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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

In the Matter of:

DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT
ECHO PARK AND SPLIT MOUNTAIN DAMS

Date: April 3, 1950

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P R O C E E D I N G S

before

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Hearing on
DINOSAUR NATIONAL MONUMENT
ECHO PARK AND SPLIT MOUNTAIN DAMS

Monday, April 3, 1950

The hearing convened at 10:00 o'clock a.m., in the Auditorium, Department of the Interior Building, Washington, D. C., The Honorable Oscar L. Chapman, Secretary of the Interior, presiding.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN: I want to say to you that I am very pleased to find the high interest and the degree of interest that is shown by the citizens of the country in this project.

I have received information some time ago that there has been some opposition to the building of the Echo Park Reservoir. I had received many letters at that time. I have received many more since in opposition to the development of Echo Park.

Let me state clearly what fundamental principle I would like to follow. I would like to have shown to me, who has to make the decision in this case, the greatest good for the greatest number of people to be served, whether that will be

by the development of the Echo Park Reservoir or whether that will be by preserving the Dinosaur National Monument. I want that clearly focused on the attention of this group as this proceeding continues. It is my purpose in holding these hearings to try to determine from you people which you think is the more important to the country, the largest number of people who can be served and the greatest good that can be served. That must be one of our fundamental objectives in this hearing.

This morning I would like to outline briefly for you the proceedings we had in mind. If they by any chance do not fit the convenience of some of the Senators and Congressmen who are here, I will be very glad to change the proceedings to meet their convenience.

I had planned that the proponents, should I say, or those who are advocating the development of the Echo Park Reservoir would give a ten-minute resume in order to focus the point at issue, and then Mr. Drury, Director of the National Park Service, would give another ten minutes to more clearly focus the point at issue in opposition to the development of the Echo Park Reservoir. That will take 20 minutes altogether. If you Senators and Congressmen can wait 20 minutes, we will have the issue fairly clearly focused in our minds as between these two parties and as between the two groups, one who feel that we should build a reservoir, and one who feel that we

should not.

I am sincerely and honestly trying to get a record that I intend to review carefully and personally myself. I want to make a decision in this case that will stand in the interest of the people when I have made it. I don't expect to make everybody happy when I make this decision. As a matter of fact, I didn't become Secretary of the Interior to enter into any popularity contest with anybody. I only hope that I am right when I make the decision, and I want to be right.

Is that procedure satisfactory to everyone? There are three Senators present, I happen to know. There may be more. Can you three Senators wait 20 minutes or would you prefer to make your statements at this time? In the absence of any objection to that, I am going to start at this time by asking Commissioner Straus to designate whom he wishes to speak for his Bureau in presenting the ten-minute resume of the issues involved. Mr. Straus.

MR. MICHAEL W. STRAUS (Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation): Mr. Bennett, Director of the Project Planning Division.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN: Will you come up here and take the platform where they can see and hear you better?

STATEMENT OF N. B. BENNETT, JR.,
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, BRANCH OF PROJECT
PLANNING, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

MR. BENNETT: Article III (a) of the Colorado River Compact of 1922 apportions water in the amount of 7,500,000 acre-feet annually to the Upper Basin and to the Lower Basin respectively. The Compact also requires that the States of the Upper Division not cause the flow of the river at Lee Ferry to be depleted below 75,000,000 acre-feet in any period of 10 consecutive years. In addition, the Compact provides that in the event any water is allocated by treaty between the United States and Mexico and such water cannot be furnished from surplus flows, half of the deficiency must be borne by the Upper Division States. The United States has entered into a treaty with Mexico which provides for the annual delivery of 1,500,000 acre-feet.

In order to determine how the water resources of the Basin could best be utilized, the Bureau of Reclamation sponsored the preparation of the Departmental report on the Colorado River, published July 1947 as House Document 419, 80th Congress. The reservoirs considered to have possibilities for holdover storage are shown on the drawing on the far side. That report showed that known potential project requirements exceed the available water supply by about 25%. Consequently, we suggested that the States themselves recommend for construction as the next stage of development a group of projects, the stream-flow

depletions of which would be within the ultimate allocations of Colorado River water which might be made to each of them and that they determine in some manner their respective rights, consistent with the Colorado River Compact, to deplete the flow of the Colorado River.

The 1947 report clearly brought out that the flow of the Colorado River is very erratic. Past annual flows at Lee Ferry, which is at the bottom of the map, have ranged from a minimum of 4,000,000 acre-feet to a maximum of 23,000,000 acre-feet. It is obvious that under the 1922 Compact the Lower Basin receives the bottom half or firmer flow of the river, while the Upper Basin, in putting to use its more erratic supply, will need to regulate the "peaks" and "valleys" in the river flow. It is obvious that considerable storage capacity is necessary to permit carrying water over from the wet years to the dry years, to deliver water at Lee Ferry under the obligation to the Lower Basin and the Republic of Mexico.

