to position himself on the issue,
or Bob Edmonston would determine administration policy in the minds of the people. 33

Stung by the note's implication that he was not in control of his administration, Governor Knight denounced the Engle note as bluntly "political." Knight's reaction angered Armon Heffington and perhaps colored his hostile attitude toward the governor in the future, but Engle took it in stride. "My letter to Knight was really a very friendly letter," he said, "although I will have to admit it put him on the spot." 34

Throughout 1954 Engle continued to maintain the pressure against the sale of the Project by securing anti-state purchase resolutions from city councils, irrigation districts, and chambers of commerce. In Weaverville, Heffington secured an anti-state purchase resolution from the Chamber of Commerce; and in the valley, SVIC maintained an openly sympathetic attitude towards Engle's actions. However, SVIC urged repeal of the 160-acre limitation when applied "to the highly developed land in California's Central Valley." 35 In April 1954 Engle was encouraged enough to inform Assemblyman Lowrey that the Project sale was "deader than a dodo" in spite of his primary opponent's, Bill Berry of Placerville, seemed bent on making the controversy the key issue of the campaign. 36 Toward the end of the year, State Senator Harold T. ("Bizz") Johnson of Roseville, began a move to rescind appropriation of funds to enable Edmonston to continue his probe into state purchase of the
As the state purchase issue atrophied in California politics, Engle moved on the national scene to find a way out of the acreage limitation dilemma. For one thing, relying on precedents established in Wyoming’s Owl Creek and Colorado’s San Luis projects, Engle guided HR 2235 through Congress to authorize $28,000,000 for construction of Vaquero Reservoir in Santa Maria Valley in order to supplement rapidly depleting underground water storage. In 1954, due to lack of water, only 27,000 of 38,000 acres were irrigated. Thirteen of the landowners in the Santa Maria Valley were in excess of 160 acres, holding a quarter of the valley’s land. Engle’s bill accommodated these interests by not applying acreage limitation features. He did so, he said, “because you have no way of tracing that water after it goes underground.” These excess landholders would simply sink wells on the edge of the project service area and take whatever water they needed. “The alternatives were to lift the limitation or abandon the Project,” he declared, and there was no way to enforce acreage limitation when it was applied to underground water.

Liberals on both sides of Congress rejected Engle’s contention that the Santa Maria Project was a special case, involving supplemental water to underground storage; and thus not to be considered a precedent for future reclamation projects. They did not accept Engle’s fear that thirteen excess landholders would block the proposal unless
exempted from reclamation law since other excess landholders in California had complied to reclamation law in repayment contract negotiations. Acreage limitation was indeed enforceable because the Bureau of Reclamation could simply compel compliance by negotiating water repayment contracts with local landowners prior to the construction of Vaquero Reservoir. In spite of such objections, HR 2235 passed through Congress and became public law in September 1954.

As he guided the Santa Maria project through Congress, Engle also moved into the acreage limitation fight. Part of his motivation was to shore up his strength on the Sacramento Valley floor behind the Sacramento Valley canals and the Trinity-San Luis projects. Congressman William Henry Harrison, Republican of Wyoming, had introduced legislation backed by the National Reclamation Association (NRA), to repeal the 160-acre limitation of the Reclamation Act of 1902. In Red Bluff, newsman Bill Carah found that the issue was "hurting us considerably" in eastern Glenn County. Prominent farmers in that area shied away from contract negotiations with the Bureau for supplemental water fearing that the acreage limitation would be applied to the entire area. If Engle, Max Vann, and Don Smith failed to form enough water districts to enter contract negotiations with the Bureau, they would fail to obtain construction funds and lose one of their primary selling points on the Trinity issue.

By this time, Engle had concluded not to repeal the acreage limitation provisions of reclamation law. He had Sidney L. McFarland,
a Georgia-born consultant to the House Interior Committee and former associate of Dick Boke's in Sacramento, to prepare alternative legislation. The substance of McFarland's work was the "Engle formula" allowing excess landowners to pay the actual cost of water used; that is, the full cost including interest. It involved a two-price formula in which family-sized farms paid only the costs of construction while excess landholders paid the costs and interest for their water. In early February 1954 Engle asked Jim Carr to study McFarland's draft and present his ideas. 41

In contrast to liberals in and out of Congress, Engle found no sanctity in acreage limitation. Not only that, he conceded that acreage limitation "'obstructed' water development in California, and he sought a practical solution to the problem. The "'moral basis' of 160-acre limitation was that irrigation costs were a subsidy through interest-free money paid by the taxpayers. He sought flexibility in the law in which realities of land use patterns in a region could be recognized while excess landholders could not receive an unjust enrichment at the taxpayer's expense. By having excess landholders pay the principal plus the interest on reclamation projects seemed to Engle to be a practical solution to the dilemma. 42 Liberals, of course, dismissed Engle's talk of the "'moral basis' of acreage limitation. "'In his opinion,'" declared a analyst on Senator Douglas' staff, "'the 'moral' character of the law is something to be equated for cash, to be bought and sold. This level of thinking belongs in
the market place for commodities, but can we afford it in a world as unsteady as our own?"  

The problem in California was that state statute required irrigation districts to levy a uniform assessment on water users no matter how much water a farmer used. Consequently, a farmer with 160 acres received interest-free subsidized water, but a farmer who owns a thousand acres had to pay an assessment on his entire thousand acres, 840 of which received no direct benefit. Thus, Engle urged state legislation to allow assessments only for water beneficially used under a contract in accordance with reclamation law. Such action would relieve "90% of the hassle," he thought. Failing that, Engle told Carah that he had already prepared a legislative alternative to the Harrison bill. He thought it had good chance of passage, but he hesitated to do so in order to avoid criticism from the Harrison and National Reclamation Association group, "the San Joaquin bunch," and "the great liberals" who regarded the 160-acre limitation as "a sacred cow." Besides, Engle did not want to get the Interior "off the hook" since it had been ordered to study the Harrison bill and report on it.  

On July 12, 1954, Engle introduced HR 9862 making the "Engle formula" applicable to small reclamation projects. Already in the Congressional hopper was "Doc" Miller's proposal, also backed by the NRA, to provide interest-free money to non-reimbursable aspects of federal reclamation works without acreage limitation. Miller's bill
made it through the House, but opposition in the Senate prevented
action before the end of the session. In January 1955, Engle, now
Chairman of the House Interior Committee, reintroduced his bill
as HR 5881 and scheduled hearings on it for February 9-11, 1955. His
bill permitted state and local public agencies to build small reclamation
projects up to a total cost of five million dollars. The Secretary
of the Interior was authorized to make loans for that portion of the
project costs which would be reimbursable if it were a federal project.
Engle's bill made certain that the projects were self-contained,
complete projects in themselves so that repeated five million dollar
loans did not add up to thirty million dollars in federal aid. He
also inserted the "Engle formula" as a means for excess landholders
to reimburse federal government for its loans.

During the hearings conducted by William M. Aspinall of
Colorado, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation,
Engle faced the 160-acre limitation issue in a colloquy with three
representatives of the NRA. Engle conceded that the issue "puts
some of us in a mighty hot spot" in that a few excess landholders in
small reclamation projects might receive an interest-free subsidy
from the federal government. He recalled his bill of the previous
Congressional session on the same matter before them. "Well,"
he remarked, "it did not get any loud cheers from anywhere. In
fact, it was met with resounding silence." The landowners did not
want to pay the principal, and the liberals accused him of betraying
a cardinal Democratic principle. "I grant you," he said, "you start kicking the 160-acre limitation and it is like inspecting the rear end of a mule: You want to do it from a safe distance because you might get kicked through the side of the barn. But it can be done with circumspection, and I hope we can exercise circumspection." To get around the problem of excess acreage, Engle proposed that the water districts pay the interest on all excess lands, and allow the district to arrange its own terms with the individual excess landholders for repayment.

The House Interior Committee reported the bill to the House floor on May 4, 1955, and following sharp debate, passed it on March 26, 1955, with amendments. The House bill authorized federal loans to state and territories for small reclamation projects up to five million or for projects up to ten million dollars, if no further increase in federal aid were required. It required applicants for the loans to put up a thousand dollars to help prepare studies of the project and authorized the Interior Department to administer the program. During House debate, Engle stressed that his bill allowed local groups to build reclamation projects with the same money used by the Bureau, but he expected the costs to be much less. "Our experience has shown that the Bureau is not geared to build small projects," he said. On July 28, the Senate passed its version (S2442) by voice vote. Under pressure from Senate liberals it contained a provision putting the Small Projects
under acreage limitation and public power features of reclamation law. It authorized grants to projects up to five million dollars and required congressional approval for projects requiring $500,000 in aid. It authorized $200,000 for small projects in all forty-eight states and the territories of Alaska and Hawaii. 50

The House and Senate bills were stalled in conference when Congress adjourned on August 2, 1955. HR 5881 remained in conference for nearly a year when on May 23, 1956, the conferees made their report. They settled primarily on Engle's bill, but limited it to only the seventeen reclamation states. The report also accepted the Senate's insistence that project builders not be required to put up more than twenty-five percent of the costs allocable to non-reimbursables like navigation and flood control and that any power made available went first to public consumers. It also required that Congress give its approval to proposed small projects only when the authorizing committees specifically disapprove of the project. The House immediately accepted the final report by 208-179 on June 13, 1956, following sharp debate. Opponents of the so-called Small Projects Act (HR 5881), led by John Saylor of Pennsylvania, bitterly commented that the legislation had been limited to only the western region and had frozen out the eastern states. Defenders of the conference report pointed out that the eastern section had been dropped because President Eisenhower wanted eastern interests to be accommodated by separate legislation already making its way
through Congress. Engle declared that "the basic premise of this bill is that these small projects are inherently local in character, simple in engineering and that they can be built better and cheaper by local agencies." He also tied the bill to HR 103 authored by Engle and signed into law on June 4, 1955, to enable irrigation districts to build their own distribution system for water delivery by the Bureau. HR 5881, Engle said, was "a partnership relationship arrangement between the federal government and the local governmental agency." 51

In the Senate, Senator Clinton P. Anderson, Democrat of New Mexico, led the floor fight and was compelled to accept a tactical delay before calling the legislation to the floor. Part of the difficulty facing Anderson was that eastern and southern senators fought to expand the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to build water conservation facilities. They hoped to couple their bill with that of HR 5881. Engle had been told that the President would veto the entire legislation under those circumstances. In a "gentleman's agreement," Engle agreed to allow the Senate to delay consideration of his bill while the Senate Committee on Public Works held hearings on the Agriculture Department matter. 52 In return, the Senate promised to consider Engle's bill in two weeks. On July 20, the Senate finally acted on the Small Projects legislation. Liberals bemoaned the fact that the conference report dropped the acreage limitation amendment. A flurry erupted when Senator Douglas charged that Anderson had reneged on a promise to notify him when the legislation
came up for a vote. In any event, the Senate voted for the bill without excess lands amendment.

