

This Week's Guest Writer
April 5, 1950

Arthur P. Pratt came to Alpine in 1940 to retire to his ranch, The Lazy A Ranch, after resigning from the Beverly Hills Council as City Councilman and Police Commissioner. He has been associated with Coca Cola for more than fifty years, and for three years was a director in the Alpine Civic Association, being instrumental in the organization of the Alpine Fire Department, and also with several other men putting on a big barbecue at the school that will not be soon forgotten by those who attended this successful and gay affair.

Alpine, in the heart of the Mountain Empire, is a community which can boast of many blessings; the finest climate in the world, beautiful mountain scenery, purest air to breathe, the friendliest Sun to brighten the day and the clearest Moon to adorn the night; but it has one big worry "WATER."

Hemmed in on the North by the water rights of San Diego, on the East by the water rights of Imperial Valley, on the South by the water rights of National City and Chula Vista, and on the West by the Pacific Ocean, Alpine is prevented from getting help at all points of the compass and the only way at present to get water is UP and DOWN. The Clouds must carry it over our mountains and drop it so that we can pump it out of the ground. We have, therefore, had to rely on wells and up to the present time, with few exceptions, sufficient water has been found to supply our needs; but the great question is, how long will the supply last?

Our clouds have not been good to us in the last six years and the water table under our ranches is gradually dropping lower and lower. Therefore, serious thought must be given for our future.

Wells drilled to the East of Alpine and South of Viejas Mountain usually show 30 or 40 feet of decomposed granite, and from there down hard solid granite to an unknown depth. In drilling a well on the Lazy A Ranch the first break in this solid granite rock was at 190 feet, and water was reached, and drilling stopped. In the center of Alpine a small diameter well was drilled and water came to the surface as a small Artesian. This fact, together with the granite formation described above, tempts me to seriously consider testing to greater depths and endeavor to prove that below this solid granite (if there is a below) a large supply of water might be located.

If a large volume were found, it would care for our growing population for many years to come. If it did not prove out, the only other alternative for the future welfare of this community would be help from our sister cities to our West, or if they are in the same trouble we are in, then our next best bet would be the Pacific Ocean. Yes, Salt Water can be distilled to Pure Fresh Water. At present it is expensive; but the cost is not prohibitive.

On the Island of Curacao, The Netherlands, West Indies, all their fresh water is distilled from the salt water of the Sea. Curacao lies about 30 miles North of Venezuela in the Caribbean Sea. Its principal industry is the refining and shipping of oil and it has one of the world's largest oil refineries located there. Farming is very limited; but its entire population of about one hundred thousand rely on the processing of salt water for their fresh water needs.

What Curacao can do, San Diego County can do!

Arthur P. Pratt