Your letter of July 26 is one that I find rather difficult to answer because the solution to resource problems are not simple nor are they easily resolved. There are no panaceas for our troubles even though we may ardently wish that there were and so I am afraid what I may write may turn out to be neither pleasant nor satisfying—After all we have just seen the ending? or, I might say, the first round of one debate which was a much more simple problem than that of the Upper Colorado Project. Yet, after a year of battling by the experts the problem of Hell’s Canyon still remains just where it started. Now you ask me to tackle a much more complex problem in the short space of a letter I should be flattered.

You have expressed the desire to gain an understanding of a complex water problem—congratulations—and may I be in the front rank to welcome you to the legion of the confused. The basic principles of what is right is clear but will we be able to see them clearly through the bitter smoke of human conflict? No— that isn’t right because the question is not "if anyone will" but the question is "will anyone want?"

From your letter I do gain the impression you are confused and have arrived at some sort of conclusion that we starry-eyed lovers of the outdoors have something to do with that confusion and have placed some sort of stranglehold upon the Bureau of Reclamation’s dream of spending a few paltry dollars of the public’s funds upon a grand and lavish program in the Upper Colorado Basin. If this is true, then you give us much more credit than do either the Army Engineers or the Bureau of Reclamation.

Since you appear to desire to use Dinosaur as an example, I’ll try to follow along but we must keep in mind that this single question is not the key to the Colorado Project but a minor issue that has been blown up as a major problem. Of course it is presumptuous for one who is so far removed from the Colorado area to be critical and I am willing to admit I have not given the problem the time it deserves because I have similar troubles at home. Nevertheless, the problems of the Colorado and the problems of the Klamath are very closely allied even though these rivers are hundreds of miles
from each other, their basic problem is tied to the same fundamental source. But to get back to the problem that is but one of fourteen. Had the Bureau of Reclamation considered that the protest from the defenders of the National Park System was any real threat to the Colorado Basin Project— I can assure you the problem of Dinosaur Monument would have been handled in much a different fashion. Consequently I must admit a considerable degree of confusion now that we are being accused of blocking the course of their triumphantal conquest of nature.

To be frank, if you actually believe that the Echo Park argument "To build or not to Build" as raised by the defenders of the Monument the one and only stumbling block in the program then may I suggest that you should sit down and do some serious thinking upon your own part and take with several grains of salt a lot of the hokum that fills the air.

Since you use the word "conservationist" as an entity I gain the impression that you classify them in your thinking as some sort of a distinct group of the species since you write that they appear to have "great power". If you approach the problem in this frame of mind I am afraid that you will not make much progress for in the haze of the "I and Thou" frame of mind you are very apt to miss some of the essential points of the whole subject. When we consider the broad movement that is sweeping the country for the wise use of natural resources the word "conservation" possesses a very definite meaning— it is the opposite of "exploitation." The movement admits no half-way measures for one cannot be a half a conservationist and a half an exploiter, you either are or aren't— confused?

Now see where your question, "What do the conservationists propose?" places me— "propose?" Where? In the case of Dinosaur? Or, in the case of the Colorado Project? I make the point because there is a whale of a difference in the answer. Let's take the Project as a whole— What does conservation propose? Those who have struggled with the conservation movement have defined roughly a group of basic principles to be considered in any frank, sensible development. The choice of words used in the attempt to make the principles clear may be subject to some degree of flux but a very definite framework of conservation thought exists. It would be an exceptional lengthy thing to attempt to write it here, but the statement, I believe presented, to the new Hoover commission task force on public works by the Outdoor Writers Association at the Denver hearing would contain the answer to your question.

It is not up to the "conservationists" as you call them to draw a blue print of physical action, they can only lay down basic principles by which the appropriateness of a project can be measured.
To apply your question to Dinosaur Monument, I think that the question there has been thoroughly answered by General Grant in his evaluation. There is not the slightest doubt of what the defenders of the Monument proposed as it has been thoroughly made a matter of record.

The confusing factor about any controversy over the use of a natural resource is created by the political equation which complicate even the most simple of decisions. Far too often, political considerations rank higher than proposals that make economic sense and issues are so clouded by acrimonious charges and counter-charges that eventually the truth is so far forgotten that one wonders if it ever existed at all. Half truths are used with full fledged meaning and all the other tricks that fill the political bag are pulled out in the attempt to beat down the opposition.

Let's see how the system works— for some reason you felt inclined to insert "I suppose you are aware of the fact that the people of the immediate vicinity of Dinosaur National Monument were promised that the creation of the monument would not interfere with later water development." A correct simple and factual statement, but why stop at that point, and say, not only promised but that even further protection was given by a reclamation withdrawal made under the act of October 17 1904, The establishment of the Monument was with the knowledge of this existing prior right which would not be interfered with? As far as I have read of the controversy the defenders of the Monument did not contest this withdrawal which was made to protect the rights of the people of the immediate vicinity! Perhaps it is best this be forgotten since the withdrawal action did not cover Echo Park?

