

Stand Taken by Four Northwest Senators Makes Private Building of John Day Dam Dim

(Editor's note: This is the second of four articles on the implications of the power policy dispute on the Pacific Northwest as it heads into an important election year and a critical session of Congress.)

By A. ROBERT SMITH
Mail Tribune Correspondent
Washington—The focal point of the Pacific Northwest power struggle in the session of Congress that opens in three weeks will be the question of who will build and finance the John Day dam, an interstate project bridging the Columbia river between The Dalles and McNary dams.

The Eisenhower administration is backing a bill under its "partnership" power policy by which three private power companies would put up 88 per cent of the cost of the \$310,000,000 multi-purpose dam in return for its 1,105,000 KW for 50 years. The federal government would put up the balance to cover flood control and navigation costs.

But all four Democratic senators from the two-state region are opposed to this bill. They—Sens. Wayne Morse, Warren G. Magnuson, Henry M. Jackson and Richard L. Neuberger—favor federal construction of the project. They hope to get congressional approval of money to get it built.

It is almost axiomatic that the U. S. Senate does not pass legislation so vitally affecting a specific area without the approval of the senators involved—when

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the senators' party controls the Senate. So the outlook for favorable action on the bill is considered dim.

The Eisenhower administration suffered a severe setback to its power policy chances when Neuberger last year unseated ex-Sen. Guy Cordon (R-Ore.), who was not only the administration's right hand man in Congress on natural resource issues but was as skillful a legislative artisan as the GOP had in the Senate.

Much of the political strength Northwest Republicans enjoyed while Cordon was in office they could regain only by unseating either Morse or Magnuson in 1956. A GOP victory in either state would puncture the all-Democratic barrier that now blocks their "partnership" power policy.

The John Day bill is due to come up in hearings in the House Public Works Committee when Congress reconvenes. Sponsored by Rep. Sam Coon (R-Ore.) and backed by such other Northwest Republicans as

Reps. Thomas Pelly (Wash.) and Harris Ellsworth (Ore.) the measure has some chance of winning House approval.

House passage would send it to the Senate Public Works Committee, where Sen. Neuberger now sits as a watchdog for the advocates of federal development of the Columbia river. He would aim to kill it in committee.

The face-to-face debate between Coon and Neuberger in 10 Oregon cities this fall on the John Day issue was just a warm-up exercise for the coming debates in Congress, where the action taken on Coon's bill will determine the winner of the debates.

A secondary fight will be over the Hells Canyon authorization bills that are awaiting final committee action in both chambers. Although approved by the subcommittee which held hearings on this matter, the high federal dam proposal has lacked sufficient votes to be sent to the floor of either House or Senate. Meanwhile, Idaho Power Co.,

with administration backing, has been granted a license to build three dams in the Hells Canyon stretch of the Snake River. Backers of the single high dam are banking on the unlikelihood of the Boise utility actually starting construction of any of these dams as long as a court case is pending which could void the license. They hope that in the two-year period that the case is expected to take in the federal courts they may pick up extra votes needed in Congress to put the high dam bill through.

Here again on power policy, all four Democratic senators are arrayed against the administration. They support the federal Hells Canyon project and oppose the Idaho Power scheme.

A breakthrough by the Republicans in the forthcoming elections, by defeating either Morse or Magnuson, would give them the political strength they now lack in the no-holds-barred battle over electric power policy for the Northwest.

(NEXT—Magnuson and Morse contrasting tactics.)

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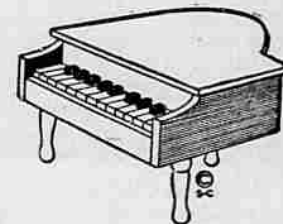
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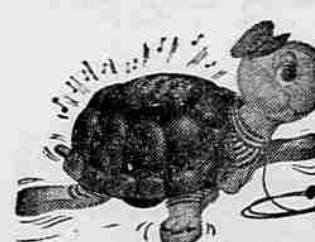
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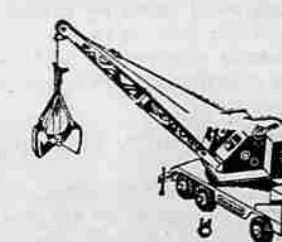
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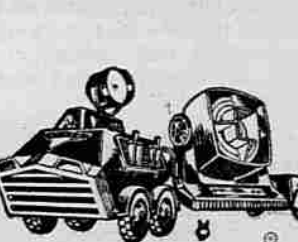
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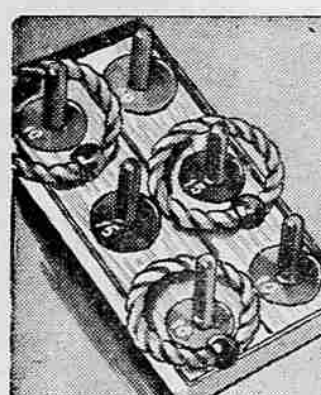
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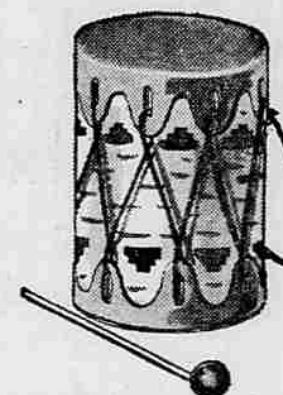
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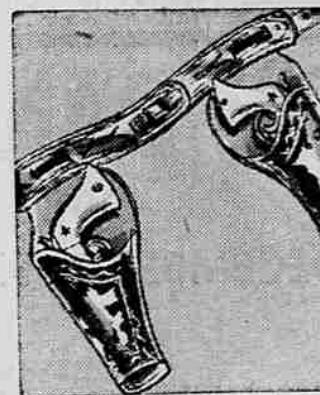


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