"Texas is going to determine its own destiny in the development of its water resources. We are going to make sure that every area of our state has the water supplies necessary to the achievement of its full growth potential. These goals will not be realized by chance, nor by blind dependence on the wisdom of the federal agencies. We must accept our own responsibilities." (John Connally, Governor of Texas)

WATER GROUPS CONSIDER UNDERGROUND WATER CONFLICT

Growing conflicts resulting from the unregulated use of underground water in Colorado were aired in two water agency meetings held in Denver on December 9th. The Colorado Water Congress and the Colorado Water Conservation Board, in separate meetings, devoted most of their scheduled time on the growing problem caused by the pumping of underground water. The two major problem areas are in the Arkansas and the South Platte Valleys. Surface water users in these areas are claiming that increased pumping has on many occasions dried up their water supplies. On the other hand a large segment of the agricultural economy of the areas is based upon water wells. All interested parties are clamoring for legislation to protect their rights.

The executive committee of the Colorado Water Congress, at a breakfast meeting, expressed its dissatisfaction with the progress being made in the development of corrective water law legislation. The group called interested parties to consider a two-phase program: (1) a long range study
to develop a new water code for legislative consideration by the 1966 legislature; (2) stop-gap legislation to rectify immediate problems to be considered by the 1965 legislature.

Frank Milenski, guest of the committee from La Junta, stated that "time is running out on the surface water user; and if underground water pumping is continued the same as in the past, surface water rights will have no value whatsoever." John Barnard, former CWC chairman, suggested that stop-gap legislation be passed, definitely stating that tributary underground water be placed under the appropriation doctrine and that the State Engineer be directed to enforce this law and regulate underground water use accordingly.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board considered the same problem during most of its session. Felix L. Sparks submitted a report to the Board outlining the problem and recommending remedial action. In his report Sparks declared that there is "virtual anarchy in Colorado water use today because of uncontrolled water well drilling." Richard Eckles, State Coordinator of Natural Resources, told the Board that Governor Love feels that some legislation is urgently needed at this time.

Sparks' proposals, which he interpreted as guide-lines for suggested legislation, included:

-all water, regardless of origin, to be the property of the people and subject to appropriation under permits issued by the office of the State Engineer.

-that groundwater be classified as tributary or non-tributary to streams by State Engineer decision.
-that tributary groundwater be defined as those waters which, if not intercepted, would be available to surface decrees.

-that non-tributary groundwater be administered under a theory of "correlative rights" vesting administrative authority in the State Engineer.

-that existing surface decrees be modified in order of priority to include groundwater as a source of supply.

-that a seven-man commission be appointed in each separate drainage to assist in water law administration.

The Colorado Water Conservation Board did not take official action on Sparks' recommendation. Instead, the Board directed Sparks to issue his report to the Governor as an administrative recommendation.

ON THE NATIONAL SCENE

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR announced on December 2 its approval of a Bureau of Reclamation feasibility report recommending development of a water salvage plan for the Closed Basin Division, San Luis Valley Project, in south-central Colorado. The works proposed in the report would salvage shallow groundwater now trapped in the San Luis Valley and would deliver the salvage water to the Rio Grande River. The contemplated development would contribute to critical water shortages in the Rio Grande Basin salvaging an average of about 102,000 acre-feet of good quality water annually. The plan proposes a system of some 129 wells in selected areas throughout the water salvage area of about 109,000 acres. The main objective of the project is to contribute water to the Rio Grande Basin for Mexico under the 1906 treaty. To date deliveries have been met to some degree at the expense of irrigators along the Rio Grande.
CONGRESSMAN ASPINALL CLARIFIES WATER ISSUES. Wayne N. Aspinall (D-Colo), in an interview in Denver on December 5, took occasion to contradict Kenneth Holum, Assistant Secretary of the Interior, on a statement Holum made regarding probable reduction to power rates for the Colorado River storage project. Aspinall described such a statement as "irresponsible." "There certainly will be no reduction in rates below what is prescribed unless it is conclusively shown that power produced within the upper basin can provide the same income from the project," Aspinall said. He stated that he would not countenance any raids on the upper basin fund created for development of Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Mexico.

Aspinall also promised he would resist moves for a single Colorado River administration. "The Colorado is a two-basin river, and any attempt by anyone in or out of government to take over administration of the upper basin contrary to the compact must be vigorously opposed by the upper states," he said.

