

Neuberger Says 'Five Great Principles' At Issue in Bill for Hells Canyon Dam

Senator Richard Neuberger's remarks on the occasion of introduction of the Hells Canyon bill were in part as follows:

"Mr. President, the struggle over the natural resources which has begun today with the introduction of the Hells Canyon bill will rank in history with the battle over the founding of the U. S. Forest Reserves and the long fight by Senator George W. Norris for Muscle Shoals.

Hells Canyon is the greatest natural hydroelectric power site left on our continent, but even more than this is at stake.

Hells Canyon is the keystone in the arch of resources out in the great Pacific Northwest. If Hells Canyon is given to private monopoly for far-less-than-full development, other resources will likewise pass from the hands of the people.

Principles at Issue

Five great principles are at issue in this bill:

1. Will the power resources of the Columbia river and its tributaries — the mightiest hydroelectric stream in North America—be tapped for the public or for a favored few?

2. Will power sites in the Columbia Basin be used to full capacity or to merely a fragment of their possibilities?

3. Will the 308 Report of the Corps of Engineers, which is the master plan for Columbia Basin development, be followed or will it be abandoned?

4. Will Columbia Basin kilowatts be available to farmers, manufacturers and home-owners at low-cost or at high monopolistic rates?

5. Will the generation of hydroelectric power be accompanied by such additional multi-purpose benefits as flood control, irrigation, downstream power firming, and the protection of wildlife?

Hells Canyon in Public Interest

If the Hells Canyon bill which we have introduced today is passed by Congress and signed by the President, these questions will be answered in the public interest.

If the bill fails of passage, Mr. President, these questions will be answered in sorrowful and adverse terms for the American people.

I should like to associate myself with my senior colleague from Oregon (Mr. Morse) in what he has said about Hells Canyon and its impact on our state, region and nation. I also should like to thank from the bottom of my heart the other distinguished Senators who have joined with Mr. Morse and myself in sponsorship of this bill, which means much to our state of Oregon but also to the United States of America.

Mr. President, I first visited Hells Canyon in 1939. I have been there many times since. I have ridden its rapids on the mailboat "Idaho." I have trudged its narrow trails and ridden horseback over Freezeout Saddle, the great pass on the Oregon rim of the chasm where Capt. Benjamin L. E. Bonneville and his fellow explorers escaped from the gorge nearly a century and a quarter ago.

Hells Canyon passed into protected public possession when Theodore Roosevelt and Gifford Pinchot set aside the Forest Reserves in 1908. The vast chasm is divided between the Nez Perce and Clearwater National Forests of Idaho and the Walla Walla National Forest of Oregon. The hydroelectric power resources of Hells Canyon need not be given to the absentee-dominated Idaho Power Company, if this Congress will only stand by the principles of those progressive Republicans, Theodore Roosevelt and his Chief Forester, Gifford Pinchot. Indeed, Roosevelt and Pinchot deliberately located forest ranger stations along swift rivers at power sites, to keep these sites out of the clutches of what Pinchot called "the Power Octopus." We are again confronted by a challenge similar to that which sent Roosevelt and Pinchot into action.

Position Taken Despite Findings

An administrative arm of Congress —the Federal Power Commission—now has before it a proposal by which a private power company could preempt that section of the Snake river within the high multi-purpose Hells Canyon dam would be built. Through narrow interpretation of the Federal Power Act, legal counsel for that body has recommended that licenses be granted to permit building three small private dams in the Hells Canyon area. Through tortured logic, this position was taken despite findings that the alternative high Hells Canyon Dam would provide superior total multiple-purpose benefits.

The Federal Power Act, it seems to me, is fairly clear as to how the Congress intended the Federal Power Commission to function in cases such as the present controversy. The Act specifically declares that the Commission shall license that project best adapted to comprehensive development of a river basin. How can less-than-full development be the best policy, when an alternative will produce maximum use? It sounds inconceivable, but that is the

unbalanced interpretation of the law which has been given by the present Commission.

Water Policy Imperative

It is important that this national water policy be spelled out here and now. We live in an age when energy for industrial fuel is a dominant factor in social and economic growth. The Columbia River Basin contains about 42 per cent of the nation's potential hydroelectric energy. We have developed approximately one-sixth of the possible capacity. Here is a challenge to American ingenuity and foresightedness. Have we the wisdom to carry on the program which will realize the full possibilities of this resource? We must be equal to the challenge, because this nation does not have a world monopoly on choice sites for development of low-cost energy. Failing to develop our water power to the fullest and at the lowest cost, industry will go where the cost of energy is cheaper and the supply more abundant. We have already seen this trend started in the Pacific Northwest where aluminum companies have been forced to locate elsewhere because of the recent threat of power shortages. In our region—which has no other fuel for an energy base except falling water—the economic paralysis from piecemeal high-cost power would be roughly equivalent to a serious economic depression. We cannot allow the race for low-cost energy to be lost by default merely to satisfy the demands of special corporate interests.

The technique of multi-purpose river development has been uniquely American. In recent years it has been one of our chief technological exports. The United States is spending millions of dollars to show governments in Europe, Asia and elsewhere how to get the most out of river resources. Our funds and our know-how are being used for power development by governments around the globe. At home, however, such action is labeled by the present Administration as "creeping socialism" and "subsidized power." Apparently, the Administration believes that what is good for our allies is not good for us.

Administration's Double Standard

We in the Columbia Basin states saw the effects of this teeter-totter logic when the President's budget was presented a few weeks ago. Again the Administration failed to allocate a single dollar for start of a new multi-purpose project on the main stem of the Columbia or its tributaries. At the same time, there were ample funds for far-away places.

I favor the use of financial aid to help under-developed areas raise their standards of living by better use of resources. But it seems singularly inconsistent for the Administration to give its blessing to multi-purpose river projects in foreign lands, and the back of its hand to similar objectives on the Columbia, the Snake and the Tennessee rivers. Surely, Baker, Oregon deserves as much consideration as Bombay, India.

Continuation of the Administration's double standard for river projects will put the nation further behind in meeting its prospective power requirements, while power expansion goes on around the world. We must regain our position in the world as the recognized disciples of full river-basin development. Our leadership in this field of conservation has been an example for the entire world, but

it is suffering under the Administration's policy of do-nothingism and phony "partnership."

Decision Must Shape Destiny

What we pass on to the future by our action on the Hells Canyon bill is more than a single dam-site. Our decision on this measure may well shape the destiny of national conservation policy — a policy tried and proved for 50 years, until thrust into limbo two years ago under the influence of self-seeking interests. The issue at Hells Can-

yon is the very Synthesis of the meaning of resource conservation. The question is this: Given the opportunity to put to beneficial use the greatest natural water-storage site in the continent, will Congress decide to reserve for all time the full multipurpose utility of Hells Canyon? Or, will it surrender to shortsighted expediency, telling this generation and those to come that they must accept less than total productivity from their river resources?



ALL IN A DAY—Miguel Jose, born Feb. 7, looks into camera with all the nonchalance of a true trouper as he poses with Mom and Dad in his Hollywood photo debut. Mom and Dad are Actor Jose Ferrer and Singer Rosemary Clooney.

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