

Agency Scope Boise Issue

Groups Struggle To Prepare Drafts

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BOISE, Idaho (Special)—Scope of the proposed interstate compact governing the Columbia basin cropped up Thursday as subcommittees struggled to prepare tentative drafts.

Differences of opinion arose in the power subcommittee over whether the compact should provide merely for co-operation in preparation of plans for water uses, power, fish and wild life, navigation and pollution abatement, or instead provide for a construction agency.

Howard Stinson, Boise, representing government agencies, proposed inclusion of power to initiate action on projects.

Charles Savage, Washington's representative, urged that the commission be given more authority than it will perhaps ever use, so that it will not become merely "another recommendatory agency which would have no authority itself and might block another agency from assuming authority."

Stinson raised the question of financing under the debt limitations common to all of the states if authority were given for the commission to serve as a construction agency.

H. T. Person, Wyoming, objected to creating another construction committee.

Second Agency Seen

Committee sentiment appeared to favor a compromise which would permit the commission to initiate projects but let some other agency handle construction.

Topics assigned for subcommittee study included:

Engineering—Determine water for upstream consumptive uses

as against downstream use for power, navigation, etc.; protection of state water laws; order of preferential uses of water; impower state co-operation with other states and federal agencies in a water control plan; transbasin diversion within the Columbia basin and outside, and consideration of Indian rights.

Fisheries—Study of fisheries problems.

Legal—Consideration of existing compacts concerning water as part of the interstate compact; navigation; provide that two states with joint water rights can settle problems by agreement or compact without action of the over-all compact authority; and consider relationship with British Columbia and Canada.

Power—Establish authority for allocation of power to states and transportation of power outside of the basin.

Pollution—Provide control of pollution in interstate streams.

Executive—Agree upon number of commissioners, terms of office and pay, and authority for the commission to provide finances for its own operation.

Fish Policy Hinted

The fisheries subcommittee reported it will prepare a final draft of its recommendations in a meeting at Seattle January 25. Its recommendations will include:

State fisheries agencies to be fully informed of commission planning and any state comments to be made part of the official record.

Commission policy to require fish protective measures in all developments, including the principle of substitution or restitution elsewhere.

Responsibility of construction or operating agencies for future fish protective installations, such as downstream facilities.

Cost to be part of project costs.

In allocating water, needs of fisheries are to have priority second only to domestic and municipal water supplies.

Consideration to be given to maintenance of minimum stream flows and stable pool levels, established prior to start of construction, to conform to fish requirements.