

JFK Supporting Federal Dam at Mountain Sheep

By ELMER W. LAMMI
United Press International

Washington - (UPI) - President Kennedy still supports federal construction of the Mountain Sheep dam in the Pacific Northwest, the Federal Power Commission has been told.

But an attorney for the Interior Department also said construction of dams on the middle reach of the Snake river between Idaho and Oregon should be delayed until the problem of passing fish over high dams can be solved.

Harry Hogan, assistant department solicitor, said Interior Secretary Stewart Udall had talked with Kennedy about the administration stand on the project. Hogan said he was authorized to state there had been no change in the administration's position.

Kennedy promised on May 9 to take another look at the project in line with his expressed view that private industry should build the dam unless the federal government could prove federal construction was superior.

Summer Decision Likely

The full commission heard oral arguments for and against construction of the Mountain Sheep dam in a climactic all-day hearing. The commission is expected to reach a decision sometime this summer.

Most of the testimony concerned the impact of dam construction on the last remaining major salmon spawning grounds in the Salmon river.

Spokesmen for Washington, Oregon and Montana fisheries interests supported the Pacific Northwest Power Company's contention that Mountain Sheep dam above the mouth of the Salmon would have little effect on fish runs.

The Washington Public Power Supply System is seeking permission to build the Nez Perce Dam downstream from the mouth of the Salmon.

Runs Said Doomed

Evelyn Cooper, counsel for WPPSS, suggested Columbia river fish runs were doomed in any event. She said implementation of the Columbia river treaty with Canada would reduce flows over the dams and most fingerlings would have to pass through turbines in 10 dams. At each, she said, 8 to 10 per cent would be destroyed.

Hogan, in arguing for delay, contended that both the PNP and WPPSS were wrong in arguing that there was a current power shortage. On the contrary, he said, there would continue to be a surplus of power until about 1972.

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