

Reports Help To Clarify Administration's Power Policy Stand

Partnership Change Already in Works Because of Losses

By A. ROBERT SMITH

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Washington—The apparently conflicting reports during the past week of whether the Eisenhower administration is planning a change in its power policy has helped to clarify, rather than to completely confuse, just what is happening as a result of the election. These reports which seem conflicting on their face are:

1. That authoritative sources within the administration say that a change in the "partnership" power policy is already in the works as a consequence of the serious Republican losses at the western states, especially the Pacific Northwest.

2. That Secretary of Interior Fred A. Seaton, in addressing the National Reclamation Association last Friday night, reiterated his belief in the soundness of the "partnership" power policy and disclosed that in January the administration will have "several proposals ready for consideration by the next Congress which provides for partnership development of multipurpose river structures."

Is one report right and the other wrong? No. Both reports are accurate.

The authoritative sources who disclosed that a change in policy is under consideration are very closely associated with Secretary Seaton and who, incidentally, were well aware of the prepared speech Seaton would deliver at the NRA meeting.

The confusion would seem to lie mostly in what Seaton means when he talks about "partnership" and where changes might be made within the context of that policy which would not alter the broad concept which Seaton has in mind about power policy.

When he talks about "partnership" power development, Seaton stresses the need for cooperation among local private and public power agencies and the states and federal government. All of them have a role to play in a loose partnership with one another to contribute to the total job of development of the nation's water resources. There is room for all, especially when it comes to putting up the money, because the federal government can't be expected to build and finance all projects everywhere.

No Real Disagreement
Up to this point there is no real disagreement with the "partnership" power policy, for even the most critical Democrats have no notion that the federal government should build every project everywhere and foreclose local public and private companies from having a share in this vast enterprise.

The rub comes in cases where there is a conflict of plans and interests between the government proposal, such as the high Hells Canyon project, and the local power company proposal, such as Idaho Power Company's three-dam scheme. During the president's first term, the power policy called for government withdrawal from sites like Hells Canyon if local utilities wanted to move in and build private

dams there—and this led to the charge of "give-away" which top GOP leaders are now convinced cost the Republican heavily in the West this past election day. It is at this point that the changes that are now in the works may become most evident. Seaton has ordered a study of the feasibility of the government building a high dam at the Pleasant Valley site on the Snake river where Pacific Northwest Power Company is now seeking a federal license to build a smaller project. Such a dam would eliminate another private project, the little Hells Canyon project which is part of Idaho Power's three-dam scheme for development of the river just above the Pleasant Valley site.

Under the approach made during the administration of Douglas McKay, it would have been virtually inconceivable for the Interior Department to seriously study the feasibility of coming out for a high federal dam that would knock out two private projects—but that is what is now happening under Seaton.

If the administration should go through with this proposal for building a high dam at Pleasant Valley—and most observers are convinced a hot cabinet fight would have to be won by Seaton to proceed with the plan—this would mark a sharp shift in the approach of the administration to development of major multipurpose dams. And yet it would still be within the basic context of the "partnership" power policy as Seaton is constantly defining and defending it.

On the Columbia river, the last has probably been heard from the administration about a "partnership" plan for construction of the John Day dam, for the recent election wiped out every staunch advocate of that proposal who might otherwise have sponsored it in the next Congress. The power companies who wanted to join in building that project are now resigned to its construction by the federal government.

What this all adds up to seems to be that the administration will go on calling its power policy by the same name, "partnership," but possibly making some shifts in approach to implementing it. The broad pattern of this shift will be subtle, not drastically different from the last four years. But in some instances, such as the proposal for Pleasant Valley, the change could represent a marked departure from the approach taken by McKay and his chief subordinates, Ralph Tudor and Clarence A. Davis.

But no big alterations will be made without full debate within the administration at the cabinet level. Utility interests are already bracing themselves for a more liberal attitude toward federal spending for western projects, but they are banking on the more conservative members of the cabinet, such as Treasury Secretary George Humphrey and Defense Secretary Charles Wilson, to put up so tough a fight against a more liberal policy that any modifications will be kept to a minimum.

This internal battle and its outcome in the coming weeks is expected to provide one of the most important running developments in the nation's capital that vitally affects the future course of western development.

MANY CHRISTMAS TREES
Washington — (UPI) — The Agriculture Department today predicted about 39 million Christmas trees will be used in the United States this year. About 27 million trees will come from domestic forests and 12 million will be imported from Canada, the department said.

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Alimony payment checks totaling \$155,565.91 have been paid during the year July 1, 1955 through July 1, 1956, through the Jackson county clerk's office according to Mrs. Bereth P. Hop-

kins, county clerk.
The amount represents 247 active cases with a result of 2,342 checks being written by the clerk's office. Sixty-one of the cases are more than five years old with 19 of them more than 10 years old.
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