

Surveys on 4 Snake Dams Are Ordered

Maj. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis, chief of the corps of engineers, has directed the Walla Walla district office to begin new surveys of eight hydroelectric dam sites in the middle Snake river basin.

The directive follows an appropriation of \$140,000 which congress earmarked for new feasibility reports which are to supplement those of former years conducted by the army on the Snake and its principal tributaries. Congress ordered a report on the new survey by next January.

Sites to be surveyed, General Sturgis said, are Nez Perce and Mountain Sheep on the Snake, Crevice on the Salmon river, Kooskia, Forks and Penny Cliffs on the middle fork of the Clearwater river, and Elkberry and Bruces Eddy on the north fork of the Clearwater.

Both Cooperate

Although three of these proposed projects — Nez Perce, Mountain Sheep and Crevice—were formerly assigned for study and future construction to the bureau of reclamation in the agreement with the engineers of April 11, 1949, both the bureau and the corps are co-operating in the forthcoming re-evaluation, it was indicated by spokesmen for both agencies.

The new survey is significant in that all of the sites mentioned would be for storage dams. Some have been advocated as alternatives to the controversial high Hells Canyon storage dam, which is now being spotlighted by hearings before the federal power commission on an application by Idaho Power company for permits to build three smaller projects above the Hells Canyon site.

Four Are Controversial

In its 1950 survey of the Colum-

bia basin, the corps found that the Nez Perce and the Hells Canyon sites jointly offered the maximum benefits from the middle stretch of the Snake; that the Crevice site was best adapted to development of the Salmon, and that Kooskia was the best in the Clearwater system. But all four have proven controversial — Hells Canyon because of fears expressed by upriver irrigationists, Crevice and Nez Perce because of possible fish losses, Kooskia because it would flood out four towns and 183 miles of roads.

Forks is a site upstream from Kooskia being considered as an alternative. Other alternatives to Kooskia considered by the corps are combinations of Elkberry dam on the north fork and Penny Cliffs on the middle fork of the Clearwater.

Work on the surveys and the new reports got under way early this month when Col. F. S. Tandy, Walla Walla district engineer, spent considerable time making a personal survey of the basin.

Assignments for the work have been made within the planning branch of the district office.

High Potential

Engineers realize that the Clearwater river constitutes the biggest flooding river in the Pacific Northwest—and it also has one of the highest potentials for power development.

In fact, it was explained, the Clearwater has been listed as the flooding stream of the Snake River system.

Both the Salmon and Clearwater rivers are intra-state streams (entirely in one state) eliminating the necessity of agreements between states, officials said.

The district engineer declared that this report is vitally important to the future development of the Pacific Northwest. There are many factors to be considered, he said, including the curbing of floods, selection of sites or sites that will not damage the fish industry and the storage of water for a variety of purposes including power and irrigation.