Now let us take this word you use so freely— the word "development" here again is a two edged word for one might ask—"what do you mean by development?" Basically development implies placing a resource into human service— right? Now there is a subject you might sit down and wrestle with for a while, I think you might discover it has two sides.

So much for a controversy that has been given "the works" by far more competent people than I and after all you are wondering how I would look at the problem if I was faced with it. At the very outset I must admit being at a disadvantage because I have never visited your country nor do I know your people, and to know the people is one of the most important parts of the problem for it is people who make problems as well as solve them.

For some unknown and unaccountable reason we all appear to suffer the same form of
popular delusion and that is if we get the country settled up (developed) we will have more prosperity. We are much like the old hound who chases his tail for we never seem to make ends meet. Of course there are a few, who by rare good luck or just plain have a nose for business, find themselves with a pot of gold in their laps and cash in on any new advance in the economy of an area.

In all my life which bridges back to the days when the horseless carriage was a luxury I can remember the same plaintive theme, if we had a packing house, a cannery, a what-not, or if we get that next forty under irrigation we will be able to bridge the gap and the struggle of existance will be tempered. Well here we are in 1954, as far as I can see the same old story is just as good to day as I suspect it was even back in the days of Rome.

Has the good old eternal "rat race" given us so much advancement? This is a question I have often pondered, we cannot turn back the clock, we cannot truthfully examine human emotions of past days with the knowledge we possess today neither can we predict the human feeling of days in the future. Surely we have more luxuries and gimmicks of a material nature, these are the things we can concede, but what about happiness and contentment of the human soul? Does it progress or retrogress? Or, does it remain static? If I only knew the answer then I would be able to view the "rat race" with some intelligence but as it stands I cannot become excited over so called prospects of "development" in the sense you write. We've got it here the same as you, the Bureau proposes $100,000,000 "development" of our basin, no doubt there will be plenty who will want to beat the big drum, I'll be among the missing---- perhaps I'm just getting old and feeble?

Nevertheless we must keep alive to the fact that the world is growing up around us as well as in other parts of the land. So perhaps we better forget the dreams and get down to practical realities and examine some of our basic problems. To speak of Colorado I am at a disadvantage because I do not know the facts regarding your local population pressures----- Does this take precedence above or below the overwhelming problem of the growing population of California?

Now you who live in the Colorado Basin cannot escape this problem any more than those of us who live in the Klamath River Basin. The only difference between us is that we live a little closer to the problem. Yet in spite of this fact the pressure is upon the Coloradp as it is already supplying the demands of people living in the South Land.
Population is like a blotter it soaks up tremendous quantities of moisture; even a small population can become a very thirsty element that knows no bounds. I am quite sure that you who live in the Upper Basin must be aware of this basic fact since it definitely poses a threat to your future economy—just as it does to ours. I have listened to wails from your area to the fact that "California is wasting water," especially so after purveyors of bureaucratic propaganda artfully planted the story in your area. We likewise make quips about the "swimming pools of Hollywood." It is all just so much smoke screen to cover up our fear and reluctance to face basic facts that we cannot ignore.

Water which is the easiest to get at, naturally becomes the first to feel the demands of population pressure. It is true that California that does not reach the insatiable demands of cotton growers. That water which you in Colorado have wailed about is our water and we are justly thankful that yours is much easier to get. When it comes to a decision between the Colorado and the Klamath—I need not give you three guesses as to where we people of the Klamath stand. This, however, is not frankly facing a problem; it is the artful dodge of the politician.

This fact is clear, to get at our water will be a task that will require billions and in that we don't have to take our hat off to the grand dream unveiled for the Upper Colorado. You have your Dinosaur we have our Trinity both have been controversial, the difference being— with Dinosaur you don't lose the water in the Trinity—we do. It will cost the American public at least a half a billion dollars to get a million acre feet of our water for the thirsty cotton farmers and land boomers of the Central Valley. Well we have some 14 other million acre feet upon which the heavy hand of population will eventually get it's hand, but that will be a long way in the future for a minor matter of dollars stand in the path. The Bureau—in its usual modest fashion starts the story at three billion—who will pay the bill?

California?—Don't be silly, if the time should come in our day, you and I along with a few others will be footing the bill, but the question is will the others be willing? As things are now progressing my guess will be that the others will not be enthusiastic of footing the bill—so where does that leave you? I think just where I came in. Perhaps I had better make another start.

