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by Secretary of the Interior Douglas  
McKay before the Los Angeles  
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ADDRESS BY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR DOUGLAS MCKAY BEFORE THE LOS ANGELES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, FEBRUARY 3, 1954

For Release on Delivery

It is always a pleasure to return to the West Coast if even for only a short visit, and to enjoy your traditional California weather and hospitality.

Meeting with this distinguished group here tonight of course, is a particular pleasure for me since we have a mutual interest in the challenging task of resource development.

I want to talk to you tonight about several of the more difficult problems we face in carrying out this task wisely and effectively. As diverse as these resource problems may appear at first glance, they all involve as a common denominator the necessity for assuring resource development in a manner which takes cognizance of not only the needs of the moment but of the long-term needs of the future.

Both considerations are important. It is the essence of good resource planning to make sure that we do not rob Peter to pay Paul.

There is one subject in these United States on which emotions can be aroused at the slightest provocation. That is when someone asks what constitutes the wise use of the natural resources of the Nation.

Take the Dinosaur National Monument. I'll talk more of that later.

Nothing seems closer to us, especially in the western part of the country, than the resources of the earth which have made this Nation great. We see them all around us--rivers, forests, minerals, and the land itself.

Together they make up the greatest assets we have in the West. Just as the continued prosperity of the West depends on the wise use of its natural resources, this prosperity is of crucial importance to the entire Nation which depends upon the West as one of its most vital productive areas.

On the subject of natural resources we have two extremes. There are those who would exploit these resources to the utmost, giving no thought to their conservation but only to the immediate gain to be obtained.

On the other extreme are those who want a "hands off" policy, a policy which would lock up these resources forever and permit no one to touch them.

Somewhere between these two extremes is the logical course to follow. It is not to make a Solomon decision of trying. It is a case of trying to find the point between these extremes where we can use these resources in such a fashion today that they will continue to be of use to future generations.

Gifford Pinchot in his book "Breaking New Ground" said "conservation is the foresighted utilization, preservation, and renewal of forests, waters, lands, and minerals, for the greatest good of the greatest number for the longest time."

And Governor Pinchot added:

"To the use of the natural resources, renewable or nonrenewable, each generation has the first right. Nevertheless, no generation can be allowed needlessly to damage or reduce the future general wealth and welfare by the way it uses or misuses any natural resource."

That, from one of the foremost conservationists of our time, is accepted doctrine.

It represents the view that somewhere between the two extremes of those who say "hands off" and those who would despoil our natural resources there is middle ground. That is the place where the Department of the Interior steps into the picture and has a responsibility.

We are determined to conserve the natural resources of the Nation by their wise use. The resources belong to all of the people and all the people should obtain the benefits from them.

Here in the State of California, where you have some of the greatest natural resources in the national parks, Yosemite, Sequoia, Lassen and others, you know what it means to make wise use of those resources.

They belong to all the people. These parks have been developed so they are easy of access. People from all parts of the Nation--yes, all parts of the world--come to visit them.

They are being used wisely and widely. So are the other national parks. Roads have been built and facilities have been made available to make the parks more accessible and more enjoyable to the millions of people who each year are visiting the park system in ever-increasing numbers. The interest of you Californians in the national parks is graphically indicated by the estimate that California license plates are seen in our parks more frequently than those of any other State.

Let me remind you that three of the most popular park areas in the whole Western United States are those whose facilities have either been created or improved by Federal reclamation construction, for which the public users are paying not a single dime.

Two of the three leading national park areas in the number of visitors last year, in fact, the Lake Mead Recreational Area and the Great Smoky National Park, have both benefited greatly from Federal dam developments. Lake Mead had 2,200,000 visitors last year. One wonders how many would have visited the area if it had not been transformed by the construction of Hoover Dam from a silt-choked, fishless stream far down in the depths of Boulder and Black Canyon into a beautiful lake offering boundless recreational opportunities.

North of here, you have the Millerton Lake Recreational Area, used by half a million people as the result of the creation of Millerton Lake, in back of Friant Dam. Further north, the construction of Shasta Dam has created a glimmering jewel

in Lake Shasta. In this region the Forest Service has created a recreational area. Already, a new sports fishing industry has been built up around the fabulous Kamloops which thrive in the cold, deep waters of Lake Shasta. And downstream from the dam, the annual salmon run is being gradually revived as cold water from the dam has provided ideal spawning grounds in the shallow sands of the Sacramento River.

If Governor Pinchot was right when he described the purpose of conservation as "the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time" then what has been done to develop Lake Mead and the vast recreational areas of the Tennessee Valley, all by-products of water project construction, follows the Pinchot doctrine right down the line.

And what has been done in Lake Mead and in the Great Smokies is what we have in mind in Dinosaur National Monument.

