

# Col. Graf Says Army's Flood Control Plan Would Have Eliminated December Deluge

The army's plan for flood control would have prevented the Christmas flood that claimed five lives and caused \$7,500,000 damage in Santa Cruz, the city flood control commission was told last night.

Col. John Graf commanding the San Francisco district of the U. S. corps of engineers, stated flatly that the flood protection target set by his staff would have kept Santa Cruz dry in the face of a 20 per cent greater volume of water than actually ripped down the San Lorenzo river and Branciforte creek the night of December 22-23.

Graf's declaration came at a special meeting called to bring commissioners up to date on progress in the city's drive to obtain federal and state aid in erecting barriers against the threat of future floods.

When army engineers were determining how much flood protection the city needs they took into account the worst possible combination of rainfall and other flood-inducing factors from the head of the San Lorenzo Valley to the rivermouth, Graf said.

They concluded that the maximum river flow likely to hit Santa Cruz in any circumstances would be 36,000 cubic feet per second above the mouth of Branciforte creek while the peak flow that dumped into the river by the creek would be 10,000 feet, Graf said.

Any flood works to be built by the army will be based on protecting the city against this maximum "design flood" — whose projected volume is 20 per cent greater than the actual flood of three months ago.

Graf said his engineers estimate that the peak flow during the height of the flood was 30,000 cubic gallons per second above the confluence of Branciforte creek, or 6000 c.g.s. less than an army-designed levee system would provide for.

He said he could not remember the exact peak volume carried by Branciforte creek during the flood but that it was less than the 10,000 c.g.s. projected by the army survey.

Graf's categorical assertion that the levee system proposed by the army would have contained the flood waters came in response to a question from Chairman George Bertolucci near the close of the meeting.

Earlier, Graf explained the current status of the flood control project and gave commissioners a rough estimate of how much riverbank land would be required for the levees.

He reminded his listeners that city representatives will appear before a congressional committee next week to urge approval of \$207,000 so the army can complete engineering and design work on the levees that will extend along the river from its mouth to near the city line and along Branciforte creek.

Originally, the proposed 1957 federal budget carried no appropriation for the San Lorenzo project but it was revised to include the \$207,000 figure "due to the pressure from Santa Cruz and the efforts of your congressional delegation—Senator Knowland, Senator Kuchel and Congressman Gubser," Graf said.

The \$207,000 will be sufficient to complete plans but no money will be left over to prepare plans and specifications and ask for construction bids, Graf said. Additional funds will be needed to push the project beyond the planning stage in fiscal 1957, he said.

City Manager Robert Klein pointed out that Gubser and the city are still fighting for an additional \$100,000—bringing the total 1957 appropriation to \$307,000

—and have not given up hope that it can be won.

Graf said if the extra money is provided he would be in a position—once planning is completed—to call for bids by June of 1957 with the hope that congress would provide construction funds for the succeeding fiscal year beginning July 1, 1957.

The contractor—and Graf himself—would then be gambling that congress would follow through the initial \$100,000 construction appropriation with the funds necessary to finish the job.

If this speculative timetable materializes actual construction would probably begin in the late fall of 1957, Graf said.

The levees will require land averaging 100 to 150 feet in depth on each side of the river and will provide a channel approximately 300 feet wide. The levees will be 12 feet wide at the summit and very from two to 16 feet in height, depending on location, Graf said.

Graf said he would have to look up the answer to another question—whether the city will have to come up with its estimated share of costs, \$227,500, when and if the initial \$100,000 for construction is approved.

He expressed belief that the flood control system and the planned redevelopment by the city of the flood-hit Front-Water-Ocean-Southeast quadrangle will complement each and that "coordination" of both projects may even lead to lower costs for both.

"I believe the combination should lead to, if anything, I would think, reduced costs for both projects," Graf said.

Commissioner Hamilton Gronen registered a vehement objection to the state's plan to replace the two business district by-pass bridge piers shoved out of position by the flood.

Gronen said the presence of piers in the channel posed a drift jam threat that could cause a new flood and urged Graf to throw the army's weight into the struggle to get the state to change its plans in favor of a longer center span.

Graf replied the state had undoubtedly studied all factors in planning the bridge but that he would look into the matter.

(City officials have made three trips to Sacramento to plead for a change in the bridge design but have obtained only a promise to investigate.)

Last night's meeting was the commission's first since last October 4, when it rather shakily recommended approval of the army's flood control plan after previously having gone on record as opposed to the scheme because its cost and lack of beautification features.

The session was attended by most members of the city council and several top-ranking city officials, including City Engineer Alec Russell. Commissioners present included Bertolucci, Gronen, A. C. Curry, Mrs. Lillian Huebner, Loren Johnson, Bob Voris and Ludwig Sterner.

## OSCAR NIGHT TONIGHT

Hollywood (AP).—Tonight is Oscar night in movietown and for the first time this traditionally gay night will be tinged with a little sadness.

Never before in the 28-years of the Academy awards has a dead man been one of the favorites to win a top Oscar. Then, too, it is expected to be the last Hollywood appearance of Grace Kelly, a movie queen soon to become a real princess.

Many in Hollywood feel that if the late James Dean doesn't win the top acting award, the academy should give him a special Oscar. The brilliant young actor was nominated for "East of Eden."