

Interior Department Getting Set To Win Columbia Basin Approval

By A. ROBERT SMITH
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Washington — The interior department is getting all set for another concentrated attempt to win approval of a Columbia basin reclamation account—a method by which new and existing federal power projects in the Pacific Northwest would contribute a power subsidy to develop new irrigation projects throughout the region.

This is essentially a long-range plan designed to provide an extra source of revenue to finance many of the less economically feasible reclamation projects that are beyond the ability of water users to pay for entirely.

It would mean, if adopted, that some power revenue from McNary dam, for example, might be placed in a special basin account and used to help finance new irrigation projects anywhere in the Columbia basin, not just in the vicinity of that Columbia River dam.

More Details
Commissioner of Reclamation W. A. Drexler may give more details of what the interior department plans to do next week when he makes a speech at Yakima.

Both Drexler and Interior Secretary Fred A. Seaton mentioned the possibility of a basin account for the Northwest when they addressed the National Reclamation Association at Salt Lake City last week. They didn't commit the Eisenhower administration to advocate such a plan, but they spoke favorably of it and indicated clearly they are hopeful of pushing it through.

One reason the department is starting a drive for the basin account now is that it feels Congress this past session approved the principle which is inherent in the plan when it authorized the Crooked river project in central Oregon and the vast four-state Upper Colorado reclamation project in the inter-Mountain states. In both instances, irrigation development will be aided financially by power revenues from dams that are physically unrelated to the irrigated acreage.

Same Principal
The same principle has been applied to power dams and reclamation in the Missouri basin and in California's vast central valley. So the Columbia basin now remains the last great area with big irrigation possibilities

that has not been brought under a basin account.

One reason for this delay is that it has been controversial in the past. The bureau of reclamation tried to get it through Congress in 1950 as part of a big package which included the high Hells Canyon project and many projects of the corps of

Commission Calls For Highway Bids

Salem — (UP) — The Oregon State Highway commission will receive bids on \$1,800,000 in highway projects at a meeting in Portland Dec. 17, it was announced Saturday.

Projects to be bid on include: Douglas county: 2.83 miles of grading on the Myrtle Creek-Canyonville section of the Pacific highway, south from Myrtle Creek—a four-lane job.

Jackson county: 1.11 miles of grading and paving on the Pacific highway in Ashland.

Lane county: Traffic signals at four intersections in Eugene.

Malheur county: 16.29 miles of grading and paving on the lone highway about 36 miles north of McDermott, Nev., and 49 miles west and south of Jordan Valley.

Multnomah county: Install 16 mercury-vapor luminaires on the Columbia River highway below Crown Point vista house.

Umatilla county: 25 miles of grading and 1.22 miles of paving on the Hermiston highway about 3 miles south of Hermiston.

Wallowa county: 25 miles of grading and paving on the Wallowa Lake highway and Main street in Enterprise.

New Groups Join Transportation Club

Four new groups have joined the newly-formed Rogue Valley Transportation club, the board of directors has announced.

The new members include the Western Union company, Pacific Telephone and Telegraph company, California-Oregon Power company and California Pacific Utilities company.

The organization will hold a Christmas party Saturday evening, Dec. 8. Next regular club meeting will be held at noon Thursday, Dec. 20, in the Pioneer room of the Jackson hotel. Theme of the meeting will be "Christmas Festivities and Spirit."

Prospective members may get

Engineers. After a lengthy battle on the Senate floor, the reclamation part of the package was shunted aside and the corps of engineers projects approved.

Some groups and individuals have opposed the basin account because they claim it may lead to development of uneconomic irrigation projects with revenues from sound power dams. Another consideration is that it requires the federal government to continue to build power dams in order to have that power revenue available, and some interests want the private utilities to take over this job.

Touch off Debate
If the administration asks Congress to authorize such a plan this coming session, it will undoubtedly touch off another debate between those who support the Republican administration and the Democrats who have opposed its power and resource policies—for the Democrats will argue that the Northwest can't have an effective basin account without the assurance that more federal dams are going to be built instead of the "partnership" projects advocated by the administration.

