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Of The Committee On Public Lands, House of  
Representatives and a Special Subcommittee Of  
The Committee On Interior And Insular Affairs,  
United States Senate – Eighty-First Congress –  
First Session on H.R. 5506” (1949)

# THE PALISADES DAM AND RESERVOIR PROJECT

## HEARINGS

BEFORE A

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AND A

SPECIAL SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE  
COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS  
UNITED STATES SENATE  
EIGHTY-FIRST CONGRESS  
FIRST SESSION

ON

## H. R. 5506

A BILL TO AUTHORIZE THE PALISADES DAM AND RESERVOIR  
PROJECT, TO AUTHORIZE THE NORTH SIDE PUMPING DIVISION  
AND RELATED WORKS, TO PROVIDE FOR THE DISPOSITION  
OF RESERVED SPACE IN AMERICAN FALLS RESERVOIR,  
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

AUGUST 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, AND 19, 1949

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xi

## CONTENTS

| Statement of—                                                                                                                 | Page           |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Hon. John Sanborn, a Representative in Congress from the State of Idaho.                                                      | 2              |
| Hon. Bert H. Miller, a United States Senator from the State of Idaho.                                                         | 7              |
| Hon. Glen H. Taylor, a United States Senator from the State of Idaho.                                                         | 8              |
| Hon. Compton I. White, a Representative in Congress from the State of Idaho.                                                  | 9              |
| Wesley R. Nelson, Assistant Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation, Department of the Interior.                                  | 10, 31         |
| Robert J. Newell, consultant with the Bureau of Reclamation; formerly regional director, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho. | 19, 29, 35, 39 |
| H. R. Stinson, regional counsel, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho.                                                         | 38, 180        |
| Charles Whitaker, secretary, Chamber of Commerce, Rupert, Idaho.                                                              | 42             |
| George C. Brazier, member, power rate pumping committee, Rupert, Idaho.                                                       | 42             |
| Charles E. Anderson, president, Upper Snake River Valley Water Users' Protective Union, Idaho Falls, Idaho.                   | 51             |
| Ival V. Goslin, general manager and engineer, Aberdeen-Springfield Canal Co., Aberdeen, Idaho.                                | 59             |
| William E. Hess, American Falls, Idaho.                                                                                       | 61             |
| John T. Pogue, Menan, Idaho.                                                                                                  | 69             |
| Thomas L. Sutton, mayor, Idaho Falls, Idaho.                                                                                  | 71             |
| Lynn Crawford, watermaster, Idaho Falls, Idaho.                                                                               | 72             |
| Charles H. Welteroh, manager, Robert Steele Canal Co., Jerome, Idaho.                                                         | 77             |
| R. P. Pacy, attorney, Twin Falls, Idaho.                                                                                      | 83             |
| E. W. Hasing, representative, Upper Snake Water Users' Development Committee, Washington, D. C.                               | 85             |
| Frank R. Clinton, assistant regional director, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho.                                           | 107, 209       |
| Ralph Gale, Idaho Power Co., Boise, Idaho.                                                                                    | 111            |
| George Corey, vice president, Utah Power & Light Co., Salt Lake City, Utah.                                                   | 181            |
| Albert M. Day, Director, Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior.                                               | 198            |
|                                                                                                                               | 224            |

# PALISADES DAM AND RESERVOIR PROJECT

MONDAY, AUGUST 8, 1949

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION OF  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS, AND A SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE SENATE INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,  
Washington, D. C.

The subcommittees met at 10 a. m. in the committee room of the House Committee on Public Lands, Hon. John R. Murdock (chairman of the subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation) presiding.

Mr. MURDOCK. The committee will come to order, please.

We have the pleasure of having the Senate subcommittee on this legislation with us this morning. Senator Miller, will you come up? Also, Senator Taylor. Senator McFarland will be a little bit late. Senator TAYLOR. I just wanted to make a little statement, but I will sit up here with you.

Mr. MURDOCK. We are glad to have you.

The Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation has been called this morning to consider H. R. 5506, a bill to authorize the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project, to authorize the north side pumping division and related works, to provide for the disposition of reserved space in American Falls Reservoir, and for other purposes.

The bill will be inserted in the record at this point.

(The bill is as follows:)

[H. R. 5506, 81st Cong., 1st sess.]

A BILL To authorize the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project, to authorize the north side pumping division and related works, to provide for the disposition of reserved space in American Falls Reservoir, and for other purposes

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,* That the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project, Idaho, heretofore authorized under the provisions of the Federal reclamation laws by the presentation to the President and the Congress of the report of December 8, 1941 (House Document Numbered 457, Seventy-seventh Congress, first session), by the Secretary of the Interior (herein called the Secretary), is hereby reauthorized under the Federal reclamation laws for construction and operation and maintenance substantially in accordance with that report as supplemented and modified by the Commissioner's supplemental report and the recommendations incorporated by reference therein, as approved and adopted by the Secretary on July 1, 1948.

SEC. 2. There are hereby authorized for construction and operation and maintenance under the Federal reclamation laws: (a) the north side pumping division of the Minidoka project, this to be substantially in accordance with the Commissioner's report, and the recommendations incorporated by reference therein, as approved and adopted by the Secretary on July 1, 1948; and (b) for the furnishing of electric power for irrigation pumping to that division and for other purposes, power generating and related facilities at American Falls Dam. These generating and related facilities, to the extent the Secretary finds to be proper for pay-out and rate-making purposes, may be accounted for together with other power facilities operated by the Bureau of Reclamation that are interconnected with the American Falls Dam power facilities, excluding any power

facilities the not profts of which are governed by subsection 1 of section 4 of the Act of December 5, 1924 (43 Stat. 701).

Sec. 8. The Secretary is hereby authorized to contract, under the Federal reclamation laws, with water users and water users' organizations as to the use for the benefit of the heretofore reserved storage capacity in American Falls Reservoir. Not to exceed three hundred and fifteen thousand acre-feet of that capacity shall be made available to those who have heretofore had the use of reserved capacity under some arrangements between the United States and the American Falls Reservoir District of Idaho, the distribution of this capacity among contractors to be determined by the Secretary after consultation with the interested water users' organizations or their representatives. Of the balance of the reserved capacity, forty-seven thousand five hundred and ninety-three acre feet are hereby set aside for use under contract for the benefit of the lands comprising unit A of the north side pumping division of the Palisades project, and seventy-one thousand acre-feet are hereby set aside for use under contract for the benefit of those lands in the Michaud area which may heretofore be found to be feasible of development under irrigation. Contracts for the repayment of construction charges in connection with reserved capacity shall be made without regard to the second proviso of the fourth paragraph (Minidoka project, Idaho) under the heading "Bureau of Reclamation" of the Act of June 6, 1924 (43 Stat. 417). Such contracts shall require the repayment of all costs determined by the Secretary to be allocable to the reserved capacity, less, in the case of the three hundred and fifteen thousand acre feet of capacity above described, three hundred and sixty-eight thousand and thirty-fourths of revenues realized, after deduction of what the Secretary determines to be an appropriate sum for operation, maintenance, and replacements, from the hoisting of that capacity for irrigation purposes up to the time water first becomes available in Palisades Reservoir and, in the case of the capacity set aside for the north side pumping division, all other revenues realized from or connected with the reserved capacity and which the Secretary determines to be available as a credit against the cost allocable to that division.

Sec. 4. (a) The continuation of construction of Palisades Dam beyond December 31, 1930, or such later controlling date fixed by the Secretary as herein provided, is hereby made contingent on there being a finding by the Secretary by the controlling date that contracts have been entered with various water users' organizations of the Upper Snake River Valley in Idaho that, in his opinion, will provide for an average annual savings of one hundred thirty-five thousand acre-feet of winter water. If in the Secretary's judgment the failure of the reclamation organizations so to contract by the controlling date at any time, is for reasons beyond the control of those organizations, he may set a new controlling date not beyond December 31, 1931.

(b) Repayment contracts made in connection with the use of capacity in either American Falls or Palisades Reservoir may include, among other things, such provisions as the Secretary determines to be proper to give effect to recommendations referred to in section 1 of this Act, and particularly those concerning the continued effectiveness of the arrangements as to the minimum average annual water savings.

Sec. 5. This Act is declared to be a part of the Federal reclamation laws as these are defined in the Reclamation Project Act of 1930 (53 Stat. 1187).

Mr. MURDOCK. There is a companion Senate bill, introduced by Senator Miller, and we are happy to conserve the time of the House and Senate by having this joint session or joint hearing.

I think it would be quite well and quite proper to open our hearings with a brief statement from the author of the bill, Congressman Sanborn, to be followed by Senator Miller, author of the companion bill in the Senate.

#### STATEMENT OF HON. JOHN SANBORN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Mr. SANBORN. Mr. Chairman, I will take the witness chair.

Mr. MURDOCK. Yes, Mr. Sanborn. We can see you better down there and also hear you better.

Mr. SANBORN. Mr. Chairman, I am happy that the Senate committee agreed to meet in joint session with us to consider these companion bills, and I am also happy to state that we have a large delegation of representative people from the territory involved, which is in my district in Idaho, and I assume that they will present some very interesting information to the committee.

