"Today there is prevalent a silly perversion of the conservation concept which seems to be based on the sterile proposition that man is vile, his needs are unworthy, and his works are evil; and that we must be kept away from our hills and waters so that America may be preserved for fish and Gila monsters. Merely to preserve resources while preventing their use, is in itself a form of waste, and contrary to the very spirit of conservation."—Guy C. Jackson, President, National Reclamation Association, at the 1958 NRA Convention, Houston, Texas.

COLORADO WATER CONGRESS NEWSLETTER

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Curecanti . . . proposed workhorse on the Gunnison River . . . took a big step closer to reality when the Dep't. of Interior filed a favorable report on the project's feasibility, without objection by the Budget Bureau.

Curecanti's job: Furnish hydroelectric power to help pay for Western Slope participating units of the Upper Colorado Storage Project. Upper basin power revenues are pooled, but Colorado gets 46 percent of the total. Curecanti's horses: Two dams, two powerplants . . . over a million acre feet of storage . . . 100,000 kilowatts of power. Cost: $82 million.

Curecanti will be an integral part of the upper basin power complex. PL 485 calls for an extra high voltage backbone transmission system forming a power grid between Glen Canyon and other units of the upper basin project. Without Curecanti . . . a gap in the grid, less firm power, less income to finance other projects.

But Curecanti has been low-man on the Upper Colorado River totem pole. Its authorization was contingent upon a finding by the Secretary of Interior that benefits would exceed costs. Construction started on the three other storage projects . . . Glen Canyon, Flaming Gorge, Navajo . . . while the Reclamation Bureau studied Curecanti.

Colorado contributed $35,000 to speed the Bureau's studies and last February the Secretary released a proposed economic justification report on Curecanti. It included a favorable benefit-cost ratio, but also a finding against the project by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service prepared in cooperation with the Colorado Game and Fish Department.
The Secretary noted the fish controversy and asked for Colorado's official views on Curecanti. Your Water Congress moved quickly and was instrumental in getting the Colorado legislature to adopt a memorial approving Curecanti. All major Colorado water interests, including the Game & Fish Commission, backed the project.

The Budget Bureau recently transmitted Interior's report on Curecanti to Congress without recommendation for appropriations to start Curecanti. The administration wants to hold the line against inflation by a "no new starts" policy.

The House Appropriations Committee, in a bipartisan effort, defied the no new starts policy "because it eventually would dry up the water resources of the country". It recommended 7 new reclamation starts, but it didn't include any funds for Curecanti. The Senate Appropriations Committee, of which Colorado's Gordon Allott is a member, also approved new starts. It put an appropriation of $1 million into the Curecanti kitty.

A joint Senate-House Conference Committee is compromising differences in the appropriations bills. It will decide on the Curecanti start. Prospects: Not very good for a Curecanti start this year.

Colorado's Smith Fork Project, a proposed $4 million participating unit along the Smith Fork of the Gunnison, is all set to go. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees have approved it. The project will provide a full irrigation water supply to 1,320 acres and supplemental water for 6,920 acres.

Colorado's Wayne Aspinall, chairman of the powerful House Interior Committee, has proposed an alternative to the no new starts policy. It's a sample 8-year program designed to show that a few new starts can be made each year without excessive pyramiding of costs. It's a planned, long-range approach.

The Senate is also taking the long-look on water development. Senate Res. 48 by Murray and Mansfield of Montana set up a select committee to make a two-year study of the nation's water resources and water requirements for the next 20 years. Existing information and new studies will be used to develop broad legislative proposals for comprehensive water resource development by federal, state and private agencies. Committee membership has increased to 17 senators. No Coloradans.
The Select Committee will seek answers to these questions: How much water development is needed ... When is it needed ... Where is it needed ... What should be the pattern of water development ... What level of water development expenditures is justified?

Already on the Select Committee staff: Director Ted Schad, former technical specialist in the Library of Congress and co-author of "The Report on Reclamation". Consultants: Dr. Edward Ackerman, former Ass't. General Manager of TVA and co-author with Denver's Dr. Lof of a book on modern technology and water supply ... Dr. Abel Wolman, widely known sanitary engineering teacher and writer ... W. G. Hoyt, former top drawer USGS engineer.

The Select Committee has sent letters to governors requesting statements on state water problems. Hearings will be scheduled to stimulate grass-roots interest. One may be held in S. Dakota in mid-October. No controversial issues are apparent yet. Except politics!

