

# Russian River Bridge at Monte Rio in Redwood Empire Formally Dedicated



OVER three thousand people gathered among the redwoods and along the shore of the Russian River to participate in the colorful ceremonies surrounding the formal dedication of the new bridge spanning the Russian River at Monte Rio, on Sunday, March 31st.

The bridge was built as a Joint Highway District project initiated by the Boards of Supervisors of Sonoma and Mendocino Counties at a total cost of \$125,000. The California Highway Commission, with the approval of the Director of Public Works, participated in the construction of the bridge and was represented at the dedication by Highway Commissioner Timothy Reardon of San Francisco, in whose district the Russian River is located.

The Monte Rio Bridge celebration was initiated by the Monte Rio Chamber of Commerce, with the support and cooperation of the Redwood Empire Association.

## CHRISTENED WITH VODKA

Speakers on the program included: Governor Frank F. Merriam; H. G. Ridgway, chairman Events Committee, Redwood Empire Association; Highway Commissioner Timothy A. Reardon; Edward J. Neron, Deputy Director State Department of Public Works; Senator Herbert Slater; Assemblyman Hubert Scudder; Supervisor A. M. Brown, Jr., of San Francisco and Supervisors Tom Ferguson, Charles Perkins and Willard Cole, directors of the Joint Highways District in charge of construction of the bridge; J. B. Piatt, Chief Engineer for the Bridge District; Miss Margaret Hess, granddaughter of a pioneer family in the Russian River section.

High light of the ceremonies was the christening of the new bridge by Miss Irene Pershime, descendant of one of the earliest Russian settlers of Fort Ross on the Sonoma County Coast in 1812, who cracked a bottle of old Russian vodka; followed by Miss Ruth Sheridan, granddaughter of the late Captain Sheridan, Russian River pioneer, who settled near the site of the new steel and concrete span in 1860. Miss Sheridan broke on the bridge railing a bottle of champagne made on the Russian River. This ceremonial was pre-

sented by State Railroad Commissioner Wallace L. Ware.

## ENTERTAINED AT LUNCHEON

William Healy, president of the Monte Rio Chamber of Commerce, presided as toastmaster. During the program he introduced numerous other State officials and civic leaders and presented scions of pioneer Russian River families.

Preceding the celebration, official guests were entertained at a luncheon by the Ladies Auxiliary of the Chamber of Commerce and the Chamber directors.

Other State highway officials participating included: L. V. Campbell, Engineer Cooperative Projects, Division of Highways, and T. H. Dennis, Maintenance Engineer, Division of Highways.

Governor Merriam delighted his audience with his refreshing humor, pleased them with his expressions in favor of united, cooperative effort by chambers of commerce and civic organizations in requesting and securing appropriations for highway construction and improvement and enthused them with his optimism and progressive thought.