On August 6, 1956, President Eisenhower reluctantly signed the Small Projects Act into law, making the "Engle formula" a legislative reality. The President had deep misgivings about constitutional defects inherent in the legislation. He particularly opposed the section giving congressional committees the right to veto proposed reclamation projects under reclamation law as an improper delegation of legislative authority. The Interior Department would not act until the section was eliminated. The President signed the bill on the understanding that Congress would act promptly to eliminate the offensive section.

Senate liberals were very upset at the outcome, believing that an irreparable breach had been made into basic reclamation law. Confirming their fears were reports from Sacramento that large landowners, notably the Southern Pacific Company, with 120,000 acres in the service area of the proposed San Luis project on the west side of the San Joaquin Valley was very interested in the "Engle formula" of the Small Projects Act.

Southern Pacific interest in the "Engle formula" confirmed liberal fears that it was a new version of the older tactics to evade the Homestead Act of 1862. Liberals charged that the "Engle formula" had the effect of the "commutation clause" in the Homestead Act which enabled timber and industrial interests, cattlemen, miners, and
speculators to acquire large acreage through fraudulent means. The liberals believed that the "Engle formula" was a boon to land monopolists.

Engle, however, was encouraged by the reaction from public agencies in his own district to the prospect for grants and loans under the Small Projects Act. His bill fit in with the President's policy of having federal help for local projects when local interests could not pay for construction themselves. Implications of the political dynamite of the "Engle formula" would be seen in the late fifties as Engle fought for the San Luis project. But, Engle was not ready to directly assault acreage limitation. He made this clear to an official of the National Reclamation Association in late January 1957. The NRA had sought his support to amend acreage limitation using the Small Projects Act as a precedent. Engle declined, citing current congressional support for the 160-acre limitation, and he declared that he did not favor "an out and out repeal of the acre limitation. . . . I have long thought that the acre-limitation is too inflexible and its present form a serious handicap to Federal water development."
FOOTNOTES

1 Armon Heffington to Clair Engle, December 12, 1953, EP, WF5.


9 Knight, 12-13;
10 John F. Shelly, Frank Havenner, Clarency D. McKennon, Clyde Doyle, Harry R. Shepard, Cecil R. King, Chester Holefield, and George P. Miller to Harry S. Truman, February 19, 1951, *DP.*


12 Paul H. Douglas to Paul S. Taylor, January 23, 1953, *DP.*


15 Ibid.; *Central Valley Project, Problem 24,* pp. 6, 16.


24 Baker and Hansen, pp. 17-19; Clair Engle, "Who should own the Central Valley Project," speech before the Commonwealth Club of California, "San Francisco, August 13, 1954, *EP.*

26 Ibid., November 22, 1953.


28 Douglas McKay to Paul H. Douglas, February 1, 1954, DP.

29 Ivanoeho Irrigation District and the State of California vs. Courtney McCracken et al. (No. 122), United States Supreme Court Reports Annotated, L. Ed. 2d., U.S. 355-357, p. 1323.

30 Clair Engle, "Comment by Congressman Clair Engle to Radio Station KFRE, Fresno, on the Decision by Judge Shepard, Fresno County Supreme Court, on 160-acre limitation in the case of Albonico vs. Madera Irrigation District, Clair Engle Papers, Box 81, California State Archives, Sacramento, California. (Hereafter CEP): By 1957, however, Engle and other California Congressmen declared, "The colomitous effect of this decision [Ivanoeho] in California water development, indeed the reclamation program in the whole west, is almost too serious to contemplate." It could shut down the Central Valley Project and end federal water development in the state. Clair Engle, et. al. to Edmund G. (''Pat'') Brown, February 4, 1957, EP.

31 Clair Engle to Walter P. Jones, January 21, 1954, EP.

32 Clair Engle to Lorene Melquist, January 21, 1954, EP.

33 Clair Engle to Goodwin J. Knight, January 25, 1954, AH.

34 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, February 8, 1954; Clair Engle to Rodney Alden, February 22, 1954, EP.

35 The Orland Register, March 22, 1954.

36 Clair Engle to Lloyd W. Lowrey, April 6, 1954, EP.

37 Harold T. Johnson to Clair Engle, November 5, 1954, EP.

38 Congressional Record, 83rd Congress, 1st session, (February 2, 1954), pp. 1144-1145; Clair Engle to Paul H. Douglas, February 5, 1954, DP.

39 Ralph Helstern to Eugene D. Millikin, March 19, 1954, DP.
William M. Carah to Clair Engle, February 2, 1954, CEP, Box 81.

Clair Engle to James K. Carr, February 9, 1954, CEP, Box 81.

Clair Engle to John A. Gilmont, December 4, 1953, CEP, Box 81.

"Analysis of proposed legislation by Congressman Clair Engle to amend excess lands provion," 1954, DP.

Clair Engle to William M. Carah, February 2, 1954, CEP, Box 81.

Ibid.; Clair Engle to James K. Carr, February 9, 1954, CEP, Box 81.

Ibid.


Ibid, pp. 63-64.


Sacramento Bee, June 22, 1956.


Sacramento Bee, October 17, 1956.

Clair Engle to Burnham Enersen, February 28, 1957, EP.
PARTNERSHIP ON THE TRINITY,
1955-1959

Chapter VII

Composition of the House and Senate Committees on Interior
and Insular Affairs is vital to the reclamation west. These committees
handle all legislation concerning irrigation, reclamation, minerals and
mining, livestock grazing on public lands, Indian affairs, and national
parks. In the past both committees have shown sympathy for western
economic interests, the Senate perhaps more so than the House.
The reason is that aside from California and Texas no western state
has the population--and hence the representation--of many of the
states east of the Mississippi River. Consequently, bills reported
out of the House Interior Committee lack the same measure of support
that exists in the Senate.

Congressman Engle's emergence as House Interior Committee
Chairman came at a most auspicious moment in natural resource
development history. Awaiting Committee action in January 1955
were major reclamation project controversies of the fifties: Hell's
Canyon, Colorado River Storage Project, Fryingpan-Arkansas, and the
Trinity-San Luis. How Engle managed these issues would determine the success of his endeavor to obtain congressional authorization of the Trinity project. As Barnet Never of The Denver Post noted, the House "is where the battle will be fiercest and the outcome least certain."  

Engle intended to be a vigorous chairman, a dynamic leader of natural resource development issues. He intended to revitalize the nation's conservation program. His close friend, Senator Clinton P. Anderson, Democrat of New Mexico, became Chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation under James E. Murray's Interior Committee. Other conservationist leaders held misgivings about Engle's accession to the chairmanship. The noted historian and conservationist Bernard de Voto, for one, believed that conservationists "can take little comfort" from Engle's chairmanship.  

For his part, Engle declared that what the West needed was "less talk and more cement and steel" in its reclamation program. He intended to resolve the Colorado River Storage Project dispute and get his Trinity-San Luis project through the 84th Congress; otherwise, he declared, "I will consider my tenure as committee chairman a failure."  

On January 5, 1955, Congressman Engle and Senator Kuchel introduced identical Trinity-San Luis legislation which provided $225,000,000 for construction. Trinity and Shasta counties had a major role in preparing this legislation. Shastans received a vague
reference to the conservation of the Clear Creek water flow, and Trinitarians obtained first preference for twenty-five percent of Trinity power, funds to meet additional costs for public service and facilities during the construction period, and in-lieu tax payments to cover tax revenue lost by removal of land from county tax rolls. The bill received unqualified Shasta County support, but Trinity opposed the proviso leaving the rate of the Trinity water flow to the discretion of the Interior Secretary.\textsuperscript{5} To appease coastal county opposition, Engle accepted an amendment offered by Congressman Scudder to guarantee sufficient annual Trinity water flow to protect his district's lumber and fishing industries.\textsuperscript{6} It was not long, however, before pressure from the Interior Department and Engle's own district made for significant revisions in his Trinity bill.

