

# SOUTHERN NEVADA

Written Especially for the  
**LAS VEGAS AGE**

By CORNELIUS VANDERBILT, Jr.

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The city of Las Vegas lies at the crossroads of American engineering, business and prospective national affairs. It stands at the crux of possibly the greatest single undeveloped area in the United States today. It is probably on the brink of one of the most phenomenal developments — if its possibilities are not justly that this old world of ours has seen in many a day.

Perhaps I am too sure. My superlatives may annoy other dominant sections of the land. Yet, superlatives are comparatively nothing when it comes to the description of actual construction that has taken place elsewhere, since the war.

We have become warped to magnitude. Those of us who are fortunate enough to get about, find our most enlarged viewpoints dwarfed by the size of things that take place seemingly overnight. Even in finance, nothing now amazes us save the quarter, half and more percentages of the Billion dollars.

Just by way of further introduction, I am going to ask you to bear with me a moment while I recite to you, some personally rather interesting facts. A lot more could be said, but we have neither the space nor kind editor, the time; and besides, 't would not be proper here to divulge the exchanges of political dictum that come even from within the White House itself.

In the summer of 1922, Senator Hiram Johnson of California, and Congressman Phil D. Swing, also of our neighboring contemporary, separately came to this writer, with a typewritten copy of one of the first congressional bits of legislation concerning the Colorado Riv-

er. A few months later, with his first daily then substantially established in Los Angeles, overtures were made from a certain political and financial faction in San Francisco, and the tabloid-tornado swept into that city. Municipal and county elections were taking place; the first Boulder Canyon bill had been introduced in Washington. Look to your files. But four municipal dailies in California commented upon it; and it happened that two controlled there by this writer constituted one half the public opinion on the bill at that time.

Political machinations went ahead.

Warren G. Harding passed away. Calvin Coolidge came to take his place. From time to time congress sputtered. Colorado River control, but that was all.

In the fall of 1924, this writer went to Washington, with a witness. He lunched at the White House. So did the witness. They talked afterwards with the President concerning California politics. What Mr. Coolidge said, will make excellent autobiographical material at a later date, for present and future generations of Californians to read.

Concerning the building of the dam the President was emphatic. Anything that he could do, within political reason, he was willing to do to signify his good intent.

But the years slipped by. Other legislation was introduced. Other persons held the center of the stage; other localities took up the public mind. Politicians came and went. Many brought their Colorado River schemes to this writer; even representatives of the power companies approached him, as did the municipal water and power departments of other western cities.

In 1925, the fall, I believe, we went to Washington again to confer with the President. Herbert Hoover was at lunch, also Fred B. Stearn, the "Colonel House" of this administration. In the discussions which followed, Mr. Coolidge suggested one point: "Floods must be checked; the desert must have water, nearly one quarter of the west is dry."

Articles were written. It was an uphill battle. Forty-seven editorials under this writer's pen appeared from September 1923 to January 1925 in his three newspapers; and five articles in national monthly publications.

You will remember in those dark days, when it seemed as if Colorado River legislation were forever dead that there was still a handful of men, in scattered sections of the southwest, who refused to give it up. Maybe the congressional bills were poorly worded; something was not quite right; but whatever it was, it had not to do with the engineering project but with the political one.

However, said the prominent engineers to us: "It's not feasible; not necessary yet. Besides it will cost too much." And the slogan "a raid on the Treasury" came into being.

Strange how times change! When the Swing-Johnson bill slipped through Congress a few weeks ago, one would have thought that Washington were passing a bill to provide for its own water supply. No mention of the \$165,000,000 that the government would have to spend. The "treasury raid" was in the background.

But the really great thing that the county — the southwestern country, has needed for thirty years, took nine long, wearisome years to even be properly understood. Public officials who would place politics above their love of country should not be kept in office. And yet they remain — many of them in position of such importance that nothing save a national upheaval can remove them.

There are too many good men, whose heads might well fit into their caps, who could be called to serve their state and their nation to far better cause.

Last fall I had the pleasure of escorting an elderly gentleman of intelligence and wealth, for the

first time west of the Rockies. We travelled by automobile from the agricultural bountied states of the midwest, to the vast, barren, grazing plains of the mid-southwest, across the rolling Rockies to that great barren expanse that runs lengthwise from Canada to Mexico, and from the Continental Divide, known to us Nevadans as the Intermountain Plateau.

"Water, water, water" was his nightly epitome of the journey. Before coming I had written him for months about the problems of our vast unirrigated spots. Two days after we had left the flourishing cornfields of the mid-west we struck an oasis, after miles of desert traveling. Then one after another from time to time. He was with me three weeks and he saw a lot in that time; and he is but one of a great many thousands of other eastern business men who now understand what water means to our great barren country.

Western prosperity is builded upon reclamation!

If reclamation is a failure then the west is a failure, because the foundation of our entire structure here is reclamation, and its twin sister, cheap power. It is a rather interesting fact that more money is taken out of California every year in crops, than ever was taken out at the height of the gold mining days.

I wonder just how many people interested in reclamation realize what the passage of the Irrigation Act of 1897 has done for California? How many of us know that this act made it possible for California and sixteen other arid western states to attract and support a population without which there would be comparatively few farms in the intermountain west on which people could live and make a living?

And how many of us take into consideration the fact that without the vast reservoirs and canal systems in these districts, insuring moisture exactly when needed in our back country, through the rainless summer months, there could be today comparatively few cities and little need for schools, or roads, railroads or power companies in the west?

How many of us understand that the irrigation districts of California alone, organized under the

Wright Act, are today irrigating more acres of land than all the Federal power projects to date, combined, and at a lower average capital investment?