Mr. Chairman, I have introduced H. R. 6666, and identical companion bills have been introduced in the Senate, for the following purposes:

1. The reauthorization of the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project, Idaho.

(a) This project will furnish reservoir storage space of 1,400,000 acre-feet, which will be used to store water to provide supplementary irrigation for about 600,000 acres of land in the upper Snake River Valley.

(b) Power installation of 112,500 kilowatts to supply firm power to the city of Idaho Falls and irrigation pumping power for the Michaud area, the north side pumping division of the Minidoka project, and other areas.

(c) Control of major floods and preventing damages to several thousands of acres of the irrigated land in the upper Snake River Valley.

(d) Fish and wildlife benefits through Palisades storage and the restoration of Gray's Lake to its natural state and control of its level to create the optimum of its wildlife environment.

(e) Substantial recreational benefits through the coordination and operation of the Palisades and Jackson Lake Reservoirs.

2. Authorization of the north-side pumping division of the Minidoka project to supply irrigation water to 77,650 acres of land now irrigated, lying north and west of Rupert, Idaho.

3. Power installation at American Falls Dam for the purpose of furnishing electric power for irrigation pumping and other purposes.

4. The sale of heretofore reserved storage capacity in the American Falls Reservoir as follows:

(a) Not to exceed 315,000 acre-feet of that capacity to those who have heretofore held lease arrangements for American Falls Reservoir space.

(b) To set aside 47,593 acre-feet of American Falls space for lands comprising unit A of the north-side pumping division of the Minidoka project.

(c) Setting aside 71,000 acre-feet of American Falls space for use under contract for lands in the Michaud areas which may hereafter be found feasible of development under irrigation.

This legislation is vital to the continued development of our irrigation and reclamation projects in Idaho. The active capacity will be used jointly for irrigation and flood control under a plan of operation worked out by the Bureau with the Corps of Engineers.

This project is a multiple-purpose development involving irrigation, power, flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife. The dam will be located on the main stem of the Snake River at Calamity Point in eastern Idaho about 8 miles west of the Idaho-Wyoming boundary, and about 50 miles east of Idaho Falls. In addition to

providing supplementary irrigation water, already mentioned. It will provide flood protection for several thousand acres of irrigated land on the Snake River plain above Idaho Falls.

The project will also provide additional hydroelectric power to serve irrigation pumping lands, municipalities, rural communities, and others. However, the production of power at Palisades Dam will be entirely incidental to the operation of the reservoir for irrigation and flood control.

It is encouraging to see some hope for actual completion of the Palisades project. This project was authorized in December 1931, and little more than preliminary survey work has been done to date. Roughly, this project will provide new farm homes and opportunity for livelihood for 1,000 or more families. The new wealth created in the form of new production from the farms in the division would create additional livelihood opportunities for an equal or greater number of families in the trade and industrial enterprises which would service this new farm production.

It will place a block of public domain, presently unproductive, into active economic production.

Details regarding the cost of the development proposed under H. R. 3488 are to be given the committee by officials of the Bureau of Reclamation, who are present, and will appear immediately following the conclusion of my statement.

The legislation under consideration deals with the control and use of water in the entire watershed of the Snake River above Miller Dam. The annual inflow of water into the Snake River, including Henry's Fork and other tributaries, averages about 6,000,000 acre-feet. Waters of the upper Snake River are now used for furnishing a full or partial supply of water for approximately 1,000,000 acres of high-type agricultural land. The proposed legislation will authorize the construction of units for the storage and use of nearly all of the water not now utilized in the upper Snake River Valley. The land to be irrigated is limited only by available water supply.

Among the outstanding cash crops produced in this irrigated area are potatoes, sugar beets, dry beans, and seeds. This valley is famous for its production of the high-quality Idaho russet potato. A very high percentage of the 100 carloads per day shipment of Idaho russet potatoes comes from this area. About one-third of the irrigated area is devoted to the growing of hay and alfalfa, in rotation, providing winter feeds for the livestock industry of the area. The upper Snake River Basin is a garden spot prolific in peas, canli-flower, and other vegetables and fruit. The valley as a whole is one of the largest agricultural communities in the entire West.

Idaho Falls is the metropolis of northeastern Idaho. The city has harnessed the Snake River and installed its own municipal power plant to supply its light and water. Idaho Falls has a famous street known as Spud Alley, from which 10,000 carloads of choice Idaho potatoes have been shipped within a single year.

A few miles west of Idaho Falls, the Atomic Energy Commission is starting the construction of its new plant for the purpose of applying atomic energy to commercial purposes.

As we move down the highly agriculturally developed valley of the Snake, we pass the Blackfoot and Fort Hall Indian Reservation and

eventually arrive in Pocatello, the second largest city of Idaho. Pocatello is a railroad center where lines of steel radiate to the east, west, north, and south, connecting Idaho with the markets of the world. At Pocatello railroad yards, car shops, and roundhouses, workers turn upwards of a million dollars each month.

A permanent addition to Pocatello in the war period was the naval ordnance plant, where guns up to 14 inches in diameter and 98 feet in length are rolled. Pocatello also boasts of having many factories; and in particular a fine cheese factory, oil-refining plant, and phosphoric acid fertilizer plants.

East of Pocatello, underlying grazing lands are 5,000,000,000 tons of phosphate, enough fertilizer to realize and maintain the fertility of worn-out farms of the entire Nation.

To the southwest of Pocatello is located the American Kalla Reservoir, with a store line of 125 miles and a capacity for storage of 1,700,000 acre-feet of water. This reservoir is a major unit for the purpose of supplying irrigation water to 400,000 acres of farm land and the towns of Rupert, Burley, Shoshone, Jerome, Twin Falls, Buhl, and Coalinga.

In this entire area, more than 95 percent of all farms now have electricity.

While most of the cultivated land of Idaho is devoted to high-quality potatoes, sugar beets, peas, beans, onions, wheat, and fruit, the production of vegetable seeds is also of great importance to the Nation. Idaho now grows more than one-half of all the vegetable seeds produced in the United States. Fifty percent of all onion seed used in the United States is grown in Idaho and more than 60 percent of all hybrid sweet-corn seed.

Idaho's reclamation projects have been developed over a long period of time on a unit-by-unit basis. Early projects were largely for the purpose of growing alfalfa and grain to supply winter feed for Idaho's sheep and cattle industries. In later years, more road crops have been grown, requiring a late supply of irrigation water, which, together with changing seasons, has resulted in water shortages being experienced on thousands of acres of lands under irrigation projects.

The Bureau of Reclamation has been conducting studies over a period of more than 20 years for the purpose of developing a plan to place under beneficial use all available water in the Snake River Valley above Milner, Idaho; and has recently submitted its reports on the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project and the north-side pumping unit of the Minidoka project, and its representatives and engineers are now present and prepared to give detailed testimony regarding the projects and other features proposed under the legislation now before this committee.

The benefits of the projects authorized in this bill will go far beyond the borders of the State of Idaho. With an increasing population and depletion of soil resources, the agricultural productivity of these projects will benefit the economy of the entire Nation. This development will not be immediate. It will require several years of work and planning before all projects authorized can be brought into full operation. The end result will strengthen our economy.

Following the officials of the Bureau of Reclamation, I will present a number of witnesses from the project area. These witnesses will include the watermaster of the river, the mayor of the city of Idaho Falls, officials and representatives of irrigation districts and other water users' organizations.

Mr. LEMCKE. Mr. Chairman, I think our colleague has made a very splendid statement, but I want to ask him just one question.

You say, "this is to reauthorize." Has this project been authorized? According to your statement it has; so why duplicate it? What is the reason for a second act if it has already been authorized?

Mr. SANBORN. Mr. Lemke, the project has been materially changed in size and benefits and needs reauthorization to proceed.

Mr. LEMCKE. Some new development has been brought into the bill; is that the idea, which is not in the old authorization?

Mr. SANBORN. The capacity, especially for the electric part of the project, needed enlarging; and it really appeared best to have the reauthorization to take in the added features.

Mr. MURDOCK. If that answer partially satisfies, let the Chair suggest that since we have our colleague, Congressman Sanborn, on the committee with us, we should refrain from further questioning now so that we may hear from the Senators who are here.

Mr. SANBORN. Mr. Chairman, I am sure that the engineers of the Bureau will go into those matters and answer those questions quite satisfactorily. I am sure we would be glad to hear from Senator Miller on the legislation. He is a member of the Senate Subcommittee and author of a companion bill. I am glad that we have Senator McFarland with us. He is the chairman of the Senate subcommittee, which is sitting with this committee. We are also glad to have with us Senator Taylor, senior Senator from Idaho.

Mr. D'EWART. I would like to ask the witness one question before he leaves the stand.

I would like to know how the Atomic Energy Commission came into this picture.

Mr. SANBORN. Just a statement of interest regarding the territory-community interest.

Mr. D'EWART. Will not the location of that project in this area destroy many of the benefits of this irrigation project?

Mr. SANBORN. I believe not.

Mr. D'EWART. It is dangerous.

Mr. SANBORN. I believe, if I remember correctly, the Montana delegation fought quite hard to get the Atomic Energy Commission into their territory.

Mr. D'EWART. That is correct, and here I find it right in the middle of this project.

