

Club Protests Water Compact

Asks Investigation
Be Made of Priorities

The Billings Commercial club Monday lodged a protest with the Montana Yellowstone river compact commission against the entry into an agreement for the distribution of the waters of the Yellowstone and its tributaries for irrigation purposes in Montana, Wyoming and North Dakota, without a further investigation of priorities and vested water rights. The protest was made at a meeting in Billings at which final terms of the proposed irrevocable water compact will be discussed and, if possible, agreed upon.

The meeting of the compact commission of the three states is scheduled Tuesday at 9:30 a. m. at the Northern hotel. A tentative agreement on the pact was reached in Billings at a session of the commission December 1 to 2, at which time hope was expressed that the proposed agreement could be signed at Tuesday's meeting.

The protest was registered by H. G. Wiggens, a member of the board of directors of the Commercial club who had been designated to enter the objection, according to H. L. Buck, secretary-manager of the club.

Similar protests also were registered by officers of water users and irrigation associations in this vicinity. The "protest" meeting was attended by approximately 30 persons Monday afternoon at the Commercial club.

Wiggens said that the protest was registered because "it is believed that a water compact should not be entered into at this time owing to the fact that priorities have not been determined to a great extent in Montana."

"We believe that this state should not go into such a matter blindly," he said. "We should not sign away our rights when we don't even know what they are in regard to water priorities."

"We believe that there should be a compact at a later date after rights have been adjudicated, but the time now is not ripe for an agreement of this type. We further believe that adequate figures and statistics should be made available to the commission for the drawing up of a compact."

Rockwood Brown, local attorney and a former member of the Yellowstone river compact commission, also expressed the opinion that there would be a further consideration of facts and figures in relation to the proposed pact.

"I am wholeheartedly in favor of a compact, but it is out of place at this time," he said. "Priorities should come first and we should adjudicate our rights before there can be an equitable allocation of the water."

Representatives of the following water users and irrigation groups were present at the session:

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Brown Favors Adjudication of Water Rights First

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