NRA CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

THE NATIONAL RECLAMATION ASSOCIATION held its 33rd Annual Convention in Palm Springs, California on November 8, 10 and 11, 1964. The two primary points of concern at the meeting were: (1) the possibility of power development plans subordinating the interests of irrigation; and (2) lagging appropriations for irrigation developments.

PRESIDENT URGES STEPPED-UP RECLAMATION PROGRAM

HUGH A. SHAMBERGER, President of NRA, called upon the association to continue and step-up its fight for more authorizations and appropriations
for water supply projects. "These projects are needed not only locally
to supply needed water supply, but are needed by the entire country in
order to maintain a booming national economy," Shamberger said. His
address outlined significant problems that confront the entire West:

Right now the West is like a man who, after long effort, has
made his way to the threshold of an outstandingly successful career
only to find that a chronic illness which has handicapped him for
years is now becoming acute. Unless this illness can be successful­
ly treated, his long struggle will be in vain, and his glowing fu­
ture will be lost just when it seemed within his grasp.

All things except one seem to promise the brightest of futures
for the West. Its population, its industry and enterprise, its
prestige and influence in national affairs, are growing at an ac­
celerating rate that could soon make it an important, if not the
dominant, region of the Nation. But it has always suffered from
the chronic handicap of insufficient water; and the Reclamation pro­
gram which for more than 60 years has been its main reliance in over­
coming this handicap is in trouble. Unless Reclamation can be made
vigorous and healthy again, the West may lose the promise of its
future.

The 88th Congress authorized expenditures of only $148,000,000
for new starts. The challenge facing us is to raise this level at
least three-fold and do it during a period when demands for reduced
federal commitments and expenditures are coupled with needs for sup­
porting heavy defense and space appropriations and finding means
within the national economy to combat poverty and unemployment.

Therefore, I think that all of us -- not only those of us at
this convention, but all NRA members and all beneficiaries of the
Reclamation program -- should redouble our efforts to keep the West
aware of what Reclamation means to it. The Nation must be aware
that the West values Reclamation as its own program vital to its
welfare, and is alert and resolute to defend it.

In summary, then: While we look to the Congress and the
Administration in Washington to fulfill their responsibilities
toward the West and toward Reclamation, let us also be vigorous in
our own behalf. Let us insist that our fellow citizens and our
elected representatives recognize and act on the axiomatic fact
that an arid or semi-arid region needs irrigation in order to grow.
No desert, no waterless wasteland ever contributed anything to any­
body as long as it remained parched; but when provided with irriga­
tion, many such areas have sustained great and rich civilizations.
The American West must take its place among these latter.
CONGRESSMAN ASPINALL OUTLINES LEGISLATIVE RESPONSIBILITY

If we are, in fact, in a critical period with respect to the reclamation program it is not because this project or that project was not authorized this year, but it is because we have serious problems relating to the over-all water resources development task which must be resolved -- problems that involve all federal water programs and the relationship of the reclamation program to the other programs, problems that involve soundness and feasibility of projects, problems that must be resolved in the national interest if we are to successfully meet the water needs of the American people in the decades ahead.

This statement of legislative responsibility was made at the convention by Wayne N. Aspinall (D-Colo), Chairman of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee. Aspinall further clarified the position of Congress in the over-all problem of advancement of reclamation in the West:

There seems to be a prevailing view that Congress is expected to take, without question, the water projects sent up by the Executive, and give them routine approval. I'm afraid this view is due partly to the way some committees of the Congress have been operating. I assure you that the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs is going to attempt to meet its legislative responsibilities because I believe this is necessary in the national interest. I take the view that the reclamation program and resolution of the problems connected therewith is the responsibility of the Congress for, under the Constitution, Congress exercises the legislative powers of our Government. It is the Congress that has responsibility for establishing the policies and the guidelines for federal participation in water development throughout the Nation.

Our national effort to make maximum and best use of our limited resources can be successful only if Congress accepts this responsibility and we receive the full cooperation of the Executive, including all the agencies having responsibilities in the water field, and the full cooperation of the States and all others interested in water development.

Unless agency ambitions, competition, and conflicts are put aside, unless there is a willingness to adopt uniform policies and procedures, unless there is the fullest cooperation and coordination, unless there is also a willingness to cooperate and compromise in sectional disputes, unless partisan politics is removed from project consideration and projects are considered on the basis of merit and
feasibility and, most important, unless decisions are based upon one basic measure -- the public interest -- then surely we will not succeed. To the extent that our actions do not fully measure up to the standards, inefficiency and waste will result and the entire national economy will be the loser.