Mr. MURDOCK. We thank you, Mr. Sanborn, for that statement.

We will ask you to hold yourself in readiness to answer a lot of questions. I have a lot to ask myself, pertaining to atomic energy and spuds and some other things.

Mr. SANBORN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MURDOCK. Senator Miller, we would be mighty happy to have a statement from you now. You probably do not care to go to the witness stand, but may we have a statement from you?

# STATEMENT OF HON. BERT H. MILLER, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Senator MILLER. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I have prepared no statement with respect to this matter and, of course, for that reason, I will be very short in what I have to say.

I was somewhat interested in the question asked by the gentleman over here on my right (Mr. Lemke) as to whether there had previously been any authorization for this project.

I mention that fact at the present time because I was unaware, until recently, that the dam for the Palisades Reservoir was moved upstream quite considerably, since I knew where it was some years ago. Whether or not there was any authorization I do not know.

Furthermore, during the very early part of the year some of the Idaho Falls energetic people talked to me about what a wonderful thing the completion of the Palisades Dam would be, insofar as the city of Idaho Falls is concerned, and they interested me to some extent. For that reason I did talk with the second assistant of the Department of the Interior incident to said dam and its benefits.

The Idaho Falls people were particularly interested in having the dam constructed, among other things, for the purpose of securing additional power at Idaho Falls.

As you may know, Idaho Falls municipally owns its utilities, but would not have sufficient to perform the tasks that these people who were talking to me had in mind for the energy that could be generated if Palisades Dam were constructed.

We have in that vicinity a great deal of low-grade ore, just whole mountains of it, and it is not so far from Idaho Falls. If we had adequate road facilities to it, which is just a comparative matter, we could make great use of it. Those people were vitally interested in making the city of Idaho Falls more prosperous. If we had the power and could bring in a lot of that low-grade ore, for the benefits that would inure from the smelting operations, it could be brought in cheaper. Then the power would also be available.

The particular representative of the Department of the Interior to whom I was talking gave that as a reason why there would be no activity with respect to the construction of the Palisades Dam, or as to why there had not been any heretofore. They recognized that, so he told me some of the benefits for irrigation, and that it would be very, very beneficial. However, what they were looking for was, of course, a multipurpose dam. They would not only have the benefits of irrigation, but they would also have hydroelectric power, and this dam would not be such as could participate in anything more, probably, than just the irrigation feature.

I have given considerable thought to that, and if there are any that have the same notion with me, I think that notion should be dispelled for the reason of the location of the Palisades Dam. We all know from the map that is high up on the south fork of the Snake River. In fact, it would be the farthest dam other than the dam at Jackson's lake that we would have. Of course, Jackson's lake, as you know, was created into a reservoir and supplies lands that also would be supplied to a certain extent by the Palisades.

These lands are down below American Falls Reservoir. Twin Falls and Minidoka, and all through that section of the country.

If we take into account for just a moment the hydroelectric possibilities of the dam such as the Palisades we must recognize the fact that all the irrigation waters or storage waters go farther on down the river and would, of necessity pass through that dam because it is higher up. Therefore, it appears to me that any thought that it would not contain what is largely sought from the Reclamation Bureau—or, I take it, from the Corps of Army Engineers—would be a thing of little or no consequence insofar as the possibilities of it are concerned because all of the water of the south fork of the Snake River—and it has a lot of it—would pass through that dam.

To me it would seem that the creation of hydroelectric power would be a matter of course rather than a matter of speculation.

We have tracts in Idaho above Pocatello or at least northwest of Pocatello and to the west of Lake Walcott, which forms a small reservoir for the Minidoka Dam, and west of the Minidoka Dam, and even to the northwest. There are vast tracts of virgin land that would be susceptible of irrigation in the event a project such as the Palisades is brought into operation.

To my way of thinking, and having been a native of the State of Idaho and seeing the development that has gone forward so far as irrigation projects are concerned, I can see what a vast area would be opened up in the event the Palisades Dam is authorized and utilized for the purpose of irrigating virgin tracts of land such as now are contemplated by the bills that are before these committees.

I think that is all I need say.

Mr. MURDOCK. Thank you, Senator Miller.

We have with us at this time Senator Taylor, who has an identical bill. Senator Taylor, may we hear from you?

#### STATEMENT OF HON. GLEN H. TAYLOR, A UNITED STATES SENATOR FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Senator TAYLOR. I am not going to address myself to the bill, but just to the committee, to thank you gentlemen for the courtesy extended to our delegation from Idaho. They will give you the facts of the matter, as well as the Reclamation Department.

I was impressed with the Chairman's questioning, since he mentioned atomic energy and Idaho potatoes in one breath. It is generally conceded that Idaho potatoes were the first development of atomic energy.

It you will hurry up and authorize this, that is all we ask.

As has been pointed out, we have waited almost 10 years, and it is a very important part of the development of our region out there. The atomic energy plant is located nearby, and in case of a national emergency I think it would be well, particularly, to have these power features close by in case long-range transmission should be disrupted by hostilities. I think the power aspects are very important.

Of course, the reclamation is going to bring in a lot of very fertile land, and we have GI's out there who are waiting for homes and we are glad to welcome GI's from any part of the country who want to

come out and settle. We have room for them. All we need is the water.

Mr. MURDOCK. It occurs to the chair that it is well we do not have service-club regulations applying to committee hearings. Otherwise, three gentlemen already would have to be fined for extensive advertising.

Thank you for your statement, Senator Taylor.

As I said at the beginning, this is a joint session. We had scheduled these hearings some weeks ago, and 24 hours in advance of the Senate hearing. As I said to Senator McFarland, the chairman of the Senate subcommittee, "We will be happy to have you come and meet with us." I wanted to open the session. I wanted, particularly, to invite the Idaho Senators to make a statement. However, I will be glad now to present the gavel to my colleague from Arizona, Senator McFarland.

Senator McFARLAND. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would prefer that you go right ahead. We are just visitors and are trying to learn all that we can here.

Mr. MURDOCK. Very well.

When I came here in the Seventy-fifth Congress and was made a member of this committee it was an independent committee. The Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation was a full and independent committee of the House. Congressman Compton White, of Idaho, was the chairman. I worked with him during those several years while he was chairman, and we put through a great many pieces of legislation which, I think, were highly beneficial to the West. I find that Congressman White is quite familiar with the whole field and realm of reclamation.

I am glad now to have him join with his colleagues in a statement concerning this particular legislation. Mr. White?

#### STATEMENT OF HON. COMPTON I. WHITE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF IDAHO

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, since I represent the northern district of Idaho I am somewhat familiar with this project.

In the first place, I want to say that I am in favor and am in full support of this legislation. The passage of this bill, as I understand it, and the carrying out of the program proposed in the bill is always dependent upon one thing, and that is the agreement of the States of Wyoming and Idaho for the use of water and the division of water of the Snake River.

The Snake River has been our main source of water supply in irrigating the large and productive areas of southern Idaho, which is one of the most productive areas in the whole Northwest.

I was quite surprised, when talking from a railroad standpoint, to learn the amount of tonnage and freight handled by the great Union Pacific Railroad system. It handles the freight from California, and the products of the Willamette Valley and all the Oregon country. I was told that the greatest part of their freight originated and came from the great production of Idaho. We all know the history of the Idaho potatoes and all the products of that great fertile productive country, which was semiarid until water was put on it.

The Department of the Interior, through its Bureau of Reclamation, has made a great many studies, and has worked out the details of irrigation plans to utilize the waters of the upper Snake River.

In this same hearing where the Palisades Dam is now proposed to be built, I think the first site was changed due to underground conditions, when it was found necessary to put the project over to another site. We have now agreed and have found a proper site. All we need is the agreement between the State of Idaho and the State of Wyoming.

This pumping project would be very beneficial. Not only will the proposed legislation give supplemental water to existing irrigation districts, but it will bring in new land, some of the most fertile in the State of Idaho.

I can think of no irrigation project that would do more good and bring more money to the people of Idaho. Do not forget the tax revenue to the Government in this project, which we have under consideration.

I am, therefore, sponsoring the legislation. I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MURDOCK. We thank you for that statement, Mr. White.

Congressman Sanborn, you have given us a list of witnesses.

May I ask the clerk whether there is a departmental report on the bill?

Mrs. McMICHAEL (the clerk). We have no report, as yet, on the bill. Mr. MURDOCK. Congressman Sanborn, what is your knowledge of the departmental report?

Mr. SANBORN. Mr. Chairman, I understand that the report has been prepared and will be ready to present to the committee at the hearing tomorrow morning. That is my understanding.

Mr. MURDOCK. You have knowledge that it will be a favorable report?

Mr. SANBORN. That is my understanding.

Mr. POULSON. Mr. Chairman, is there a representative here from the Department?

Mr. SANBORN. Yes. There are Department men here who can speak on that subject with authority, I am sure.

Mr. MURDOCK. May we have a brief answer as to the report, Mr. Nelson?

**STATEMENT OF WESLEY R. NELSON, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION, WASHINGTON, D. C.**

Mr. NELSON. My name is Wesley R. Nelson. I am Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation.

