



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

For Release to IM's, MARCH 18, 1961

ADDRESS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR STEWART L. UDALL AT COMMEMORATION OF THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF THEODORE ROOSEVELT DAM ON THE SALT RIVER RECLAMATION PROJECT, ARIZONA, MARCH 18, 1961 (4 P.M., EST, 2 P.M., MST)

It is good to be home in Arizona again and to join with all of you in this observance of the 50th anniversary of the dedication of Roosevelt Dam--joining with some of you who were here for that historic dedication in 1911 by the great Teddy Roosevelt himself.

Fifty years ago! I wasn't born yet, and neither were a great many of us who are here today. Yet all of us have benefited from the development of our State which resulted from this pioneer reclamation project.

How many of us will be here 50 years hence to witness the 100th anniversary? It would be a foolhardy person who would venture any predictions, either of our own longevity or of the startling, reclamation-encourage developments yet to come. And it would indeed be a rare and gifted prophet who could match the accuracy of the immortal Teddy at that first dedication a year before Arizona attained statehood.

Standing here at a time when the mortar in this masonry dam was scarcely set, he predicted:

"Great things will take place in the Salt River Valley due to this stupendous project."

It was an understatement at that, wasn't it, as our State's prosperity and burgeoning growth testify?

While a respect for the value of water and of our other natural resources is a part of the upbringing of any native Arizonan, I want to tell you I have gained a broader understanding and a new respect for their importance in our lives and the complex problems they pose from the few weeks I have served President Kennedy as Secretary of the Interior.

Natural resource development touches the lives of all of us in many ways. Hanging over most of the policy decisions that funnel through the Department of the Interior is the sobering realization that the decisions we are required to make on many of these matters today may profoundly affect the lives of our children and their children in the years to come.

This long-range nature of resource development is brought into vivid focus by the event we are commemorating here today.

Nearly 60 years ago, the Congress passed a history-making conservation measure--the Reclamation Act of 1902. This enabled the Federal Government to cooperate with the people of the Salt River Valley and the Arizona Territorial government in the building of this first great dam under the Reclamation program.

The Reclamation Act of 1902 was, in effect, the Magna Carta of Western development. It opened the door to the development of the still untold natural resource wealth of the West, and it freed the struggling States and territories from the dominance of Eastern interests--and Eastern capital.

In the days of the old frontier, the tide of empire was ever westward. The Nation was rich in natural resources and our national prosperity and expansion fed on ruthless exploitation of these national riches. The established theory of the time was that the general development and prosperity of the country could only be advanced by private capital and investments. Land was either given away or sold for a trifle to form the ultimate base for great private fortunes at the expense of the many. Many timber lands were stripped bare. The public grazing lands and the vast wealth in oil and other minerals in the public domain were bringing enormous dividends to a few, but yielding little to the people as a whole to whom these natural resources belonged.

The Reclamation Act of 1902 was only the beginning of a concerted national effort to return the publicly owned resources of the Nation to their rightful owners.

With the assistance and inspiration of one of our all-time-great conservationists, Gifford Pinchot, the national forest preserves were increased from 43 to 194 million acres during the first decade of the 1900's. The water power resources of those areas were put under government control to prevent speculation and monopoly, and livestockmen grazing their herds on the public range reserves were required to pay a nominal fee for the privilege.

In 1907, the Inland Waterways Commission was created, and in 1908, the historic White House Conference of Governors was convened--an American landmark in conservation. From this conference came a national conservation commission to inventory the Nation's natural resources.

Probably no policy of President Theodore Roosevelt's administration excited deeper public interest or sharper opposition than his efforts in behalf of natural resource conservation and public use. His official acts, his speeches, and the influence of his dynamic personality led to the adoption of a philosophy that the public interest must come first in the administration of our natural resources.

The early conservation policy was not one of stagnation. On the contrary, it was one of conservation and use--use in the public good. Nowhere is it better illustrated than here on the Salt River Project.

Irrigation in the Salt River Valley, as most of you are aware, actually predates even the discovery of America, having its beginning in the era of the Hohokam Indians in the period of about 1400 A.D. The civilization of the Hohokam--its rude canals and fields--were forerunners of the Salt River Federal Reclamation Project. The settlers of what has become modern-day Arizona tried to wrest a living from the soil and for a while they seemed to be destined for the same fate as the Hohokam--plagued alternately by flood and drouth. However, this was changed and the whole future of a region improved and made secure through control and beneficial use of a nature's bounty.