From a practical point of view, little headway will be made by charging California with wasting water—give the State some credit for intelligence and believe me the outfit is in a mell-of-ahess and they know it. No little part of the problem is to be charged directly to the Bureau of Reclamation, not that the Bureau has not lacked the desire to lend a helping hand but due to the fact that the Bureau took over and wanted to be the stud duck in the puddle.
If I were a Coloradan I would give considerable thought to this problem of being the "stud duck" in the puddle and I would give careful heed to the example that is being presented in California and the reaction of Californians to the helping hand of the federal government. You state "we in the Colorado River basin have to depend upon the bureau to a great extent for future development." Let us assume that this is so thought to be perfectly frank, I wonder if "we in Colorado" are really taking the simple way out being attracted to the flame of promised prosperity at the hands of bureaucracy as a moth is to a candle.

Let us look at the California picture--- The people of the State blissfully put trust in the hands of the agents of the old gent with the chin whiskers, just as "we in Colorado." This California story started back in the days of the depression years of the 30's. times were tough, a helluva lot more than you boys are experiencing today, so the smart political-wise bureaucrats moved into the Golden State with their carpet-bags (oops' pardon, just a bit mixed on my civil wars). Well anyway, they moved in with their nice shiny brief cases and took over the Central Valley Project which had been the dream of the engineers of the California State Water Board---- You know how it is the State was broke and here were the "men of the hour!"

Everything was nice and rosy, Uncle footed the bills, wrote the tally on the cuff, and if you fell behind in paying the installments that was all right for Uncle was most happy to extend the time---- as well as his sphere of influence. Little by little the debt mounted and with the mounting debt the representatives of the Old Gent began to assume the possessive attitude of a different type of Uncle which began to reach out into a great many more phases of the life of the people that they first contemplated when they welcomed the "fair-haired boy on the white horse" so many years ago.

The State of California eventually became alarmed--- (the apologists and boosters for greater glory and the abundant life say the people were "needlessly concerned" and mumble words about politics)--- and eventually the people could stand just so much which resulted in out-spoken civil strife (I've listened to it) in public---- not off the record. I've heard State officials speak right out and say "We want the bureau..."
to get the Hell out of here and stop attempting to interfere with our State government."

I’ve listened to State officials address some potent remarks directly to bureau officials and there was little doubt as to the meaning, or the feeling with which they expressed themselves. Of course Uncle reminds the Californians that there is a slight matter---of---uh!—oh some $600,000,000, the kind old fellow spent upon the ungrateful souls of Californians.

We in Oregon have ring-side seats in this “battle of the Century”, in fact, we have it practically in our lap, for we likewise have had long experience with the helping hand of the government that dates back to the turn of the century. Reading back in history I have been impressed that the statements of the farmers who were benefited back at the turn of the century, essentially no different to the statements I listen to being made by present day individuals who are paying the cost of being benefited.

Well back to California—- and what do you think?—- The Dam Fool Californians went to work to find ways and means to pay the bill!

Oh Yes! There is much to this story that any outsider can sit down and ponder for apparently the Bureau added nothing but confusion and debt. The planning, engineering design, basic engineering studies and everything else had been the work of the people of the State while the bureau played the part of Little Jack Horner.

You ask me what the people of the Colorado Basin should do?—-I think that I can say without contradiction that the people of Colorado could do well to study the plight of California before you cheerfully sign on the dotted line—- It’s good advice and for free—- so I know it will not be taken because the lure of the pork-barrel is irresistible. Not that some of your projects are of that nature as Glenn Canyon, at least, can stand on it’s feet in the face of most criticism, appears to be the opinion of many competent observers.

Perhaps the people of the Colorado Basin may think the easy way out is to have Uncle do everything, it is up to them to weigh the cost against the benefits—- it’s not all peaches and cream. To one who is far away, however, the question that comest to mind
is "What has the people done for themselves to shape their own course of future?"

Perhaps you have done a lot— I wouldn't know— for if you have it's been kept a pretty close secret from the outside world— After all, you should remember that we do not read your local publications we formulate our opinions from what we read in publications of wider circulation—- New if I was a Coloradan and I had something to show the people of the United States that I was doing personally, at the level of the grass-roots—-at my own expense—- to think for myself, to shape the course of my own destiny with my own hand—- Well I'd do a lot of deep thinking how I could get my story to the nation.

If you depend upon the federal government to shape the course of your future, then be prepared for getting little sympathy— this appears to be the trend of public opinion everywhere that I have come in contact with it.

Now let us see one outside observation upon some of the publicity that has come from your area—- I seem to remember something about a Colorado River Commission that is representing your basin got itself some publicity when some members wanted the Upper Basin States to join hands and boost the Arizona Project. The impression gained was that political power in Washington was being sought in an attempt to boost the stock of federal development of the Colorado. Perhaps there were well meant fears of California involved—- or perhaps it merely screened action designed to build political power.

