

Naturalist Finley Attacks Proposed Inland Waterways

Tourist Business Called More Important to Oregon

BY WILLIAM L. FINLEY
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In the recent columns of The Oregonian are numerous articles regarding a bill introduced in congress by Senator Charles L. McNary and Representative Walter Pierce, asking for a federal appropriation of \$23,700,000 for another dam on the Columbia river at Umatilla rapids. It is stated the reason for this dam is to develop inland waterway transportation. Also, the army engineers have recommended a program for a new series of dams on the Columbia and Snake rivers at an estimated cost of \$138,000,000. There is also a bill in congress asking for the first appropriation toward building seven high dams on the headwaters of the Willamette river.

While the leading businessmen of Oregon have advocated a policy of the government balancing its budget, at the same time they have a dagger in hand trying to force our representatives in congress to grab millions of dollars out of the United States treasury to finance all these local promotion plans.

Mayor Joseph Carson seems to be the only public official who has publicly opposed vast sums of federal money being spent on local projects. It is a dangerous policy that has spread through hundreds of communities in different states which is forcing the federal government more into private business year after year, and will eventually lead to disaster.

What is really the most important industry in Oregon? Is it not the one that is pushed by the state highway commission to bring tourists to Oregon from all parts of the country to enjoy outdoor life and spend the summer in our recreational areas, angling, cruising and enjoying our rivers, forests, mountains and shoreline?

The migratory fish runs of Oregon are not only one of its greatest attractions, but also one of our most important outdoor resources from the commercial standpoint.

Records of the past show that our fish runs cannot be maintained with dams that turn our fine rivers into lakes and change the whole biological conditions of these waters. The proposed projects have been studied only from an engineering standpoint. Although engineering is an important business,

it alone cannot determine the future of this state.

What is inland waterway transportation? It does not include the lower stretches of a deep river like from the mouth of the Columbia to Portland, Or. It is the use of upper stretches of rivers, like the plan of barging from The Dalles up to Idaho. Such water transportation is 70 years out of date. The whole country is a network of steel rails, and every populated district is lined and interlined with modern highways, where trucks and automobiles supply numerous traffic demands.

There is an old saying that transportation by water is cheaper than by land. This does not refer to inland waterway transportation. The entire expense and upkeep on these inland routes is taken from the pockets of the taxpayers.

This so-called inland waterway transportation is the result of the greatest pork-barrel legislation in the United States. On the Missouri river, for instance, between St. Louis and Kansas City, where the country is well populated, one might expect this to furnish cheap transportation. Perhaps it is cheap for barge owners and shippers, because the facts show that for every ton of freight moved along the river the cost to the taxpayers is over \$5000.

After the government tried to deepen the channel on the Missouri river between Kansas City and Sioux City, the taxpayers met the freight bill at \$2900 per ton.

Eight hundred thousand dollars have already been spent to deepen the channel between The Dalles and Umatilla rapids on the Columbia river. What will it cost the taxpayers for freight moving on the upper Columbia between The Dalles and Lewiston, Idaho? According to the top figures of estimated boat transportation furnished by the promoters our nation will be paying anywhere from \$25 to \$50 per ton for such inland waterway transportation.

The building of the canal system in New York state for inland waterway transportation shows clear proof from the state officials that it would have been cheaper to have loaded all the freight carried on the canals into railroad cars and let the state pay the full freight bills.

Since there is a great campaign under way for inland waterway transportation on the upper Columbia, and since the proposed project will destroy our salmon runs, why shouldn't we have certain experts figure out how much our nation will lose instead of gain?

THE SALMON INDUSTRY IMPERILED.

Portland, Ore., June 15. In THE TRIBUNE of June 5 is an article entitled "U. S. Guards Pacific Salmon Fishing Trade," telling of the campaign to prevent the Japanese from selling out and canning the salmon runs that belong to the Americans.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

While those interested in the conservation of our salmon runs have carried on a good campaign for the Alaska fisheries, certain politicians and promoters are waging a bigger fight to destroy the salmon resources of Oregon, Washington, and Idaho, one of the most important industries of the west and one of our greatest recreational attractions. The records show that these runs of Pacific salmon have been rapidly playing out. In many places this important food fish is on its last fins.

Of all the rivers of the world the Columbia is the finest salmon stream. It has produced, and still produces, more and better salmon than any other stream. The federal government has built one dam across the Columbia river at Bonneville which is about 70 feet high and about 140 miles from the mouth. The construction of gravity fishways or ladders has enabled the salmon runs to successfully get above this dam. The second dam now being constructed by the government at Grand Coulee is about 350 miles above Bonneville. This will be over 500 feet high, but the engineers have not even considered any attempt to build fishways. This blocks completely the spring Chinook runs that pass Bonneville dam and work on to the headwaters of the Columbia to spawn. The records prove that these cannot be maintained by artificial propagation and hatcheries. The salmon industry of the Columbia supports thousands of families. It is a harvest worth \$10,000,000 a year, which is 5 per cent on a \$200,000,000 gift of nature and not burdened with debt.

The promoters are now pushing plans for seven more dams on the upper Columbia and Snake rivers to turn this picturesque stream into a series of lakes to develop inland waterway transportation. Bills are now before congress to construct the first dam in this series at Umatilla rapids at a federal cost of \$23,700,000. Another bill provides for seven high dams on the upper Willamette river, the best salmon tributary of the Columbia. These will change the whole biological character of the rivers and put an end to the valuable salmon runs.

While many of the leading businessmen have advocated a policy of the government balancing its budget, yet at the same time pressure groups are organized in many localities to grab funds for local interests at the expense of the federal taxpayers. This is a policy that has spread through hundreds of communities in different states and is forcing the federal government more into private business and will eventually lead to disaster.

Why should the government furnish funds to promote schemes that wreck our salmon runs? When a river has various public values, why should we not prevent one use of public waters from destroying its other values? Before the Columbia and Willamette rivers are exploited by these local pressure groups, is it not common sense to make detailed and careful studies to find out which is the most important service of these rivers?

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