It's been tried before ... many times. A long list of commissions, agencies and committees have assembled stacks of reports on water policy. Ex-President Truman had a detailed water policy statement prepared. President Eisenhower had a cabinet committee prepare an abbreviated statement. Neither resulted in significant water legislation. Some Washington railbirds feel that SR 48 is a political answer to the no new starts policy, timed to coincide with the 1960 national election campaign.

Select Committeeeman McGee of Wyoming on the committee's undertakings: It may "turn out to be a billion dollar affair".

A recent study by the U. S. Dep't of Commerce says this: "The U. S. must almost double its investment in development of water sources in the next 16 years. About $171 billion is needed to keep up with demands of a growing population." Commerce's study is intended to provide water resource planners with statistical benchmarks.
Here's an interesting Commerce Dep't. water benchmark:

"The capital investment in public and private water resources development in the continental U.S., based upon 1958 replacement costs, is estimated to be about $1,028 per capita, or a total of $179 billion. This total is equivalent to nearly two-thirds of the value of all stocks listed on the New York Stock Exchange in December 1958 and amounts to nearly 10 percent of the total national wealth. Water and sewage utilities account for nearly a third of the total investment in water resources development."

Water research bills to establish soil and water conservation laboratories appear to be stymied. Reasons: Budgetary limitations, opposition by the Department of Agriculture.

Federal agencies have submitted their views on the Wilderness Bill, S-1123. They would like to see wilderness areas established, provided the legislation is amended to protect their interests.

Interior has a problem, with its Reclamation Bureau and Fish and Wildlife Service on different sides of the wilderness controversy. So it straddles the fence. It wants wilderness areas established, but states: "We believe it is logical and practical that every area included in the wilderness system should be examined carefully to determine if the wilderness area is, in fact, the highest and best use for the particular area."

Agriculture sees no need for a National Wilderness Preservation Council. It wants the Secretary of Agriculture to determine if existing primitive areas should be included in the wilderness system. The Budget Bureau notes that the Smithsonian Institute doesn't want to be involved in the N.W.P. Council. It feels that proposed methods for changing a wilderness area designation raise serious constitutional and administrative questions.

NRA notes that there are at least thirty national park proposals in Forest Service areas that are under various stages of consideration. Coverage: 6 to 14 million acres. NRA asks: "Have the proponents of wilderness legislation concluded that they are not going to get the Wilderness Bill and are now therefore proposing instead a series of national parks?"
We all like national parks . . . But: The development and utilization of practically all natural resources is prohibited within a national park.

The Senate Interior and Insular Affairs Committee will meet in executive session August 4 to decide what action is to be taken on wilderness legislation. If the committee does report a bill, it is likely to be amended considerably. Most likely amendment: Elimination of the Council.

Senator Jackson (Wash.) has proposed the amendments to S 1123. They help some, but don't go far enough. Water Congress Chairman Barnard is attempting to have more extensive amendments placed before the Senate Committee.

Hearings on states' water rights legislation now pending before the House Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation were held in Washington on July 20-24. Water Congress Chairman John Barnard, Jr., testified on behalf of Colorado water interests in support of the so-called substitute bill. Barnard also supported the more comprehensive Farm Bureau legislation. Additional support for the substitute bill came from Attorney John Clayton of Greeley, representing NRA.

There are four House substitute bills . . . all about the same as the Senate's O'Mahoney bill (S851). One of these (HR 4567) is sponsored by Colorado's Aspinall. Tone: Moderate. The substitute bills provide that the withdrawal or reservation of public lands shall not affect any right to the use of water acquired under state law either before or after such withdrawal or reservation.

There are five Farm Bureau bills on states' water rights. One (HR 5555) is sponsored by Rogers of Texas, chairman of the subcommittee considering the bills. Tone: Tough. They are like the Barrett bill of previous years. Colorado's Representative Byron Johnson supported HR 5555. Special counsel for the Farm Bureau at the House Committee hearings: Clarence Davis, former Undersecretary of Interior. Colorado's former Undersecretary, Hatfield Chilson, testified for the substitute bill.