The report which was drafted in the Bureau of Reclamation has been cleared by all of the various bureaus concerned. It is now before the Secretariat and it is expected that it will be presented to your committee tomorrow. Obviously, I cannot say for certain until the Secretary finally signs it but we anticipate that you will have the report tomorrow. [The report is printed on p. 92 of these hearings.]

Mr. MURDOCK. Mr. Nelson, if you will please be seated, I see you are the first witness representing the Department.

Mr. NELSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. MURDOCK. Before you proceed with your testimony I would like to say just one thing.

We have on this committee, the Public Lands Committee, the entire delegation in the House from the great State of Idaho. We find that both of them are great boosters for Idaho spuds and many other products.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. MURDOCK. While we have the two Senators from Idaho here, we want to tell them that we think very well indeed of their colleagues representing Idaho in the House of Representatives.

Mr. NELSON, as a representative of the Bureau of Reclamation, will you proceed with your testimony?

Mr. NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, as has been previously stated, you have before you several identical bills, H. R. 5506, S. 2195 and S. 2203, all relating to improvements in the upper Snake River Valley. The documents which we will present, and the testimony of the witnesses that will appear before you, will give the committee sufficient background for appropriate consideration of the bill. I want at this time only to give you some general information about the proposals to be made effective through the bill and to let you know of the keen interest of the Bureau of Reclamation in those proposals.

The purposes of the bill are the reauthorization of the Palisades Reservoir and the authorization of the power installation at American Falls Dam, together with authority for disposition of unsold space in American Falls Reservoir, and the authorization of the north side pumping division of the Minidoka project.

Later the witnesses from the field will point out these various features in detail and give you an explanation of each one. Commissioner Page of the Bureau of Reclamation, whom many of you remember, presented the original plan for Palisades Dam in 1941, but its construction was regarded then, as now, as being dependent on the working out of assurances of a minimum water supply through the curtailment of certain wasteful winter diversions in the upper Snake River Valley. The Palisades Dam project was authorized in December 1941 upon the basis that these negotiations be worked out prior to construction. The negotiations and plan of operation, together with the plans for facilities to accomplish the desired operation, have now been completed.

As a basis for those negotiations, it was necessary first to make an intensive study of the water supply problems of the upper Snake Valley, but the war prevented the completion of that study until late in 1946. Since the completion of the water supply report, regional representatives of the Bureau of Reclamation have been meeting and negotiating with the water users as to ways and means of curtailing winter diversions. It was gratifying indeed to receive a report from Mr. Newell early this year indicating that agreement in principle had been reached as to this problem and the related one concerning the disposal of the heretofore unsold space in American Falls Reservoir.

The results of these negotiations are a special tribute to the patience of Mr. Newell and the confidence reposed in him by the various factions in the upper Snake River Valley, but I leave to him the privilege of discussing this in greater detail.

One phase of the proposal before you I wish to dwell on in a little more detail. Since the cessation of hostilities in the last war great pressure has been put on the Bureau of Reclamation to complete promptly the development of new land opportunities for veterans. In Idaho the immediate possibilities of this kind are limited, but one of these is the North Side Pumping-Division of the Minidoka project. That is an especially fine body of land lying north of the Snake River in the vicinity of Rupert.

Senator McFARLAND. Mr. Chairman, may I ask a question?

Mr. MURDOCK. Yes, sir.

Senator McFARLAND. Why are the possibilities limited? Is that on account of the elevation of the land there?

Mr. NELSON. The available water supply, primarily.

Senator McFARLAND. I thought Snake River had more water in it than Idaho was using.

Mr. NELSON. In the particular area where it could be applied to the lands I am confident that the water supply is fully appropriated, for the lands that are available.

Senator McFARLAND. For this project?

Mr. NELSON. For this project in this particular area.

Senator McFARLAND. But there are areas that could be developed in Idaho, are there not?

Mr. NELSON. There are other areas that could be developed in Idaho. The Mountain Home project is one. The costs of those developments are quite large, as you probably know.

Senator MURKIN. Do not forget the Bruneau tract of 1,000,000 acres.

Mr. NELSON. Yes, sir. Thank you for that comment.

Mr. BURNETT. I might say to my good friends from Idaho that all of the water to be stored in the Palisades Dam is Wyoming water, and we want to use a little of it in Wyoming.

Mr. PORTERSON. I would like to ask the Senator a question. Do you consider that all the water in the Snake River will be needed for the development of Idaho?

Mr. BURNETT. We hope not.

Mr. PORTERSON. And Wyoming.

Mr. SAMPSON. Mr. Chairman, in answer to that I believe that Idaho will not be able to hold all the water any more than Wyoming will be able to hold all the water. Some little will get away.

Mr. PORTERSON. The point is that you are going to have need for it, and it will not be going down into the Columbia River and be used as a propaganda move of the Department right now to say that it ought to go to California.

Mr. BURNETT. I will say to my colleague from California that we cannot hold all this water in Wyoming and make beneficial use of it. We can use a little.

Senator McFARLAND. I am afraid we cannot talk about developing the State unless California comes in.

Mr. PORTERSON. I just wanted it on the record at this point that we do not want any of that water. I think my colleague, Mr. Engle, will back me up on that. We are not asking for that water.

Mr. ENGLE. We would take it if we could get it.

Mr. SAMPSON. Well, we in Idaho certainly appreciate the fact that California is not after that water.

Mr. NELSON. The Bureau long has had plans for the development of these lands. The lands are 100 percent public lands, and they have been under withdrawal since 1908 looking toward their ultimate development. The original plan was for their development by the use of unsold space in American Falls.

During the course of negotiations as to ultimate disposition of American Falls space, it appeared for a time that the area to be developed would have to be greatly reduced because of insufficient storage water. However, with the well program now proposed, it now seems probable that the total development will embrace 77,650 acres.

Under the arrangement now proposed, a part of the division, called unit A, will be developed with stored water; the remaining lands, unit B, to be developed through pumping of underground water.

The Bureau of Reclamation with the cooperation of the Geological Survey, during the past 2 years, has carried on an exploratory well-drilling and test pumping program, and a number of private wells have been put down in the area. It is, of course, not possible to indicate now whether the entire area of 64,000 acres of land regarded as suitable for irrigation in unit B can be developed through the well program, but the prospects are promising.

Mr. BURNETT. Mr. Nelson, may I ask you a question right there? Is it because there is not sufficient water that you find it necessary to put down these wells?

Mr. NELSON. The problem in the Snake River Valley, which Mr. Newell will discuss later, is a very complicated one.

Mr. BURNETT. Very well, I will withhold the question.

Mr. NELSON. Unless you want to discuss the matter at this time I will let Mr. Newell explain it later, because he is more familiar with the details.

Mr. BURNETT. Very well.

Mr. D'EWEART. Mr. Nelson, will he go into the geological results of putting in these dams on the headwaters, and the effect it may have on the springs below?

Mr. NELSON. Mr. Clinton, the man who had charge of the later investigations, can give you some information on that subject.

Mr. D'EWEART. I understand they made extensive surveys.

Mr. NELSON. Yes, sir.

Actual experience with the pumping operations will, in the final analysis, dictate whether all of these lands, or possibly more lands can safely be supplied from the underground supplies. For that reason, our plan of development is flexible so as to permit full use of safe underground water withdrawals, without the possibility of damaging overdraft.

The problem in the upper Snake River Valley has been for many years that of providing adequate supplemental storage for existing irrigated lands. While the Bureau of Reclamation does have a special responsibility concerning the development of new lands, and especially public lands, it is also concerned about adequate storage for lands already developed. The opportunities for such storage are limited, and the Palisades site appears to afford the one best remaining opportunity for the upper Snake River Valley. We feel, therefore, that it will be of more than usual moment to Idaho to have the Congress approve a general plan that provides adequate supplemental water

for existing projects, and provides also for the development of a sizable block of new, public land.

Mr. Chairman, at the completion of my statement or at some place in the discussions I think it would be appropriate to insert certain documents.

I should like to submit for the information of the committee certain other documents.

I have with me a report on the Palisades project which has been submitted by the Secretary of the Interior to the President through the Bureau of the Budget; the report on the Minidoka north side development, which has been sent to the interested States for comment; and a pay-out schedule for the American Falls power plant. The committee may desire to have these as exhibits for its use in considering the bill.

Mr. MURDOCK. Without objection, they may be admitted for this purpose.

Mr. NELSON. Thank you, sir.

Mr. NELSON. Then I have a letter from Governor Robins of Idaho commenting on the north side pumping division of the Minidoka project.

I understand that a letter from the State engineer of Wyoming with respect to the Palisades project has been forwarded but has not yet been received, and that it is favorable. I believe it would be desirable to place it in the record at this point, when it is received.

Mr. MURDOCK. Without objection, it may be placed in the record at this point.

(The document to be furnished is as follows:—)

STATE OF WYOMING,  
STATE ENGINEER'S OFFICE,  
August 6, 1919.

Mr. WENDELL R. NELSON,

Acting Commissioner, United States Department of the Interior,  
Bureau of Reclamation, Washington 25, D. C.

DEAR MR. NELSON: This will acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 8, 1919, including two copies of your supplemental report on the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project in Idaho. One of these copies is being mailed to Mr. Clifford Hanson at Jackson, Wyo.