On February 21, 1955, Secretary McKay recommended immediate construction on the Trinity-San Luis project on the basis of the Bureau of Reclamation restudy report, but his veiled references to partnership made Engle charge that he had "pussy-footed" on the company proposal.\textsuperscript{7} Indeed, Engle reported that the Interior favored negotiating a contract with the company and was "threatening to stymie the Trinity unless I bow down and accept the P.G. & E. proposal or give them a blank check."\textsuperscript{8} Assistant Interior Secretary Fred G. Aandahl, made his department's position public on July 14, when he referred to the Company's informal contractual offer to the Bureau of Reclamation in Sacramento. The department, he said, "now recommends that
partnership] be done if a satisfactory contract can be worked out. 9

Back in Engle's district, the company partnership proposal had made a great impact upon Trinitarian and Shastan taxpayers. Partnership was especially suggestive to Trinity County with its 5,087 citizens and with seventy-two percent of its land owned by the federal government and thus not subject to county taxation, 10 making it an economic and political satellite of the more wealthy and populous Shasta County. Particularly effective in spreading Company propaganda was San Francisco attorney William Kuder whose "flowery talk...was a talk of seduction." 11 Kuder's arguments placed many public power advocates in a quandary. John and Vivien Steppling, who took over the Trinity Journal from Bob Cook, were typical. They had come into the region looking for work on Shasta Dam construction. Torn between thinking as Trinitarians or as Californians, the infusion of Company tax monies to ease the burden of hard-pressed county taxpayers tilted the Stepplings toward partnership on the Trinity. They wrote that "altruism [sic] is a virtue we most admire in neighbors." 12

Redding businessmen and real estate agents similarly saw "boom times" ahead for the region, particularly if their local tax burdens could be eased. Not so Paul Bodenhamer who used his newspaper to denounce partnership as a conspiracy to establish "a complete, undisturbed monopoly" by eliminating competition in power generation
in northern California. In 1954-1955, undaunted by Bodenhamer's strident opposition, the Company pushed hard to secure petitions and resolutions calling for partnership on the Trinity. Engle worried that this activity might "foul up our project in a public-private power fight that may seriously endanger the passage of the bill and the construction of the project." Trinitarians nearly blushed from ardent wooing by company officials. To head off embarrassing opposition within the county, Engle advised Heffington not to "argue the merits of the P.G. & E. proposal. Your strongest ground is that it would kill the project, so they have nothing to lose by stirring up this argument." Heffington might also casually mention that the Democrats see partnership as a good political club and are not about "to let the Republicans off the hook by themselves." "It is a simple choice," said Engle. "Either the project will be started by the Congress as a Federal Project--dam, powerhouses, tunnels and ditches--or it will not be started at all." In other words, "adoption of the P.G. & E. proposal means the death of the Trinity River Project." Armed with statistics, engineering data, and tactical advice from Engle's office, Heffington and Mrs. Melquist fought a rear-guard action against the Company's drive for pro-partnership resolutions, but Company representatives secured a prestigious endorsement from the Trinity County Board of Supervisors. The Weaverville Chamber of Commerce meeting on March 30, 1955,
was particularly stormy and the members, swayed by the compelling oration of William Kuder, overwhelmingly endorsed partnership. Mrs. Melquist "saw red" when told that anyone opposed to the Company "was a traitor to Trinity County." Her dark mood was not lifted when she had to sign the resolution and send it on to Engle in her official capacity as Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce. "I darn near quit over it," she stated, "but, I decided I could fight them better by staying on the inside... at least I'll know a little bit more about what they're cooking up."16

In January 1955 another serious threat to the Trinity-San Luis bill emerged along the Feather River in Butte County. The Oroville Chamber of Commerce adopted a resolution in opposition to Engle's bill as competitive to the state-sponsored Feather River Project. Republican State Senator Paul S. Byrne of Chico then introduced a resolution in the state legislature to block construction on the San Luis unit of the Trinity project. Realizing the Byrne Resolution would delay Congressional action on the Trinity, local government leaders instructed State Senator Ed Regan to oppose the resolution in committee. Heffington and Redding attorney Laurence W. Carr, brother of Jim Carr, met with Feather River backers in Sacramento to smooth over their differences. Regan successfully postponed committee action on the resolution until March. It appeared in hindsight that Byrne had acted on the mistaken belief that the San Luis was an integral part of the Feather River package and Bodenhamer,
also acting on unreliable information, charged Regan with neglect in representing Trinity-Shasta interests, which compelled Engle to smooth Regan's ruffled vanity.\textsuperscript{17}

To head off this threat of the San Luis unit, Engle joined Bodenhamer and Larry Carr in calling for mediation and integration of the Trinity and Feather River projects, informing Byrne that he would go to Oroville to discuss the problem with local officials. A federal-state squabble over the San Luis would only bring the Trinity and Feather River projects to a halt, and, therefore Engle suggested that federal construction on the Trinity-San Luis be authorized until the Feather River Project was completed, at which time California could lease San Luis facilities from the federal government. Engle thought that it "boils down to an engineering problem" that could be handled by federal-state cooperation in an integrated plan.\textsuperscript{18}

Engle was also disturbed by the role of State Engineer Bob Edmonston in the Byrne Resolution. Edmonston's great dream was to build a major water project, and he also intimated that the Trinity-San Luis was competitive to the Feather River Project. To counter Edmonston's move on the San Luis unit, Engle requested Heffington to provide documentation for the Oroville meeting to show that the Trinity-San Luis linkage had been "widely publicized for a long, long time." The project had been before Congress for some time, and the State Engineer had never made any statement that they were in conflict with the Feather River project. "In short," said Engle,
"either the State Engineer doesn't know what he is talking about or was asleep at the switch for a long, long time."^{19}

In Oroville, Engle bitterly denounced the State Engineer's office and declared that the San Luis was "a dead duck" in the current congressional session, and he would introduce a separate Trinity bill within a few days. Engle's arrival in Oroville was met by a scurrilous yellow circular denouncing "Clara Engle" for stealing northern California water for vested interests in the San Joaquin Valley. Engle's political contacts in Chico and Oroville subsequently determined that it was printed by an Oroville printing shop and distributed by two sales boys from the *Oroville Mercury-Register* who had been paid a dollar by an unidentified man.^{20} In any event Engle's address did much to mollify Oroville's misgivings about the nature of the Trinity-San Luis project. Local politicos Ray Leonard and Stanley Pittman believed that some arrangement could be worked out.^{21}

Engle's Oroville address, however, caused apprehension within the ranks of the Californians for Trinity, Sacramento, San Luis. Jim Carr advised that a telegram be sent down to Jack Rodner to reassure the San Luis farmers that Engle's words had been mis-interpreted. When the telegram ended up in the hands of Senator Kuchel, Ed Regan, Assemblywoman Pauline Davis, Armon Heffington, and the offices of the *Sacramento* and *Fresno Bees*, an embarrassed Engle vigorously disapproved of the telegram and reiterated his
intention to introduce separate Trinity legislation so that "we will
not be delayed if we have to go it alone."22 "I receive your tele-
gram which appeared to be conceived in spleen and spawned in adren-
alin," replied Carr icily. "...I regret you found it necessary to
catalog my determined and overtime efforts to assist you as inter-
ference and working at cross purposes."23 By this time Engle had
calmed down and made his peace with Carr.

On March 7, 1955, after Byrne seemed amenable to the inte-
gration plan, Congressman Engle introduced HR 4663 which ex-
cluded the San Luis unit from the Trinity project. Three days later
Jim Carr wanted to know Engle's thinking on which of the bills to
push. "I don't want to be flying up the wrong canyon," he said.24
Engle introduced the separate Trinity measures in order to get the
Bureau of Reclamation moving on a report, "or no Trinity bill
could be passed this session."25 He realized that the Trinity project
itself had little or no opposition in California, not from the State
Engineer, Governor, San Luis people, or the Department of the
Interior. "I hope that we can go along and row our boat for a while,"
he told Heffington. If the San Luis dispute could not be cleared up
by the end of April, he was ready to push the separate Trinity leg-
islation.26 By late April Engle had made up his mind to push the
Trinity bill in spite of state legislation favoring federal construction
of the project. The Trinity must be "simple and contain only a di-
rection as to what is to be done...to legislate the details will require
negotiations...existing some five or ten years from now." 27

Trinity backers later wondered what had happened to them. Bodenhamer and Larry Carr charged that unnamed Los Angeles groups had conspired to manipulate a fight between Trinity and Feather River backers to choke off federal funds for the San Luis unit. 28 Many Shastans still remembered statements by Los Angeles water groups that they would seek "firm title" to the water coming out of the Feather River Project. 29 Engle was not so hesitant in naming names. He charged that the Colorado River Board in Los Angeles, a tax-supported body, was tampering with his project. The so-called Trinity-San Luis interference with the Feather River was "a smoke screen," and this organization was "really trying to put the pressure on me because of my position on the Upper Colorado Basin." 30

What had happened was the Engle found himself caught in the maelstrom of western regional reclamation politics. Since the late forties there had been legislative warfare for control of the Colorado River. In the early twenties Arizona State Senator Fred T. Colter initiated a movement to develop the Phoenix-Tucson area by diverting water from the Colorado River through a highline canal. 31 In December 1947 the Bureau of Reclamation utilized Colter's concept in its Central Arizona Project designed to pump 1,200,000 acre-feet of water from Lake Havasu to central Arizona by means of a 241-mile long aqueduct.