As many of you know, the Department recently submitted to Congress a comprehensive plan to enable the five States of the Upper Colorado River Basin to utilize their apportionment of Colorado River water. This plan, known as the Colorado River Storage Project, provides for irrigation of 380,000 acres of land, bringing the benefits of life-giving water, which you in California know so well, to a potentially important productive area.

In our studies and recommendations concerning the Upper Colorado River Project we, of course, realize fully that the downstream States have certain very important rights and we quite agree that these downstream States should have these rights fully recognized and protected in any upstream development.

Included in the plan of the Department for this development is a recommendation that a dam be built at Echo Park. This dam would be inside the boundaries of the Dinosaur National Monument and would flood part of the canyon of the Green River,

and the Yampa River, a tributary of the Colorado. While it will therefore alter the canyon, we do not believe that it will destroy its scenic beauty. The known deposits of dinosaur remains will remain untouched--miles from the reservoir site.

The Echo Park Dam site was personally inspected by Under Secretary Ralph Tudor together with Commissioner of Reclamation W. A. Dexheimer and National Park Director Conrad L. Wirth. After they returned, the Under Secretary reported to me that while there were other alternate sites outside the park, their use would mean a great loss of water from evaporation.

In the deep canyons in Echo Park there will be a minimum of evaporation. The storage area that would be provided by alternate sites would be shallow and the evaporation naturally greater.

Secretary Tudor reached his conclusions on the basis of sound engineering and good logic. He said use of any of the alternate sites would mean the loss of enough water to supply all the needs of a city of over 600,000 people. Can we afford to waste that much water? Could you here in California afford to lose that much water?

Let me quote from Mr. Tudor's report. "There would be substantial loss in electric generating capacity if any one of the alternate sites were selected. While this is a matter of economic importance I do not attach as much weight to it as to the loss of water. The power loss could be replaced by steam power at some increased cost.

"I share the concern of those who would preserve the beauties of the Dinosaur National Monument in their present natural state, but as between a choice of altering the scenery, without destroying it, in a basin which is and will remain rich in scenery, or the irreplaceable loss of enough water to supply all the needs of a city the size of Denver, I believe the conservation of the water in the interest of the Nation is of greatest importance."

So, there you have it. Does conservation of that much water justify our decision? We think it does.

Yet, that is not the whole story. As I said before the wise use of a natural resource is to make it available to the people. We have included in the Upper Colorado report an item of \$21,000,000 to develop the area around Echo Park Dam within Dinosaur National Monument. We will build roads and facilities to take care of the people who want to go there.

Just as Lake Mead has provided a rich opportunity for recreation for hundreds of thousands of people, so we hope will the creation of a new lake in the canyon behind Echo Park Dam. Alter the park? Yes. Make it available to more people? Yes. Destroy it? No.

The 12 areas of the National Park System over which the Department has jurisdiction in California have proven to be a major attraction which has drawn millions of visitors to the State each year. Last year, for example, close to five million people visited National Park areas in California.

The number of dollars the traveller spends is not in itself, of course, the true measure of value park areas have to the Nation. A greater valuation must be placed on the opportunity they offer for healthful relaxation, for spiritual inspiration and for the patriotic stimulation that is part of any tour to one of these spots.

Some people, I sometimes fear, do not understand the true significance of our national parks. There are some, for example, who contend that our parks are only for a selected few who through education or special training are best able to understand and enjoy the grandeur of scenery that a bounteous nature has bestowed.

They would lock up these resources. They oppose vigorously the development of new recreational areas which would result from programs for water resources development providing vital facilities to aid in the economic strengthening of regions lacking sufficient water for agricultural expansion or for industrial development.

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Is this negative approach in the tradition of Gifford Pinchot? This great conservationist during his life was not concerned with cliques or pressure groups. He was dedicated to the ideal of a strong America, which could forge ahead in agriculture, in industry, in business, while at the same time preserving the spiritual or scenic requisites that are integral and necessary for the enrichment of our lives.

The majority of Americans believe in the ideal of a park system providing opportunities for the many and not for just a few if an analysis of the National Park System visitation is an index.

In 1946, the Park Service recorded 21,752,000 visitors. In 1953, the number of visitors more than doubled. This increase of 112 percent is to my way of thinking a sure sign that the average American and not the rich and fortunate alone enjoy our parks.

Recreational opportunities on the reservoirs and adjacent lands of the Echo Park project will include picnicing, boating, fishing, swimming, hiking, riding, camping, and sightseeing. These opportunities are not now available to the average tourist.

Only a handful of visitors each year actually penetrate the canyon section of the monument where most of the new recreational facilities will be developed.

Conrad L. Wirth, Director of the National Park Service, tells me 22,334 persons visited Dinosaur National Monument last year. Only 3,000 of them went into the Echo Park section and 500 of these went down the Green River by boat.