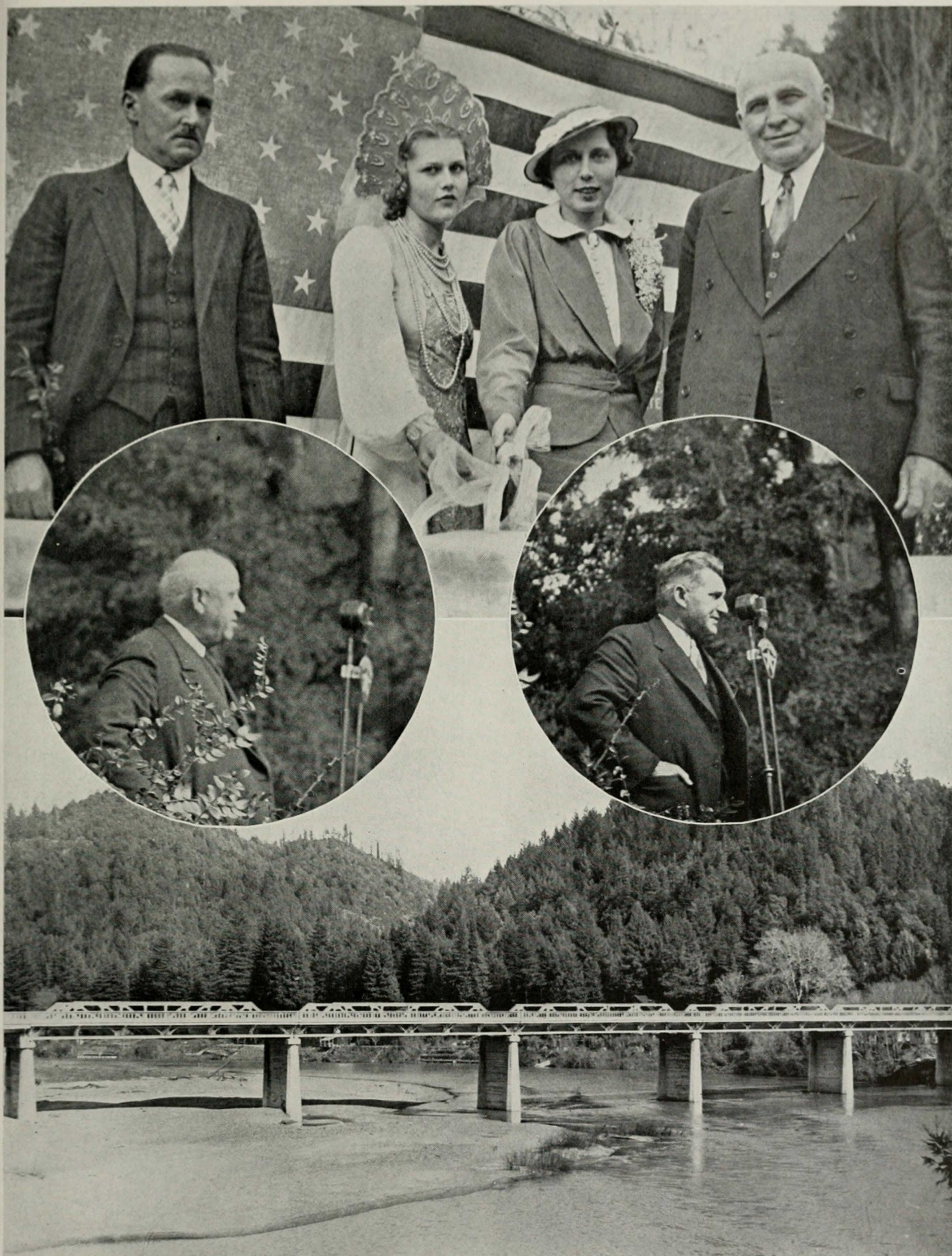
## GOVERNOR MERRIAM LAUDED

Other speakers on the program lauded Governor Merriam for his stand against diversion of the gas tax and for his progressive attitude toward State highway construction.

Preceding the Governor's address, the Analy High School Band of Sebastopol, which entertained the celebrants during the program, dedicated an Iowa State song to Governor Merriam.

A bevy of Russian River lassies, in vacation attire, brought gifts in a Russian River canoe and presented them to the Governor, in the form of Sonoma County products.

Highway Commissioner Timothy A. Reardon pointed out the need for making possible ingress and egress to various parts of the Redwood Empire—in greater comfort and safety and with the expenditure of less time—by improving State highways therein. He lauded the work of civic organizations such as the Redwood Empire Association, Chambers of Commerce and others in cooperation with



**DEDICATING THE RUSSIAN RIVER BRIDGE** at Monte Rio, Governor Merriam was assisted in the ceremonies by President William Healy of the Monte Rio Chamber of Commerce; Irene Pershime, descendant of Russian pioneers who christened the bridge with vodka while Miss Ruth Sheridan descendant of American pioneers broke a bottle of Sonoma champagne on the structure. Deputy Director of Public Works, Edward J. Neron is at the microphone in the right inset and Highway Commissioner T. A. Reardon, at left. The bridge cost \$125,000.