But, warned Interior Secretary "Cap" Krug, if Arizona's claims to
Colorado River water proved invalid, then "there will be no dependable water supply available from the Colorado River for this diversion." 32

Upon publication of the Bureau's report and the intention of Arizona politicians to enact it, southern California girded for a sustained political and propaganda effort to control the Colorado River. In 1947 the Colorado River Association of California was organized to coordinate California's publicity effort. It was composed of six water and power groups in southern California; the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, Imperial Irrigation District, Coachella Valley Water District, San Diego County Water Authority, and Palo Verde Irrigation District. A representative from each of these agencies was also on the Colorado River Board, a tax-supported group led by Joseph Jensen, whose members were appointed by the Governor. In opposition the Central Arizona Project Association was organized by Arizona water and power groups and by individual contributors. 33

As one of the three California representatives on the House Interior Committee (also Norris Poulson and Richard J. Welch from southern California and later Sam Yorty from Los Angeles), Engle played a major role in the great Central Arizona Project fight in Congress (1949-1952). In protecting southern California interests on the Colorado River, Engle made a name for himself in southern California that was to redound to his credit in later years.

In protecting southern California's claims to the Colorado River
he also protected the interests of his constituents in the Mother Lode country. Los Angeles' "grab" on Owens Valley water and San Francisco's "grab" on Hetch Hetchy water were still vivid memories in the back country. "If Arizona is able to steal a million acre-feet of water from southern California," Engle said, "the Los Angeles crowd will be up in Inyo and Mono counties trying to get some more of our water. And with six million people and fourteen Congressmen, I will be like a boy standing on the burning deck trying to stop them." 34

Although the Central Arizona Project won easily in the Senate, Engle, Poulson, and Yorty did not let it escape the House Interior Committee. When the dispirited committee chairman, John R. Murdock of Tempe, Arizona, finally conceded defeat in 1952 and Arizona turned to the courts to litigate its claim to the Colorado River, he held three men to be primarily responsible: Engle, Poulson, and Yorty. 35

Just as the Central Arizona Project neared a climax in Congress, the Colorado River Storage Project (CRSP) in the Upper Basin area of the Colorado River also bloomed. As conceived by the Bureau of Reclamation in 1950, the CRSP consisted of five major power dams at Echo Park, Flaming Gorge, Glen Canyon, Navajo, and Whitewater. It was essentially a gigantic four-state project developing a area of more than a hundred thousand square miles. 36 Just as the Central Arizona Project was filled with significance for California, so was the CRSP in that it pitted not only Arizona against California, but
also the Upper Basin states of Wyoming, Utah, New Mexico, and Colorado against California.

Engle clearly believed that it was "bad politics and poor statesmanship for California to be surrounded by hostile neighbors." He hoped to create a feeling in the West that "California's political power is a safeguard for them, rather than a menace." An early indication of his attitude could be seen in his support for the Fryingpan-Arkansas ("Fry-Ark") project in Colorado. The "Fry-Ark" was designed to transfer water from the western slope of the Rockies in Colorado to the Arkansas River Valley in southeastern Colorado. Efforts to seek congressional authorization in 1954 were crippled when it was revealed that Colorado was not totally united behind the project. Moreover, the large California delegation opposed this relatively small project because it feared that it was an opening wedge for the massive Gunnison-Arkansas project that involved the diversion of nearly a million acre-feet of water annually from the Colorado River.

Upper Basin representatives retaliated against California reclamation projects. One notable victim was Leroy S. Johnson's Tri-Dam project on the Stanislaus River. It had seemed certain of passage in 1954, but angry Upper Basin congressmen refused to allow it to come up for a vote in spite of support from the Interior Department, President Eisenhower, and Speaker Sam Rayburn's Texas delegation. Engle warned the Colorado River Board that
southern California tactics "will eventually make Los Angeles and southern California generally the most hated single area in the nation." Engle's moderation on the "Fry-Ark" and the CRSP caused some southern Californians to suspect that he had made a deal with Upper Basin representatives to support his Trinity project.

On the issue of the CRSP itself Engle provided strong, steady support for the Upper Basin's cause. Believing that the Echo Park Dam feature was detrimental to Colorado River development, however, he sought to eliminate it from the final bill. In this he was supported by the nation's preservationist organizations which feared that the dam would destroy the Dinosaur National Monument and the national park system. After the November 1954 elections he informed the Upper Basin area that he would continue to support the CRSP and would seek to work out a compromise with southern California. The nature of this compromise was revealed in a secret meeting with the Colorado River Board in December 1954. The Congressman predicted that if southern California toned down its resistance to Colorado River development, perhaps the size of the CRSP could be similarly scaled down. "In the last session they were zeroed in on every project in California," he warned. "They sit there and swing away at everything. We will have a rebellion in the Western States against us." In spite of his entreaties, Joseph Jensen and Board attorney Northcutt Ely continued their unrelenting opposition to the development of the Colorado River.
In view of these circumstances, Engle concluded that Jensen and the Colorado River Board sought to punish him for his defection from California's fight for the Colorado River. He had been warned in the April 1954 hearing in Redding that the Trinity project would have a tough time in Congress if nothing positive was done for the "Fry-Ark." 46 Thinking that the small "Fry-Ark" posed no threat to southern California's claims to the Colorado, Engle backed it in Congress, thus earning the righteous anger of southern California water interests. Now, Engle was angry himself over the mutilation of his project. He suggested that Assemblyman Lloyd W. Lowrey look into the Colorado River Board's budget "if they continue to stick their noses in northern California affairs." 47 Jim Carr was appalled by Engle's indiscreet remarks and suggested that he use the telephone in the future when talking about southern California. Of course, "you can promptly tell me to go to hell," Carr said. "After all, if anybody's going to drop a safe, you don't want to be under it." 48

In Washington, subcommittee hearings on Engle's revised Trinity bill were held in April-May 1955. Engle was confident that he could get the bill out of subcommittee without further revision. This confidence was misplaced as P. G. & E. spokesman Robert H. Gerdes shrewdly emphasized the leasing of the falling water by the Company for $3,500,000 annually, which appealed to subcommittee Republicans. Faced with potential opposition, Engle inserted a provision to authorize the Interior Department to study partnership on the Trinity and report
back to the House Interior Committee within eighteen months.

Since it would be years before the power generators could be installed on the Trinity, construction of dams, reservoirs, and tunnels could begin during this eighteen months interim period. ⁴⁹

On May 19, 1955, the House Interior Committee reported Engle’s HR 4663. During House debate on June 21 minor adjustments were made on the bill by voice vote. Congressman Scudder served notice that he would introduce partnership legislation upon completion of the Bureau’s eighteen-month study. ⁵⁰ At the conclusion of the debate, the House approved the Trinity project by 230-153, including that of Hubert Scudder. ⁵¹ The seventy-eight vote margin stunned reclamation forces in Congress. It seemed to have everything, a gold-plated benefit-cost ratio of 3:1, the sponsorship of the influential Chairman of the House Interior Committee, and even the enthusiastic backing of such staunch Bureau foes as John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania.

Arizona Congressman Stewart L. Udall had expected not more than seventy-five to a hundred votes in opposition. In his analysis of the Trinity vote, he found that western congressmen of both parties nearly unanimously endorsed the project while eighty percent of Democratic negative votes came from the South. Another fifty negative votes came from the Middle West (all but six were Republican) while thirty-five Republicans and three Democrats from the large industrial states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania also voted “nay.” ⁵²

Congressman Harlan Hagen of Tulare thought that the opposition came
primarily from anti-public power Republicans, a few northern Democrats "who felt that the assurance of public power use in the bill was not sufficiently definite, and a handful of Southern Democrats who were ill-advised that this development would promote additional cotton acreage in California." He also expected that the Trinity authorization "is a step forward to the attainment of the San Luis features."\(^53\)

The fact that Engle professed to know of no single congressman who intended to vote against the bill and that no organized opposition existed in the House boded ill for more controversial reclamation projects in the legislative pipeline. Concerned over the unexpectedly narrow margin, Engle carefully analyzed the vote. First, the heavy barrage of criticism directed against Western reclamation and the Bureau of Reclamation in Reader's Digest, Newsweek, and other national journals cost heavily in terms of congressional support. Second, sectional interests played a significant role. Southern cotton interests were reluctant to provide for more irrigated land competing with them for cotton quotas. The San Joaquin Valley, for example, was heavy into cotton production already. Engle later confided to a Trinity friend that he informed southern congressmen that the Trinity project was over three hundred miles from the San Joaquin cotton fields.\(^54\) Midwesterners, Engle said, also tended to fear promotion of western irrigation works in sugar beet producing areas which would ultimately compete for sugar quotas. Third, southern
California interests had alienated Colorado River basin states with its unceasing barrage of anti-Central Arizona Project and CRSP propaganda. Finally, on ideological grounds, many conservative Congressmen did not support any water and power projects built by the federal government. 55

The Trinity vote also reflected Congressional misunderstanding and spite. Engle had inadvertently incurred the anger of a normally pro-public power Congressman, Michael J. Kirwan of Ohio, Chairman of the powerful House Appropriations Committee. Kirwan had the notion that Engle opposed his "pet" flood control project on the Delaware River and persuaded several liberal, public power-oriented Congressmen to vote against the Trinity bill. This flood control project was special interest legislation designed to help a United States Steel plant in return for the corporation's hiring of Kirwan's son in its Pittsburg office. 56 Although Engle finally straightened Kirwan out, it was not in time to prevent the loss of ten votes. 57 Engle later observed, "it will be at least 60 days before some members will vote for anybody's project after having lost an appropriation for a pet project of their own." 58

During July 1955 Engle wore off "a good deal of shoe leather on the Senate side" as he watched over the fate of his bill. He requested an early hearing on HR 4663 by Senator Anderson's subcommittee from Senate Interior Committee Chairman James E. Murray. Murray noted that the House version included a million dollar construction
appropriation. He congratulated Engle on his success, but refused to commit himself on when Anderson's subcommittee would report out HR 4663 or Kuchel's S78. Western senators with their own reclamation projects coming up began to play political hardball with the Trinity legislation. Senator Anderson informed Kuchel that prospects for San Luis were nil if Kuchel opposed CRSP. Engle got the CRSP through his committee without the Echo Park Dam provision, and White House pressure managed to put the project up for debate on July 27. However, CRSP managers in the House withdrew the bill minutes before the bill was scheduled for debate when it was apparent that they did not have the votes for passage. Kuchel was under pressure from Oregon and Idaho interests to support a high federal dam at Hell's Canyon on the Snake River between Oregon and Idaho.

