

# Bruces Eddy 'Urgently Needed,' Chief Of Engineers Declares

OROFINO—The commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers said here Tuesday Bruce Eddy Dam is "the most urgently needed project in the Northwest, if not the United States."

Maj. Gen. E. C. Itschner, corps chief from Washington, D.C., gave this assurance in an interview and in conversation with civic leaders and staff associates who accompanied him on a whirlwind inspection tour of the dam site and its storage pool area on the North Fork of the Clearwater River.

He said the project's top priority has been determined because of its flood control potential and its value to downstream power works. Gen. Itschner estimated \$130,000,000 would be needed to plan and build the dam.

Gen. Itschner said he is encouraged by the progress of efforts to counter arguments that the dam would harmfully affect fish and wildlife and by recent legislative action in the Senate calling for \$500,000 in planning funds.

Gen. Itschner advised his new district engineer at Walla Walla, Col. Paul H. Symbol, and division engineer near Col. Allen Clark at Portland to make preliminary plans for work on designs and actual testing, so that when money is available there will be no delay in official work on the dam project.

He said, "I would get going on Bruce Eddy at once, make an immediate start and line up now what work will have to be done."

Gen. Itschner said the \$500,000, although authorized under the civil works appropriations bill, is still not available to the corps.

### Wording Needed

He explained, "there must be some language outlining Bruce Eddy funds placed either in the 1959 appropriations bill or in the committee report," before the money will be appropriated and made available.

He said he was advised of this need by the House parliamentarian. The Bruce Eddy funds are covered in the Senate bill, but not in the House version. The bill is now in the hands of a joint committee.

"The conferees must put it in or it will drop out entirely," the general said. "Sen. Dworshak (R-Idaho) got it in in the Senate and I am confident he will push to keep it in the conference."

A planning start hinges on final action by Congress and the President, he said, but he added, "it is only a matter of time when we will get Bruce Eddy constructed. It will be constructed and it will benefit this area greatly."

He said, "We are most anxious that Bruce Eddy be built. It is extremely desirable."

He said the corps was assured that money was available to complete designs for Lower Monumental Dam on the Lower Snake River. He said he is hopeful that stepped-up appropriations for the four dams in that project area would be approved as outlined by the Senate.

In a talk at lunch the general commented, "If Bruce Eddy is going to hurt fish and wildlife resources a great deal, we (the

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Corps of Engineers) would be hesitant about giving it our full hearted support."

"And I have testified before Congress that there is no truth in the opposition. They (opponents) are not fair or they are completely ignorant. It would cause infinitesimal damage."

The general said the development of hydroelectric projects is a "must" to "maintain pace of our enemies."

"I am amazed to see how far the Russians are going," he said. "We have three dams of 2-million kilowatt capacity. Russia is building 10 with an installed capacity of between 2-million and 6-million kilowatts. One is completed, three are under construction and plans are well advanced on the others."

"They are making great advances but they are a long way behind the United States. But we must keep in mind what is best for this country."

### 'Most Needed'

The general then interjected, "Bruce Eddy is the most needed of all projects that could be built at this time for flood control purposes."

He said in the Columbia River flood of 1948 some 16 per cent of the flood water came from the Clearwater.

"We need flood control on this river very badly."

"Some persons," he said, "have been given a false impression as to the effect upon wildlife. It is very sad that this has gotten around."

"And let me point out that we do not want to get into the position of stumping for projects, because we do not push projects, but give facts to Congress."

"I am confident when Bruce Eddy Dam is finished we will have more fish and wildlife and it will greatly benefit the people downstream. It will mean one and one-half times the power benefits to downstream works than at the site."

Gen. Itschner told a reporter the site, one mile upstream from Ahsahka, "is the best suitable site we have discovered in flood control and it is very valuable for power."

"Bruce Eddy will have far-reaching effects all the way to the mouth of the Columbia and particularly to below The Dalles," he said.

Mayor A. B. Curtis of Orofino, host at the luncheon, told the group, "The only opposition to Bruce Eddy is from the fish and wildlife people. We have learned so much the past years and there is a job ahead of education and information to the wildlife group."

"They are totally unapproachable," Curtis said. "I have tried to draw the stinger out but I have only found a growing amount of misunderstanding and deliberate misunderstanding at that. They are deliberately unapproachable to an explanation."

Curtis said he has heard estimates that building the dam and backing up the water some nine miles would mean a loss of between 35,000 and 50,000 elk in the drainage area.

He said "reliable studies show that only 5,329 elk are in the drainage area and of that only 1 per cent is in the pool area. Four-tenths of 1 per cent of the winter range is in this area and that's hardly worth mentioning."

He said Lewiston and Orofino "must get the word out to those who have been led astray."

Curtis pictured the completed dam and reservoir as a tourist lure and said it would tie in with the Lewis & Clark Highway as a lure to keep tourists in north central Idaho.