Wyoming water rights, and in particular its right to the use of an equitable portion of the water of Snake River, unappropriated at this time, would be seriously jeopardized by construction of this project in the absence of a compact or agreement with Idaho on division of the water.

Representatives of the two States have recently met and entered into an agreement that must be drafted into the form of a compact and approved by the representatives of the States, the legislatures and governors of the States, and consented to by the Congress of the United States before it becomes effective.

With the assistance of Mr. R. J. Newell, Federal Representative on the Snake River Compact Commission, and the legal and engineering staff of the Bureau of Reclamation, I feel sure that a satisfactory compact will finally be approved.

My only further comment is to the effect that your report appears to be complete and comprehensive, and seems to be ample evidence of the necessity for construction of Palisades Reservoir in the over-all development plan for the Columbia River basin.

Yours very truly,

L. C. BRANOR, State Engineer.

Mr. MURDOCK. Would it be desirable for the committee to hear Governor Robins' letter read? It is short.

Mr. NELSON. It is short, sir. If you like I shall read it.

Mr. MURDOCK. I think that would be preferable.

Mr. NELSON. It is addressed to the Honorable Michael W. Straub, Commissioner of Reclamation.

My DEAR COMMISSIONER: I have had on my desk for study for the past 3 weeks the proposed report of the Secretary of the Interior on the north side pumping division of the Minidoka project, Idaho.

This project has been a part of the over-all planning for nearly 45 years largely because it was, even thus early, recognized that the lands involved were, by the reason of their fertility, climate, and situation and topography, well suited to intensive agricultural use.

The project, in its major portion, will make beneficial use of Idaho's subterranean waters available in the area as demonstrated by the great amount of investigation work done by the Bureau. Developed by individual units as planned, there should be no deleterious effect on the subterranean water supply where continuing studies by the Bureau will keep check on this feature.

Referring again to history, when 500,000 acre-feet of American Falls Reservoir space was reserved for this project, it was naturally implied that as and when the development was feasible the obligation would be met.

For the above reasons and since new irrigated land in Idaho is in demand and since there is presently none being developed elsewhere exclusively for vegetables, this project has the hearty approval of Idaho.

Sincerely yours,

C. A. ROLING,  
Governor of Idaho.

Mr. D'EWEART. Mr. Chairman, this letter only covers part of the authorization in H. R. 5506. Does the Governor of Idaho approve the rest of the features?

Mr. NELSON. The project report concerning the reauthorization of the Palisades project was not required to be forwarded by law to the governors of the States but it was sent to them for informational purposes.

Similarly, the American Falls power plant is considered as already authorized. The present proposal is for the completion of the plant.

Mr. D'EWEART. Does the Governor of Idaho give his approval to all features of H. R. 5506?

Mr. NELSON. We only have from him the statement with respect to the Minidoka north side unit.

Mr. SANBORN. Mr. Chairman?

In answer to that I believe that the Governor will have a representative who will speak for him on the bill.

Mr. NELSON. I understand there is a representative here.

Mr. BARRETT. Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MURDOCK. Mr. Barrett.

Mr. BARRETT. I have been advised that the Governor of Wyoming and the State engineer have sent down a communication on this matter. It has not been received in my office as yet. It will probably be received today.

I should like to inquire from you, Mr. Nelson, if my understanding of the situation respecting Wyoming and Montana is correct.

I have before me a copy of a resolution adopted by the Snake River Compact commissioners on July 29 last. I assume that you have a copy of that, also.

Mr. NELSON. Yes, sir.

Mr. BARRETT. The resolution is short. I will read it:

*Be it resolved by the Snake River Compact commissioners as follows:*  
That, with respect to the main stem of the Snake River and the Salt River, the forum for the apportionment of water measured at the State line, excluding rights for use in Wyoming established prior to July 1, 1949, shall be in principle as follows:

Idaho shall have the right to divert directly or store 96 percent thereof. Wyoming shall have the right to divert directly or store 4 percent, subject to the following conditions:

One-half thereof, or 2 percent, of the flow at the Idaho-Wyoming State line may be used without restriction. The other one-half, or 2 percent, of said flow at the State line shall be subject to the requirement that replacement storage shall be provided for the reimbursement of Idaho users who may be injured by such diversion to the extent of one-third, and all diversionary rights to be established for projects to be constructed by Federal agencies shall be subject to this requirement until this 2 percent has been appropriated for use in Wyoming.

That the adoption of this formula is subject to clearance by L. C. Bishop, State engineer of Wyoming, and, of course, to the incorporation of it in a suitably framed compact to be executed by both State compact commissions and subsequently ratified by the State legislatures of each State and thereafter approved by the Congress.

That it is the sense of this meeting that the Idaho Compact Commission will request that the Bureau of Reclamation do not request any more appropriations, other than that now pending in the amount of \$205,000, be made for Palisades Reservoir until after the Idaho Legislature shall have ratified a compact in accord with the foregoing.

Now, the difficulty with our State has been occasioned because of the recent illness of our State engineer, Mr. Bishop. However, he has recovered and he advises that he has approved this resolution.

I would like to ask you now if it is not your understanding that the reauthorization of this project will be upon the condition that appropriations pursuant thereto will be made in accordance with this understanding, and that clearance for appropriations will be conditioned upon (1), the execution of the compact and ratification by the legislature of the State of Idaho and approval by the Governor; and (2), that the Bureau will withhold its request for appropriations until the Idaho Legislature has acted. At least, since I do not want to put it quite that strongly, they may make the request for appropriations but they will advise the Appropriations Committee after the Idaho Legislature has ratified this compact that there is no reason why the appropriations should not be made.

Is that not your understanding?

Mr. NELSON. Yes, sir. I believe it would be desirable to make the request for the appropriation because it takes a long time to follow designated procedures in getting the item before the Congress.

However, when the item does come before the Congress a full statement will be made of this proposal so that the Congress will be fully aware of it.

I assume that the State legislature will have an opportunity to act upon this item before appropriations are actually passed by the Congress next year.

Mr. BARNETT. I certainly approve of that arrangement and I think it is very fair and equitable and satisfactory and in accordance with the proper methods for handling these matters.

My State, of course, furnishes most if not all the water that will be stored in the Palisades Reservoir and we are agreeing to take a very small part of it—4 percent to be exact—together with such other water as we presently have the right to use.

Mr. WHITTE. Will the gentleman yield for a question at that point?

Mr. BARNETT. Just let me finish this line of thought, please. Accordingly, as I understand the situation, Wyoming will interpose no objection to the reauthorization of the Palisades project with the

distinct understanding that while the Bureau may request from the Bureau of the Budget an appropriation for the Palisades Dam for the fiscal year 1951 that neither the Bureau nor the State of Idaho will insist upon appropriations pursuant thereto and in fact they will advise the Appropriations Committee that they have agreed not to request the appropriations unless and until the Idaho Legislature has ratified a compact and the Governor has approved same providing for the agreement that we have outlined above.

Mr. NELSON. I think that is a very fair statement, Congressman Barrett.

Mr. BARNETT. Thank you very much.

Mr. NELSON. And the Bureau of Reclamation will follow that line. Mr. BARNETT. I yield to the gentleman from Idaho.

Mr. MURDOCK. Mr. White?

Mr. WHITTE. You stated a minute ago that the request for the appropriations should be made, so that the money could be made available, and not too much time would be lost.

Mr. NELSON. It is a matter of the procedure involved. We must put in our request to the Bureau of the Budget within the next month. Mr. WHITTE. Assuming that this authorization is made for the passage of this legislation, then the item would be put into the Bureau of Reclamation budget and would be sent to the budget and be included in the regular Department of the Interior appropriation bill. Is that the plan to be followed?

Mr. NELSON. We would make the request to the Bureau of the Budget within the next month, as I mentioned, anticipating that action would be taken on the authorization, and ratification by the State of Idaho, prior to the time the appropriation is actually made.

Mr. WHITTE. In other words, you would make a separate budget estimate and send it up to the Bureau of the Budget as soon as this authorization is made for this legislation. Is that the plan?

Mr. NELSON. We would send it up at this time, regardless of whether the authorization is made or not. If the authorization is not made the Bureau of the Budget may refuse to send the item to the Congress.

Mr. WHITTE. Then in your statement you want to anticipate and expect to anticipate favorable action on this authorization, and you will fortify yourself by having the Bureau estimate in there?

Mr. NELSON. That is right; yes, sir.

Mr. WHITTE. I think that is a good procedure.

Mr. MURDOCK. Off the record just a moment.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. NELSON. Mr. Chairman, would it be in order for me to finish my statement? I only have a couple more comments.

Mr. MURDOCK. Go right ahead.

Mr. NELSON. The officials for the Fish and Wildlife Service are here to testify on behalf of the plans, and I have a favorable report by the National Park Service which I would request be inserted in the record.

Mr. MURDOCK. Without objection, it may be admitted.