Having discussed some of the problems which we face in the years ahead and given you a few examples, I shall turn briefly to what we are attempting to do about them. First, we are trying to reverse this "every-agency-for-itself" trend and to make a start toward establishing general policies and procedures that will provide the cooperative and coordinated national effort in the water field which is essential to the economic well-being of the Nation in the decades ahead. Our objective is a national approach to water resources development. It is now clear that all the Nation's water resources must be developed to the fullest extent, whether the water is eventually to be used for agriculture, industry, or for our rapidly growing cities and towns. Planning, therefore, must be on a comprehensive and coordinated basis to provide multiple-benefits and Congress should establish the federal role and the roles of the various water development agencies.

While we can never be sure what the future holds, there are several major problems and projects that will require the attention of Congress during the next two or three Congresses. An equitable water program for the Pacific Southwest will be one of our most difficult tasks, and will require early consideration since this is the most critical water area of our Nation. In the Upper Colorado River Basin the authorization and construction of participating projects should continue on an orderly basis. Water planning activities are being stepped up in other areas of our Nation and I expect to see in the next few years the State of Texas come forward with a proposal for major development and use of its water resources.

EASTERN CONGRESSMAN CHALLENGES POWER POSITION

The reclamation program in the western states is in serious trouble; and, in part, it is of your own making. I realize this is fully recognized by your own organization because of expressions of concern received by me and other members of Congress in recent months.

This challenge was hurled to the convention by Congressman John P. Saylor of Pennsylvania. Saylor centered his challenge around the issue that irrigation needs are being subverted by using water projects to develop power:
It should not be necessary to tell you that reclamation has been and should continue to be a vital factor in the growth and prosperity of our Nation. However, there is now substantial opinion in both political parties, in the House of Representatives and the Senate that irrigation -- the basic justification of reclamation projects -- has been subordinated to other purposes in too many situations.

This is not the time for complacency or inactivity, this is the time for positive and constructive action if you have any hope of reclaiming the reclamation program from the forces which are striving mightily to subvert honest irrigation needs for their selfish goal of using water projects to develop federal electric power for power's sake.

The program really began going astray when the federal power advocates began selling the Congress and the irrigators a bill of goods claiming that power was really the "paying partner" or the cash register in the reclamation movement. Let's take just a moment to look more closely at this claim that hydroelectric power is a paying partner. There is strong evidence that in many instances power has become a burden on other project purposes, particularly irrigation.

You all know Bonneville Power Administration has been operating at a loss. Its annual operating deficit has been highly publicized. An audit by the Comptroller General showed that in six years through 1963 the total deficit from its power operations reached more than $50 million and it is expected to rise to nearly $60 million by 1965. Certainly power cannot be called a paying partner of irrigation in the Pacific Northwest so long as this situation continues. One of the reasons for the deficits of these basin developments is the construction of added units with higher power costs than the original development without a corresponding adjustment in power rates. Naturally this practice dilutes earnings and extends the payout schedule. How could it do otherwise? The inevitable result is a reduction in the ability of the power units in the project as a whole to repay irrigation costs.

Saylor named other power projects which he claimed as losers, such as the Missouri Basin Project and the proposed Burns Creek Project in Idaho; and he stated that it is highly doubtful if the Colorado-Big Thompson Project will ever become the paying partner of irrigation.
He summarized his views with recommendations for sweeping changes in organization and in repayment policies:

I think the repayment formula for federal water projects should be changed in such a way as to require that the irrigation allocation beyond the ability of water users to repay should be concurrently amortized with the power costs. This could be done by making incremental payments annually to the retirement of both elements of cost. Furthermore, there can be little justification in my mind for the continuation of the policy of charging no interest on the portion of the irrigation costs which is repaid from power revenues. I propose that the repayment formula be further changed to require an interest charge be placed on the amount of the irrigation cost allocation of any federal water project that must be repaid from power revenues. This interest charge should be identical with the rate of interest applied to the power portion of the project.

I am ready to accept the challenge of this problem by suggesting the extension of the reclamation type of activities to all 50 states in the Union. This new agency would have the exclusive jurisdiction over the planning and construction of hydroelectric developments and an entirely new body of law should be written to regulate its activities.