Whatever the basic reasoning— the result from here appeared bad publicity and I think carried more harm than good. At the time, if I recall correctly the rest of the states did not go for the proposal, however, It was the first action that got the publicity rang the bell in the headlines, being in the newspaper world you know how deeply the majority of people fellow such a problem— first impressions are the most powerful.

To gain political allies might be smart in the halls of Congress, but is it best for Colorado to develop two competing blotters of large capacity for waters of the Colorado? That is a question only the people of the Colorado can answer for themselves— personally it would seem to me that the problem is to keep the customers in as small a number as possible is Colorado's best protection.
Let us examine at least one straw-in-the-wind to come from the recent controversies between the people and the federal planners--- between "conservationists" (as you call them) and bureaucratic ambitions. Both types of controversy have been going on and out of the conflicts there is emerging one very definite factor because people do not like iron-clad controls, the factor is the gradual emergence of a critical examination of all the optimistic statements of bureaucracy and this is especially true of costs.

The American public is being educated in matters of such nature by several forces, the "conservationists" have done much in this field of public education. The end result developed from this education is that money out of the federal purse will become increasingly difficult for grandelouent programs.

Even small programs are beginning to find the going rough and the easy federal money tough to get, even if the program can show definite ability to meet its obligations. An example:

Just over the hill to the west of us in the famous Rogue (Easy) Valley we have the Talent Irrigation District. This area definitely needed money to increase the size of its facilities to meet the growing needs of population pressures. The sum was small ($4,000,000) as I recall--- there were no conflicts--- the project financially sound. Congress, however, displayed little enthusiasm in making the appropriation which eventually was granted.

The Straw is beginning to show? The people in the East who have been so generous in the past are showing a tendency to count the pennies (and look to projects at home). I suspect the trend that has started will increase--- trends always do. Where does that let the Colorado stand? I would be inclined to think in not too envious a position-- I may be wrong--- and often am. An election may change the faces on Capitol Hill but it would not change the growing resentment of the American people at further increases in taxes. Projects from now on out will have to put up some mighty strong sales talks and their political boosters will have to work harder. It is just possible that Congressional leg rolling on mighty programs may find congressmen a trifle shy of legs.

The only basic protection people in the Upper Colorado Basin will have to protect their basic water rights is by beneficial use. We of the Klamath, well knew that is our
only protection and even at best that may not be sufficient in the coming struggle a couple or more decades in the future. Putting water upon the land holds the strongest appeal yet even this appeal has its limitations if subsidies must run into hundreds of dollars an acre. Putting water to work on the land, at a reasonable cost, can still win support of American people—unfortunately too much "hog-wash" has gone over the dam in regards to hydro-power (whether it is private or public makes no difference).

Far too frequently hydro-power has been the chief objective hiding under a thin veneer of agriculture. The American public is not so dumb that they cannot see through such subterfuge. Do not be fooled by public inactivity a few boosters might assume from the lack of public activity on this subject that their program holds public approval—however, I do not think that the collective mind of the public has as yet formulated any definite reaction to the many golden pronouncements involved in this power problem.

I think, however, that I am willing to make a guess at the direction the wind will blow—my basis is strictly upon the presumption that bureaucracy has over played its hand on hydro-power. The pendulum appears to have started back—does this mean the rise of private interests? I am not sure, there are a lot of readjustments in the picture on both sides of the ledger— the course will probably be between the excesses of private gain and the aggrandizement of bureaucracy— Let us hope so because as a democracy we cannot afford to let bureaucracy control the water faucet— if ever that condition should arrive then democracy is on its way down the drain.

You asked me a question about "conservationists" at the start of your letter, your thoughts were tied up in the Colorado problem. I will answer you this way— Colorado has a number of the best of the "conservationists" in the Nation, regardless of what boosters may have to say, these "conservationists" have the well being of Colorado as the first thing upon their mind. Forget the rest of us starry-eyed dreamers who are the furiners. To put it bluntly— it's a bet you can't beat us so I guess that old adage is pretty true in this case; "If you can't beat em! Join em!" and put them to work. Sure there will be conflicts but remember we are all in the same boat sailing into uncharted waters. Colorado can do no less than seek the advice of its own for only
through the "conservationists" of Colorado may you ever hope to come in contact with the "conservationists" of America—- if we seem to possess "great power" perhaps there must be a reason—- Work constructively — Think constructively — Stand on your own feet in charting the course of your future destiny—- and—- tell the world! That is the only advice this poor sagebrush columnist can offer.

So much for the lecture, Sincerely

[Signature]

Kenneth McLeod Jr

PS. Just remember Colorado has been there a long, long time and it will be there a long time after our civilization has passed into oblivion.

If this answers some of your questions do not ask as you wish.