(The document is as follows:)

STATEMENT BY THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, ILLINOIS, AS PART OF THE PALISADES PROJECT, IDAHO, BEFORE THE JOINT HEARING OF SUBCOMMITTEES OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS AND THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS (IDENTICAL BILLS, H. R. 6506, S. 2105, AND S. 2203, 81ST CONG., AUGUST 8, 1940)

The National Park Service has consistently maintained that no satisfactory method has been developed for evaluating recreational benefits at reservoir sites in terms of dollars and cents. The sale of water for irrigation purposes or municipal consumption and the sale of electricity are measurable transactions in marketable commodities. Recreation, however, is an intangible thing. The kind and degree of benefit that people derive from recreational areas varies with every individual, with the weather, and with many other factors that cannot be expressed in monetary terms. Since there is an undeniable economic benefit, however, connected with the provision of recreational facilities in adaptable and accessible locations, the National Park Service holds that it is justified in assigning a "judgment value" to such benefits, drawing on its long experience in the field of outdoor recreation for its conclusions.

The construction of the Palisades Dam and the plan of operation proposed by the Bureau of Reclamation would result in important recreational advantages, mainly in the vicinity of Jackson Lake but also to some extent at the reservoir behind Palisades Dam. The stabilization of Jackson Lake would greatly enhance the appearance of the shore line, which is muddy and littered with stumps and debris under draw-down conditions at present. This improvement would also result in a far better foreground for the spectacular Grand Teton which are viewed across the lake by all travelers through that country. Much additional recreational development and use, especially for boating and fishing, would be possible with a stabilized lake level. With a constant water level at the shore the best of the present unsightly mud flats, attractive opportunities would be provided for the location of accommodations for visitors, both transient and vacationing, and the establishment of facilities such as boat livery would be encouraged.

Despite the adverse factors of attractions in the general vicinity, rough topography, and fluctuations in water level of the Palisades Reservoir it is certain that a structure like Palisades Dam together with the large body of water in the reservoir will attract people to the area. The Service estimates that those who number about 4,250 people annually. Accommodations such as parking, camping and picnicking areas, access roads, water, toilet, and boat piers should be provided in order that the public may take full advantage of the recreational potentialities of the reservoir.

It is the judgment of the National Park Service that the benefits accruing to the Jackson Lake area by reason of construction of the Palisades Dam would be worth \$1,000,000 over the life of the project, due to the increased tourist business which would result and to the fact that visitors would stay for longer periods under more attractive conditions. It is also estimated that benefits in the amount of \$250,000 would be realized by the provision of recreational facilities at the Palisades Reservoir site. At the present time approximately 250,000 people annually visit the Jackson Lake area. Based on this number alone the total proposed allocation to recreation of \$1,250,000 would only amount to about 48 cents per visitor over the life of the project.

Mr. NELSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

That agency would also be glad to have a representative appear in person on behalf of the plan.

There are three representatives from the Bureau of Reclamation here to testify today. The first is Mr. Robert Newell, now a consultant, and formerly the regional director of region 1, in which these projects are located.

The second is Mr. Frank Clinton, the man who was in charge of the recent investigations on this project, and who knows all the answers in that regard, and who is now assistant regional director of region 1, receiving that appointment about a month ago.

The third is Mr. Howard R. Stinson, the chief counsel for region 1, who is one of the top-notch lawyers in Reclamation. He has had

some 15 years with the Department, of which 11 have been with the Bureau of Reclamation. He has been in region 1 for the last 5 years.

Mr. Newell retired just recently, after more than 31 years of service with the Department. He started in 1903 as an engineer aid on the Minidoka and Boise projects, so he knows this area from a long way back.

He was out of the service for a while, including some flood-control investigations over in China, and he came back in 1923.

Among the various undertakings which he accomplished satisfactorily were superintendent of the Boise project and construction engineer on the Deadwood Dam of the Boise project.

Later assignments included service as construction engineer on the Cle Elum Dam, eastern Washington, and he was also connected with the construction of the Owyhee Dam.

He was appointed regional director in 1945. He handled prior to that time the raising of the Arrowrock Dam.

One of the items that he paid a lot of attention to, and as a result the report was completed recently, was the comprehensive development of the Columbia Basin.

Finally, I should say that he on his retirement received the highest award which the Secretary of the Interior could confer, that for distinguished service.

I would like for Mr. Newell to be the next witness for Reclamation.

Mr. MURDOCK. Thank you for that statement, Mr. Nelson.

(Discussion off the record.)

Mr. MURDOCK. Now, if Mr. Nelson will remain with us a while, we may want to ask some questions.

Mr. Miras. Mr. Chairman?

Mr. MURDOCK. Governor Miles.

Mr. Miras. Before the witness proceeds with his testimony, there was a statement made this morning that I cannot let go unchallenged. Some of my colleagues here promised to come to my rescue, but they do not seem to be coming forth.

It was stated that Idaho and the Idaho potato created atomic energy. I want it understood that it was New Mexico and the pinto bean.

Mr. MURDOCK. My impression is, Governor, that you do not need anyone to come to your assistance.

Mr. PORTLON. Mr. Chairman, will Mr. Nelson be the chief representative of the Department, or Mr. Newell?

Mr. NELSON. I expect to be able to answer questions relating to departmental policy.

The gentlemen from the field, of course, are familiar with the figures and facts relating to the project, but I shall be at hand to answer any questions you wish to ask.

Mr. PORTLON. I want to ask some questions later on.

Mr. MURDOCK. Mr. Newell is scheduled as our next witness.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT J. NEWELL, CONSULTANT WITH THE BUREAU OF RECLAMATION; FORMERLY REGIONAL DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF RECLAMATION, BOISE, IDAHO.

Mr. NEWELL. Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I am R. J. Newell of Boise, Idaho. I was recently regional director and now am consultant with the Bureau of Reclamation.

This project that is to round out the land and water development in the upper Snake River Valley is quite important because that development now includes more than 1,000,000 acres of good irrigated land.

I would like in the beginning to tie down this term "upper Snake River Valley." The formal Palisades report designates the watershed of the Snake River above Milner Dam including lands irrigated by canals diverting at that point as the "upper Snake River Valley."

Now, in local usage, we divide this section in two parts at the American Falls Reservoir. About half the improved land is below the American Falls Reservoir and it is locally referred to as the lower valley; and the other half above will probably be referred to by succeeding witnesses as the upper valley.

This land in the upper valley was developed first largely by private enterprise. Practically all and certainly the greater part was under ditch before the year 1900.

After the beginning of this century the two Twin Falls tracts, the south side and the north side, were developed by private capital under the Carey Act. Very nearly at the same time, beginning about 1904, or 1905, the Minidoka project was developed under the Reclamation Act. That includes something over 100,000 acres.

The south side of the Minidoka project is almost entirely watered by pumping and a power supply was necessary to make this pumping possible, and a power plant was installed at the diversion and storage dams at Minidoka to supply this power for pumping.

As soon as operations began, it seemed wrong to let that power plant stand idle through all the season that irrigation was not going on, and arrangements were made to peddle it out in the nonirrigation season to settlers in the farming area and in the towns of Rupert and Burley largely at first for space heating. Thus the project got into the power business 40 years ago.

The planning for this area of over 1,000,000 acres of irrigable land in the valley was handicapped by lack of water-flow records. At that time the records of river flow had not been kept long enough to disclose possible years, sometimes two or more successive years, of short flow. Also, through the years since that time the farming practice has changed from the old grain and hay economy in which late water was not important to the more high-priced row crops such as the Idaho potato and sugar beets which demand plenty of water in the late season.

It was soon discovered that supplemental water in large amounts would be necessary for the land that had been developed practically all by 1920.

There is a reservoir at Jackson Lake on the edge of Wyoming that was originally installed for the Federal project at Minidoka.

There is also a reservoir at Henry's Lake, which was installed for the privately irrigated land in the upper valley, and that is practically all the storage that was available in 1890.

By that time the demand for supplemental water had become strong enough that the provision of storage was the main interest in the next period. For the extreme upper end of the upper valley the Island Park Reservoir and the Grassy Lake Reservoir were provided.

For the major part of the valley, both upper and lower, the large

reservoir at American Falls was built, and Jackson Lake Reservoir was increased in capacity.

It was then believed that the American Falls Reservoir would be sufficient to meet the demands for supplemental water. Subscriptions were taken from the districts that were short of water, and, incidentally, those districts were required to put up the cost of the storage in advance at that time; and such subscriptions amounted to half the feasible capacity of the reservoir.

Some of the districts underestimated how much storage they would need. Others were not in an organizational or financial condition to put up the money.

There remained one-half that reservoir capacity which was unsubscribed for, and it was proposed by the Government at that time to hold it for the area that we now term the Minidoka north side pumping.

Shortly after this the Gooding division, which is on the Wood River, got into serious water supply difficulties and Congress authorized the sale of half the remaining reservoir space in American Falls to the Gooding, but the inference was that the other half, or one-fourth of the total space in American Falls, would still be reserved for the Minidoka north side pumping, which is a part of this general project.

Mr. WHITE. Will the gentleman yield there for just one little question?

You speak of space. Was there water in the space or was it just vacant?

Mr. NEWELL. The American Falls space yields almost 100 percent water. The reservoir has not filled every year, but generally it fills and space means water.

Mr. WHITE. The supply coming down the Wood River to the big irrigation district was found to be short, and the arrangement was made to take the water and just apply it to half the land, and make a deal with the Government to get water from this reservoir for the other half by building a long canal?

Mr. NEWELL. You are speaking of Gooding now?

Mr. WHITE. Yes.

Mr. NEWELL. That is correct.

The original Gooding development covered too much land for the water supply available.