Fortunately, Engle enjoyed a close personal and working relationship with Senator Anderson, who wondered how the Trinity bill compared with other bills acted upon by the House committee. "This is the best project our committee has ever handled in my experience," said Engle. "I realize that a Californian would be modest," replied Anderson, "but I thought if I tried hard I could get that out of you." Anderson's friendly exchange with Engle did not prevent him from using testimony by Robert H. Gerdes on the Company's partnership proposal to request the Bureau to study the finances of the Trinity project as though it would not be integrated
with the Central Valley Project. Proponents of the Trinity feared that Anderson's request would delay final congressional authorization and Engle thought that to separate the Trinity from the Central Valley Project would be "like trying to unscramble eggs." 63

Murray's committee voted the Trinity bill out on July 27, and the Senate passed the House version by a voice vote three days later. On August 12, 1955, President Eisenhower signed the Trinity project into law, the only major reclamation project enacted by Congress during the first session of the 84th Congress. "By playing ball with the Upper Basin States," remarked a bitter southern Californian, "Representative Engle of California had got his Trinity project." 64

Plans for ground-breaking ceremonies for the Trinity project were laid primarily by Don Smith, Armon Heffington, and Mrs. Meilquist. After conferring with Bureau Director Clyde H. Spencer in Sacramento, Smith set October 19, 1955, as the date of the ceremony. Meetings between Trinity and Shasta county spokesmen resulted in an agreement that all datelines on news items originated in Trinity County and that Trinitarians also dominate the steering committee designed to handle the arrangements. John Steppling, Paul Bodenhamer, and Bert Phillips handled the publicity and promotion. Smith and Trinity County Supervisor Ken Loomis selected Heffington to coordinate the effort. Smith also arranged to get $300 from the Trinity County Board of Supervisors, another $500-$600 from the Shasta Supervisors, and he expected the Redding Chamber
of Commerce to kick in a few hundred as well. 65 State and local officials, Bureau and Interior officials, and politicians all attended the festivities. Congressman Engle made one of many speeches, labeling the Trinity River Division as "the end of an era" for the Central Valley Project. 66 To conclude the ceremonies Engle pushed the plunger of a dynamite charge box on the Papoose Dam site, and actual construction on the Trinity was finally underway.

In spite of prestige acquired through his superb handling of his Trinity legislation, there was an undercurrent of resentment in Trinity County over Engle's refusal to accept partnership with the P.G. & E. Part of this was local reaction to an article in the Saturday Evening Post in which Trinitarians did not come off well in its account of the Simmons murder trial in 1941. While the article generated favorable response throughout the Sacramento Valley, Engle expressed hope to Stepling that local people would "detect the fiction and the bunk." 67

Although Stepling thought it bought time to prepare for orderly economic development in the county, Engle's eighteen month compromise with the Company was not universally approved. He was somewhat miffed by the denunciation of the Oakland-based California Water and Power Users Association as a "gimmick." He replied that he incorporated the provision so as not to delay congressional authorization, and he thought that as the sponsor of the Trinity project he was entitled to a meeting with officials of California
Water and Power Users "before you publicly hit the panic button." 68
He also stated that without the eighteen month compromise, the Trinity project would have died in Congress, especially if it "got tangled up with the controversy over the Upper Colorado Project. 69
A more graphic example of Engle's political deterioration in Trinity County was his ugly public quarrel with John Stepling over Trinitarian fears that the Bureau of Reclamation might eliminate the Lewiston Dam and place two power generators in Shasta County, thus rendering the Company proposal meaningless to county taxpayers. Engle attempted to finesse himself out of a Trinity-Shasta fight by straddling the issue, and an angry Stepling skewered him with a creditability gap charge "which only a politician can jump in one sashay." 70 In Sacramento Jim Carr saw the squabble as a "tempest in a teapot," adding that the people "don't have much to do up there in the wintertime and I guess it gave them an opportunity to hold a lot of indignation meetings." 71 After contacting key Shasta and Trinity leaders as well as "sleuthing" in the Bureau's Sacramento office, Carr concluded that Trinity County would not lose the Lewiston Dam. 71 When the Lewiston Dam was finally retained, Engle suggested that Heffington offer to buy Stepling a drink "to wash down some of the horsefeathers he has been writing about." 72
Between 1955 and 1958, while the Interior was completing its eighteen months study, a blizzard of Company and public power propaganda swept through northern California. Company representatives
spoke before farm, veterans, business, service, and fraternal organizations, and distributed massive quantities of brochures, booklets, and pamphlets, all extolling the benefits of "partnership" on the Trinity. A cocky Company partisan wagered Engle "a Dry Martini against the cost of a kilowatt" that his district supported the Company proposal, and alarmed public power advocates looked to Engle for leadership. The Congressman might have considered that sporting proposition because he maintained close contact with his constituents, and the district's pulse was reassuring. An unscientific sampling taken in 1956 indicated that most district voters opposed the Administration's "partnership" program by 48.7% to 41% and 10.3% no opinion, and an equally unscientific poll in 1957 demonstrated that Company acquisition of Trinity power facilities was opposed by 58.9% to 34.6%. These polls were merely advisory, but Engle joked that he could not "recall a case in which I found myself in serious disagreement with a heavy preponderance of those answering the poll."  

On February 12, 1957, Interior Secretary Fred A. Seaton, a Nebraska newspaper publisher who succeeded McKay in 1956, announced that his Department and the Company had negotiated a contract in December 1956 for the purchase of falling water and production of electrical power from the Trinity project. It was a typical "partnership" contract, calling for federal construction of dams, tunnels, reservoirs, and irrigation facilities. Company obligations included the construction
of three powerhouses and transmission lines, which it could control for fifty years, and paying a total of $4,617,000 to the federal government for the falling water. At the end of this fifty-year period, the federal government could, with two years notice, acquire these power facilities by paying the Company's net investment plus severance damages. On April 17, Scudder introduced a bill to authorize the Trinity power contract, which was referred to Engle's committee, prompting an impertinent letter from Armon Heffington strongly suggesting that Scudder stay out of Trinity business.

Engle was initially unsure how to handle Seaton's report, "whether it would be better to call a hearing and kill the proposal dead as fast as we can, or let it drag on and sort of die out." The provision in the contract requiring the federal government to pay severance damages if it wished to acquire the Trinity power facilities clearly worried Engle, for it could amount to millions of taxpayer's dollars. To show how this worked, Engle referred to the Big Ben powerplant, built on the Feather River by the Company some forty years before at a cost of $7,700,000. When the state had to purchase it in relation to its water plan, the Company indicated that its severance damages would come to $33,000,000.

Within days Engle requested copies of cost allocations, water supplies, repayment studies as well as the criteria utilized to back up the Interior Department's conclusions. He also urged Secretary Seaton to order the Bureau of Reclamation "to furnish all specific
information requested by the Committee staff in order to facilitate the Committee's study of the Secretary's recommendation. This request led to three subsequent upward estimates in the cost of the Company's contract to taxpayers and ratepayers. On May 2, 1957, Seaton reported that the Bureau's figures were in error and requested Engle to delay consideration of the legislation seeking to authorize the joint development of the Trinity. Later the same day Engle charged that Seaton's letter confirmed his "suspicions that the figures in the P.G. & E. proposal are in error," were underestimated, and thus, "casts doubt on all the other figures supporting the P.G. & E. proposal, and will require us to examine them very carefully."

With the Company going all-out for the Scudder bill, Engle decided that a new public power group was needed to refute their "advertising brochures and the usual hurry-scurry of their minions.... all at the expense of the ratepayers." This touched a sore point among his constituents, many of whom were angered over being charged with the expense of Company partnership propaganda rather than having it charged to its stockholders as a business expense. When Assemblyman Lowrey provided some Company propaganda expenditure statistics, Engle concluded that it was obvious that it expected to reap a handsome profit from Trinity power and urged a legislative committee to look into the matter.

To initiate this promotion, Engle suggested that Judge Joseph F. Aleck of Redding and attorney Winslow Christian of Loyalton,
co-chairman of the Second District Democrats, "dig up someone, preferably from Shasta County, to head up and correlate the opposition." Action toward that end was taken elsewhere by First District Democrats who selected Clement W. Miller of Corte Madera, a labor relations specialist, to head the campaign against Seaton's contract with the Company. Engle's office provided Miller with data to aid him in a debate with William Kuder on a San Francisco radio station. Miller was disappointed with his performance. His experience convinced him that a strong organization was necessary to present effectively the public power viewpoint. "It was quite apparent in the way I was introduced," he said, "...that I was part of some sinister subversive group." Engle was sympathetic, noting that "the P. G. & E. is tough to debate, because they have men who have done nothing other than study the field." He urged Miller to get in touch with Winslow Christian and Jack Halpin, a Redding attorney and Democratic activist, who were formulating just such an organization under his aegis.

