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MEMORANDUM

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August 16, 1944.

United States-Mexican Water Treaty: Summary of
Letter of August 9, 1944, from Ambassador
Messersmith Reporting Conversation with Attorney
General R. W. Kenney of California

Mr. Kenney stressed these points: (1) Many of the people in California might not oppose the treaty if they knew all the facts; (2) the treaty might be generally good but was not fair to California; (3) California interests were not given a proper opportunity to make themselves heard in the discussions preceding the signing of the treaty; (4) if certain unspecified changes were made in the treaty California might abandon its opposition; (5) he admitted that he was in strange company in defending the interests opposing the treaty; (6) the importance of the treaty in Mexican-American relationships should be emphasized; and (7) he contemplated an early trip to Washington in order to continue his work on the treaty.

The Ambassador replied as follows: (1) Although he could discuss details of the treaty with the Mexican Government only, he thought the treaty was sound and had been negotiated on the basis of the interests of our whole country and not of local, state, or individual interests; (2) this treaty is of primary importance in Mexican-American relationships, overshadowing all other problems between the two countries; (3) it is well known in Mexico that the delay in taking up the treaty in the Senate is due entirely to the attitude of these California interests; (4) the treaty is so important that he is prepared to resign as Ambassador in order adequately to inform public opinion in the United States concerning its merits; (5) it is the obligation, and in the interest, of the sound people in California to see that the merits of the treaty and its importance are properly presented to the people of that State; (6) the record discloses that California interests were given ample opportunity to present their views over and over again before the treaty was drafted; and (7) the treaty was the result of very careful study and the question of making changes in it should not be raised.