REMARKS OF GILBERT G. STAMM
COMMISSIONER OF RECLAMATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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RECLAMATION'S FUTURE: 1974 AND BEYOND

I appreciate this opportunity to become better acquainted with you and to express some of my thoughts on the future of Reclamation.

It's been a couple of years since the last meeting of the construction engineers in Denver, and there have been many significant changes in the interim. If I had stood before you a year ago to talk about Reclamation's future, someone might have asked, "What future?" If no one had been bold enough to ask, I'm sure a lot of you would have been thinking it. I must confess that there were times when my optimism wavered, particularly in regard to our construction program.

A year ago, it seemed there were forces from all sides attempting to clobber the Bureau's program. The National Water Commission report led many people to think that irrigation was a dirty word. Among 232 numbered recommendations, it called for direct irrigation water users to pay full costs with interest, and further concluded there would be no need for
Federal water resource development for 30 years. Crop surpluses that had existed for many years were being used as an argument against further irrigation and against the need for water resource development. Nobody seemed to care that our hydroelectric plants were churning out billions of kilowatt hours of energy every year without consuming water nor polluting water or air. The environmentalists were attacking us in public meetings, in the press, and in the courts. We had problems and delays in the Department as well—new men had been appointed to decision making posts, most of them intelligent, dedicated, and personable, but lacking in experience and knowledge of the water resource development programs. In the light of all of those factors, it is easy to understand why a year ago money, programs, decisions, and morale were involved in frustrating impoundments, reviews, delays, and uncertainties.

As a result of one way or another of one or more of those factors, we found ourselves a year ago faced with a slowdown in construction on nearly all fronts, curtailment of personnel, and some reorganization. The third powerplant was far behind schedule; construction of Auburn Dam was stalled; the future of the Central Arizona Project was in doubt; Oahe, Bonneville, Garrison, and Palmetto Bend appeared to be in big trouble. Lyman Project construction was stopped. The list could be much longer.
But, a lot has happened during the past year. The food shortage last summer has virtually erased our stocks of surplus food. The courts have ruled rather consistently in favor of the Bureau of Reclamation and against those who have brought suit against us. Many Congressmen—leaders of both parties—have reaffirmed their belief in the value of the Reclamation program. The men we work with in the Department have become better aware of the water program, its accomplishments and its merits. The sale of food abroad is beginning to be recognized as an excellent way to swing the balance of trade more favorably toward the United States.

And perhaps even more important the energy crisis has focused new attention on the multiple benefits derived and to be derived from water projects. The fact that the Bureau’s 50 hydroplants produced 38 billion kilowatt hours of energy last year—an amount equivalent to the energy that could be produced by burning 75 million barrels of oil or 18 million tons of coal—is significant in itself. But the Bureau takes on an added importance at this critical time when you consider that nearly all of the proposed solutions to the energy crisis require water as an essential element. Whether we are talking of coal-fired steam plants, gassification of coal, development of oil shale, acceleration of nuclear power production, or additional hydro installations, water is a key element, and water is our business.
THIS IS IN ADDITION TO THE UNDISPUTED FACT THAT WATER IS ESSENTIAL TO ALL LIFE AND THAT REGULATION OF ERRATIC FLOWS OF CERTAIN STREAMS BECOMES MORE ESSENTIAL AS POPULATION AND OTHER DEMANDS INCREASE.

EVEN SUCH ONCE SINGLE-MINDED ORGANIZATIONS AS THE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH HAVE BEGUN TO RECOGNIZE THE WISDOM OF MAKING MORE EFFICIENT USE OF OUR FACILITIES BY SUGGESTING THAT WE ADD POWERPLANTS AT EXISTING DAMS.

IN VIEW OF ALL OF THESE FACTORS IT IS EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE ADMINISTRATION HAS EASED ITS POSITION ON CONSTRUCTION FUNDING, AND GIVEN US THE GO-AHEAD ON SEVERAL CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS WHICH COULD HAVE BECOME HOPELESSLY STALLED UNDER CONDITIONS OF ONLY A YEAR AGO.

THIS YEAR'S REQUEST FOR CONSTRUCTION FUNDS IS THE SECOND LARGEST IN THE HISTORY OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION. THE 1974 APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE BUREAU TOTAL $424.8 MILLION, OF WHICH $303.6 MILLION IS FOR CONSTRUCTION. THE 1975 BUDGET REQUEST TOTALS $460.7 MILLION WITH $324.8 MILLION FOR CONSTRUCTION, INCLUDING THE NAVAJO COAL-FIRED POWERPLANT BUT EXCLUSIVE OF THE NAVAJO INDIAN IRRIGATION PROJECT.

