7-21-1913

Hetch Hetchy Invaders. John Muir Asks That Their Bill Be Not Rushed Through Congress.

John Muir

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To the Editor of The New York Times:

The Yosemite National Park is not only the greatest and most wonderful national playground in California, but in some of its features it is without a rival in the whole world—its silver fir and sequoia forests, its twin songful rivers, and its twin Yosemites. It belongs to the American people and in universal interest transcends with the Yellowstone and the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. Its headwaters of the two rivers embraced within its boundaries are the Merced and the Tuolumne. The Yosemite Valley is in the Merced Basin; the Hetch Hetchy Valley, the Grand Canyon of the Tuolumne, and the Tuolumne Meadows are in the Tuolumne Basin. Excepting only the Yosemite Valley, the Tuolumne Basin in its general features is more wonderful and larger half of the park.

At a recent session of Congress a most determined attack was made by the City of San Francisco to get the right to use the Hetch Hetchy Valley as a reservoir site, thus depriving 30,000,000 of people of one of their most priceless possessions for the sake of saving San Francisco dollars. As soon as this scheme became manifest public-spirited citizens all over the country entered their protests, and before the session was over the park invaders saw that they were defeated, and permitted the bill to die without bringing it to a vote, so as to be able to try again.

Ever ready to take advantage of beclouding political changes, a bill having the same destructive purpose has been introduced at this session of Congress, and its supporters are speciously urging that it should be rushed through as an emergency measure, when in reality nothing like an emergency exists. San Francisco may be in immediate need of an increased supply of water, but her own engineers admit that the present supply can be more than doubled by adding to nearby sources, and this plan in any case will have to be followed, for years will be required to bring water to the city from any of the Sierra sources. The Advisory Board of Army Engineers is of the opinion that there are several sources of water supply that could be obtained and used by the City of San Francisco and adjacent communities to supplement the near-by supplies as the necessity develops. From any one of these sources the water is sufficient in quantity, and can be made, suitable in quality, as we are preparing data based on the reports of the army engineers which will demonstrate that San Francisco can obtain abundance of pure water from other sources than the Tuolumne Hetch Hetchy. So important a bill should not be rushed through Congress without mature consideration, and time allowed for its opponents to be heard. Anything less would be unjust to the American people. Therefore, in behalf of all who appreciate our mountain parks and believe that they should be preserved, we call on you to aid us in postponing consideration of this destructive bill until the next regular session of Congress.

JOHN MUIR.
San Francisco, Cal., July 15, 1913.