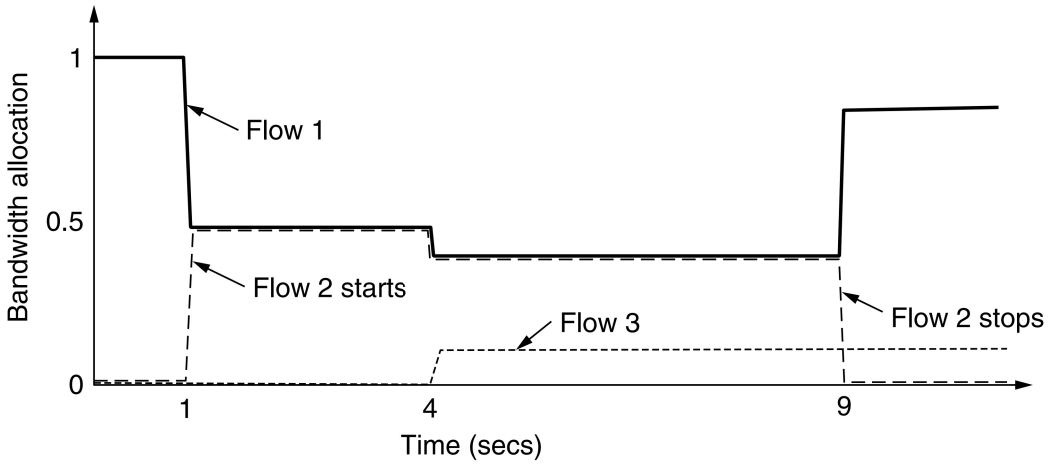


**Figure 6-21.** Changing bandwidth allocation over time.

### 6.3.2 Regulating the Sending Rate

Now it is time for the main course. How do we regulate the sending rates to obtain a desirable bandwidth allocation? The sending rate may be limited by two factors. The first is flow control, in the case that there is insufficient buffering at the receiver. The second is congestion, in the case that there is insufficient capacity in the network. In Fig. 6-22, we see this problem illustrated hydraulically. In Fig. 6-22(a), we see a thick pipe leading to a small-capacity receiver. This is a flow-control limited situation. As long as the sender does not send more water than the bucket can contain, no water will be lost. In Fig. 6-22(b), the limiting factor is not the bucket capacity, but the internal carrying capacity of the network. If too much water comes in too fast, it will back up and some will be lost (in this case, by overflowing the funnel).

These cases may appear similar to the sender, as transmitting too fast causes packets to be lost. However, they have different causes and call for different solutions. We have already talked about a flow-control solution with a variable-sized window. Now we will consider a congestion control solution. Since either of these problems can occur, the transport protocol will in general need to run both solutions and slow down if either problem occurs.

The way that a transport protocol should regulate the sending rate depends on the form of the feedback returned by the network. Different network layers may return different kinds of feedback. The feedback may be explicit or implicit, and it may be precise or imprecise.

An example of an explicit, precise design is when routers tell the sources the rate at which they may send. Designs in the literature such as XCP (eXplicit Congestion Protocol) operate in this manner (Katabi et al., 2002). An explicit, imprecise design is the use of ECN (Explicit Congestion Notification) with TCP. In this design, routers set bits on packets that experience congestion to warn the senders to slow down, but they do not tell them how much to slow down.