

*(For release when given)*

Statement of W. A. Dakheimer, Commissioner of Reclamation for Presentation to House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs in Connection with H.R. 4443, 4449, and 4463.

Probably one of the greatest single tasks presented me upon taking the oath of office of Commissioner of Reclamation some six months ago was that of bringing the plan of the Colorado River Storage Project and Participating Projects to its initial stage of fruition. Since my previous assignments with the Bureau of Reclamation have allowed me a sizeable knowledge of the problems of the Colorado River, I was not unmindful of the magnitude of such an undertaking, the initial phase of which alone will require an expenditure of over a billion dollars in a construction period of 10 or more years.

Although I have been closely associated with the construction of projects in both lower and upper Basins my present responsibility demanded that I review to my own satisfaction the very details of the report on the Colorado River Storage Project and Participating Projects. The present plan reflects the changes and revisions which, in my opinion, were necessary to place the plan in agreement with the current policies of the Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Reclamation.

The negotiations of the States and the formation of the plans for developing the Upper Basin have been followed by many of us with great interest. I have observed in particular an extensive amount of cooperation between State and Federal Agencies in deriving a comprehensive plan for developing the water resources and the other resources related to the use of water in this vast area. Probably no greater cooperative effort was ever made in the history of Basin Planning. In fact the plan derived is the

result of many years of extensive study on the parts of State and Federal personnel, culminating with <sup>the</sup> unanimous support of the official spokesman of all five States of the Upper Basin. It likewise has the unqualified endorsement of me and my staff.

The plan contemplates administration and operation in full conformance with the Upper Colorado River Basin Compact of 1948 and also the Colorado River Compact of 1922. It provides for full compliance with the paramount requirements for deliveries at Lee Ferry. The plan also provides for the condition requiring that water uses for power are subservient to uses for irrigation and domestic purposes. Early operation of the powerplants, therefore, will not interfere with subsequent upstream consumptive uses and the repayment schedules accordingly allow for appropriate reductions in power generation as upstream uses occur.

The tremendous growth of population, agriculture, and industry in the West has imposed a constantly increasing burden upon the water resources of the area. Great centers of population have been forced to go far afield to satisfy their enormous thirst for water, and the potential sources of water for exportation are becoming scarcer and more expensive. Even portions of the great Columbia River Basin have been developed to the extent of their local supplies, and engineers are eyeing transmountain diversions from undeveloped tributary watersheds for continued expansion of the economic life of those areas. The same problem, though in differing degrees confronts us in every State from the Mississippi River to the Pacific Coast.

Reclamation has recognized this problem for many years, and our projects are designed to conserve and utilize the water most efficiently. Literally millions of acres of land lie parched and unproductive in the seventeen western States. A large percentage of this land could be made to produce crops for our growing population if the necessary water could be provided. Meanwhile, millions of acre-feet of water are wasted from our rivers to the sea each year for lack of control--such control as could be provided by the project we are discussing here today. Every watershed adjoining the Colorado River Basin has been developed by the effective utilization of local water resources, and some of them have drawn heavily upon the Colorado River through diversions of water and power. The economic pressure demanding expansion of use of the Colorado's water resources is irresistible. For a large segment of the West this basin is literally and figuratively an oasis, promising water and power for expansion of all phases of economic life.

Further development of the Upper Colorado River Basin cannot take place under existing conditions without risk of shortages due to commitments of the Colorado River Compact and to the extreme annual and seasonal variations of flow of the main stream and its tributaries. The Colorado River Storage Project is the key which will unlock these imprisoned water resources for the development of the Colorado River Basin, for the adjoining watersheds which will benefit directly, and for expansion of the Nation's productive capacity.

I will not attempt to discuss the details of that plan inasmuch as E. O. Larson, Director of Region 4, and his assistants are here for that specific purpose.

As Commissioner of Reclamation I can assure this Committee and the people of the Upper Colorado River Basin the full support of my staff in bringing about the development of the Colorado River Storage Project and Participating Projects on a sound, economic, and engineering basis.

I am therefore pleased to present to you Mr. E. O. Larson, Regional Director, Region 4, with headquarters at Salt Lake City, Utah.