RECLAMATION COMMISSIONER DEFENDS POSITION

Floyd E. Dominy, Commissioner of Reclamation, called upon the delegation to understand the position of Congress and to unite for the development of an over-all water program. "I know that many of you were disappointed that specific projects in which you have a particular interest were not authorized by the last Congress. This, I believe, was not attributable to objections to individual projects. Rather, they were delayed by the manner in which the Congress was forced to occupy itself with the great pieces of landmark legislation which were enacted. Most of these actions have now been taken. I therefore believe that..."
the new Congress will be another landmark Congress for conservation, this time, in the number of project authorizations which it will consider and enact into law," Dominy said. He listed major steps that must be taken in order to realize the most out of the reclamation effort:

On the part of NRA, it must be a demonstration of solid united support; a demonstration of willing participation within the framework of long established principles of Reclamation law; a demonstration of faith in the future by undertaking the financial commitments which are a cornerstone of Reclamation's integrity. There is another major factor which must not be overlooked. As I have said many times before, we must be our brother's partner and keeper. Few projects can succeed in the Congress solely on the endorsement of the single local group immediately benefited. To the greatest degree possible, they must have the united support not only of the local area but of the state and of all the west.

Dominy defended the western reclamation program against challenges hurled by Congressman Saylor of Pennsylvania in his speech before the convention:

Representative John Saylor, the ranking minority member of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, has suggested that our name might be changed to Bureau of Federal Power. This suggestion and accusations that we have neglected irrigation and water development for power, have been made with regularity at these conventions for the last 25 years or so. For some reason, the National Reclamation Association appears to be a popular and receptive sounding board for such statements. I challenge those who would achieve these ends to seek ratification from our national policy makers, the Congress of the United States, instead of repeating the same tired shibboleths again and again before this association. I am confident the Congress will maintain the path of progress exemplified by the Colorado River Storage Project, the Central Valley Project, and Missouri River Basin Project, the Pacific Northwest-Southwest Intertie and, as Chairman Aspinall said yesterday, the objectives of a Pacific Southwest Water Plan.
THROUGH THE WATER METER

The Denver Water Board is considering a 15 to 20 percent increase in water rates, effective April 1, 1965. This consideration is based on a report by consulting engineers Black and Veatch of Kansas City. . . Five ditch companies in the Arkansas Valley will petition State Engineer Whitten to enter the water war raging in the valley. The petition demands that he protect surface water right owners against alleged illegal pumping of water from the river bed. Complainants -- Bessemer, Canyon City Irrigation, Amity Mutual, Colorado Fuel and Iron and Fort Lyon. Defendants -- Oxford and Highline . . . Frank E. Moss (D-Utah), Chairman of the Senate Reclamation Sub-committee, has announced that legislation to authorize the $102 million Animas-LaPlata and the $46 million Dolores Projects will be brought to a hearing in his sub-committee in the next Congress, these projects will be located in southwestern Colorado. . . Lower South Platte Conservancy District and the Colorado Cattleman's Association have joined the groups demanding action to control unregulated water well use. . . Action on the Purgatoire River Dam Project will be stymied until the Purgatoire River Water Users Conservancy District signs a repayment contract with the Bureau of Reclamation. . . The Colorado Groundwater Commission has deferred action on declaring a critical district in the San Luis Valley until further studies are made. John Cuykendall of Roggen, chairman of the Commission, said it is impossible to declare a critical district on only a portion of the underground aquifer. . . The Lower South Platte Conservancy District has proposed
the elimination of the Sterling Lift Unit from the Narrows Project. Reason: Sedgwick County residents fear that the unit will have a detrimental effect on the flow of the South Platte River below Sterling.

The City of Pueblo reported a drop in revenue from the sale of water amounting to $93,241 in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1964. Reason:

Most of the decline was due to switching from flat rate billing to meters.

The City of Montrose employed Richard Hall, currently manager of the southeast Englewood Water District, as Superintendent of the city water and sewer department. The Ute Water Conservancy District near Grand Junction has accepted the bid by the Housing and Home Finance Agency for $9,200,000 of the district's water bonds. HHFA set an interest ceiling of 3 and 3/4 percent.

The Bureau of Reclamation has called for invitations for bids for construction of the Silt Pump Canal of the Silt Project near Rifle. Bid opening: 10 AM, Tuesday, January 19 at the Bureau office in Rifle.

Robert Jennings, project manager for the Bureau of Reclamation in Grand Junction, reports that water supply for the Colorado River Storage Project Units and Lake Mead continues to be critical. Jennings estimated that the water supply for the system during the next six months will exceed the requirements by only ½ million acre feet and that any significant reduction in supply or increase in demand could jeopardize the operation of Glen Canyon during the next six months.

It is rumored that the 1965 Colorado Legislature will be asked to initiate a constitutional referendum on water. The basis of the referendum will be to limit the use of water without waste and to give the legislature control over the use of water without waste.