Compare that figure--3,000--to the 2,220,000 that visited Lake Mead. To the 969,000 who visited Yosemite. To the 500,000 who visited Sequoia. To the 225,000 who visited Mount Lassen.



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Because of the very difficult nature of the terrain, travel in this most scenic area of the Dinosaur Monument is limited at present to a very limited number of hardy individuals, scientists and others who are interested in rugged geography, geology, paleontology, and related sciences.

When we consider the whole picture, therefore, we find that the Upper Colorado project is vital not only because of direct economic values in developing essential water resources, but because of its indirect values contributing to the enjoyment of nature by a larger number of our citizens.

And--I repeat--the Dinosaur bones, the actual prehistoric evidence, will not be inundated. They are miles from the dam site and reservoir on high ground.

By no stretch of the imagination can our recommendation on Echo Park be construed as a precedent for the invasion of other existing parks. No one in this administration is going to build a dam in Yosemite, or Yellowstone, or run a pipeline into Crater Lake.

Echo Park and the problem there does not foreshadow the slightest alteration in any other recreational area by a project such as we have outlined.

Here, almost in your own backyard, you have the question of the Santa Margarita storage dam and reservoir. It was the hope of the Department of the Interior that the construction of a feasible project in this area would conserve a good bit of the water which now runs into the sea and is wasted.

Your fine Senators, Bill Knowland and Tom Kuchel, are striving to obtain congressional authorization for the construction of the Santa Margarita project. Legal problems have been plentiful. To date these legal difficulties have halted the planning of the Department as far as this project is concerned.

We in Interior are cooperating with the other Government agencies in attempting to find a reasonable solution which will be of help to this part of the State. We will do everything we can to bring this matter to a successful and early conclusion.

We come now to the conservation of the public lands. The matter of the disposal of public domain lands is also a problem of considerable magnitude in California. When one talks with people who have had occasion in the past to do business with our Bureau of Land Management, the impression is gained that the Bureau attempts to find reasons for denying applications.

I can assure you this will not be the future policy of the Department.

We will attempt to act on the applications as rapidly as possible under the requirements laid down by Congress. It is our determination that a vigorous effort will be made to advance and enlarge the surveying and classification of the public lands.

This will be done in order to determine whether they are available for entry. It is hoped that under such a policy we will be able to not only to expedite the handling of land matters but assure that steps are taken to put the land to its best use, recognizing in all cases that there must be a balance between individual and national interests.

In order that this may be accomplished, I have had the operations and organization of the Bureau carefully analyzed. I recently approved the recommendations of a survey team for making the operation of the Bureau more efficient and effective.

You have read in the newspapers recently that a conference was held between officials of the Department of the Interior and the California Water Project Authority relative to the proposed sale of the Central Valley Project to the State of California.

Let me make very plain--the Department has not hung a "for sale" sign on this very successful Federal venture into power, irrigation and flood control.

A group of your State officials, representing the California Water Project Authority, came to my office to ask if the Federal Government would sell the project to California. We said--and I repeat--we will listen attentively to any proposal of California.

I have made it clear in the preliminary negotiations, however, that the Federal Government must receive for the project the money it has put into the project, less what is known as the nonreimbursable items. These are the costs normally borne by the Federal Government for such things as flood control, navigation and recreation.

The Federal Government will not expect a profit. Neither will it expect a loss. We do not contemplate a "bargain basement transaction".

Here again you have two groups in your State--and in some parts of the Nation, too--who are at opposite ends of the poles in their thinking on Central Valley. Some would have it sold to California at a very low price. Others want the Federal Government to hold it forever.

Between these extremes, I am sure, is an answer which will be equitable to both the State of California and to the Federal Government.

Let me tell you about a conservation project that is close to my heart. It is in my home State of Oregon and it is a project which reflects my thinking. In my term as Governor we set out to reforest 300,000 acres of land on which millions of feet of virgin Douglas fir had been destroyed by fire.

The people of Oregon voted \$10,500,000 in bonds to finance this venture. They did not ask the Federal Government for help. They did it on their own. We started this job in 1949 and are planting in blocks of 10,000 to 20,000 acres with corridors 1,000 and 1,500 yards wide to be used for access roads and fire breaks.

Progress in this work is gratifying. By utilizing sustained yield and other modern conservation methods in the area, Oregon's \$700,000,000 a year lumber industry is assured of a prosperous future.

This is a conservation project in one State. It reflects my thinking of what should be done to conserve the natural resources of all the States. Thus, in every phase of conservation, whether in the forests, on the rivers, on the public lands, or under the lands, we are working daily to the end that our program will mean "the greatest good for the greatest number for the longest time".

It is a difficult task. If we are to achieve our goal we will need the understanding and cooperation of groups like this throughout the country. Only by working together as a team can the American people assure that our natural resources will be developed fully and effectively, contributing richly as they are converted into the necessities of life to the welfare of our economy and well-being of our people.

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