

November 4, 1949

AGAIN—TWO SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

YOU'VE often seen in action that great old American institution, Two Schools of Thought. It is ever with us, inevitably, is bound to be in a democracy.

Right now, two schools of thought are gradually developing in that so-far-theoretical matter of how to dispose of the Matilija dam water. Maybe, we'll have some heavy rains this coming winter, and then the problem will no longer be theoretical. We then shall need some sort of a Zone 1 policy. Heretofore, Zone 1 has operated blissfully without a policy.

School of Thought No. 1 takes it for granted that the water which is conserved will be sold for beneficial use, the revenues going to pay interest on the \$3,400,000 bond issue and to retire the bonds over a period of years. That is the premise on which the people authorized the bonds in the first place. That would be the fair way, for the people who use the water to pay for it.

School of Thought No. 2 is beginning to say—No, that would be a lot of unnecessary bother; let's just distribute the water, dump some in the streambed for the folks down below, spread some in the Ojai valley to bring up well levels, and pay for the Matilija dam by increased taxes.

Admittedly, the matter can be handled either way, or by a combination of them, provided the tax limitations will stand all that extra load. So, be prepared as time goes on to hear the conflicting arguments.

As to School of Thought No. 2, we offer a few observations for consideration. First, under such a plan there would be a good many property owners and tax payers who would not, could not, receive any of the Matilija dam water. Yet they would have to pay equally with everybody else. That's inequitable.

Also, if you were going to arrive at any reasonable program of dumping the water, it would have to be dumped for various areas in amounts fairly proportional to the tax contributions those respective areas were making.

In Zone 1, the Ventura Avenue oil field and the city of Ventura are the two big tax-paying units (and also the biggest users of water). Such a program would leave very little of the water for the Ojai valley, which needs it desperately and should have an ample supply to meet its rapid growth. The Santa Ana valley, the Rincon, the upper Ojai, and other important corners of the zone would be getting no water from the dam at all.

It seems to us at this juncture that School of Thought No. 2 will have considerable home work to do on the problem before its case sounds very convincing.