

Bruces Eddy Could Be Started In 1962, Corps Official Says

OROFINO — If the next session of Congress provides authorization and funds, construction of a 670-foot high concrete gravity type dam at Bruces Eddy could begin in the spring of 1962, Col. Paul H. Symbol told a gathering here Wednesday night. Symbol is district engineer for the Walla Walla division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. If constructed, it would be the largest dam of its type in the world, he said.

The Corps of Engineers earlier had hoped to build a thin concrete arch dam at the site on the North Fork of the Clearwater River "which would look beautiful," said Symbol. But he said geological problems, particularly on the west side of the river, and the fact that the opposing bluffs slope off too sharply will prevent this type of construction.

Symbol spoke to 250 packed into the Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall. The meeting was sponsored by the Clearwater Dam Ass'n.

Predicts Favoring Action

Mayor A. B. (Bert) Curtis, who introduced Symbol, predicted favorable action on the project in the next session of Congress. The dam was first proposed eight years ago.

The dam has not been authorized by Congress but the last session appropriated \$600,000 in planning funds. Symbol's report was on the progress of planning by the corps.

He said one phase in the use of these planning funds may lead to better solutions to passage of downstream migrant fish through dam turbines.

Although other dams built by the corps in the Columbia River Basin have been lower, "we have had no trouble getting fish upstream" on these, he said. The major problem always has been safe passage of the downstream fish.

Looking forward to Bruces Eddy, an experiment was conducted at Tacoma City Light Co.'s 470-foot high Cushman Dam No. 2 on the Olympic Peninsula, said Symbol. In that experiment, 77.7 per cent of the 40,000 tattooed Chinook, salmon, steelhead and trout survived passage through the dam's turbines, he reported. He said pathologists from the U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service cooperated in the experiment during which turbines were operating at maximum efficiency.

"Cushman is an old dam—not designed to handle fish," Symbol noted.

He said the corps previously had been working with Allis-Chalmers, builders of heavy equipment, on the problem. With information gained in the tests "we now hope to design new turbines which will increase survival" of the fish passing through them, he said.

670-Foot High

Symbol said not all the engineering plans have been completed, but it now appears a 670-foot high dam can be built at an elevation of 1,600 feet above sea level.

Construction costs for three generators to supply 250,000 kilowatts of power are estimated at \$166-million, he reported. Final construction costs are estimated at \$185,000 when another three generators would be installed to produce a total of 510,000 kilowatts.

Six gates to control floods would provide a flow of 200,000 cubic feet of water per second, "twice the maximum flow of record of the 1933 flood," said Symbol.

The dam would store 3,340,000 acre-feet of water, with two million acre feet utilized for flood control, he said. (An acre-foot is an acre of water one foot deep.)

He said the proposed 150-foot drawdown "might disturb some people. But the water level would be dropped 150 feet in the winter. We would hold to the normal level during the entire summer recreation season." The water level would be lowered in the winter to prepare for spring flood water, he explained.

The pool created by the dam would extend 53 miles upstream on the river, even to about eight or nine miles up the Little North Fork of the Clearwater, said Symbol.

Symbol said, in passing, that 4 per cent of the big game winter range would be inundated by the pool, but did not elaborate. The dam has long been opposed by wildlife groups who contend it would destroy a large portion of the winter range of the area, particularly for elk.

He said log passage facilities planned at the dam will reduce transportation costs and the pool will provide log storage space. "It now appears construction of log handling facilities would be a federal cost. Maintenance costs would be borne by private concerns," he said.

Symbol anticipated five or six years will be required for construction of the dam. The first year of construction, the 100 employed, plus about 10 from the Walla Walla district Corps, would bring about 315 persons to the Orofino area, he said.

2,200 New People

"During the fourth and fifth years, when construction reaches its peak, about 700, plus 60 government employees, will be on the job. This would mean a total increase of 2,200 persons moving into the area," he said.

He added that it is not the present policy of the Corps of Engineers to provide housing for construction workers, unless the situation becomes critical. "We look to the people of this general area to furnish this," he said.

While relocation problems aren't great at the proposed dam, about 15 miles of road from Ahsahka to Dent will have to be relocated, he reported. A bridge or ferry would have to be used to cross the upper end of the pool where the road to Headquarters now crosses the river, he added. "We will replace all present roads and preserve facilities," he said. "Our plan is to leave you people whole. And we will consult with you to find the best solutions to these and other problems."

Oliver Lewis of Walla Walla, chief of construction for the Walla

Walla division of the corps before his retirement 1½ years ago, also advocated construction of Bruces Eddy.

"There are no unsolved problems in connection with Bruces Eddy," he said. "Major controversies exist in connection with construction of dams on the middle Snake River. Dams on the middle Snake should not be built until these controversies are resolved."