On April 30, 1957, Christian announced the formation of the "Northern California Water and Power Committee," headed by Clem Miller and Jack Halpin as First and Second District Co-Chairmen, to mount northern California opposition to the Scudder bill. According to Christian, it "was largely a paper organization designed to float publicity" against the Company proposal. Most of the publicity generated was in the Sacramento Bee, and it "died a natural death
almost immediately.\(^89\)

A major unsuccessful effort was undertaken to obtain an anti-partnership resolution for the Shasta County Supervisors, and Bodenhamer labored quietly with similar results for a resolution from the Redding Chamber of Commerce. To overcome the Company's tax issue in Trinity and Shasta counties, symbolized by Larry Carr's failure to support their objectives, Halpin and Christian deliberately turned the Scudder bill into a partisan issue. Their organization would concentrate on northern California Democrats, and they asked Engle to get Senator Kuchel to "hit" the Republicans as well.\(^90\)

Christian had long sought to use the "Northern California and Water and Power Committee" for partisan advantage. He organized a speaker's bureau ostensibly to keep posted on Company propaganda, but he and Engle also noted that it could be used in a partisan way. "It would be better, of course," Engle said, "if we didn't have to make the P.G. & E. proposal a partisan issue, but there was no escape from it."\(^91\)

Indeed not, for in the spring of 1957, Engle was organizing his campaign for the United States Senate in 1958. California Republicans saw the Scudder bill as a vehicle to embarrass him in the primaries. In May 1957 Assistant Interior Secretary Elmer E. Bennet indiscreetly signalled this tactic to Clem Miller. If Engle wanted to become Senator, he said, he was going to have to release the Scudder bill from his committee to assuage unspecified "local commitments"
to northern California taxpayers. He thought that the Scudder bill "had a fifty-fifty chance" and that Engle's hopes for "higher office" would compel him to let it through his committee. Engle replied that Bennett "is a pretty foxy fellow and is hard to tie down in an argument. However, he said just what I expected he would."  

Engle's career had indicated to him that voters responded best to pocketbook rather than ideological issues. Additionally he interfaced a politically crippled opponent, Governor Goodwin J. Knight, victim of the "big switch" in 1957, whose position on water issues was hopelessly vague due to his "waffling" on the Trinity project and partnership since 1954. Knight hired Whitaker & Baxter, a public relations outfit also retained by the Company, to sharpen his image. This firm unleashed a stream of anti-Engle and anti-public power news releases in the spring of 1957, much of this "canned junk," to use Engle's phrase, ending up in newspaper editorials. Engle himself attempted to hurt the Repubulican cause by telephoning Washington D.C. "muckraker" Drew Pearson that Senator Knowland, campaigning for Governor, had come out for the Company proposal and that the Company "contributed a lot of liquor" to a Knowland reception.  

By spring 1958 Engle's campaign for the Senate was in high gear. His well-publicized position on the Trinity won him the support of liberal ideologues in the March 3 meeting of the California Democratic Council, but did him no good in the Trinity mountains
where the Company had consolidated its political position. A political informant reported that "a number of Weaverville poeple... froth at the mouth when your name is mentioned [sic]" and gratuitously added that "Weaverville has kissed the P.G. & E. corporate bumpas for years." Engle conceded that he was not popular in Trinity County, but consoled himself with the fact that the county population was so small. 96

An attempt to embarrass Engle politically in his own stamping grounds occurred on January 15, 1958, in Oroville with the apparent backing of the Interior Department. Following a speech by Under secretary Hatfield Chilson of Colorado, Dan Beebe, editor of the *Oroville Mercury-Register*, approached three City Councilmen with a pro-Trinity partnership resolution. Beebe hoped to get this resolution adopted without major controversy, and Councilman Stanley Pittman, member of the Republican central committee with political ambitions of his own, agreed to lead the fight. Council action was blocked for a week, however, by council members who were angered by their exclusion for the initial planning of the resolution. Pittman conceded under questioning that an Interior Department attorney had written the resolution, leading a local Engle backer to suspect that the Beebe-Pittman resolution was "an effort to stab you [Engle] in the back." 97 Engle did not expect that at this stage "one resolution, more or less, will make a lot of difference." He noted that California is a preference customer for federal power and
had a right to ask for federal help for such projects as the Feather River. "Somebody ought to point out to them that they are cutting their own throats," concluded the Congressman. 98

In Washington the Scudder bill had been joined by similar legislation introduced on May 9, 1957, and January 15, 1958, respectively by James B. Utt, a right-wing Republican attorney from Santa Ana, and Republican Charles S. Gubser, a Gilroy farmer and teacher. Extensive hearings on these bills were held in January and February 1958, compelling Engle to leave the campaign trail and protect his Trinity project in Washington. He declared that he would do "every-thing in my power to knock this so-called partnership dead in the head." 99 In one bitter exchange, he implied that Secretary Seaton had "bamboozled" Congress on the Trinity Project. Interior and committee Republicans demanded a retraction, and Engle relented by substituting "hornswoggle" for "bamboozle." He said: "A fellow might 'hornswoggle' another fellow out West in a horse trade, but it takes a city slicker to 'bamboozle' anyone--a widow woman out of her government bonds, for instance." 100

In early May 1958 backers of the Scudder bill pushed for a quick subcommittee vote, a maneuver, Engle thought, "to put me in a squeeze" and "to force me back here and prevent me from conducting a vigorous primary campaign." 101 Congressman Saylor succeeded in having the bill called up on May 14, catching some of Engle's supporters off-guard, and the vote to send the bill on to the
full committee promised to be close. Engle had counted on Walter S. Baring's vote, but the Nevada public power Democrat was under heavy pressure from southern Nevada unions to support the Scudder bill. This pressure came from Clark County unions on behalf of California Local 1245 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) which had endorsed partnership in 1955. The impact of this endorsement was neutralized when it became known that most of the membership of the local were Company stockholders. Nevada unions had earlier offered to finance Baring's bid for Governor should he decide to make the race and telegraphed him on the morning of May 14 to vote for the Scudder bill. Not having time to talk with Engle, Baring voted "present," and the motion to send the Scudder legislation on to the full committee was defeated by 14-14-2 "present" vote. In an extraordinary letter, Baring apologized to the furious Engle, protesting that his capitulation was not a "double cross," that he was not a "political prostitute," and that he had gone "just as far as I could to help you without crucifying myself." 103

The other "present" vote belonged to James A. Haley of Florida who believed that power development was a mere by-product of reclamation projects. "Thus," said the Florida Democrat, "it seems to me that we should allow someone to develop this power potential." The federal government was not going to do anything about Trinity power until the Company expressed an interest in developing this potential. In any event, Haley indicated that he would
take another look at the issue. Engle did not expect that Trinity partnership bills would get out of Congress in the current session, "but they can give me a lot of trouble because of the closeness of the vote on the Committee. If Jim Haley will just cooperate a little bit I could get the thing bottled up."

Heartened backers of the Utt-Gubser bills scheduled another vote for May 16, three weeks before the California primaries. To meet campaign obligations, Engle personally requested postponement of their consideration until June 11, to which Utt agreed. During this hiatus, Engle scored a great primary election victory and worked hard on "persuadable" Congressmen to defeat the Utt-Gubser legislation in subcommittee, particularly Baring, Haley, and Arizona Republican John A. Rhodes. He warned Baring that if he continued voting like this, he might lose support of ninety percent of organized labor as well as of all Democratic liberals. Baring seemed stronger since Andrew Biemiller, President of the IBEW, set "the Clark County Central Trades... right."

Engle considered Jim Haley's cooperation critical to "get the thing bottled up," but the most his political contacts could get out of Haley was that he voted the way he did for "free enterprise."

For some reason Engle thought that John Rhodes' vote could be acquired, but his political contact in Arizona found Rhodes to be like "talking to a stone wall." Engle's activity succeeded in "bottling" up the Utt-Gubser bills in the subcommittee. But, a
majority of the House Interior Committee urged the Interior Department not to request, and the House not to appropriate, funds for Trinity power facilities until Congress had finished considering them. 109

Upon Congressional adjournment, Engle returned to the campaign against Governor Knight. While significant issues were discussed, the campaign often deteriorated to name-calling and lacked the drama of the Brown-Knowland gubernatorial contest focusing on the "right-to-work" controversy. California Democrats won a landslide election in 1958, and Engle returned to Congress as a freshman member on Senator Anderson's Interior Committee in January 1959. He called on the California Municipal Utilities District to supply him with an independent engineering report to buttress his impending call for increased appropriations for the Trinity project. Within two months Engineering Consultants, Inc., based in Denver, reported that the Trinity River Division construction was ahead of schedule and would be able to operate by July 1, 1963, if the present construction rate were maintained. 110 Senator Engle made excellent use of the report in his appearances before the House and Senate Appropriations Committees later that spring.

