

Editorial Comment:

SHACKLES FOR THE ROGUE?

In its report on plans for development of the water resources of the Rogue river basin, the bureau of reclamation specifies that this statement is "addressed primarily to the people of the Rogue river valley." We respectfully submit that the Rogue river issue is of legitimate concern also to the rest of Oregon, to our country and continent, since it involves the future of one of the world's most beautiful rivers, a stream internationally famous among anglers and vacationists. The Rogue is something more than a river—it is a principle, an ideal and a trust. To tell us by inference that those who do not dwell beside the river have little at stake in the hearing soon to be held, is to disqualify a proper public interest in a regional and national inheritance.

To every generation something is given in trust, that the generations to follow may enjoy the gifts of providence, and peculiarly those of the outdoors, as others have enjoyed them. Such a property is the Rogue river, with its scenic charm and its great migrations of trout and salmon. The utilitarian proposal to destroy much of this beauty and bounty by the construction of dams—and, indeed, eventually to harness the river from its source to the sea—assumes that this is best for the people. That would depend, we think, upon the definition of utilitarianism. It is a term that rises superior to workaday projects and finds its higher utility in the refreshment of mankind. South-

ern Oregon's well-loved river brings more than merely material blessings to those that live there or visit it. It will continue these benefactions, if undisturbed, if unviolated, centuries hence. The Rogue deserves better of its privileged custodians than to be harnessed into a series of frog ponds—where now the steelhead and cutthroat spawn, and the salmon, in their ancient bridal gravels.

Aware of the several counterarguments in the instance, which have to do with at least one nonexistent necessity—that of additional power—we would respectfully remind the proponents of the plan to sell the Rogue into slavery that it has been said, "Man doth not live by bread only." But even aside from this it is our considered opinion—as it is of the Oregon state game commission and the United States fish and wildlife service—that in the long run an unravished river will be of far greater benefit to the people. Let us insure that we shall have a melancholy memory of a time when the Rogue was the Rogue, untamed, unspoiled and much as it was in the day of creation. Let us not invite the reproach and ridicule of those that come after. Let us leave them the matchless river as we found it. There is, it seems to us, though it has been suggested the matter is none of our affair, no greater urgency than this.

One realizes that the engineering problems of channeling the Rogue river are of themselves a challenge, and that craftsmen wish to work at their craft, but it seems to this commentator that the Rogue river is by way of being a creative masterpiece of engineering just as it is—and from the hand of that selfsame engineer who shaped the hills alongside. Nor is this idle emotionalism, mere sentimentalizing, for which one should apologize as for an old-fashioned opinion. They speak of "improving" the Rogue! To improve it—how? Since it is as God made it, its subjection to barriers and machines scarcely can be styled reclamation, with any degree of accuracy, and it is equally fantastic to speak of improving the stream.

Gentlemen, when the time comes to discuss the Rogue river, think better of your ambition to change it into a sequence of frog ponds. Cast about for another answer to your problems. Take thought of a land already nearing impoverishment of its fish and wildlife resources. Consider the need of today and of tomorrow for recreation in our Oregon outdoors. This proposed to enslave the Rogue, sirs, may end by making slaves of your inheritors. Reflect that the emergency is spurious, and that the proposal is anything save cultural or progressive. Yours is the opportunity to pronounce and establish a principal essential to the happiness and

well-being of America. And thereupon resolve that the Rogue shall remain a natural river in perpetuity—a living testimonial to the sympathy and foresight of this generation. Then adjourn.

—The Oregonian.

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