The States of the Upper Colorado Basin were successful in negotiating a compact to divide the waters of the Upper Basin. This Compact was completed in October 1948 and subsequently consented to by the Congress. Thus, at least a part of one of the recommendations of the 1947 report has been effectuated. Investigations in the Upper Basin were intensified in order that the States might have available, as soon as practicable, sufficient information for them to select

and recommend a list of projects for construction as the next stage of development. These investigations concentrated upon determination of the total amount of storage capacity required to permit the Upper Basin to fully utilize its apportionment of 7,500,000 acre-feet, while at the same time permitting it to fulfill its obligation at Lee Ferry. In making this determination it was, of course, recognized that there was opportunity for multiple-purpose developments at most, if not all, of the available sites. These investigations to date have shown that approximately 48,500,000 acre-feet of capacity will be required in the Upper Colorado River Basin to attain the use of 7,500,000 acre-feet annually, apportioned to the Upper Basin. Since the time that report was prepared, it has been found that it would be potentially possible to utilize a tremendous portion of water in the Upper Colorado River Basin for the development of synthetic fuel. So we are in essence faced with potential demands approximating perhaps twice the water apportionment. Every drop of water is significant. It behooves us to find that combination of reservoirs which has the minimum amount of evaporation loss. At the same time, that system must be adaptable for multiple-use purposes, and thereby produce the maximum amount of power. The power market is growing at an estimated rate of one-half billion kilowatt-hours per year. The market is not concentrated in any locality but is widespread throughout the Basin. To meet the power market

needs, it is essential that power plants be located strategically throughout the entire area. It is essential that a first group of reservoirs be constructed in the immediate future while water is available to fill them.

In February 1949, under the provisions of the 1944 Flood Control Act, all of the available facts and data were presented to the Colorado River Basin States Committee, with the request that that Committee representing the States of the Upper Basin select and recommend jointly those reservoirs which they believed should be included within the plan of development and those which should be in the initial stage. That Committee, together with the Upper Colorado River Commission, has recommended that, among other things, the Echo Park Reservoir and Power Plant construction be in the initial stage. It is, therefore, tentatively contemplated that the initial stage consist of: Flaming Gorge, Echo Park, Curecanti, Martinez, and Glen Canyon. There would then be constructed later: Gray Canyon, Bridgeport, Crystal, Split Mountain, and Cross Mountain. This group of 10 reservoirs and power plants, with an aggregate capacity of 48,555,000 acre-feet, and 1,755,000 k.w., form the team which would provide the needed regulation and power production, with the minimum loss from evaporation. They would permit complete utilization in the Upper Basin of the 7,500,000 acre-feet apportioned to them. They are economically justifiable, completely self-liquidating

at a power rate of only 5.5 mills at the load centers, can assist financially in the development of irrigation projects, and in addition, contribute funds to the Federal Treasury.

For present purposes, it is important to note that any group of reservoirs which does not include Echo Park and Split Mountain can meet the objectives heretofore outlined only at the cost of increased evaporation loss, less annual revenues, and higher unit power costs. The minimum increased loss of evaporation, if Echo Park and Split Mountain are omitted, and under an engineeringly feasible plan, will be approximately 350,000 acre-feet of water annually. This is enough to irrigate approximately 230,000 acres; it is enough to supply municipal water to a town of approximately 1,500,000 people; it is enough to develop a synthetic fuel plant from shale of approximately 1,200,000 barrels per day.

The Bureau of Reclamation has concluded that the group of reservoirs indicated constitute the most efficient means of attaining comprehensive resource development in the Upper Colorado River Basin.

I thank you.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN: I understand that this comprehensive report has been approved by the five Upper Basin States.

MR. BENNETT: I cannot say it has been approved by them. There is no report yet. All the data were submitted to them, and they recommended and concurred in this particular plan.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN: They have approved what you are presenting to the Secretary of the Interior.

MR. BENNETT: Correct.

SECRETARY CHAPMAN: There is one thing I want you to bear in mind. These maps are prepared by the Bureau of Reclamation and these over here by the Park Service (laughter), just so we get proper continuity of the thing.

I want it brought up clearly in this hearing how many acres are involved in Dinosaur National Monument, how many acres will be inundated, and what damage you think there will be to those acres that are inundated, as compared with the values that may accrue to the citizens otherwise if they are inundated.

We are meeting our schedule very well. We will try to follow a rule somewhat in between that of the House of Representatives and the Senate, from three minute limitation to the unlimited debate. We have asked these gentlemen to limit themselves to 10 minutes on their brief statements. Also those of you who are able to remain for the afternoon session will have an opportunity to question in detail any man who has made a statement here today.

Now, Director Drury of the Park Service.

STATEMENT OF NEWTON B. DRURY,
DIRECTOR, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE.

MR. DRURY: Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I know you would feel that your National Park Service would be remiss in its duty if it did not take the position that the greatest good for the greatest number in the United States consists in protecting inviolate the national parks and monuments. I say this in the light of the long history and tradition, in the light of the acts of Congress which since 1872 have established in the United States a pattern of land management which is unique, the object of which is to preserve unspoiled for public enjoyment the great places of beauty and wonder in America just as nature made them and as they were first observed by the explorers and the pioneers.

Questions of convenience and of local necessity and of engineering efficiency are important in connection with engineering matters. When we come to an institution that has been a part of our culture and our way of life in the United States as the national park system, beginning with Yellowstone in 1872 and leading up to the present day when there are 175 parks and monuments and related areas, under the basic Act of 1916 the National Park Service of the Department of the Interior is enjoined to protect these areas and the scenery and the wildlife and the objects of historic and scientific interest therein and make them available for public enjoyment