The theory of "one man, one vote" is supposed to give everyone a right to vote on issues pertaining to his general welfare, especially when the legislation this so-called representative government dishes up to us every once in a while, even by our State Legislature, benefits only special interests. And the detriment of the people which it is supposed to represent.

A glaring example of this, that is, a case in point is the Antelope Valley East Kern Water District, better known as AVEK.

AVEK was created by the State Legislature in the last few days of the 1959 legislative session, under the power of broken promises and political shenanigans without approval of the legislature, council, without proper readings, or committee hearings.

The AVEK Bill was hurriedly passed by an unelected State Legislature which act must forever be adjudged as a derision of the legislative procedure.

AVEK is an unlimited taxing agency—a malign tax eating, cancerous bureaucracy—with many taxing tendencies which are constantly reaching into the taxpayers' pocket, for more money. It has the power to tax without the consent or approval of the voter, having the "powers of a city" it need not give a financial statement to the people for money it spends.

Inasmuch as the legal time limit for 1959 legislative session had elapsed when, if any new legislation could legally be placed in the "legislative hopper" Assemblyman Allen Miller (Hesperia) of the State Constitution *) when he died an amendment to Senate Bill No. 1068 thereby creating AVEK without the general knowledge or the right of the people to vote on any opposition. Three years later, Assemblyman Lanterman referred to this act as the "CABOOSE LAW."

Mr. Lanterman also stated: "The sceludgery which appears in this thing is that somebody got to the Governor's Office —-now they are stuck clear up to their eyeballs and can't get out of here unless we blam them out again with another legislative action—and I think this simply—is the story of this kind of miscarriage of legislative procedure and never again will I agree more to the composition of a committee, to accept an amendment this big—which was an agency in itself."—2_P. 41.

At this same Assembly Hearing, Mr. Skelton AV. the following statement: "After some of the statements made here...[it] made me feel that maybe I'd better take inventory, that we're kind of a bunch of bad boys. I'm one of the seven directors that was appointed by 'Governor Brown.' "—2_P. 90, To which Assemblyman Lanterman replied: "The question that I have raised about this at all times was the manner in which this (AVEK) was introduced at the last minute in the closing days of the session. We should have major legislation of the kind that created AVEK brought before us without the opportunity for everyone Involved to have a hearing before their Legislature. This is one of the basic issues that I have made all along—that this was put in as an amendment on a Senate Bill without hearing or notice. There is no file notice (on amendments) required, Mr. Skelton, to alert people relating to their right to be heard on legislation of the kind this AMG. That should not be permitted. The issue I have raised is very simple; that any misunderstanding, any disregard or any lack of equity that is involved in a matter of this kind should be redacted forth."—2_P. 91(2).

To which Mr. Skelton replied, "I agree with you!"—2_P. 91(2).

Another Report stated: "Wetlands at the Bakersfield Hearing reviewed the unusual circumstances under which AVEK was created WITHOUT A VOTE OF THE EAST KERN WATER District, and through unusual legislative action. Senator Walter Stier who represents the east Kern portion of the AVEK area (KVJ assembly) at the AVEK hearing AVEK did not give through normal legislative procedures. Senator Stier described what he called the "bizarre way that this Bill bounced around before it became enacted into law."—3_P. 27.

If the State Legislature had acted in good faith, and had applied the much vaunted "ANEK" theory, and had not served special interests as it did, it would have submitted AVEK to a vote of the people and would not have arbitrarily forestalled this momentous issue, upon an unsuspecting populace. And since AVEK was created without the knowledge or vote of the people, it is simply "renowned," not the fact. Consequently, AVEK should be dissolved—if not dissolved, then that portion overlapping Lancaster's Water District No. 4 should wither away as any other populated area that has plenty of low cost water.

The truth of how utterly "renowned" AVEK is, was proven over and over again when AVEK put a $1,000,000 Flood Control Bond to a vote of the people which was an attempt to get a vote of confidence from the community. AVEK spent a barrel of money to prove we were all going to be flooded unless the ONE MILLION DOLLAR BOND was approved — and AVEK's Bond issue was soundly defeated two to one by a vote of the people.