Senate hearings on states' water rights bills have not been scheduled. Senator O'Mahoney of Wyoming, long-time leader in the state-federal water rights controversy recently suffered a mild stroke.
House action is expected soon on HR 3—a bill designed to curtail federal pre-emption of state authority. A companion bill (S 3) is pending in the Senate. These are the proposals that passed the House by a large margin last session but lost by one vote in the Senate. They are popularly known as the attempt by Congress to curb the powers of the U. S. Supreme Court.

HR 3 doesn't mention water rights. But it's aimed at the tendency of the U. S. Supreme Court to rule that when Congress has legislated on any subject, the states have no authority to enact or implement laws on the same subject even though not in conflict with federal law. HR 3 would provide a rule for determining whether a federal law should supersede state laws on the same subject.

Note this: Senator Murray of Montana has introduced S 1782, a bill to provide for the comprehensive operation of hydroelectric power resources. It would amend the Federal Power Act to authorize payments to the owner of a water control facility, either federal or non-federal, in power or money, for regulation of reservoir releases in a coordinated manner.

Each participant would be required to coordinate the operation of its facilities to produce the optimum amount of firm energy for itself and for all downstream owners of hydroelectric facilities. The FPC would be authorized to fix a charge for a hydroelectric facility that operates unlawfully in such a way as to interfere with storage releases from water control facilities that have been coordinated under terms of an inter-facility agreement.

S 1782 proposes voluntary agreements. But some Washington observers are apprehensive that once initiated, such agreements would be subject to interpretation and to the fixing of charges and credits by an agency of the federal government... a step toward federal control of all water releases and of all production of electric power.

Senator Murray has also proposed an investigation of the country's power transmission system by a special Senate water resources committee. The bill: S 1883. Major objectives: A giant power grid, particularly in the western states...
Legislation to assure development and organization of bulk power supply . . .

Eventual interconnection of all major power systems in the U. S. Both S 1782 and S 1883 have been referred to the Senate Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. Hearing dates not yet announced.

Colorado power people are becoming concerned about the lack of information on the Bureau of Reclamation's plans for the Upper Colorado River transmission system. They have many questions. Some of them: Who will construct the transmission lines to load centers, the federal government or private utilities? If it's the government, will it duplicate existing or planned private utility lines?

Senator Carroll of Colorado, speaking before a House Committee:

"The preference power people and the private power people in Colorado have no authoritative knowledge of the transmission line plans of the (Interior) Department, other than the preliminary plans drawn at the time the project was authorized. Our Colorado power people have not been consulted. It is now time, with a million dollars invested, that we know how the Bureau of Reclamation plans to interconnect the keystone projects, where they intend to locate the substations at major load-centers, from which power can be stepped-down and delivered to preference and private users for further distribution."

To date there has been no coordination in planning between the Bureau and power utilities in the upper basin area. This has introduced confusion and uncertainty into the upper basin power planning picture. Utilities must plan and construct facilities years in advance of anticipated need.

Power utilities are hard pressed to keep up with power load growth. Total installed generating capacity in the U. S. in 1958: 160 million kilowatts. Latest estimate of required capacity by 1980: 451 million kilowatts . . . an average increase of more than 8 percent each year during the next 22 years.

Congress noted the trouble on upper basin power planning and lowered the boom in its appropriation bill language:

"None of the funds provided shall be used for additional surveys, rights-of-way acquisition, design, or construction work on transmission lines until economic studies to determine proper market areas have been completed and the interested parties in the area are advised of the status of planning, the tentative allocations of power, and are given an opportunity to react to proposals of the Bureau for the location and size of transmission lines."
Power allocation and transmission for Glen Canyon, Curecanti and Flaming Gorge is going to be a problem. The Colorado Water Conservation Board has requested assistance from the Colorado Water Investigation Commission in meeting this problem.

Hydroelectric power figures strongly in another congressional bill . . . HR 8 and its counterpart, S 1591. If passed, these bills would comprise the Water Conservation Act of 1959.

Behind HR 8: An apparent effort by public power interests to shift some of the reclamation project repayment burden from hydroelectric power to non-reimbursable benefits such as recreation, fish and wildlife, pollution control, watershed programs, salinity control, etc. Result: Lower wholesale power rates to cooperatives and preference power people.

HR 8 proposes to limit project allocation to power to the difference between the cost of a project with power facilities and the cost of the project without power facilities. It's called an incremental basis. The U. S. taxpayer would pay irrigation subsidization costs now paid indirectly by hydropower users. The bill would also: Extend the payout period to the useful life of the project . . . permit basin-wide pooling of project benefits and costs, thereby permitting inclusion of infeasible projects . . . require the consideration of all benefits and costs in determining the benefit-cost ratio . . . make the interest rate on projects equal the average interest rate paid by the U. S. during the preceding 15 years.