The Senator was similarly delighted to learn that repayment schedule of the Central Valley Project was maintained. Credit for this progress was due to maintenance of public power facilities, accounting for ninety-seven percent of the net operating revenues to date. "This provides a dramatic object lesson with respect to
Trinity," he said. He urged that Trinity power facilities be built by the Bureau of Reclamation for benefit of irrigation and power consumers and for repayment costs.111

On March 10, 1958, the Utt-Gubser bills were reintroduced with significant changes; that the federal government could take over the Trinity powerhouses at a depreciated cost, excluding severance damages, by July 1, 1967, or after the San Luis project was ready to operate, or which ever came first. Engle was not impressed, particularly, after the Company announced its acceptance of the compromise. He remarked that the legislation was "the same old wolf but with a new sheepskin Easter bonnet."112

The Utt-Gubser bills would have disappeared without a trace in the labyrinths of the House committees had not President Eisenhower's Budget Director, Maurice H. Stans, struck out funds for the construction of Trinity powerhouses. Engle loudly denounced this tactic as an unsubtle hint that the Trinity project would not be completed without Company participation. Assistant Interior Secretary Bennett adamantly declared that his department would not seek funds for the Trinity powerhouses, but he reiterated Interior support for partnership with the Company over the Trinity.113 Before Senate and House committees, Engle urged a two and a half million dollar appropriation for construction of the power facilities. He declared partnership to be "legislatively dead," and if work on the powerhouses did not begin soon, they would not be ready to operate when the dams and
reservoirs were completed, thus wasting taxpayers' dollars. 114

The Senate Appropriations Committee subsequently appropriated
$2,415,000 to complete the Trinity power facilities, without partner-
ship features. 115

On August 11, 1959, partnership died in the House Subcommittee
on Irrigation and Reclamation as the Utt-Gubser bills were tabled
by a vote of 13-9. 116 "Chalk up another for Engle," congratulated
a Redding supporter. "Trinity will long stand as a unique personal
triumph over a gigantic monopoly." 117 Engle gave full credit to
House Interior Committee Chairman Wayne Aspinall who had defeated
the bills partly as a favor to his old chairman. "This," exclaimed
the Senator, "for all practical purposes kills the P. G. & E. partner-
ship scheme for good and all. It is the coup de grace to a long,
futile argument." 118
FOOTNOTES

1 The Denver Post, January 14, 1955.


3 The Denver Post, November 5, 1955.

4 Redding Record-Searchlight, November 4, 1955.


6 U.S., Congress, Senate, Trinity River Division, Central Valley Project, California, Hearing, before a subcommittee of the Committee of Interior and Insular Affairs, Senate, on H.R. 4663, 84th Cong., 1st sess., 1955, p. 11. (Hereafter, Senate Hearing on HR 4663.)


8 Clair Engle to Arch Menifield, May 11, 1955, EP.

9 Senate Hearing on HR 4663, p. 23.

10 Ibid., p. 25.

11 Jonathan Tibbitts to Clair Engle, April 26, 1955, EP.


13 Redding Record-Searchlight, May 6, 1954.
14 Clair Engle to D. Jack Metzger, April 16, 1955, EP.

15 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, March 12, 1955, EP.

16 Lorene Melquist to Clair Engle, no date, EP.


18 Clair Engle to Paul S. Byrne, February 8, 1955, EP.

19 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, February 8, 1955, EP.

20 J. J. Madigan to Clair Engle, March 9, 1955, CEP., Box 81.

21 Ibid.


24 James K. Carr to Clair Engle, March 10, 1955, EP.

25 Clair Engle to James K. Carr, March 12, 1955, EP.

26 Clair Engle to Armon Heffington, March 8, 1955, EP.

27 Clair Engle to James K. Carr, May 2, 1955, EP.


30 Clair Engle to Lloyd W. Lowrey, January 17, 1955; Clair Engle to James K. Carr, January 22, 1955, EP.


34 Clair Engle to F. J. Young, April 2, 1954, EP.


37 Clair Engle to Edwin C. Johnson, July 29, 1954, EP.


39 Fred W. Simpson to Clair Engle, July 7, 1954, EP.

40 Tudor, Notes, July 19, 1954; August 7, 1954.

41 Clair Engle to Wayne H. Fisher, June 21, 1954, EP.


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CONCLUSION

The Bureau of Reclamation proposed the San Luis project in order to provide a million acre-feet of water to irrigate the Westlands in Fresno, Kings, and Kern counties. It would collect water behind the San Luis Dam during the winter and release it for irrigation during the spring and summer. When California proposed its own water master plan, it originally sought to export water from the Feather River watershed over the Coast Range to southern California through a series of lifts. However, it later opted for construction of the San Luis Dam and Reservoir on the Bureau's proposed site, thus sparking the State-Federal conflict that dramatically altered Congressman Engle's Trinity-San Luis legislation in 1955. A compromise between the state and federal government enabled the latter to service the land it had originally proposed to do while California would service land further to the south.¹

A major controversy erupted during the late fifties over whether reclamation law would apply to lands served by the state project.
Engle and his allies in the San Joaquin Valley, Congressmen Bernard F. Sisk of Fresno, Harlan Hagan of Tulare County, and John J. McFall of Manteca, fought to have reclamation law apply only to those lands serviced by the federal San Luis project.

Liberals within and without Congress viewed the San Luis project and the concept of federal-state integration as a dodge to the enforcement of acreage limitation. They pointed out that the federal service area was dominated by large landholders, twelve percent of whom owned seventy-five percent of the land. More significantly, many of these landholders also owned large tracts in the federal Pine Flat service area on Kings River in which water was distributed without regard for federal reclamation law. ²

The final congressional push for the San Luis project began in the 86th Congress (1959-1960). Senator Engle authored S44 and Congressman Sisk wrote HR 7155 to make the project a legislative reality. Significantly, Section 6A of Engle's bill and Section 7 of Sisk's bill provided that federal reclamation law apply only to land in the federal service area. These sections were designed to avoid future litigation with potential buyers of $1,750,000,000 California bond issues to finance the Feather River Project. Engle hoped to work "in coordination" with Senator Kuchel, Congressman Sisk, and Governor Brown. Engle also expected some support or "at least no opposition" from southern California. He argued that southern California should support the San Luis because "whatever north-south route
eventually is adopted, San Luis is a step in the right direction. 3

Engle's drive occurred simultaneously with an attack against
the "Engle formula" as a move to void acreage limitation. Engle
declared that the attack, mounted by liberal newsman George Ballis
in Fresno, 4 was unfair, that he was not opposed to acreage limita-
tion in principle, but sought a practical, flexible approach "without
rigid adherence to a mathematical acreage formula." 5 Professor
Paul S. Taylor of Berkeley took up the attack against the Engle-
Sisk bills. He denounced the Sisk bill as a violation of the Cali-
fornia Democratic Party platform which upheld acreage limitation.
HR 7155, said Taylor, destroys federal reclamation law, by first
integrating San Luis unit with federal CVP [Central Valley Project]
to give all the physical and financial advantages of integration, and
then by exempting from the 160-acre limitation a portion of the waters
using CVP facilities, viz., those waters that ultimately are deliv-
ered to lands outside the federal San Luis 'service area." 6

Engle and Sisk, however, clearly differentiated between the
federal and state-sponsored San Luis projects and explicitly stated
that federal reclamation law was to be applied to the former. Sisk
declared that to enforce federal reclamation law "on a completely
state financed, state built, and state operated project using water
completely subject to state water law would be wrong in principle
and disastrous in results." 7 "In this instance, Paul," said Engle,
"Your argument is with State law. Many of us can agree with your
principle but I, for one cannot agree with your method;... I think we would only kill the Federal San Luis project entirely if it were to be used as a device to attempt to apply the 160-acre limitation to a portion of the State project."8

The proponents of the San Luis project were mauled in Senate debate in mid-May 1959 as Senators Douglas, Morse, and Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota moved to eliminate Section 6A of Engle's bill. By deleting Section 6A, Senate liberals expected reclamation law to apply to both federal and state service areas. Douglas denounced 6A as "one of the greatest land steals that has ever been attempted in the history of this Nation."9 Acting on information provided by George Ballis, Taylor and other interested liberals in the Central Valley, Senate liberals hammered away at the San Luis project until an exasperated Senator Kuchel cried out, "Who, in God's name, speaks for people of California?"10

"To everyone's surprise," Dougals recalled, "we won decisively, defeating repeal of the Reclamation Act of 1902 on a decisive vote to eliminate Section 6A."11 On May 12 the Senate passed the San Luis project bill, adding a provision forbidding delivery of water to new cotton land, and sent it over to Chairman Aspinall of the House Interior Committee. The House committee acted on Sisk's bill and sent it on to the Rules Committee. By August 1959 Congressional leadership behind the San Luis project, including Engle, Kuchel, Sisk, and Aspinall, decided to delay final House action until
January 1960. Although disappointed by a five-month delay, Sisk noted that the House had to deal with major legislation before it adjourned, and political reality indicated that it was best to wait until the second session.  

Part of the problem was the conservative membership of the House Rules Committee. Senator Engle sought to lay the groundwork for future release of the San Luis bill by working on Republican Homer Budge of Idaho. Budge had a "pet project" stalled in the Senate and could not even get a hearing in the House. Engle persuaded Aspinall to hold hearings on Budge's project in January 1960. "I think that this will give us the necessary leverage to get a favorable vote out of Budge in the Rules Committee," declared Engle.  Engle's sanguine hopes were dashed in April 1960 when Rules prevented Sisk's bill from reaching the floor. By early May 1960 Rules reconsidered its action and scheduled the project for debate.

House liberals led by Albert C. Ullman of Oregon and Jeffrey Cohelan of Berkeley, California, the latter being a former student of Taylor's, strove to eliminate Section 7 of HR 7155. Their efforts were aided substantially by indication that Governor Brown sought a compromise. In February 1960, reflecting the Governor's attitude, Sisk offered to eliminate Section 7 himself. Liberals were suspicious of Brown's and Sisk's intentions, suspecting that the big landholders "can litigate endlessly, farming all the while, and hoping for a Congress or an Executive that will let them out, while they are still
litigating and farming."14

In mid-May 1960, the House began final debate on the San Luis bill during which George P. Miller spoke of the political conse-
quenices that befell other politicians, notably Sheridan Downey, who attacked acreage-limitation.15 In the end, with guarantees to pro-
tect the Delta from saline intrusion the House, accepted the bill by 214-180. The Senate accepted the changes, and President Eisenhower signed the bill into law on June 3, 1960.16

With the enactment of the San Luis project, the major pieces of Clair Engle's water program were laid in place. To give him full credit for California's postwar water development program would be to ignore the roles of Governors Warren, Knight, and Brown, the influential detail and promotional work of Richard Boke, Jim Carr, and Marsh Jones; and others in the ranks of local leader-
ship, of which Armon Heffington, Don Smith, Lorene Melquist, Max Vann, and others come to mind. They all contributed substantially to the design, promotion, and creation of the reclamation program. Given that Clair Engle did not act alone, his role was crucial in supplying the legislative foundation of the region's reclamation pro-
gram. He had authored every major addition to the initial features of the Central Valley Project.

