

# Stipulations Put Bruces Eddy Dam In Poor Position

The House Rules Committee decided yesterday at Washington, D. C., to send an omnibus water projects authorization bill to a House-Senate conference — but with stipulations that jeopardize Bruces Eddy and Burns Creek dams in Idaho and perhaps other Columbia River Basin projects.

The Associated Press reported the Rules Committee decided upon negotiations to reconcile differences between Senate and House bills only after House Public Works Committee members pledged that they would not yield in conference to accept controversial projects added by the Senate. Rep. Howard W. Smith, D-Va., exacted promises from the House conferees that they would stand fast.

The wording of a rule adopted by the Rules Committee to govern the bargaining was not reported. However, two Republicans to be designated as House conferees said they would oppose all controversial projects added by the Senate on which House hearings have not been held, plus all projects added by the Senate which lack approval of the Bureau of the Budget.

Spokesmen working for authorization of Bruces Eddy dam on the North Fork of the Clearwater River said it has been cleared for authorization by the Budget Bureau. They noted, however, that the House Interior Committee's subcommittee on flood control declined to accept testimony on the project at this session. Senate hearings on Bruces Eddy dam were conducted. One spokesman said the stipulation on House hearings, if adopted as a rule by the House, might bar all Columbia Basin projects from authorization at this session of Congress.

## One-Day Lag

Smith told The Associated Press that if the resolution framed by his committee is filed with the House today it couldn't be called up until tomorrow.

However, Sen. Frank Church and Rep. Gracie Pfof, D-Idaho, reported that the conferees of the Senate and House might meet in a preliminary session today—perhaps without waiting for a House vote on the Rules Committee's rule to bind the conferees.

The House adopted earlier an omnibus bill to authorize rivers projects which eventually would cost \$2.25-billion. The Senate version of this bill boosted the eventual cost to \$4-billion. The measure has been snarled since last week in House protests against the Senate bill.

Major projects named as controversial at the Rules Committee hearing yesterday, the AP said, included Knowles dam in Montana, Burns Creek and Bruces Eddy in Idaho, Devils Jump in Kentucky and Trotters Shoals dam in Georgia and South Carolina.

Amid charges that the bill is a "pork barrel" and the "biggest public power steal in the recent history of Congress," House conferees were asked by Smith their individual attitudes toward preserving the House-passed bill.

## Baldwin, Cramer Oppose

Rep. John F. Baldwin of California and Rep. William Cramer of Florida, the two Republicans who would be House conferees, said they would oppose all controversial projects added by the Senate on which the House committee has not held hearings, and all projects added by the Senate which lack Budget Bureau approval. Rep. Clifford Davis, D-Tenn., likely chairman of the House conferees, said he agreed with Baldwin's position.

Col. James H. Beddow, Walla Walla, district engineer for the U. S. Corps of Engineers, told the Tribune in a telephone interview that the Budget Bureau had commented favorably on Bruces Eddy as part of the Columbia Basin review report.

Mayor A. B. Curtis, Orofino, and Herbert G. West, Walla Walla, executive vice president of the Inland Empire Waterways Ass'n, noted that the House did not hold hearings this year on Columbia Basin projects. Thus, Bruces Eddy and Burns Creek, plus Asotin and China Gardens dams on the lower Snake River, might be

dropped from the authorization list if the House refused to budge from the standard cited by Baldwin and Cramer.

However, other objections were cited in the House, and it was not clear just what rule the House conferees finally would follow. Smith said he was disturbed by a "rather long list" of Senate additions which did not have Budget Bureau approval. Rep. John P. Saylor, R-Pa., whose single objection blocked a conference last Friday, said the Senate had loaded the omnibus bill with millions of dollars worth of purely public power projects, some of which, he contended, are not properly within the jurisdiction of the Public Works Committee. He objected specifically to Burns Creek, which was cleared by the Public Works Committee after it had been eliminated last year by the House Interior Committee.

Attorney Ray McNichols of Orofino said he had talked yesterday with Church and Mrs. Pfof, and "both say the fate of Bruces Eddy and Burns Creek, plus Asotin and China Gardens, are hanging in the balance."

## Plea Successful

"Mrs. Pfof appeared before the Rules Committee and finally obtained a rule permitting House conferees to meet with Senate conferees on the omnibus bill. There had been speculation that the Rules Committee might not permit a conference and the omnibus bill thus would be lost this session. The obtaining of a rule seems to be a major victory.

"However, a number of Republican House conferees have advised Mrs. Pfof they will seek to eliminate the Idaho projects at the conference.

"Church again talked with the Senate conferees and reports he has a solid commitment from Chairman Robert S. Kerr, D-Okla., and Democrats on the conference committee to fight to retain the Idaho dams in the omnibus bill at the conference. Church said the conferees may be able to meet initially today and likely will continue into tomorrow. Church has an appointment with Kerr for this morning to discuss strategy prior to the conference meeting.

"Regardless of the outcome, the people of this area owe Church and Mrs. Pfof commendation for remaining in Washington and fighting for these Idaho dams while their respective opponents in the Idaho election are able to campaign in the state," McNichols said.

## Sudden Switch

West said the House Flood Control subcommittee had declined to receive testimony on Bruces Eddy and other Columbia Basin dams earlier because they were limiting testimony to "controversial" projects. He said the listing of Bruces Eddy as "controversial" in the Rules Committee yesterday was "a new twist nobody knew anything about" for this session of Congress.

West said the House in the past has been reluctant to tie the hands of its conferees as tightly as Smith's committee proposes. "If the House adopts such a restrictive rule and refuses to budge, we probably are out for this year on Columbia Basin projects.

"If the House insists on banning these projects, it then depends partly upon how tough the Senate will be. I can't see the Senate going back on Bruces Eddy if there is any chance to keep it."