

PG&E Outlook For 1970

In their annual "Outlook" report, Pacific Gas and Electric company again places Santa Cruz among the 10 faster growing counties in the big utility's 48-county service area.

Actually, the projected Santa Cruz county growth rate of 2.5 per cent is 10th on the list, but 5th among the more populated areas.

PG&E estimates Santa Cruz will gain 3000 residents this year although they rate our current population at 121,000, somewhat below The Sentinel's estimate.

Sonoma county rates as the fastest growing county with population in excess of 100,000 with a forecast of 3.6 per cent growth there in 1970, for a gain of 7500 persons.

Santa Clara county's growth rate is pegged at 3.3 per cent or 35,000 persons while Stanislaus county is expected to grow at 2.7 per cent or 5500 persons.

Contra Costa county is expected to gain 15,000 residents or a 2.6 per cent increase.

The Santa Cruz gain of 3000 is almost as large as the prediction for Monterey county, a 1.3 per cent growth or 3200 persons. PG&E expects a gain of 300 persons in San Benito county, 5200 in San Mateo county and only 6000 in Alameda county. Surprisingly, only an increase of 200 persons is expected for San Luis

Obispo county, a figure we are inclined to believe may be on the low side.

In another view of the comprehensive PG&E Outlook, the company expects more new housing starts this year than occurred in 1969, a forecast we also find a little difficult to anticipate unless major changes should occur in the money market in the near future.

The San Jose division, which includes Santa Clara, Santa Cruz and most of San Mateo county, is forecast for 20,000 new dwelling units, 11,000 of them single family units. This total is about the same as is forecast for all of the North Bay, the San Francisco, Sacramento and San Joaquin divisions, which include 18 counties (some partial).

For their total area, PG&E forecasts 65,000 new dwelling units in 1970 compared to an estimated 62,000 units this past year. All of the increase is anticipated to be in multiple units.

By comparison there were 57,267 new dwelling units built in 1967, 47,639 in 1966, 70,347 in 1965 and a high of 108,403 in 1964.

The growth rate for the entire area, which includes just about every northern and central California county, PG&E forecasts a 1.6 per cent figure, below the state's expected 1.8 per cent gain.

The 1.8 per cent increase, by the way,

would be the highest growth rate for the state since 1967 when the total population gain in California was 342,000 persons. The increase this past year was estimated at 309,000 or about 860 new people per day.

The utility forecasts an increase of 8.1 per cent in personal income for Californians along with a 5.9 per cent growth in retail sales and a 1.4 per cent increase in manufacturing employment.

With these forecasts it is fairly evident that PG&E does not anticipate that changes in the national economy will make major changes in California.

Both the increase in retail sales and a growth in the number of manufacturing jobs would be slightly in contrast to the national outlook, especially in the field of industrial growth. The sales increase could be a continuation of inflation, but would, of course, also be reflected in the population growth.

The company expects to see sales of 1,218,000 new major electrical appliances and 354,500 gas appliances. The big sellers are expected to be color TV's, frostless refrigerators and gas water heaters.

Generally speaking, the PG&E Outlook is slightly more optimistic than some forecasts although part of this report may be in the fact that much of the material in the Outlook was gathered 60 days ago.