Secretary Seaton indicated last week that his answer to this argument is to guarantee that power revenues from "partnership" projects would be reserved for reclamation use after the utilities have paid off their investment in the dam.

Seaton spoke of charging a falling water levy which the utilities would pay as a government fee, so to speak, for the right to continue making use of the dam after their original licenses are issued for development of hydroelectric sites and the time usually used by the utilities to amortize their capital investment.

In other words, Seaton's argument is that a basin account can be set up and provided with revenue for reclamation by a reservation enforced by law on new power projects in the Columbia basin. And whether they are built entirely by the government as federal dams, or by local utilities and the government as "partnership" projects, in either instance after their cost has been amortized they would begin to contribute to the basin account.

TREE ON TRAIN

Alamogordo, N. M. — (UP) — A 65-foot Englemann spruce cut in the mountains of New Mexico for the White House Christmas tree will be placed on a train with a state police guard Sunday for the trip to Washington.

In touch with either Bob Stephenson, 3-5325, or Bob Holmes, 2-7173.



ARRIVING IN NEW YORK, Actress Marilyn Monroe gives "brushoff" to press saying she is tired. With her is Arthur Miller, her playwright-husband. (International Soundphoto)

Police Investigating Three Poison Deaths

Hagerstown, Md. — (UP) — Police investigating the poison-deaths of a West Virginia fruit-picker and at least two of his children tried to find out Saturday how arsenic got into his well.

During the last two weeks 42-year-old William S. Kidwell and two of his children have died from arsenic poisoning and virtually all the rest of the 11-member family have become ill. Another Kidwell child—a 10-week-old infant—died earlier this month, but police have not determined whether the child was poisoned.

Authorities said they do not yet know whether the deaths were accidental or killings.

Mother Hospitalized
The mother, who had been taken into custody for questioning about the "peculiar" nature of the case, was admitted to the Washington County General hospital here Friday.

Tom Kaylor, Washington county state's attorney, said "she claimed she didn't feel too well." He indicated she would be tested for arsenic in her body.

Friday night West Virginia police questioned and released Kidwell's brother, Richard. Police said they gave him a lie detector test but released him after the results were inconclusive. Richard lived with his brother's family at their home near Kearneysville, W. Va.

According to police sources Richard Kidwell said he also was ill. But these sources said he did not require hospitalization.

Dr. Russell S. Fisher, chief medical examiner for the state of Maryland, revealed Friday that arsenic traces were found

Two Men Arrested For Selling Space

Norman, Okla. — (UP) — Police arrested two men Saturday for selling parking space at \$1 a car to fans arriving for the Oklahoma-Nebraska football game.

They were doing a big business selling space on a free campus parking lot.

BALLET FOR HUNGARY
Monterey, Calif. — (UP) — Monterey's Hill Theater will show Monday a film of the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" produced by the Bolshoi Theater of Moscow. All proceeds will be donated for Hungarian relief.

CRASH VICTIM
Vancouver, Wash. — (UP) — Ronald Rex Gibbs, 21, Joseph, Ore., was killed Friday night when his automobile failed to make a curve and crashed out of control on Highway 830 about eight miles east of Bingen, Wash.

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Swiss Stop Flow of Cheap Gasoline

Bern, Switzerland — (UP) — The Swiss government Saturday stopped the flow of cheap and ration free Swiss gasoline for foreign motorists.

Several thousand French, Italian and German motorists, it was reported, crossed the Swiss border during the past week for the sole purpose of buying cheap Swiss gasoline.

But a government decree issued put a stop to this practice in order to conserve Switzerland's dwindling stocks.

Hereafter, foreign motorists will be required to state how much gasoline they had in their tanks when they crossed the border and only be permitted to "export" the same quantity when they leave the country.

The new decree also forbids Swiss motorists from taking gasoline in spare containers with them when they leave Switzerland.

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