

Orofino Group Asks Support Of Clearwater Dams Program

An appeal that residents of the entire Lewiston area "stand together solidly" in support of a river development program on the Clearwater River was voiced yesterday by a delegation from Orofino at a joint meeting of the Waterways and Highways committees of the Lewiston Chamber of Commerce.

Bert Curtis, Orofino, chief fire warden for the Clearwater Timber Protective Association and Pottlatch Timber Protective Association, outlined plans proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build two dams on the North Fork of the Clearwater River and others on the Middle Fork of the Clearwater and the Selway River.

Discussion of the Middle Fork projects quickly brought a motion that the Highways Committee support the North Fork dams but oppose the Middle Fork proposals on the grounds that the latter might threaten completion of the Lewis & Clark Highway. The motion was tabled for future study and discussion after Curtis assured the group that the federal government would relocate any highways flooded by any of the projects and would build, if the upper river dams were constructed, a better Lewis & Clark Highway link than the one now being constructed.

For Ice Harbor Too

Curtis emphasized that his organization was as eager as anyone to protect the Lewis & Clark Highway and assured Chairman J. W. Shepard of the Waterways Committee that the Orofino delegation would work with Lewiston interests to obtain Congressional appropriations to build Ice Harbor Dam on the lower Snake River. Spokesmen for both communities stressed that they wished to avoid any conflict of interest between the supporters of Ice Harbor and the Clearwater projects.

Curtis reviewed the engineering studies conducted on the Clearwater last summer by the Corps of Engineers under an appropriation obtained by Sen. Henry Dworshak (R-Idaho) to find suitable sites for water storage projects in the headwaters of the Columbia River.

"Col. R. S. Tandy, Walla Walla district engineer of the Corps of Engineers, asked me to make two points clear," Curtis said. "First, these Clearwater dams have not been authorized by Congress, and even after they are approved it may take a long time to get appropriations. Second, the Engineers are not in any kind of promotion work."

Curtis said the entire area "will have to hang together" at a public

Dworshak that the Senator would work vigorously in Congress "for any program Idaho can fully agree on." Dworshak indicated, Johnston said, that "Oregon interests may not be successful in pushing John Day through ahead of Ice Harbor as they did with The Dalles" if Idahoans can present a solid front in Congress. The Clearwater projects, Johnston remarked, "were initiated, in my opinion, to find a suitable storage substitute for Hells Canyon dam." However, he said, additional storage will be needed in the upper basin whatever happens in the Hells Canyon controversy, and "it seems to me to be most important that this region stand together behind immediate appropriations to build Ice Harbor and authorization for any of the Clearwater projects we can get united support for."

Move to Favor North Fork

The motion to favor the proposed dams on the North Fork and oppose those on the Middle Fork was made at the beginning of the meeting by J. C. Jeppson, chairman of the Highways committee, who was called away from the meeting before it ended. Don Zirbel, a member of the committee, moved that the motion be tabled after Curtis and Roy Huffman, a member of the Waterways committee, assured the group that the Corps of Engineers would relocate a "four-lane, black-topped highway" through any section of the Lewis & Clark highway flooded out by Middle Fork projects. The tabling motion was passed after Bert Schroeder, a member of the Highway committee, stipulated that the tabling should mean merely postponing the motion for later discussion.

Shepard said he was assured last week by the Army Engineers at Portland that highways would be relocated as a normal part of operations on any dam project conducted by the Corps.

Elbert Stellmon, member of the Waterways committee, asked Curtis: "There is no question, is there, that we would get Ice Harbor built first?"

"We are in accord there," Curtis said.

H. E. Karlburg of the Highway committee remarked: "You'll get no opposition on the North Fork, but you'll get plenty of opposition on flooding the Lewis & Clark highway, even with the plans for relocation."