

HEAD OF CONSTRUCTION COMPANY WILL DIRECT BUILDING OF THE HOOVER DAM FROM ROOM IN CALIFORNIA HOSPITAL

Wattis Says Colorado River Project No Different from Any Other Dam

San Francisco Mar. 5. (AP)—A slight, white-haired man with a quick, expansive smile sat in a San Francisco hospital room today and prepared to direct the taming of the turbulent Colorado river with the biggest engineering project ever undertaken within the United States.

The builder, who from his hospital room will direct the harnessing of the wild stream is William H. Wattis of Ogden, Utah, president of the Utah Construction company and head of the Six Companies, Inc., low bidder on the construction of Hoover dam of the great Boulder Canyon project.

The bid of the Six Companies, Inc., was \$43,890,995.50, or more than \$5,000,000 below that of the next lowest bidder, the Arundel Corporation of Baltimore.

Wrapped in a bathrobe and apparently much at home in the room where he has spent some time under treatment for cancer, Wattis talked eagerly of the great project which will transform raging floods into a placid reservoir 110 miles long.

"Now this dam," Wattis said, "is just a dam. It's no different from any other dam, there's just more of it, that's all."

"People call this a dam," he continued, "when they should call it a tunnel. We've got to dig way down under the river bed to put in those diversion tunnels 4,000 feet long and 50 feet around. That's something. But this dam, it goes up higher and it reaches farther back, otherwise it's the same little dam we threw up in a dozen places."

He seemed downright enthusiastic over a "nasty little job" that will receive first consideration. That is the building of seven miles

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of railroad along the narrow gorge to haul "mud and muck" from the tunnels and bring back gravel for concrete.

Between cigar puffs Wattis told how the Six Companies, Inc. was formed. He said the syndicate idea possibly was born of the joint work now being done by the Utah Construction company and the W. A. Betchel company on the Western Pacific railroad extension in northern California.

"We knew it was too big a job for any one concern to handle," he declared. "It involves a lot of money—more money than any one contractor has a right to have."

"I don't know whether I'll get out of here soon or not. I think I'm improving," he remarked, "but don't worry, I'll be on this job."