

*Journal - April 17, 1939*

## Robins Asserts Umatilla Dam Needed by Northwest

WASHINGTON, April 17.-(AP)—Colonel Thomas M. Robins, army engineer, told the house rivers and harbors committee today that a \$23,700,000 dam at Umatilla rapids on the Columbia river would provide "sadly needed cheap water transportation" for Pacific Northwest farmers.

He said, however, the war department could not justify construction solely as a navigation project if immediate benefits amounting to \$260,000 annually were considered only.

"Indirect and intangible benefits might justify the project as strictly one for navigation but the army engineers in considering the development of such projects consider only the direct benefits," he said.

Power could be developed by the dam and the resulting revenue might pay for it, he added.

The engineers, however, did not recommend power development until energy from the government's dams at Bonneville and Grand Coulee had been utilized.

Mention of power quickly brought strong opposition from Representative Dondero, Republican of Michigan, and Representative Seger, Republican of New Jersey.

"So far as I can see," said Dondero, "this project is just going to put the government deeper into the power business."

"That's true," replied Robins, "but

it is about the only way we can get sadly needed cheap water transportation on the Columbia river. God knows it is needed."

Representative Hill, Democrat of Washington, told Dondero he was "looking at the project from the wrong angle."

"Perhaps the project cannot be justified on the grounds of immediate earnings," said Hill. "However, we of the Pacific Northwest are building for the future. The army engineers are talking about the present, and they must be conservative in their recommendations."

From Representative Pierce, Democrat of Oregon, came a statement that the present was "the accepted time to authorize construction of the dam and go on record as wanting to provide relief to the farmers of the Pacific Northwest."

Herbert G. West, executive vice president of the Inland Empire Waterways association, Walla Walla, said the project would at least "force down freight rates and speed the inland development of the Pacific Northwest."

Description of the project as the "missing link" in the chain of channel development of the Columbia to accelerate river transportation came from Representative Angell, Republican of Oregon. After the hearing, Angell said he would not be surprised if the committee approved the project tomorrow.

distance of 417 miles. Over \$30,000,000 have been spent and about \$50,000,000 more will be needed. The river keeps changing and needs continuous repair. If an engineer would take the records of all freight moved up and down this river, he would find the cost to the taxpayers is several thousand dollars a ton. This is so-called "sadly needed cheap water transportation."

Inland waterway transportation is about 70 years out of date. The country is lined and interlined with railroads and hard-surfaced highways. As far as the public is concerned, transportation by water is not cheaper than by land. The army engineers have already spent \$800,000 in deepening the channel of the Columbia river above The Dalles. In previous years the government had spent about \$12,000,000 for projects including Cascade locks, Celilo canal, etc. The next proposed expenditure is \$23,700,000 for a dam at Umatilla rapids. The plan of the army engineers for water transportation on up the Columbia and Snake rivers will lift another \$100,000,000 out of the taxpayers' pockets. If we take the total amount of freight the promoters claim will be moved up and down the Columbia, the hearing before the interstate commerce commission, published in 1936, proves that the actual cost to the taxpayers will be an average of \$70 a ton.

There is no bigger example of pork-barrel legislation in the United States than this proposal for cheap water transportation. Up to June 30, 1937, the federal expenditures for these schemes amounted to \$2,186,000,000. If this inland waterway policy could be changed, our taxpayers would save \$100,000,000 a year.

Next comes the real reason why the business men and taxpayers should ask our representatives in congress why they are trying to endanger one of the greatest industries of the Northwest. The fish resources of the Columbia river belong to the people. This is a \$200,000,000 wildlife resource that cannot survive if the great river has its whole biological conditions changed.

## Finley Assails Dams on Rivers

*Journal*  
Naturalist Says Army Engineers Fail To Note Other Public Services

*Apr. 26, 1939*

"The proposed plan to get congress to appropriate \$23,700,000 for a dam at Umatilla rapids on the Columbia river is condemned by the commercial fishermen at Astoria because it will help destroy the salmon runs.

"Others contend the government has already planned to spend a vast sum in the Northwest and effort should now be made to balance the federal budget," said William L. Finley, naturalist, who is vice president of both the National Wildlife federation and the Izaak Walton league.

### Careful Study Declared Necessary

Finley has insisted that careful study should be made by experts before additional dams are built on the Columbia or Willamette rivers. He contends the army engineers who planned these projects have failed to recognize the other public services of rivers. His statement follows:

Some people have stated that the army engineers don't care what the project is so long as they get the money to spend. Others have felt that Bonneville and other dams have been built so the government can compete with private industry. Grand Coulee dam is the biggest and most expensive reclamation project which will irrigate land at a cost of from \$200 to \$400 an acre, which the farmer is expected to pay. The proposed dam at Umatilla rapids is not needed for power or irrigation, so the engineers want this built to develop inland waterway transportation.

Colonel Thomas M. Robins, army engineer, helped persuade the house rivers and harbors committee to authorize the construction of the Umatilla rapids dam. He said: "It is about the only way we can get sadly needed cheap water transportation on the Columbia river. God knows it is needed."

This brings up a debatable question as to whether God feels the government ought to keep on bleeding the taxpayers to the last drop. It is apparent that many people do not understand either the costs or results of inland waterway transportation.

The federal work on the Missouri river is a good example to show how cheap water transportation is. Between St. Louis and Kansas City where the country is well populated, the government has spent over \$60,000,000. Between Kansas City and Sioux City they have tried to deepen the channel for a

*Salem Journal*  
**Finley to Speak On Wildlife**  
*Apr 27 1939*

William L. Finley, naturalist and author, will speak at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon May 1 with his subject "Woods, Waters and Wildlife." Finley is vice-president of three national organizations, the National Wildlife Federation, national chapter of the Izaak Walton league and the American Forestry association.

As naturalists Mr. and Mrs. Finley have cruised and explored many regions from the Gulf of Mexico to British Columbia and Alaska and with cameras have packed over the highest passes of the Cascade and Rocky mountain ranges, through most of the national parks and have climbed many snow-capped peaks including Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson and Mt. Rainier.

Three volumes have been published by the Finleys, "American Birds," "Wild Life Pets" and "Little Bird Blue." Their authorship includes some 200 articles that have been published in the Atlantic Monthly, Nature Magazine, National Geographic, American Magazine, Collier's and other magazines and papers of America and Europe. For the past 30 years Finley has been on the lecture platform, speaking in nearly every state. Mrs. Finley will accompany her husband to Salem.