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WHAT THE MISSOURI VALLEY AUTHORITY MEANS TO MINNESOTA

by

Senator Hubert H. Humphrey

I have joined with two other Senators in sponsoring legislation for a Missouri Valley Authority. This is a problem which vitally affects the everyday lives of the people of ^{Iowa and} Minnesota. The Missouri Valley presents us with one of the most challenging problems in economics, politics and democratic government.

I need not, I know, point out the importance of cheap navigation and electricity to the welfare of our people. Soil conservation and flood control are even more clearly related to our economic life in their effect on the cost of food, the amount of food and the regularity of successful crops. Irrigation would tend to diversify crops and reduce the payments of price supports on the staple commodities.

At present, the Missouri Valley is being developed under a plan called the Pick Sloan Plan, under which the Bureau of Reclamation of the Interior Department and the Army Engineers are together building dams and working to develop the valley. Experience of the past two years, however, seems to have demonstrated conclusively that this "marriage" between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Army Engineers has not resulted in full agreement and understanding. In fact, as a result of various disagreements and difficulties which have ensued to the detriment of the development of the Valley, the Hoover Commission was forced to criticize the Pick Sloan Plan and point out its shortcomings. The Hoover Commission had this to say about the Pick Sloan Plan and the way in which the Missouri River is now being developed:

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"There is simply no escaping the fact that so long as the present overlapping of functions exist with respect to the Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Federal Power Commission, costly duplication, confusion and competition are bound to result. It has been demonstrated time and again that neither by voluntary cooperation nor by executive coordination can the major conflicts be ironed out... Consolidation of these agencies is the only remedy. The Commission feels there is a possibility that the disastrous Portland floods last year reflect the failure of the present divided program."

This severe condemnation of the Pick Sloan Plan cannot be lightly dismissed. Their studies demonstrate the inefficiencies of the Pick Sloan Plan. More than that, however, their studies demonstrate the tragic results which follow when an ineffective plan is put into operation. It can be proved further that the Missouri River floods in the spring of 1947 were not at all alleviated by the work of the Army Engineers, but rather on the contrary, the floods were apparently intensified by the fact that the single-purpose planning of the Engineers for navigation overlooked the necessity of planning for flood control.

The Hoover Commission therefore calls for a "multiple-purpose" project of unified control. *P. 15 - quote Hoover Commission*

Flood control is not the only failing of the present Pick Sloan Plan. Even the navigation part of the development has been incompletely thought out. The Engineers, under the present system, have planned for a nine-foot channel in the Missouri River. Yet this was apparently set up with no consideration of the water that might be needed for irrigation. While 12-foot channels are being proposed in the Mississippi and Ohio Rivers, the Engineers ignored these proposals and other practical suggestions made for navigation, and insisted

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on only creating a nine-foot channel. This would require shifting barge loads from one size barge to another when loads are transferred from the Missouri to the Mississippi or back.

Furthermore, it is estimated that the present Pick Sloan Plan will either make irrigation inconsistent and impractical, or navigation inconsistent and impractical. Yet a nine-foot channel which the Army is digging in the Missouri is scheduled to cost \$222 million.

Many cries today are heard for economy. I suggest to those who are concerned with the problem of economy in government that the Pick Sloan Plan is not only uneconomical, but is also wasteful. The Missouri Valley Authority legislation which I co-sponsor is indeed the economical way to deal with this problem. It is the plan which is consistent with the suggestions made by the Hoover Commission.

There are other indications of inefficiency under the Pick Sloan Plan. The Bureau of Reclamation is planning a recreation project which would spend considerable money and use enough water annually to irrigate 55,000 acres. Yet Mr. W. G. Sloan of the Bureau told a St. Louis Post Dispatch Reporter, Rufus Terral, that he did not think this project was the best use of the water, but that he was doing it nevertheless "to get those people over there to stop talking."

More than economy, however, is involved in the failure of the Pick Sloan plan. Electric power is perhaps its worst failure. Mr. Lester Walker, engineer of the Federal Power Commission, said two years ago: "In our examinations into the ultimate hydro-electric potentialities of the Missouri River Basin, we find with our as yet unfinished investigation that the 1,600,000 kilowatts provided by the Pick Sloan plan of development is less than one-half

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of the total potential power of the basin. We consider five million kilowatts - a somewhat conservative estimate of the potential hydroelectric power of the basin." That is perhaps the reason why private power companies who violently oppose MVA are in favor of the Pick-Sloan plan. W. G. Sloan himself admitted that the large Gavin's point dam, which will cost \$200 million is unnecessary and not worth the expenditure. There is, furthermore, another irrigation and power project called Colorado-Big Thompson which will produce electricity at startlingly high costs. The charge has been publicly made and never denied - and I said this on March 2 on the floor of the Senate - that unnecessary costs have been added to this dam without adding one acre foot of irrigation or one kilowatt hour of electricity.

