

**REPORT OF THE STATE  
WATER COMMISSION OF  
CALIFORNIA, JANUARY 1,  
1917**

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**VARIOUS**

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WATER COMMISSION OF  
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**REPORT**

**OF THE**

**State Water Commission  
of California**

**PUBLISHED JANUARY 1, 1917**



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1917**

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STATE WATER COMMISSION.

HIRSH W. JOHNSON, *Governor* (ex officio)-----Sacramento, California  
W. F. McCLURE, *State Engineer* (ex officio)-----Sacramento, California  
W. A. JOHNSTONE, *President*-----San Dimas, California  
A. E. CHANDLER-----Berkeley, California  
IRVING MARTIN-----Stockton, California

We are indebted for many of the photos from which cuts in this report were made to the San Francisco offices of the United States Forest Service and United States Geological Survey; also, to the State Mining Bureau for cuts of maps.

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1931

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### SUMMARY.

|  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| Number of applications received to December 1, 1916..... | 531                               |
| Number of permits granted.....                           | 192                               |
| Number of applications withdrawn.....                    | 39                                |
| Number of applications rejected.....                     | 50                                |
| Number of applications pending.....                      | 250                               |
| Number of second-feet applied for:                       |                                   |
| For agricultural .....                                   | 91,360 second-feet or 83 per cent |
| For power .....  | 4,892 second-feet or 5 per cent   |
| For mining .....   | 1,632 second-feet or 1.7 per cent |
| For municipal .....                                      | 257 second-feet or .3 per cent    |
| Of the permits granted there were:                       |                                   |
| For agricultural .....                                   | 162                               |
| For mining .....   | 23                                |
| For power .....  | 7                                 |
| Number of licenses issued .....                          | 4                                 |
| For agricultural .....                                   | 3                                 |
| For power .....  | 1                                 |



LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

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SAN FRANCISCO, California.

To His Excellency, THE GOVERNOR,  
*State of California.*

SIR: We have the honor to herewith submit a report of the labors of this commission under the terms of the Water Commission Act (Statutes 1913, chapter 586), approved by your Excellency June 16, 1913, subjected to referendum, approved by popular vote November 3, 1914, and put into effect December 19, 1914. This report covers a period from March 1, 1915, to December 1, 1916.

Respectfully submitted this 20th day of December, 1916.

STATE WATER COMMISSION,

W. A. JOHNSTONE, *President.*

JOSEPHINE A. PATTEN, *Secretary.*

### ECONOMICAL USE.

"Along with the question of greater aid to settlers on California irrigation projects the economical use of irrigation water is coming to overshadow other irrigation problems in the state. Our studies of irrigation resources have indicated that there is sufficient irrigation water in California for less than one-half of the area which needs water or that will be greatly benefited by it. Even the irrigation of the 9,000,000 acres which it is estimated may ultimately be watered can be brought about only by the establishment of more economical standards of use than now prevail in many parts of the state. It is believed that the work of the State Water Commission can be of tremendous force in establishing a more economical irrigation practice, especially in northern and central California."—(Bulletin No. 1—State Department of Engineering Progress Report of Cooperative Irrigation Investigations in California, 1912-1914.)

## INTRODUCTION

The movement for businesslike legislation regarding the use of water is an old one in California. The office of state engineer was established in 1878 for "the acquirement of data upon which the state might formulate a policy and frame legislation respecting irrigation matters." Although the office continued for ten years and assembled much valuable data, it was unsuccessful in securing the desired legislation.

In 1900 the California Water and Forest Association, in cooperation with irrigation investigations of the United States Department of Agriculture, made a study of water right conditions on eight typical California streams, and in 1902 prepared a draft of a "water code" for submission to the legislature of 1903. The proposed bill was so little understood that the resulting opposition was too great to allow its introduction.

The State Conservation Commission was created on April 8, 1911, as an investigating body. At the same time the State Board of Control (water power) was created. On March 23, 1912, California's first State Water Commission took over the State Board of Control in so far as it related to the filing of applications to appropriate the use of water for power purposes. The act creating the State Board of Control (water power) and that creating the original State Water Commission were identical, with the exception that the term of license was extended from 25 to 40 years. Due to the efforts of the State Conservation Commission, the present water commission act was passed by the legislature in 1913. This gave the new commission, among other things, the authority to accept applications for the use of water for all purposes, the old commission having had authority for use of water for power purposes only. It also gave the commission wider powers, greatly increased the scope of water regulation generally, as may be seen by a perusal of the act, which appears elsewhere in this report.

This new act was suspended in its operation by a referendum petition, but in November, 1913, it was approved by a vote of the people at a general election and went into effect December 19, 1914. The commissioners were appointed in March, 1915, the work of the commission dating from that time. It was a new procedure to those who knew only of the old method of filing on water by posting notices on the stream and recording same in the county recorder's office.

The work of formulating the various blanks and forms, framing rules and regulations and systematizing the work required a great amount of labor. Today there is installed in the offices of the commission a thorough system of taking care of the business with speed and accuracy.