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A FEW WORDS ABOUT WATER

WATER

-Sam Haslem-
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The political campaigns are over and the major political arguments concerning water are through, so I thought I would compose an article about the San Miguel Project -what is being done about it, for it, and a few words about water development in Colorado.

As we all know, most farmers in Colorado and nearly all farmers on the Western Slope live on irrigated land, land that needs supplemental water over and above rainfall, in order to raise crops. We here in the San Miguel Basin rely on irrigation water for nearly all of our crops, with only a ^{very} small portion being devoted to dry land farming.

To raise crops we need irrigation water. This water can come from three sources: normal stream flow, wells, or water stored in reservoirs from the early spring run-off. In all of Colorado the normal stream flow is used up. Here in the San Miguel Basin there is very little potential for well irrigation, so the only potential is for storage of spring run-off water which comes from melting snows.

The proposed San Miguel Project will store a great deal of run-off water. This, then makes the water available for irrigation and recreation.

There are those in our midst who ask, "Why should we develop more irrigated land when we have an agricultural surplus in the land?" The agricultural surplus comes from non-irrigated dry land crops such as wheat and milo. The crops that would be raised on land irrigated by the San Miguel Project would not add to the nation's surplus. These crops would be livestock feed crops and pasture.

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Nearly everyone recognizes the value of an irrigation project and especially in our area, the San Miguel Project. However, many people are not aware of the work that is being done to help ultimately secure this irrigation project for this area.

The latest cost figures that we have, show this to be a \$66,000,000 project and yet this project will have to be self-liquidating to be feasible. This means that this will be a venture that will ^{pay} ~~pay~~ for ~~and~~ itself over a long period of time but will require a very large cash outlay initially by the American taxpayers. Even though we know the project is an excellent project, we have to sell many people on the idea of the value of this project.

These people include our Congressmen and our Senators, the Congressmen and Senators from other states, and all people who are in an advisory and administrative capacity in reclamation. These include water users in other states, especially states that are our neighbors, and we definitely have to have the backing of many people in Colorado.

~~This~~ This work is not done overnight, and for these reasons five of the members of the San Miguel Water Conservancy District Board of Directors will be attending the National Reclamations Association Convention in Palm Springs the week of Nov. 9-13.

These five men will be meeting with people interested in ^{reclamation} ~~reclamation~~ from all over the nation. They will be discussing the San Miguel Project with the U.S. Commissioner of Reclamation, Floyd Daminy. Various Congressmen who will be at the convention, water people from other states, and with many other Colorado people interested in water development.

This is just one of the many steps that will be taken prior to the authorization legislation for the San Miguel Project, which is to be introduced into Congress in 1966 according to present schedules. The directors attending the N.R.A. convention are Mike Young, president; Sam Haslem, secretary; Dan Noble, treasurer, William E. Bray, and ^{Carlos} ~~Carlos~~ Cornforth.