Planning on the basis of loosely connected and jurisdictionally jealous agencies for proper resource development in a single river valley has been proven impossible. The Hoover Commission states that bluntly in their recent report. The facts on the Pick Sloan plan state it just as graphically in wasted dollars, wasted time and wasted water.

One of the most essential concerns of any river valley plan must be soil conservation. Yet the Pick-Sloan plan cannot even begin to integrate soil conservation into its planning, since Pick-Sloan only has jurisdiction over 1% of the surface area of the Missouri Valley. Soil conservation must begin where the rain hits the ground, not where it flows into the river - carrying rich top soil with it.

We can talk about wasted resources and mismanagement under Pick-Sloan but it is fair to ask, "How do we know MVA would do any better?" We can only speak about what TVA has done and say that the same principles of administration will apply to MVA. Today the Tennessee is one of the most

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flood-proof rivers in the world. The use of electric power by homes, farms and industries has boomed. Residential users who consumed only 55 kilowatt hours a month in 1933, 11 years later consumed 129 kilowatt hours a month. Rates have fallen from 4 cents a kilowatt hour to 1.88 (as compared to 3.55 cents on the national average). At the same time, TVA was a successful business, electrically speaking, making payments in lieu of state and local ad valorem taxes, paying all expenses, straight-line depreciation, and earning 4% on investment in the fiscal year ending June 30, 1948. TVA's electric power industry earned 5% in the previous fiscal year under the same circumstances.

But power is not the only achievement of TVA, although often we are deluded into thinking so, both by opponents of TVA (who are almost all private power representatives) and by proponents of the bill who recognize that the attraction to non-Valley residents can most easily be made with statements of low-cost electric bills. - Consumers pay 100 million a year more in M.V. State than in TVA area. Quote TVA P. 16-17

Differing from the Pick Sloan method of two agencies planning single dams singly, TVA operates 26 dams as a single unit. There is a newly usable 630 mile navigation channel carrying raw materials out and finished goods in. Current savings by shippers are estimated at \$2 million a year. Soil has become more productive through planned soil conservation and greater phosphate production.

While national per capita income increased 56%, income in the Tennessee valley went up 73% between 1933 and 1940. Furthermore, the people of the Valley are so clearly in favor of TVA that it is difficult to argue that TVA has lessened their freedom. Contrarily, it has increased their freedom.

The MVA type of organization can make use of the same advantages.

What we have now, therefore, is an open and shut case against the present Pick-Sloan Plan. The Hoover Commission states that the Pick Sloan Plan has failed. It has been suggested that legislation on this subject wait five years

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or ten years while further studies are made on this subject. Actually, however, the problem has been studied under TVA, Pick Sloan and under smaller localized projects ever since the New Deal. There are experts who have studied the problem thoroughly and they include just plain American citizens in the Tennessee Valley and in the Missouri Valley. The destruction of valley settlement through floods, of farm lands through erosion, of farm settlement through the discomforts of living without electricity is going on now, not in ten years. Valley settlement, like so many other tasks of this Congress, is not too new or radical a subject. It is decades too late.

The MVA bill which Senators Murray and Gillette and I introduced, affects the people of Minnesota and the people of our region. Its efficiency, effectiveness and democracy are basic to effective American government. It poses one of the basic problems of our day - how to achieve democratic, effective government through governmental units large enough to do the job yet still sensitively responsible to the people they serve. MVA does this through clear lines of responsibility running directly to corporation directors who are on the spot in the valley, who are, in a large part, citizens of the valley and who are constantly kept advised by an official body composed of the Governors and valley leaders in the fields of labor, industry, farming, and conservation and outdoor recreation. Responsibility is clear - who to shake up or fire to get action is clear. Where Valley people can go to be heard is clear. And the success of the system in the Tennessee is clear. - *Organization - Quote P. 8*

MVA is a symbol of liberalism in that it is an acknowledgment that the meaning of democracy in 1949 is that responsible government should be the agency through which the people can act together to do for themselves what each individually cannot do. It is a symbol of conservatism in that it champions efficient

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and economical government and practical business administration. It is plain good sense. And it is urgent.

MVA should come out of the 81st Congress.



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