Later it was revealed that the State Department of Highways had already been working on the plans in the "hopper" to construct this Flood Control Ditch along the AV Freeway—which it did—out of gas tax money already paid. Go take a look—at this ditch along the Freeway—north of Avenue "M." The State also built a lake on Avenue "I" to trap the flood waters. AVEK was whitewashed in its $1 million power grab.

In retrospect then, it would seem AVEK wanted to win this "sure-fire" not to establish itself as a respectable and legitimate entity in our society, by taking credit for the large flood control system project constructed along the section of Highways. The "AVEK" directors were foiled while the people were saved $1 million in taxes.

To tell the story of the above we again quote from the Assembly Interim Committee on Water, "The agency was the prime sponsor of a million dollar bond issue designed to finance a flood control improvement district. AVEK residents opposed "eloquently and successfully" the bond issue on October 22, 1964, at a special election—almost 70 per cent voted against the bond issue."—3_P. 31.

The SWAN-SONG of Mr. Lunt, AVEK's former Director Manager, illustrated the snow job that was done when he said, "The measure (Bond issue) was supported by most service organizations and newspapers...yet the issue was soundly defeated."—4_P. 11. Part 4. Indeed it was!—two to one. The bond issue failed in every precinct. And we wouldn't have us to do it if we can if all we all vote "NO"! February 16, 1971.

But, one thing appears quite certain, AVEK is a boon to special interests, especially to bond salesmen, land speculators, contractors, and a whole generation of water engineers.

However, it is apparent that not all of the land speculators are "outsiders"—some apparently are of a local vintage since certain individuals rushed out and purchased land in the "Buttes Area" west of Lancaster when it became known that AVEK was planning to spend some 12 to 15 million tax dollars for a lake. Some owners of this land were even serving on the AVEK Board of Directors thereby creating a conflict of interest. To those who are guilty we say, "If the shoe fits—wear it!" Perhaps a grand jury investigation is in order. And, when more to add insult to injury, the AVEK Directors have the audacity to pay themselves $30 a meeting...three meetings a month for a total of $60 a month plus traveling expenses.

It should be further pointed out that an eminent geologist has stated, the plans which call for the construction of the flood control division of Lancaster is astride an active earthquake fault—and this could end In tragedy if the dikes should break—It could flood the valley (if not the desert) in three days. It happened in Baldwin Hills a few years ago when the dam gave way flooding the homes below.

At one of the Legislature's Committee Hearings, Mr. Warner S. Briggs, (now deceased) Secretary Manager of El Dorado and West Side Water Districts, Companies, testifies that he "did not agree that the Mutual Water Companies' service area would benefit from continued inclusion in AVEK's jurisdiction. In the companies' wells were dropping only from two to three feet a year..." we'll be in good shape for a long, long time," Mr. Briggs said."—5_P. 7. Accordingly, through the wisdom and foresight of Mr. Briggs, he succeeded in excising his water companies comprising some several hundred acres from the AVEK area while the rest of us are stuck with it.

At an Assembly Interim Committee on Water, Mr. Lunt, AVEK's former Executive Director Manager, was asked "Who are these people?" that is, who are behind AVEK? He replied, "They are a resident Committee in Lancaster, representing the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce Water Committee.*"—2_P. 26.

Mr. Lunt also stated under question, "Now, with the destruction of the ground water table...the banks were concerned about the future of this area..."—2-P. 36.

Parenthetically, it would seem then, that the Banking community was willing to sell "income tax free" high interest bonds placing a further indebtedness on the poor, unsuspecting, victimized property owner.

To better understand the implications of "Bonds" read this article by the water titler described as THAT BOND SALESMAN IS AT IT AGAIN.

By way of contrast to the above in an undated Bulletin, the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce quoted from a Sunday Dispatch Division Engineer James T. Rostron of the Los Angeles County Water District No. 4 who said, "Lancaster's Water District No. 4 has a water system which, despite the appeal of solving all demands imposed upon it and the water supply is entirely adequate for many years to come.