In analyzing twentieth-century western regional political history, attention must be given to the career of Clair Engle of Red Bluff, California. Like Al Ullman, Mike Mansfield, Frank Church, Mrs.
Gracie P lost, Henry Jackson, and Lee Metcalf, Engle emerged from the wars of western reclamation politics with national power and influence: but his role in western political history has yet to be satisfactorially resolved. In the running battle between western developers and preservationists, he clearly aligned with the former. Recent histories of this period serve only as reference points to future research.

From his emergence as a power in the House cloakroom, Engle placed his brand on western reclamation legislation. His influence was augmented by a close alliance with the Texas and southern congressional delegations, particularly states influenced by the Tennessee Valley Authority. His relationship with House Speaker Sam Rayburn of Texas was close and personal, and Rayburn saw the ambitious Californian as a potential successor to the reins of House power.¹⁶ Engle's legislative legerdemain in the House was the consequence of his close attention to detail. He knew the rules of the House. Referring to fellow members in Congress, he noted: "Those guys are pros. You can use the rules in a way they never thought of, but as long as you stay within the rules, and you beat 'em, well, hell, that's how it is in the game."¹⁷

To a very large degree Engle's actions were influenced by the peculiar circumstances of his rise to power and the nature of his mountain-valley constituency in California's Second Congressional District. The Second District contained most of California's water-
shed, water for the great Central Valley empire, and water for the developing heavy industry and urbanization along the West Coast.

His orientation was always to protect the areas of origin--his constituents--against the "metropolitan colonialism" of the Bay Area and the Los Angeles metropolitan area. "Big cities are notoriously phlegmatic," he declared in the midst of a controversy with San Francisco during the mid-fifties, "and if we hit them first and hard we may catch them pretty much unprepared."18

Clair Engle was more than a rural partisan taking up the cudgels against powerful metropolitan areas. He was also an ambitious politician who looked to higher office other than the United States Senate.19 As his career progressed and as his constituency evolved from a basically agrarian and mining one to a more urbanized one, Engle took a more militant stand on behalf of consumer issues. His stance for public power and distribution, his defense of the controversial SMUD contract of 1952, and his unrelenting opposition to partnership on the Trinity revealed a deep commitment to the interests and concerns of the "common man," a term he defined as the small businessman, miners, lumbermen, farmers, and ranchers burdened by bureaucratic "red tape" and economic conditions beyond their control.

Even more so, perhaps, this attachment for the "common man" revealed the inner drive in this political animal. His early years in Battle Creek influenced him deeply, and the sight of his neighbors
and family in armed confrontation with power company officials made an indelible imprint on his psyche. It provided him with the emotional foundation for his anti-private utility instincts; it explains in large measure his desire to tweak the Company's corporate nose at every stage of his meteoric political career. It made for good politics; it appealed to a reservoir of anti-Company sentiment in the northern Sacramento Valley area that had been created by the Company's ruthless expansion of the World War I era. It also illustrates why the Company failed to mobilize north state voters to repeal the Central Valley Project Act of 1933.

Clair Engle was basically utilitarian in his approach to political issues. He held faith in few, if any, political abstractions. He used the same terms that such liberal ideologues as Douglas, Morse, and Cohelan used, terms like "acreage limitation," "family farm," and "basic reclamation law," but he never allowed them to become rigid, cherished absolutes. Life was not absolute; compromises had to be made; political concepts and laws were relative and had to be adapted to meet changing realities. While Morse and Douglas cherished their hollow victories and noble lost causes, Engle determined to make reclamation law flexible, more applicable to economic realities in the Central Valley. The fact that his efforts to make acreage limitation more flexible made for good politics in the San Joaquin Valley was an added bonus to the political equation.

For all of his skills as an accommodator of political conflict,
his revelry in the "nitty-gritty" of political organization and consensus-making, Engle also possessed the rare quality of vision. In this he enjoyed the close support of Jim Carr and Richard Boke who similarly saw the potential disaster of the Central Valley Project during the late forties. Even before the initial features of the project had been completed, it became clear that other sources of water had to be utilized to make good the original design of the Central Valley Project. The grasslands hearing of April 1951 and the Sacramento hearing of October 1951 illustrated the problems of the Sacramento River and laid the basis for the great movement for the Trinity and San Luis projects. Engle encouraged Sacramento Valley residents to organize and protect their water rights from encroachment from the San Joaquin Valley and southern California. Sacramento Valley Canals were designed to protect the water needs of local agricultural interests as well as to stimulate the demand for the transmountain diversion of water from the Trinity River into the Central Valley.

Engle's struggle to enact the Trinity River diversion and then to keep its power facilities out of the hands of the P.G. & E. illustrates his genius as a political tactician and strategist. He correctly interpreted the struggle in terms of regional and national politics. The road to the Trinity, he discovered, was indirect and full of hidden dangers. It took him to the defense of southern California's claims to the Colorado River against those of Arizona, but unlike other members of the California congressional delegation, he did not
seek to block all development of the Colorado River. For that reason he backed the "Fry-Ark" and the CRSP in hope of winning over significant Upper Basin support for his own Trinity project. His subtlety in handling his Trinity project in the 84th Congress was so extraordinary that his was the only major reclamation project enacted in the first session.

Clearly the Congressman's most controversial move was to ease the rigid enforcement of the acreage limitation. He had been forced into the controversy by his concern over the state purchase of the Central Valley Project movement and its attendant consequences on California's water development. In his mind the impact of state ownership of the project would have been disastrous; at the very least, it would have delayed his Sacramento Valley Canals and Trinity-San Luis proposals for years. By working with opponents of state purchase and by moving to ameliorate the underlying causes of the movement, namely acreage limitation and the 9-E contracts, with his Small Projects Act of 1956 and companion legislation to help local financing of water distribution facilities, he neutralized potential opposition to the Trinity project.

Engle prided himself as a tough, savvy professional politician, but he was more than a mere provincial legislator. He assumed leadership in the national struggle for control of natural resources development legislation. As Chairman of the powerful House Interior Committee, he led public power advocates in their battle against the
the Eisenhower Administration's partnership program. He articulated
the desires of western conservationists who sought to develop the
nation's resources for the benefit of all the people. He was particularly
proud of his efforts to expand the Central Valley Project through the
Sacramento Valley Canals, American River Development, Trinity
River Division, and the San Luis Project. "They're better than
something you read in the Congressional Record," he said. "They're
cement and steel--something you can get out and stomp around on." 20

Engle's stance was the product of a youthful environment along
Battle Creek and the Sacramento River. Here, natural resources
were plentiful and were meant to be used even at the cost of losing
forever scenic vistas. If his vision lacked an ecological insight into
the consequences of unrestrained development, it nonetheless postulated
a better life through public development of resources. He was typically
a western American materialist. Yet, indications were that he had
begun to understand another value of natural beauty. He authored a
series of legislation that established the Point Reyes National Sea-
shore in order to protect the vanishing Pacific Coast from irresponsible
development.

The Trinity River Division of the Central Valley Project was a
milestone in Engle's political career, but it left a bitter-sweet
political side effect. Although Trinity water and power facilities
have been a boon to northern California consumers and farmers, the
expected economic boom did not materialize in Trinity County.
The Trinity project did not provide adequate flood control and virtually destroyed the area's salmon and steelhead spawn. Additionally, ten percent more of Trinity water than authorized by the Bureau of Reclamation is still exported beyond the county, and Trinitarians complain that the river is badly silted. 21

Hopes were high, however, in September 1963 when President John Kennedy dedicated the Trinity River Division at its Whiskeytown Dam facilities. All of the old veterans of the Trinity struggle were present to be congratulated—all but Senator Engle whose body was half-paralyzed by a malignancy. An operation in April 1964 left him in a dreadful physical condition, but he recovered enough to cast his vote for cloture to close debate over the historic Civil Rights Act of 1964. His last major speech, written and delivered by a staff aide weeks before his death on July 30, 1964, reflected his opposition to current partnership drives. Congressman Harold T. ("Bizz") Johnson, who had succeeded Engle in the Second District in 1958, successfully guided a bill through Congress to change the name of Trinity Lake to Clair Engle Lake over Weaverville protests. To this day, Trinity County residents refer to the lake as "the water behind the Trinity Dam."
FOOTNOTES

1A. Kenneth Anderson to George Meany, December 2, 1959, DP.


3Clair Engle to J. E. O'Neill, January 20, 1959, EP.


5Clair Engle to Phil Kerby, April 21, 1959, EP.

6Paul S. Taylor to B. F. Sisk, March 24, 1959, EP.

7B. F. Sisk to Paul S. Taylor, April 7, 1959, EP.

8Clair Engle to Paul S. Taylor, March 27, 1959, DP.

9Congressional Record, 86th Cong., 1st sess., (May 11, 1959), p. 7849

10Ibid., pp. 7850-7851.

11Douglas, p. 369.

12Congressman B. F. Sisk, Press Release, August 5, 1959, EP.

13Clair Engle to J. E. O'Neill, August 2, 1959, EP.

14Paul S. Taylor to Frank McCulloch, January 1960, DP.


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