Mr. WHITE. It was to get the water from the Wood River?

Mr. NEWELL. That is right.

Mr. WHITE. But it was insufficient, so they cut it down to one-half and eliminated the other half from consideration, and then got water from this reservoir on the Snake River for irrigation. Is that the Minidoka or the American Falls?

Mr. NEWELL. American Falls.

Mr. WHITE. It took a long canal to do that.

Mr. NEWELL. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. And the people on the other half who got water from the Wood River had to help bear the expense of building this canal?

Mr. NEWELL. That is right.

Mr. BARRETT. Mr. Newell, would you mind pointing out the 650,000 acres that will get supplemental water on this project and also the new land, on the map?

Mr. NEWELL. The new land is easily pointed out. It is colored in yellow, in these two locations [indicating]. One is adjoining the Minidoka project and one is adjoining the American Falls Reservoir.

It is not so easy to point out the 650,000 acres which would subscribe for space in the proposed Palisades Reservoir. That would include the north site, Twin Falls, not the south side, possibly a small subscription by each side of the Minidoka, and the area in the upper valley varies. Some districts need a little water, some of them need none at all, and some need a very considerable amount; so there is a large percentage of this upper valley area that is subscribing for more or less Palisades space.

Mr. WINTER. Will you indicate where the Palisades Reservoir will be?

Mr. NEWELL. The Palisades Reservoir is on the south or main fork of the Snake, a few miles below the Wyoming-Idaho line, and the backwater crosses the line several miles.

Mr. WINTER. How much is the lift? How high will the lift be?

Mr. NEWELL. For the Minidoka north side? It is about 160 feet. I believe I have worn out the usefulness of that chart for a moment, perhaps.

Mr. LEAKE. Let me ask you this question: How many acres of valuable land do you flood or cover up with water and retire from cultivation entirely because of this dam?

Mr. NEWELL. There are about 6,000 acres which are being farmed, irrigated or dry-farmed, in the reservoir area.

Mr. LEAKE. So it is just a small amount?

Mr. NEWELL. Check. And that is in a high mountain valley.

Senator MULLER. Mr. Newell, would you irrigate any on the south of the American Falls Reservoir, by gravity flow?

Mr. NEWELL. It would be possible to divert a good many miles up the valley through an Indian Service canal, and extend that canal far enough down to cover that land. It is believed that it will be cheaper and more feasible not to use that long canal but to pump directly out of the American Falls Reservoir.

Senator MULLER. About how many acres would be included in that tract?

Mr. NEWELL. There is believed to be in the neighborhood of 30,000 acres of good, irrigable land. Perhaps a little less than that.

Mr. MURDOCK. While we are on the technical phase of it, one or two questions occur to me, right at this point.

What is your water duty in that area? About how much water per acre do you use for farming operations?

Mr. NEWELL. That varies very widely according to the soil conditions. The Twin Falls tracts, I believe, use a little over 3 acre-feet per acre, between 3 and 4.

The requirement increases as you go up the river, and much of this upper valley is on a gravel bed and uses a much larger amount of water which, however, generally returns to the stream and is reused at lower points.

Mr. MURDOCK. Yes. Senator, have you any questions to ask? Senator MCFARLAND. You had not finished your testimony, had you?

Mr. NEWELL. No.

Mr. MURDOCK. Go right ahead, Mr. Newell.

Mr. NEWELL. It should be mentioned that when the American Falls Reservoir was built it was contemplated that at some time a power development would be made there, and pen stocks were installed in the dam for use if and when such a power plant should be built.

Part of the cost of right-of-way and water rights was charged to power and, has been held in a suspended account since that time.

Shortly after American Falls was built we had an unprecedented drought in the Snake River Valley which lasted over 5 years, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, and 1935. In two or three of those years the reservoir did not fill. Particularly in 1934 and 1935 the supply was very short and the damage to crops was very severe.

The settlers immediately started a request for investigations for further storage. In that connection on new projects it is frequently difficult to get domestic water. Wells frequently have to be very deep and are very expensive, and it is the usual procedure to use ditch water held in cisterns for domestic purposes and in ponds for stock water which requires the operation of canals in the winter.

The upper Snake River Valley is rather a cold country and to keep ditches open and operate them through the winter you must run them to considerable depth, so the practice has grown up on a considerable part of the valley that diversions of water were made in the winter for domestic and stock purposes and in much greater amounts than were actually used, but these greater amounts were made necessary by the possibility of getting the water through the ditches in cold weather.

The study for additional supplementary water, as stated by Mr. Nelson, ended in the Palisades project report that was submitted in 1941. It was given a feasibility certification contingent on the saving of some of this winter water that had been diverted in such large amounts in the past so that there would certainly be something to put in the reservoir if it were built. That was a difficult problem. That has required much of negotiation that has gone on since 1941. That is the contingency that was necessary before this request for a reauthorization could be made.

The project plan has developed. Arrangements for the saving of at least 135,000 acre-feet of this winter water diversion were necessary. The plan also required an agreement for the disposition of the remaining unsold space in the American Falls Reservoir. This required settlement of the long deferred plan for the Minidoka north side pumping, and that required a provision for pumping power for that particular project.

So the project that we have brought in here for authorization includes, as has been laid out, the Palisades storage reservoir with power in connection, the Minidoka north side pumping, the disposition of the unsold space in the American Falls, and the provision of power at the American Falls Reservoir.

For Palisades we have received appropriations for preliminary work for the past four years. We have completed or practically completed all the foundation exploration, the testing and drilling and surveying.

Mr. D'EWEART. May I inquire with regard whether or not it is class A funds or class B funds? What are those appropriations you have used?

Mr. NEWELL. I am not familiar with those terms.

Mr. D'Ewart. Class A is construction funds and class B is preconstruction and class C, under the rules of the Appropriation Committee, is surveys and studies.

Mr. NELSON. Those were in the category of construction funds for the authorized project.

Mr. NEWELL. We have bought some right-of-way for the dam and camp.

As the negotiations necessary for authorization looked more promising we have started the preliminary work that would be necessary when the actual construction of the dam could start.

We have let a contract for a transmission line to carry construction power into the site, such power as would be needed, as soon as the contract for the construction of the dam was let.

We have signed a relocation agreement with the State of Idaho for relocation of the State road that traverses the reservoir. The first schedule of that road construction has been advertised for bids and bids received and I believe that the work has been awarded this past week end.

On the American Falls Dam the old penstocks are still waiting to be connected for power development there.

In regard to a settlement of the disposition of the unsold storage in American Falls, that has been a subject for long, extended negotiations. As I have stated, there was originally reserved about half the total capacity for new land. Then half of that part was disposed of to the Gooding district.

When the severe drought started in the early 1930's the remaining water was leased to water users throughout the valley, and that leasing arrangement has continued ever since. The unsold space has been leased from year to year to present water users for 18 years.

These water users have urged that they be allowed to purchase this remaining space in American Falls, and the proponents of the Minidoka north side pumping project have urged that the space not be reserved for this north side pumping.

Gradually a compromise has been worked out in which an agreement has been made that about 70 percent of the remaining unsold space be sold outright to the water users in the valley who have been leasing it all these years and the remaining 25 to 30 percent be used on new land, divided between the Minidoka north side pumping and the Michaud area.

Mr. WHITE. May I ask a question there?

If that water is sold outright, what becomes of the space in the reservoir from the north side plant which you propose to build now?

I understood from your first statement that half the reservoir had been subscribed for, and the rest of the water or space had been reserved. Now you speak of selling it outright to water users. What becomes of the reservations made for the north side pumping in the event of such a sale?

Mr. NEWELL. It is proposed that there will still be reserved and earmarked for the Minidoka north side pumping a small part of this reserved storage space.

Mr. WHITE. You told us that so many acres were to be put under water, the supplemental and new acres, by this proposal, for the north

side plant. If you only reserve a little space in the reservoir, will you have enough to do the job you propose to do?

Mr. NEWELL. Well, there enters the subject of ground water. It is an interesting fact that for over 200 miles down the Snake River there is not a single tributary from the north, all having been cut off by the lava flows.

Mr. WHITE. In other words, what you mean to tell the committee is that the Wood River and the flow of the Wood River and the flow of the Lost River disappear? They go underground and are not seen any more until they come out in Thousand Springs down on the walls of the Snake River?

Mr. NEWELL. That is correct. There is a great amount of underground water flowing through this north side area and it is planned to tap this underground water for irrigation of the land on the North Side Minidoka, beyond what the reserved space in American Falls and some associated Palisades space will cover.

Mr. WHITE. Do you not think that you are raising a very complicated and interesting issue in talking about tapping the water that flows underground, when you know that the local utility, the Idaho Power Co., is operating a big plant down at Thousand Springs, and you might deplete the water flow? Would we not get into trouble with the utilities if we tried to tap the water flowing underground that emerges in the springs that flow out of the lava walls and are trapped there by the local utility and turned into power? Would we not get into trouble if we tried to tap that underground flow?

Mr. NEWELL. The total water that it is proposed to pump out of the underground supply is less than 5 percent of the water that emerges in that Thousand Springs area. It is physically possible that it could affect to some such extent as that, the rights of the Idaho Power Co. in that area. If such effect were established then some arrangement would have to be made about it, but it is a very small portion.