TO BE FULLY HONEST, HOWEVER, IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT THIS IS AN ELECTION YEAR WHICH UNDOUBTEDLY HAS HAD SOME EFFECT. CONSEQUENTLY WE FIND OURSELVES TODAY IN A MORE FAVORABLE POSITION THAN WE WERE A YEAR AGO. WE HAVE INITIATED WORK ON THE CENTRAL ARIZONA PROJECT WITH THE EXCAVATION OF THE SITE OF THE HAVASU PUMPING PLANT AND CONSTRUCTION OF A PROTECTIVE DIKE IN LAKE HAVASU AND WILL SOON AWARD A CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION
OF REACH No. 11 of the Granite Reef Aqueduct and Detention Diike. We are processing an amendment to the 1975 budget which would permit start of the Buckskin Mountains tunnel and a couple of major siphons.

We have accelerated construction of the Third Powerplant at Grand Coulee and are meeting our revised construction schedules to allow initial generation from the first of the three 600 megawatt units in August of 1975, with additional units on the line at six-months intervals. A $57.8 million contract has been awarded to Canadian GE and Allis Chalmers for the second three units, rated at 700 megawatts each. This followed rather tense state-of-the-art sessions with GAO in regard to a protest by the Westinghouse-Soviet Union combine which bid on units with a slower RPM.

Construction of the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project has been moving well this past year with the completion of Nast Tunnel and a contract award for Cunningham Tunnel, both in December 1973. We're now building aboveground at Mt. Elbert Pump-Generating Plant and have started initial storage at Pueblo Dam and Reservoir.

We recently scheduled the bid-opening for the Oahe Pumping Plant. The award of that contract will initiate construction on the Oahe Unit in South Dakota.

Construction continues on the Lower Teton Division which, as you know, was proceeding under the cloud of an environmental suit seeking an injunction to stop construction. The finding by U.S. District Judge Taylor on January 24, 1974, in favor of the defendants (that's us) removed the cloud, temporarily; however,
the Judge has been given notice that an appeal will be filed. We are optimistic over the final outcome because we believe that the environmental protection measures employed throughout the planning, design, and construction at Teton have been sound and that we are in full compliance with the law.

The Secretary has given clearance to proceed on portions of the Bonneville Unit, Central Utah Project. Currant Creek Dam bid opening is scheduled for March 6, 1974, and we expect that Vault Tunnel and other segments will get under way in FY 1975.

Agreement has been reached in the Department regarding the basis for proceeding with the Auburn-Folsom South Unit, CVP. We have taken steps to proceed with the construction of Auburn Dam through a limited excavation and foundation treatment contract. However, we are deferring construction on reaches 3, 4, and 5 of the Folsom South Canal until the issue of minimum flows in the lower American River is resolved.

While the tide seems to be turning in our favor in regard to the environmental lawsuits, they continue to impede the construction program in several cases. For the past several weeks a hearing on an environmental law suit concerning Auburn, initiated in December 1972, has been going on in Sacramento.

We have not yet been able to satisfy all of the environmental concerns at Bonneville, including the problem of providing more adequate flows for fish in the Uinta streams.
The award of new contracts on the Garrison Diversion Unit is currently at a standstill. The final environmental impact statement was filed January 10, 1974, and we are awaiting a departmental position to be based on the Program Decision Option Document (PDOD) which we have submitted. Again, an environmental suit challenges project development. In addition, Canada has registered a protest regarding project return flows that will degrade stream flow into Canada, particularly the Souris and Red Rivers.

We are also concerned about the environmental suit pending on the Palmetto Bend Project in Texas, but are continuing with major relocations of pipelines, highways, railroads, transmission lines, and other facilities. We hope to proceed with the Palmetto Dam contract this coming summer, as scheduled.

Obviously not all of our problems have been solved, but I personally am increasingly optimistic over the future of the water resource development program. I am convinced that water is not only essential to the solving of the energy crisis; it is also a vital key to the solving of many other world-wide problems.

Reclamation-supplied water will play an increasingly important role in the resolution of the world’s food crisis. In addition, throughout the West, where we operate, domestic and industrial water supplies must be augmented. It is certain that fast-growing municipalities in many areas of the West will look to Reclamation for more water.
EVEN WITH THE CHANGING ATTITUDE OF THE PUBLIC TOWARD A RE-RECOGNITION OF THE VALUES OF THE RECLAMATION PROGRAM, ACHIEVING OUR GOAL OF PROVIDING FOR THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE THROUGH WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IS NOT ALL CLEAR SAILING.

