

# Farmer delays 10m. reservoir LAND TAKE-OVER OPPOSED

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An octogenarian farmer and his sister who successfully fought a bid by the Forestry Commission to take over their land in 1952 are now equally determined to out-battle Swansea Corporation.

Their stand has held up the corporation's plan to survey a site in the scenic Brianne Valley, about 12 miles north of Llandovery, where it is proposed to establish a £10m. reservoir to serve Swansea and West Glamorgan.

An expert has said that the proposed reservoir would solve the pressing water needs industrialised West Glamorgan for the next 10 to 15 years, and has reported that land owners on the other side the valley have co-operated with the corporation.

## Keep intact

The farmer, Mr. William Jones, aged 86, of Troedrhiw Rhuddwen Farm, Rhandirmwyn, said that he wanted keep his land intact and this was why he had refused to allow access to council officials to the "corner" of his farm they require to make a survey.

Both he and his sister, Jane Jones, who says she is in her seventies, said firmly they would fight the reservoir proposal all the way.

Swansea Corporation, acting agents for 10 West Glamorgan local authorities, have obtained an order from Minister of Health authorizing them to enter on the couple's land to inspect it and make a survey, but so far Mr. Jones and his sister have refused to give their consent.

If the scheme goes through, it is anticipated that an area of about 20 to 30 acres of steep and rough grazing land on their 930-acre farm would be required.

Mr. Jones who has never married - told me in Welsh, "I am determined not to let them survey the land. I want it left as it is and I want to keep it while I am here."

His sister said she was equally determined to keep officials off the hill farm where she and her brother keep 1,400 sheep and a handful of cows and calves.

Both said they would continue to withhold permission even if approached by a local pastor, as was suggested at a recent meeting of the corporation's water committee by members fearing a repetition of the difficulties experienced 12 months ago when farmers and villagers at Llangendeirne, Carmarthenshire, refused to allow a survey of a site for a proposed reservoir.

Describing the suggestion as "foolish," Miss Jones said she did not think any local minister would make such an approach, "Even if one did, I would still not change my mind," she added.

## Fishing Rights

Miss Jones, who was born in the farmhouse and said she and her brother were the fourth generation in the family to run the farm, complained that the proposed reservoir would come to within a mile of the farmhouse.

It would not only take away part of their land but also substantial fishing rights they held on the Rivers Towy and Doethi running along the farm boundary.

"If the reservoir does come here, I have no idea what we would do," she added. "I have heard that some of the men working on reservoirs are very rough types. I would not like to live here then as we would have our sleep disturbed and the reservoir would be too near."

Miss Jones said she asked when an official who called at the farm why he was trying to force them to give up part of their land, he replied that it was his livelihood.

“ I told him that it was our livelihood, too,” she said.

She recalled that in 1952 farm owners in the area had bitterly fought a proposal by the Forestry Commission to take over 40,000 acres of land. The campaign, led by the Welsh Nationalists, was supported by Mr. Roderic Bowen, Q.C., and the late Sir Rees Hopkin Morris.

Miss Jones and her brother were involved in the fight, which resulted in a victory for the farmers following a public inquiry at Llandovery.

Subsequently, however, several farm owners sold out to the Forestry Commission at high prices.

The farm is in an area offering some of the finest mountain and river scenery in Britain. It is situated just inside Cardiganshire where this county meets Carmarthenshire and Breconshire.

Mr. R. J. Lillicrap, water engineer to Swansea Corporation, said that the authority did not want to “wave a big stick” at anyone.

“Nevertheless, more than 250,000 people down here are depending on this proposal for a water supply and if East Glamorgan comes in as well nearly a million people will be affected by the development,” he said.

“It puts the officials in a very difficult position in having to try to negotiate with various people if they are not prepared to assist in any way.”

He said that if the couple persisted in refusing to give their consent for the authority to enter their land, the corporation would apply to a local magistrates’ court for a warrant authorising them to enter.

He said the water committee had recommended the corporation to authorise the town clerk to take this step if necessary.

Mr. Lillicrap said that a complete survey of all the land had not yet been made.

He said that once it had been established what type of dam could be constructed, the corporation would negotiate with the various land owners and occupiers for acquisition of land.

### **Unfair**

The area of the proposed reservoir included no inhabited properties, although one or two abandoned farmsteads would have to be drowned.

Referring to the objections raised by Miss Jones, he said the proposed reservoir would be about a mile and a half away from the farmhouse, and would be on the other side of a 600ft. mountain.

Mr Lillicrap said he felt it would be unfair to imply that Miss Jones and her brother were the only people obstructing the authority’s proposal as owners of another piece of land which would be required if the area was flooded were also “ not being helpful at the moment.”