

Feb. 11, 1968

U.S. SHOULD NOT BUILD C.A.P. FOR ARIZONA

The Central Arizona Project (C.A.P.) is a scheme to build an aqueduct from the Parker Dam on the Colorado River and to run Eastward for about 250 miles to the area about Phoenix and Tucson, Arizona.

This aqueduct is to carry one million acre feet of water yearly. The State of Arizona is morally and legally entitled to receive this water. But it is an entirely different story as to who is to stand the expense of building this project which will cost 3/4 billion dollars.

A little history will give the basis for better understanding. In the 1930's, on the Colorado River, the Boulder Dam was built to store the water to be used for cities, farmland, and to create electricity. Two subsidiary dams called the Davis and the Parker were also built at the same time to better control the Colorado River. All the cost was paid by the U.S. Government.

The people of the region around Los Angeles decided that they wanted some of the Colorado River water. So they formed the Metropolitan Water District (later more regions entered this District so that it extends from Ventura County down to San Diego County). The M.W.D. built the Los Angeles Aqueduct leading from the West side of the Parker Dam all the way back to the Los Angeles area for about 250 miles. Extensions later leading South and North brought this water to Ventura and San Diego Counties.

The Metropolitan Water District paid for all this by selling bonds and collecting taxes from the people located in its District. THE TAXPAYERS OF THE U.S. DID NOT PAY FOR IT. The residents of the M.W.D. are still paying taxes for the building of the Los Angeles aqueduct and will continue to pay for many years in the future.

The M.W.D. built the aqueduct in the 1930's. The State of Arizona could have built the Central Arizona Project at the same time at its own expense. BUT IT DID NOT. The reason is very simple. The Federal Government had already built the Dam and aqueduct system which started the SALT RIVER PROJECT which is the big farming area around Phoenix. This dam called the Roosevelt (after President Theodore Roosevelt) and the aqueduct were paid for by the taxpayers of all the U.S.

The Salt River Project was supposed to operate under the provisions of the U.S. Reclamation Act, namely, 1. Only persons living on the land or close by were to get water for farming and 2. A person could only farm 160 acres (husband and wife could farm 320 acres; because of constant sunshine and no droughts, 160 acres of desert land gives the production equivalent to 800 acres in the Midwest or South-East United States. The Salt River Project was intended for little farmers only. There were not to be big farms owned by absentee owners.

But the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation never enforced the U.S. Reclamation Law in the Salt River Project so that big farm corporations, many from California, are the ones who control agriculture there.

These big farm interests have about 400,000 acres of virgin desertland that they want to put into cultivation. This is really the sole reason for the campaign for the aqueduct. Claiming

that the one million acre feet of the Colorado River water is going to be used in Arizona for the "booming population" as the propagandists would lead you to believe, is a very big lie.

The Metropolitan Water District that takes a million acre feet of water from the Colorado River, distributes the water to 93 cities and to a population of about 7.5 million people (other sources of water like wells and the Owens River furnish additional water). So you can readily see that this water goes to people in cities.

But this is not true of Phoenix and Tucson. Their population is only a little over 1/2 million people. People in cities do not use much water as compared to desert farms. This point can be easily perceived when one knows that the City of New York with 7.5 millions people uses 1.5 million acre feet of water annually.

Now contrast this with with Imperial County, Calif. where the author lives where about 3 million acre feet of water is used from the Colorado River to irrigate only 500,000 acres of desert farm land. The population of Imperial County is only 75,000 persons. So there should be no doubt in the reader's mind that the million acre feet of water that Arizona wants the aqueduct for is just for putting in about 400,000 acres of virgen desert land into cultivation.

Because of the geology, Imperial County does not have any wells. But in Arizona, the geology is such that there is a plentiful supply of well water for the needs of any of its cities. There is even enough well water to put into cultivation a small amount of virgen desert land but not enough to farm 400,000 new virgen acres. Do not forget that this is a scheme of the big ranchers and not little farmers.

What is going to be grown on these 400,000 acres? It will come as a shock to the U.S. Senators and Congressmen to find out that COTTON IS THE INTENDED CROP. The biggest crop in Arizona is COTTON. During the last 15 years, the desert areas in both Arizona and California have increased their production of cotton from practically nothing to the extent where about 4 years ago California was almost first in cotton production in the nation.

The big farm interests both in Arizona and California have been able to get the "cotton allotments" and to prevent the little farmers from getting these allotments. With the allotments, come "price supports" and "land diversion" payments. This is the most profitable type of farming today. The big farm corporations in the Southwest have produced so much surplus cotton that the cotton farming business in the SouthEast U.S. has gone bad. This has produced the result in the SouthEast U.S. that the rural population both white and black are forced out of farming cotton and have to leave to go to the cities where you now have very serious problems because of this migration.

Mechanization of cotton farming is just one part of the drift of rural people to the cities. But until the Southwest went into cotton farming in a big way, the competition was not bad for the SouthEast of the U.S. At the present time, there are 33 millions acres of farmland in "land diversion". Of this amount 7 millions acres are diverted from cotton production. It was only a year ago that the government was going crazy with the biggest amount of surplus cotton stored in warehouses which was costing a fortune to store.

The government forced the cotton farmers to radically cut their cotton production and paid them huge sums for "land diversion" not to grow cotton. But now Arizona wants the U.S. Government to subsidize it with an aqueduct so that it can grow more cotton on another 400,000 acres of virgen desert land. So it is not only the cost of the aqueduct but in the future the Federal government will be paying millions of dollars out in "price supports" and "land diversion" to prevent the growing of surplus cotton. This makes no sense. At least with surplus food crops, there are always some areas over the world where they can be given away. There is no sense in subsidizing Arizona so that cotton farming in the SouthEast U.S. is hurt. Let there be fair competition...