Mr. ASPINALL. Will the gentleman from Idaho yield?

Mr. WHITE. Certainly.

Mr. ASPINALL. In other words, as I understand it, it would not affect the feasibility of the project proposed here this morning?

Mr. NEWELL. That is correct.

Mr. WHITE. The question in my mind is this: Provision has been made to preserve a part of the space for this north side pumping now. It is now proposed to utilize that space. It has been explained to the committee that in past years due to the drought years there has been a shortage where the reservoir did not fill.

In the division of water between the different organizations of water users, who would have priority? Would we be able to take care of the north side project in the event there were a shortage of water in the reservoir? Suppose it did not fill and there was not enough water to go around. How would you divide the water?

Mr. NEWELL. We have always divided the water in the American Falls in percentage of total space. If it lacked 10 percent of filling then each right in it would be reduced by 10 percent.

Mr. WHITE. Have you such a clause in your contracts with the different water users?

Mr. NEWELL. That is right.  
 Mr. WHITE. You are talking about an outright sale. Would they have to take a cut, also?  
 Mr. NEWELL. Yes, indeed.  
 Mr. WHITE. I just wanted to clear up these items.  
 Mr. MURDOCK. Off the record a moment.  
 (Discussion off the record.)

Mr. MURDOCK. Senator Taylor?  
 Senator TAYLOR. There is no certainty of that? As you said, there is just a bare possibility that this water taken from underground in the Minidoka project would in any way affect the Thousand Springs, is that not what you said?

Mr. NEWELL. It certainly could affect it, only very slightly.  
 Senator TAYLOR. Then it is unlikely it would affect it at all. It is unprayer quite a ways, and a good long ways. It is more than probable that the water that comes out of Thousand Springs much further down the river comes in from the north.

Mr. MURDOCK. Senator McFarland, did you have any questions?  
 Senator McFARLAND. Will Mr. Newell be back on the stand tomorrow?

Mr. MURDOCK. Yes.  
 Senator McFARLAND. His testimony has been very constructive, and I want to state that we appreciate the privilege of having this joint session with the House and trying to save a little time for these witnesses who have come so far, to keep them from testifying twice.  
 Mr. Newell has already given a good picture of this project and I will be glad to come back tomorrow to be with you.

Mr. MURDOCK. We appreciate having this joint session, Senator.

Possibly Senator Miller has some questions at this point.  
 Senator MILLER. Well, all I am going to say or want to ask Mr. Newell is this: There has been no appreciable increase in the flow of the Thousand Springs since irrigation was brought into effect to the northeast of the springs, has there?

Mr. NEWELL. I do not have the records at hand, but I think that the flow in the Thousand Springs area has increased with irrigation on the north side of the river.

Senator MILLER. How long have you been acquainted with those springs?

Mr. NEWELL. Well, I have observed them for 40 or 50 years, but I do not have such records of their flow as are available in mind. I can produce them, I think.

Senator MILLER. And they serve no useful purpose at the present time, only to run some more water into the river? The only use that is applied to the Thousand Springs is one plant for the Idaho Power Co.?

Mr. SANNON. Well, Mr. Chairman, I would like to interpose one observation at that point.

The valley of Hagerman is also irrigated from those springs. It is not just the Thousand Springs but other springs which have come from the same source. There is also an irrigation project of about 8,000 acres which gets water from this same spring source, and also power plants are operated from water that comes from the same underground source.

Senator MILLER. Yes.

Mr. SANNON. As a matter of fact, my own home place is irrigated from this same spring water.

Senator MILLER. What I am trying to get at is that the Thousand Springs covers an area so far as the bank of the river is concerned coming out of solid lava.

Mr. SANNON. That is right.

Senator MILLER. Of a distance of 8 or 10 miles, in that vicinity, or 6 or 7 miles, at least.

Mr. SANNON. It starts in the Blue Lakes near Twin Falls and continues for better than 40 miles down the river.

Senator MILLER. Yes. There was a good amount there before there was ever any irrigation up on the benches above.

Mr. SANNON. I might observe, also, that there may be some increase since irrigation. My observation is that the flow has been quite constant through the years, however.

Senator MILLER. In other words, it would be purely speculative as to whether the irrigation above it increased that flow or not?

Mr. NEWELL. I would like to refer to the records on that.

Senator MILLER. I think it is rather inconsequential.

Mr. NEWELL. Check.

Mr. WHITE. Would you not include all the flow in the Hagerman Valley, and those streams, in the water that comes from Wood River and disappears through the lava beds? Would you not include all the water in the streams and springs in the Hagerman Valley with the Thousand Springs water? That comes down the Wood River and Lost River and disappears and finally comes out again down along the Snake in the springs, running into the Snake River.

Mr. NEWELL. It is usual to include all the spring inflow from the Milner Dam down as far as a distance of 50 or 60 miles, as a measure of this underground flow.

Mr. POWLSON. Will the gentleman yield?

You are not positive, then, that the water which you will be pumping out is water that makes up the Thousand Springs?

Mr. NEWELL. No; I am not positive.

Mr. POWLSON. That is what I say.

Mr. LEAKE. Even if it were, what harm is done? You are saving the water and using it; are you not?

Mr. NEWELL. We might be reducing the water used by the Idaho Power Co. through several plants in that stretch of the river.

Mr. LEAKE. But you create a lot of new power; do you not, by this dam?

Mr. WHITE. Will the gentleman yield to me?

Mr. LEAKE. Yes.

Mr. WHITE. For the purpose of the record, the water on the north-side pumping plant does not come in any way from the water of the flow that comes from the water in the Snake River and which is stored at the American Falls Dam. You are talking about the supplemental or additional places where you might tap some underground water with wells to the north, but the water covered by this bill is not underground water at all. That comes from the flow underground, and this water comes out of the main Snake River and is stored in the American Dam and Reservoir and will be lifted and put out onto the ground.

Is that not correct?

Mr. NEWELL. The Minidoka north-side project that we are asking authorization for includes about 14,000 acres of land that will be supplied by surface water from American Falls and about 64,000 that we propose to irrigate by pumping from ground water, so that it is about one-fifth surface water and four-fifths ground water.

Mr. WHITE. That ground water is not the water that flows under this lava bed?

Mr. SANBORN. Yes; it is.

Mr. NEWELL. Yes, indeed; yes, sir.

Mr. WHITE. I wanted to get the record straight.

Mr. MURDOCK. Perhaps we ought to discontinue the testimony at this point.

You will be available tomorrow, Mr. Newell?

Mr. NEWELL. Yes, sir.

Mr. MURDOCK. At 10 o'clock?

Mr. NEWELL. Yes, sir.

Mr. MURDOCK. I, too, want to congratulate you on the splendid statement on a highly technical matter. You see, it is very difficult for us who live 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 miles from the area to get accurate information.

Mr. WHITE. Mr. Chairman, I would like to add to what the chairman has said in complimenting Mr. Newell for his wonderful and comprehensive statement and his technical grasp of the whole problem. I think it is as clear and as concise as anything I have ever heard. Senator TAYLOR. May I say that Mr. Newell is one of our best-loved and most-respected citizens out there in Idaho. He is not an individual out there; he is an institution.

Mr. MURDOCK. We can understand that very well.

The committee stands adjourned until 10 o'clock tomorrow morning. (Thereupon, at 12 noon, Monday, August 8, 1949, an adjournment was taken until 10 a. m. Tuesday, August 9, 1949.)

## PALISADES DAM AND RESERVOIR PROJECT

TUESDAY, AUGUST 9, 1949

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON IRRIGATION AND RECLAMATION OF  
THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC LANDS, AND A SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE SENATE INTERIOR AND INSULAR AFFAIRS COMMITTEE,  
*Washington, D. C.*

The subcommittees met at 10 a. m. in the committee room of the House Committee on Public Lands, the Honorable John R. Murdock (chairman of the Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation) presiding.

Mr. MURDOCK. The committee will come to order, please. We will proceed with our hearings. This is a continuation of the hearings on H. R. 5506, a bill to authorize the Palisades Dam and Reservoir project, and for other purposes.

We are glad to have the Senators join us for the conservation of their time and the time of the committee, and those people who have come some distance. I understand that other Senators are on the way here and will be here presently.

We are glad to welcome Senator Taylor again this morning. Senator TAYLOR. Thank you.

Mr. MURDOCK. Mr. Newell was our witness yesterday and had not completed his testimony.

Mr. Newell, may we hear from you further?

STATEMENT OF ROBERT J. NEWELL, CONSULTANT WITH THE  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION, FORMERLY REGIONAL DIRECTOR,  
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION, BOISE, IDAHO—Resumed

Mr. NEWELL. Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the committee, there have been several years of field negotiation leading up to this plan that has been presented. A great deal of that negotiation had to do with the disposition of the unsold space in the American Falls Reservoir. There remains 433,000 acre-feet of space which has not been sold but which has been leased for the last 18 years to water users in the valley.

The proponents of the development of the new lands wanted all of this space. The old water users in the valley who had been leasing the space also wanted it all. The result here offered is a compromise between those two positions.

It is clear that if the space in question is used on new land the prospective shortages on old land in the valley will be more severe than would be the case with this compromise.