Theodore Roosevelt Dam and powerplant, Granite Reef Diversion Dam, and an improved canal system, constituting the original project construction, were placed in service in 1910 and completed in 1911. The project water users repaid to the United States Treasury by 1955 the initial construction obligation of almost \$11 million. Additional facilities have been built to bring the total project investment to more than \$100 million of which Federal funds amount to less than one-third of the total. Nowhere, as Senator Carl Hayden is fond of saying, can one find a sounder national investment, nor one in which the State and local people have exhibited such inspired leadership. The old phrase "states rights" has been given new meaning by the aggressive actions of those men who made the Arizona deal blossom.

An assured controlled water supply was the genesis of agricultural growth here in the Valley of the Sun. Today, the value of crops grown on the project averages about \$67 million annually and totals \$1.6 billion since stored water was made available. This production helps to supply the Nation's table with tasty salads, fruits, and vegetables during the winter and early spring when many areas are blanketed with snow.

Development of project power facilities has kept pace with agricultural progress. These resources, coupled with a choice climate, have been a growing magnet to industry and commerce.

Maricopa County in 1910 had a population of about 35,000. In the short span of 50 years it has increased 18-fold, with the last census recording a population of over 650,000. During the last decade, population has doubled, and retail sales in the county now exceed \$1 billion annually. The Salt River Project comprises only four percent of the area of Maricopa County but the value of land and improvements in the original project area represent 80 percent of the assessed value. Federal tax revenues from these irrigated lands have been estimated to total about \$300 million, about 10 times the Federal investment in the project. This is over and above the direct repayment by the water users of the costs of construction.

The dynamic economy of the valley today is a living testimony to the vision, courage, ingenuity and determination of those who conceived and brought the project to fruition. The true worth of this resource development cannot be measured in dollars and cents but should take into account its service to man--the business and job opportunities created on the project farms, in the processing industries, in transportation and distribution of the farmers products, and in the manufacturing and commerce that flows from distant cities into the area.

The story of the Salt River Project can be repeated over and over again in the Reclamation west. First comes the water, and, if possible, hydropower and other multiple uses; then come the farms and then the communities. As time goes on, greater and greater benefits are being realized from Reclamation development, which already has played such a prominent role in the growth and industrial expansion of the new West.

Theodore Roosevelt Dam stands today as a symbol and a monument--as the first great multipurpose reclamation project in the West. Although it since has been overshadowed statistically by such giants as Grand Coulee, Shasta and Hoover Dams, this great structure stands today, 50 years after it was built, as a model of the multiple-purpose concept. Some of us think of this concept as unique to our times. Indeed it is the probable answer to our present growing need and competition for water. But we here in Arizona know that the pattern of multiple use was first clearly enunciated in the days of planning and construction of the Salt River Project. And offhand, I can't think of any place today where water is being utilized to a higher degree than on this project.

There was something of a lull in Reclamation development after that flurry of new starts undertaken following passage of the Reclamation Act of 1902. First there was World War One, and then in the following decade of boom and bust prosperity no one had much time for resource development. But the administration of the second President Roosevelt ushered in a new era of resources planning and development.

Franklin D. Roosevelt restored stature and respectability to conservation. As Gifford Pinchot joined with the first Roosevelt to conserve our forests, another great conservationist, Dr. Hugh Bennett, joined with the second to protect and restore our eroding topsoil. FDR enlarged and strengthened our national park and national forest systems. Like his predecessor Roosevelt, FDR did not believe in stagnation. He was a doer and he had in the Department of the Interior another doer in Harold L. Ickes. Such great projects as Grand Coulee and Bonneville dams in the northwest and the Central Valley Project in California are testimonials to their foresight and energetic drive to put our water resources to work--to use them for the common good.

Now we have another President who is a doer--another President with a keen sense and desire to act in the public interest. No one who read his resources message of February 23 to the Congress can fail to realize that President Kennedy regards an orderly, quickened program of resource development as a part of the vital core of his administration.

Where are we headed in this effort? We are headed down the pathway blazed by those who built this magnificent project.

There are new frontiers in the waterpower field also. One week ago on behalf of the President I announced the first step in the construction of an extra-high voltage common carrier transmission system to link the power systems of the Northwest and California.

Both public and private power systems will profit from such an intertie.

Reclamation projects are not built in a day or a year, nor--many of them--in a decade. We must plan and build today with an eye to the future. We must proceed with the same strong confidence in our Nation's destiny that is best personified by the Presidents Roosevelt and Kennedy. We must get on with the job.

x x x