The supply is obtained from deep wells drilled in
At one of the Legislative Committee Hearings, Mr. Warner S. Briggs, (now deceased) Secretary Manager of El Dorado and West Side Pumps Water Companies, testified that he "did not agree that the Mutual Water Companies' service area would benefit from continued inclusion in AVEK Bill as the companies' wells in the companies' wells were dropping only from two to three feet a year"... "we'll be in good shape for a long, long time," Mr. Briggs said. (5) - P. 27. Accordingly, through the wisdom and foresight of Mr. Briggs, he succeeded in excluding his water companies comprising several hundred acres in the AVEK area while the rest of us are stuck with it.

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Mr. Lunt also stated under questioning, "Now, with the destruction of the ground water basin, the banks were concerned about the future of this area." (2) - P. 36.

Parenthetically, it would seem then, that the Banking System would like to sell "minute free" high interest bonds placing a further indebtedness on the poor, unsuspecting, victimized property owner.

To better understand the importance of "Bonds" read article by this writer titled, THAT BOND SALESMAN IS AT IT AGAIN.

By way of contrast to the above in an undated Bulletin, the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce quoted from a Report issued by Division Engineer James T. Rostron of the Los Angeles County Water District No. 4 who said, "Lancaster's Water District No. 4 has a water system which is capable of meeting all demands imposed upon it and the water supply is entirely adequate for many years to come. The supply is obtained from deep wells drilled into a very large ground water basin known as the Lancaster Basin. The rate of decline of the water table is approximately six feet per year, not an alarming rate since the average pumping level is about 100 feet below ground while most of our wells are drilled to a depth in excess of 600 feet.

In the Central Basin, particularly in the community of Lancaster, we can foresee no water shortage for many years to come. EVEN IF AN IMPORTED (AVEK) WATER SUPPLY WAS NOT AVAILABLE TO THE AREA."(6)

The Chamber Bulletin concluded by stating, "From the above statistics it may be seen that we have a comfortable factor of safety in the capability of the water system which anticipates demand that may be placed upon it." (6)

Now it seems quite obvious that certain Land Speculators and large land developers in the outlying areas where land never did have any water on it will move heaven and earth and the State Legislature to get water—and if possible at the expense of the taxpayers in the Lancaster area who have more water than they do.

And if something isn't done soon, the residents of Lancaster will have neither water nor money. Water is already being piped out of the Lancaster water basin in at least two instances.

One thing no one can deny, AVEK Directors have taxed us out of millions of dollars which we are short of, and they have not given us one drop of water to date.

However, if Mr. Rostron states, the average pumping level is 200 feet below ground and the wells are 600 feet deep, this will leave us with 400 feet of water, which, being six feet equals 66 years of water supply providing we don't let Land Speculators pump it out from under us. And now the County Water District has wells 1200 feet deep so we will be able to pump water for a hundred years or more. By then, surely sea water conversion will have been perfected for the City of Los Angeles thus releasing the Owens River Water for our use. In any event, by then most of us now living will have crossed over the River Styx.

Moreover, the idea of sea water conversion is not so far-fetched. In a recent news item we read, "A dual purpose nuclear-power-water desalting plant in the Santa Barbara-Ventura area of California has been described as a distinct possibility.

"The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California submitted a statement expressing continued interest in building and testing a large desalting project at Bolsa Island by the mid-1970's."(7)

In the opinion of this writer, if the AVEK Directors don't understand these very simple facts, it's time they come back to earth and become educated in the realities of life.

Foot Notes:
(1) Article IV, Sec. 2 of the 1959 State Constitution states in part: "All general legislation shall be introduced in the first session of the legislature every two years, and in no event, by re-assembling of the Legislature, no bill shall be introduced in either house without the consent of three-fourths of the members thereof."

The AVEK Bill was not introduced in the Constitutional limitation as to time, and because the Constitutional time limit had expired it was not legally admissible. And it was not introduced by three-fourths of either house making it illegal on that score. Moreover, it could hardly be called an amendment because it was in fact an entirely new Bill as long or longer than the Bill it was tied to.

(2) Assembly Interim Committee on Water. November 14, 1962.


Written by John N. England
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