



AMERICAN-TRAINED—Members of the Chinese Nationalist Navy march in close order drill during their training under American instructors of the U. S. Military Assistance Advisory Group in Formosa. This photo, made last December, was taken from the Army's latest film on the training. (Defense Department photo from NEA.)

House Committee Starts Work On 2 Water Resource Measures

By BILL FORCE
United Press Correspondent

Salem—(U.P.)—A House committee yesterday went to work on a pair of bills that would make radical changes in controls over the state's most valuable single natural resource—water.

Rep. Earl Hill, veteran Lane county lawmaker and chairman of the House Commerce and Utilities Committee, declared the bills were among the most vital that will be considered at this session.

The companion measures would create a State Water Resources Board with broad powers over the use and conservation of water in the state and would create a statewide ground water code replacing the present code which applies only to eastern Oregon.

Would Supplant Commissions

The proposed board would supplant the present Willamette river basin commission and the Upper Columbia River basin Commission. It would take over Hydro-electric Commission, the many of the duties of the State State Irrigation Board and the State Reclamation Commission.

Frank McCulloch, Portland attorney who served as a member of the state water resources committee which drew up the bills,

explained they were based on the philosophy that all water in Oregon belongs to the people and that it is simply loaned to users, not given to them.

A hint of the opposition proponents of the bill might expect came from Rep. Harvey H. De Armond, Bend Republican, who said he agreed with the objectives of the legislation but felt that time-honored adjudications and water priorities should be protected. He added that the bills seemed to contain an unlawful delegation of legislative authority to an administrative agency. Their effect, he pointed out, would be to create an entirely new state water law.

Powers To Avoid Conflicts

McCulloch explained to the committee that the proposed water board was given broad and overriding powers to avoid conflicts of jurisdiction in water matters now evident between several state boards and agencies.

Controversies such as the Pelton dam battle would never have reached the Legislature as in the 1953 session if the proposed measure had been in effect, he said. McCulloch asserted that many state boards and commissions have broader powers in the water field than are consistent with their functions, such as

the Fish and Game Commission and the Hydroelectric Commission. In the event of conflicts of interest, the water resources board would have the power to hold hearings and reach a decision.

In reply to De Armond, McCulloch assured him that the 1909 water code in eastern Oregon would be presumed to stand intact under the new code. Priorities now in effect would be preserved except in emergency cases when beneficial use would take precedence over priorities. Sources of pollution could be cut off without regard to priority. The bills would establish the right of the state to upset past adjudications and priorities in the public interest.

McCulloch also warned that the board should be backed by an adequate money appropriation. Rep. C. Allen Tom (R-Rufus), one of the sponsors of the bills, estimated the proposed board would cost \$125,000 to operate the next biennium. It would replace boards and commissions now costing some \$150,000.

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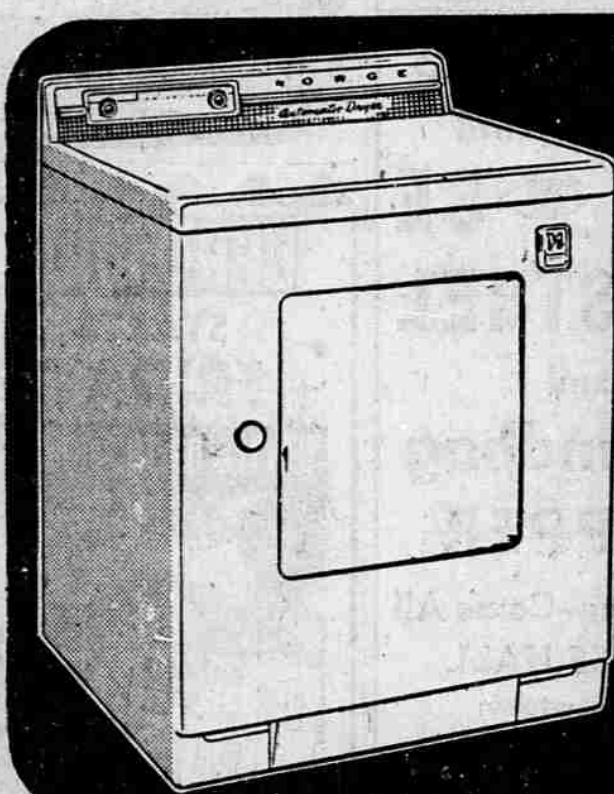


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