YOU HAVE SOME KNOTTY PROBLEMS FACING YOU DURING THIS CONFERENCE: THE SHORTAGE OF FUELS, THE AVAILABILITY OF MATERIALS, INFLATION, LABOR ISSUES, CHANGES IN PERSONNEL AND POLICIES, TO NAME A FEW. THESE PROBLEMS PRESENT FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES. I HAVE CONFIDENCE, HOWEVER, THAT THE EXPERTISE, INGENUITY, AND COMPETENCE OF OUR STAFF WILL AGAIN POINT OUT THE WAY TO ACCOMPLISH PROGRAM GOALS TO BENEFIT OUR DIVERSE HETEROGENEOUS SOCIETY.

IN SUMMARY, FOR THESE AND OTHER REASONS, I AM CONFIDENT IN THE FUTURE OF THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION BECAUSE IT IS UNIQUELY SUITED TO PERFORM IN A KEY ROLE TO MEET THE NATION'S NEEDS.

NOW I'D LIKE TO SAY A FEW WORDS ABOUT TWO SUBJECTS WHICH I CONSIDER IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO DISCUSS SEPARATELY. THE FIRST IS OUR SAFETY PROGRAM. I AM AWARE THAT OUR SAFETY RECORD HAS SHOWN A MARKED IMPROVEMENT DURING THE PAST YEAR AS COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR. BUT I BELIEVE YOU WILL AGREE THAT OUR RECORD COULD BE EVEN BETTER...AND SHOULD BE. AS CONSTRUCTION ENGINEERS, YOU HAVE THE AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY TO ESTABLISH CONTROLS OVER THE WORK PATTERNS AND WORKING CONDITIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO EITHER CAUSING OR PREVENTING ACCIDENTS. MAINTAINING THE SAFETY OF BUREAU EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTOR EMPLOYEES IS ONE OF OUR PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITIES, AND IT IS DELEGATED TO YOU. IT IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR JOB. OUR SAFETY RECORD DEPENDS UPON ALL OF US BECOMING PERSONALLY INVOLVED IN AND COMMITTED TO ITS SUCCESS. LET'S TAKE IT SERIOUSLY.
Now for a few words on another matter of involvement—that is with the public. All of you have highly important and highly visible jobs which bring you into direct contact with the public. The way you handle those contacts is becoming increasingly important to the future of the Bureau of Reclamation. Actions which do not conform with public needs and desires, can cause us big trouble. In the past we probably too often have guessed at what the public wanted or decided ourselves what was best for the public, or even in extreme cases may have attempted to impose our position on others. Those approaches have never been acceptable and particularly are they not to be condoned today.

The public or the numerous publics with whom we deal or who are affected by our activities, programs, and projects are very diverse and wide-spread. There is no way the diverse attitudes can be assessed, nor the diverse publics be informed, nor multiple function projects be formulated, constructed, and operated without full, open, objective communication with and among the publics affected. I could cite cases where communication has produced outstanding success, and conversely, where lack of it has been or could have been disastrous.

We are currently considering methods to improve our relations with the public through training programs which will better prepare us to communicate with the public in areas of planning, construction, operation and maintenance. I am convinced that in all of these areas we must begin our involvement with the public as early as possible. We must seek the public's views before we are committed to a course of action, and must continue to let the public know
WHAT WE ARE DOING AND WHY. Such an approach is extremely important to you who are on the firing line. Right now you are bearing the brunt of our failure to communicate adequately earlier in the total process. If the public involvement program is carried out adequately in the future, many of the problems you now face in construction would be avoided. The importance of appropriate communication during construction would, nevertheless, continue to be significant.

Working with the public requires a great deal of patience, objectivity, and understanding. We want the entire staff at all levels and locations to become aware of this and be prepared to do their share in reaching our goals.

Whatever else we do here at this workshop, let's remind ourselves that we do more than build with concrete and steel. Reclamation structures are but the means to an end...the end is to meet the daily needs of real people. How well we design and construct tunnels, dams, canals, and powerplants determines how quickly and how well people will be housed, find jobs, grow and distribute food, and have light and power in our towns and cities, and enjoy not only the economic but the indirect sociological and cultural benefits of the works constructed.

Remember our efforts are to benefit mankind. Otherwise we have no justification for existence.