In fact there are in California today over 110 irrigation districts, comprising nearly 5,000,000 acres. These districts have outstanding today approximately \$75,000,000 of general obligation bonds payable, both principal and interest, from unlimited ad valorem taxes of equal importance and priority in lien, with county, school or city taxes, and which rank ahead of all mortgages. The present value of the land irrevocably pledged as security for these bonds is more than \$1,000,000,000 while this same land prior to irrigation did not grow crops justifying a market value of probably over \$25,000,000.

Great industrial centers always rise adjacent to the rich areas of intensive agricultural production. Further, an industrial population will provide markets, without transportation expenditure, for the products of the soil and in turn the people of the soil will afford markets for the products of industry.

Thirty years ago, California stood practically where Nevada stands today. Thirty years have shown their mark upon the prosperity of America's third greatest financial state. Why should Nevada then, lying at the base of this generation's greatest engineering project, give second place to anyone? The battle born state has a splendid future.

Eighteen months ago on his way to the north, this writer visited Las Vegas for the fourth time. Since then he has been there nearly half a dozen times. He has been to both the proposed dam sites; he has scoured through your desert, and your mountains, and has at least a rough idea of things as they are today; and as they will probably be a few years hence. For the past six months he has had business investigators in the Las Vegas district and he hopes as you hope, that the future development will be great.

While there are many opportunities of importance in, and around Las Vegas, we must not forget that there will be any number of unscrupulous persons, perhaps well advertised, and sometimes unfortunately well-connected, who will make of the Colorado River dam project, simply another playground for their worthless stunts.

We have been through some business difficulties ourselves; and we have sat on top of two gigantic land booms; and we know something whereof we speak. Florida, a glorious state, has since the hand of unscrupulous men, been more devastated than the Mississippi Valley region after its terrible flood. California land values are still at peak prices in certain localities; but they could not beat those of Miami, Florida, in 1925. Before the bottom dropped out of

the bucks; the frontage of that little town's main street was more than the foot onage of Wall Street, New York.

Now, my Nevada friends, the wolves will come among you; and you must segregate carefully. The future of your city; your own future; everything is dependent upon how carefully you manipulate that which is yours and how coolly you keep your heads; when your boom is at its peak.

Today you stand at the threshold of a seemingly long lost dream that suddenly has become a reality. What the future actually holds no one quite knows; but certainly it is to be magnificent. You have with you staunch men; good men; great men, and men of far seeing vision.

Their advice; your own precautionary measures; your conscience, will all help you toward determining on many questions that are to come before you. Then years hence you will perhaps pass, in population, Reno. What will thirty years do?

You hold the key to the building of this giant structure in your right hand. Are you going to keep it; or let the right to its expansion slip through your fingers to those who are better versed in the art of community building than you?

Cooperation spells business suc-

cess in America today. Competitive cooperation strengthens it. Las Vegas will soon be called upon to compete with her bigger sisters, 400 and 500 miles across the desert and if she is upon her toes, she will assuredly reply in correct gesture.

Whoever secures the power rights from the Federal government, and it is no secret to prophesy that they will evidently flow to private concerns, who will turn over the smaller and less choice hunks to the public enterprises; nevertheless, whoever receive them, will sell the power, near the dam, certainly at a very reduced rate. Therefore if Las Vegas are wise, they will segregate a portion of their city right now, as a factory zone. Other segregations for other types of industries must come in time too. All of this, which is known by the better name of city planning, should take place shortly. Time is short; when big things are to be accomplished. Besides you don't want a factory in the heart of your residential district.

Southern Nevada has been for a number of years the headquarters for a large field of non-metals; less than a hundred miles above Las Vegas, the Wahmonie gold strike was located last year. Immense deposits of low grade iron

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Every delay, which means a day, in placing your order for the winter's supply of coal can mean a loss to you, because local dealers cannot control prices and a cost-at-mine advance means you must pay accordingly. Then too, delivery now means a good-first-grade coal at minimum cost, whereas rush delivery when winter storms and cold blow, may mean that you'll be glad to have inferior mining at any price.

## Liberty Coal National Ice Co.

PHONE 75

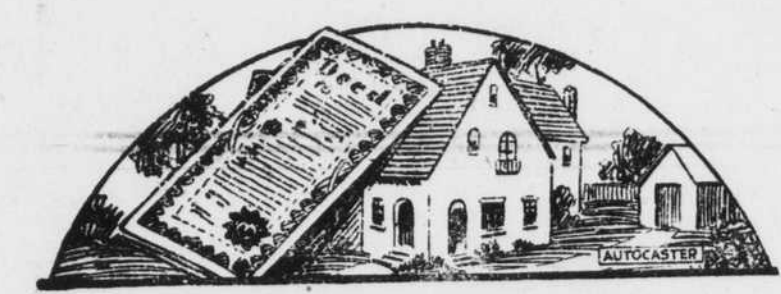
# There Are Three Words Expressive of Community Enterprise - - - -



# BUY SELL BUILD

## THERE ARE TWO OTHERS EXPRESSIVE OF LAS VEGAS, PROGRESS - - - -

# Martha Crump REALTOR



# ANNOUNCEMENT!

In keeping with the great activity in Las Vegas and surrounding community in real estate and to better serve the public along these lines we wish to announce the association of Messrs. E. V. Reed and Emery West, old experienced real estate men of California, with E. H. Hunting, who for 22 years has been conducting a real estate business in Las Vegas and who is well and favorably known here.

This newly organized firm will continue to conduct its office at No. 9 Fremont Street, where they will be glad to see and serve you at any time.

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