HR 8 hits directly at reclamation fundamentals: Power subsidy . . . repayment period . . . indirect benefits . . . interest rates. Reclamationists dislike the incremental basis for power cost allocation. Interior and Army Engineers urge modification of the bill. Co-ops support it.

More on power: The final generating unit at Hoover Powerplant will be installed soon. It's a 95,000 KW unit costing $1.6 million . . . the largest and the last of 17 units in the giant Hoover plant. But the Grand Coulee plant on the Columbia River is bigger . . . largest in the U. S. Note this: Russia is building five hydro power-plants, each larger than Grand Coulee!
The government's first saline water conversion demonstration plant will be built on the Gulf Coast at Freeport, Texas. Construction contracts may be let before next June. Anticipated conversion cost: Less than $1 per thousand gallons. Texas put up a cash offering to encourage location of the plant in the Lone Star State. Thirty-one gulf coast cities wanted the plant. Site selections are made by a three-man board. On the board: Lewis Finch of Indianapolis, President of the American Water Works Association.

The second conversion plant will be on the West Coast, probably in California. Its heat source will be an atomic reactor. Both plants will convert a million gallons a day of sea water to fresh water. The third plant will be in the northern great plains or in the southwest. It will convert 250,000 gallons a day of brackish water to fresh water. Two more plants will be designated later. Each plant uses a different conversion process.

The demonstrator plant program of OSW (Office of Saline Water) is moving ahead rather rapidly now. OSW has asked Congress for an extra $1.5 million this year.

Biggest salt water conversion plant in the world: On the Dutch Caribbean island of Aruba. Capacity: 2.7 million gallons a day of fresh water and 15,000 kilowatts of power. Water cost: $1.75 per thousand gallons of fresh water, exclusive of distribution costs and power revenues. High pressure steam is fed to two turbo-generators. Turbine exhaust goes to evaporators. Each pound of steam produces 4.88 pounds of fresh water.

Evaporation reduction by a monomolecular chemical shield called hexadeconal . . . Does it work? A 3-month Bureau of Reclamation test at Lake Hefner in Oklahoma City indicated a 9 percent reduction in evaporation losses under difficult conditions. Colorado River arithmetic: Nine percent of 1.4 million acre feet (estimated average annual evaporation loss at Lake Mead and Glen Canyon) is 126,000 acre feet a year . . . enough water to supply a city of over half a million people, or an irrigated area of 40,000 acres.

Evaporation research stakes are big. An estimated 11 1/2 million acre feet of water is lost each year from evaporation from lakes and streams in the West.
FULL SUPPORT FOR WATER DEVELOPMENT NOW POSSIBLE

A cloud has hung over the contributions by political subdivisions to public and private agencies interested in the development and conservation of our water resources in Colorado.

The question has been a legal one, in that there was no statutory authority giving any political subdivision of the state including cities, counties and water districts, authority to become members or to contribute to organizations for the protection and conservation of water.

But on April 28, Senate Bill 272 of the last General Assembly was signed by Gov. McNichols which gives such authorization and makes it legal for them to do so.

The act also declares that such organizations serve a public purpose in providing for the transmission of information between water users, private industry and official bodies about Colorado's water problems and programs.

The new law is the outgrowth of a gradual realization throughout Colorado that we have been about 20 years behind the times in developing and protecting our greatest resource.

The Colorado Water Congress was formed two years ago to promote the exchange of information and to establish unified support for water programs which are agreed to by the entire state after full consideration.

The Colorado Water Congress is an independent, non-political organization which needs funds for its program. Approximately 600 persons have subscribed to the annual membership, but additional funds for operation have been needed. The lack of authority under state law for political subdivisions to make donations to the Colorado Water Congress has delayed implementation of its purposes.

The Water Development Association of Southeastern Colorado which was succeeded by the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservation District ran into difficulties the same as the Colorado Water Congress.

But now the way is clear for any political subdivision to determine, as a matter of policy, that it is interested in helping to develop our water resources and to distribute information for that purpose. The Colorado Water Congress is a great asset to the state and should be supported on a state-wide basis.