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STATE OF IDAHO
Office of the Governor
BOISE

July 1, 1954

Major General S. D. Sturgis, Jr.
Chief of Engineers
Department of the Army
Washington, D. C.
and
Commissioner W. A. Dexheimer
Bureau of Reclamation
Department of Interior
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

Reference is made to the letter of May 21, 1954, signed jointly by the Chief of the Army Engineers and the Commissioner of Reclamation requesting a statement from this office with regard to certain projects proposed for construction and described in official copies of studies designated as the Review Report on Columbia River and Tributaries, Middle Snake River Basin -- Lewiston to Pittsburg Landing -- Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

Specifically described in these reports are four projects: Bruce's Eddy and Penny Cliffs on the Clearwater River and Pleasant Valley and Mountain Sheep on the Snake River.

The Clearwater River is the largest peak producing tributary of the Snake or of the Columbia itself. It has no artificial storage and no irrigation potential. Storage at Bruce's Eddy on the North Fork and Penny Cliffs on the Middle Fork will not interfere with present or future irrigation development in Idaho or elsewhere; will provide flood control benefits in the state and downstream; will insure a stable water supply for industrial development in the Lewiston area; and will increase the benefit cost ratio of the four proposed lower Snake River Navigation-Power dams as well as firming up all other downstream plants now operating. The selection of Penny Cliffs site appears to be a justifiable compromise with the maximum development claimed for the Kooskia site, development of which would have inundated the three towns of Kamiah, Kooskia and Stites and also a fertile valley.

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The two dam combination of Pleasant Valley and Mountain Sheep selected by the Bureau as the most feasible plan of development for that stretch of Snake River from the mouth of Salmon River to Pittsburg Landing is acceptable with some reservations. We recognize this selection as being also a justifiable compromise (in lieu of the Nez Perce site) that will permit full use of Salmon River and Imnaha River for anadromous fish.

We are disappointed that the diversion of Salmon River water to Snake River by tunnel did not appear so attractive under scrutiny. This diversion had seemed to offer a possibility of harnessing part of the uncontrolled Salmon River without interfering with fish resources.

Because the Snake River is the life blood of Idaho with only part of its irrigation potential now being utilized, we are extremely sensitive to the construction of power dams that might someday conflict with future depletion of stream flow for irrigation or other beneficial uses under state law. The language in the Report bearing on this point is reassuring but not conclusive if we are correct in assuming that the authority to build federal power dams is constitutional in origin.

We question, too, why the cost estimate of this two dam combination is more than twice as great as the immediate upstream proposal for a three dam combination now being aired before the Federal Power Commission --- both the two dam combination and the three dam combination purporting to develop comparable heads under very similar topographic conditions.

To sum up we believe these studies have disclosed four excellent prospects for projects that will fit admirably in the main control plan. Each of these four dams has a satisfactory benefit cost ratio. More detailed investigations will no doubt be made by whoever builds them.

In keeping with the power policy of the administration to the effect that the primary responsibility for supplying the power needs of an area rests with the people locally, we see no necessity for federal construction of these dams if other agencies not financed from the federal treasury are able and willing to construct them to acceptable standards, either wholly or on a partnership basis, and operate them as integral parts of the Pacific Northwest power supply.

Sincerely,

(Sgd) Len Jordan
Governor