ARMSTRONG NONCOMMITTAL ON ALLOTT QUERY TO MOVE COLORADO PROJECTS WITH CAP

From the Daily Sentinel Washington Bureau

Washington—Reclamation Commissioner Ellis L. Armstrong was noncommittal when Sen. Gordon Allott, R-Colo., reminded him recently that water projects authorized in Colorado in 1968 are to be constructed at the same time as the Central Arizona Project.

Coloradoans and other Upper Basin states are concerned if CAP is finished ahead of the Colorado Projects—all in the Upper Colorado River Basin—there may not be enough water for both CAP and the Upper Basin projects. The Upper Basin projects authorized in 1968 were the Animas-LaPlata (also partially in New Mexico), Dolores, San Miguel, West Divide and Dallas Creek.

In the Senate Public Works Appropriations Subcommittee hearings Allott asked Armstrong, "How does it come about that the Palmetto Bend project (in Texas) is already ready for construction and projects in Colorado which predated it in authorization by a month are only ready for advanced planning money?"

Armstrong said Palmetto Bend had been pushed ahead because "there is a critical need for municipal water" in its service area and "where they have salt intrusion in their wells."

Allott continued, "Then I ask you this question: there is no question in your mind about the legislative record and the intent that the Colorado projects (authorized in 1968) shall be developed contemporaneously with the Central Arizona Project."
2 - Colorado water projects washn x x x Project

Armstrong replied, "Yes, We are well aware of that provision."
He made no promises to try to keep the Colorado projects construction schedule moving along with that of CAP. CAP is ready to fly as soon as the new CAP water district and the Interior Department work out a water repayment contract. No one here doubts CAP will soon outdistance the Colorado projects in its construction schedule just as the San Juan-Chama project for Albuquerque outdistanced the Navajo Indian project's construction schedule in New Mexico for the past decade.

On specific projects, this is their status, according to Armstrong appropriations testimony before the Senate and House Public Works Subcommittees.

Animas-LaPlata: "It is now anticipated" that $225,000 currently in budgetary reserve for this project will be released for us in fiscal 1972," Armstrong told Allott, on inquiry. "We additional funds could be effectively utilized in fiscal year 1972," Armstrong said. He noted that local interests had advanced $24,500 to get Animas-LaPlata moving. Asked to detail the purpose of the $114 million Colorado-New Mexico Upper Basin project, Armstrong said it would provide water for irrigation, water supply for municipal and industrial needs and for fish, wildlife and recreation benefits in Montezuma and LaPlata Counties, Colo., and San Juan County, N.M. "Production of vegetable, fruit and dairy products" and more intensive farming expected in the area when the Animas-LaPlata is built; it now grows alfalfa, clover, pasture and small grains, Armstrong stated. Repayment will be by water users and through the Upper Colorado River Basin fund, he said. (more-hcm)
Doloros: Congress has provided $160,000 for this project in fiscal 1972, of which $90,000 was in budgetary reserve in 1971. Most of the money will be used to Colorado State University conduct irrigation studies on Southwestern Colorado soils in the coming year, Armstrong told the House Committee. Armstrong told Allott in the Senate Committee the Doloros Project, which will affect principally Colorado/Montezuma Counties, would use $250,000 in 1972 fiscal year, if it were available. "It would enable us to advance the planned report by about nine months," Armstrong told Allott. The lesser sum was provided by Congress for fiscal 1972, however.

Dallas Creek: Congress has provided $150,000 for this project for fiscal 1972. This project affects principally Montrose, Delta and Ouray Counties. There was $100,000 in 1971 budget reserve for Dallas Creek, and it could have used $250,000 in fiscal 1972, according to Armstrong. With the $150,000 available, he said it would be used to "continue and expand the definite plan report studies. This would allow the completed evaluation of foundation conditions of the Ridgeway Dam site and permit obtaining detailed topography of the dam and reservoir areas which would be used in future design data for specifications," Armstrong told Allott.

San Miguel project: Congress allowed $100,000 for this project, of which the state of Colorado has said it would contribute $30,000 for advance planning in fiscal year 1972. This project would affect San Miguel County in Western Colorado; it contains water development for
4—Colorado water projects for
both irrigation and water supply for industrial and municipal use. If
$160,000—the project's capability for fiscal 1972—were allowed, Arm­
strong said the Bureau would complete advance planning on it six months
early, "by the end of calendar year 1975." Of course, it did not get
that amount, but it will use the $100,000 provided for the same purpose.
This project has an unfavorable benefit-cost ratio, and Rep. Joe L. Evins, D-Tenn., asked about irrigators repaying "less than 10 per cent
of the cost." Armstrong said the rest of the repayment would be by pow­
er users and users of municipal and industrial water supply. "A broad
segment of the regional population benefits from the project," Armstrong
told Evins. Also he noted that while every other item has es­
calated in costs, "net income to farmers has not... the farmer's ability
to pay has remained relatively constant or has decreased while project
costs are continually rising," Armstrong said. The San Miguel project
is now estimated to cost about $74 million.

West Divide Project: This project in west central Colorado
the mainstem of the Colorado River may never be built, according to some
thinking here. There is no funding for it, but advance planning money
will be requested in 1973 fiscal year, according to the Bureau's sched­
ule, Armstrong told Allott. "It is a $100 million job" which would
take about eight years to build, Armstrong said.