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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D. MONTANA)

NATIONAL WATER RESOURCES HEARING

October 9, 1959

Billings, Montana

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At the time my distinguished colleague, the senior Senator from Montana, James E. Murray and I introduced Senate Resolution 48, I had hoped that its purpose and organization would be put into operation at an early date, and this in fact has happened more rapidly than expected. We were indeed delighted by the tremendous response with which it was received by our colleagues in the Senate and I am especially pleased at the active leadership taken by the very able Chairman of the Select Committee on National Water Resources, the senior Senator from Oklahoma, Mr. Kerr, in putting his Committee to work at an early date on what we consider to be one of the most serious problems facing this Nation, the status and character of our water resources.

The hearings that have been scheduled throughout the country should provide an abundance of field testimony upon which this Committee can proceed to evaluate our supplies and uses of water. I am sure that the excellent group of witnesses who will be heard here in Billings and in Missoula will make fine contributions.

In the instance of Montana's two very able Congressmen, Lee Metcalf and LeRoy Anderson, I know that they can give the Select Committee some very valuable testimony before its work is concluded. The water problems in Montana's two Congressional Districts are similar in some respects, but also there are some rather striking contrasts. As you know, in Mr. Metcalf's District the terrain is generally rugged and mountainous and is the source of many of the Northwest's finest rivers and streams such as the Columbia River *and Missouri*. I think it would be safe to say that the Western District has an abundance of water resources awaiting development. However, in Congressman Anderson's District conditions are more arid and there is a serious need for water conservation, flood control, and irrigation.

The American Continent has been a land of plenty in the eyes of most of us since the early days of colonization, but in recent years we are being awakened to the fact that this is no longer so. America is no longer self-sufficient, we must depend on foreign sources for certain products as well as markets for our finished goods.

In the early days the American people just assumed that there was plenty of water to be found everywhere and it was generally a true assumption. However, in recent years it has become quite apparent that we can no longer afford to take our water supply for granted.

Constantly growing urban areas are placing tremendous burdens on city water supplies. Industrialization is requiring increased amounts of water with

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each new process. Industrial use of water is of vital consideration in attracting new industry, as several Montana communities have discovered. Pollution has become a very serious problem in urban areas as well as in newly developed areas such as Montana. Recreation demands on our lakes and streams become greater with each season. More and more Americans are seeking the relaxation and pleasures of the outdoors.

Desalinization is becoming extremely important. Flood control and irrigation are still among the more serious of our conservation problems. Hydroelectric power projects continue to be the key to the development of our more sparsely populated areas. The few remaining natural dam sites are at a premium and both private and public power concerns are giving more attention to coordinated use of rivers and streams so that the ultimate benefit can be realized.

Numerous studies have been made in the past on the various aspects of water resources. Some have been very extensive and others have been more limited. Some of the recommendations have been put into operation but unfortunately far too many of these reports and reviews are collecting dust in some storeroom.

I first discussed my views on our National water resources with folks here in Montana. I thought perhaps the establishment of a Water Department in Washington would be the solution. Such a Department would take over the various activities in pertaining to water resources which are now scattered throughout the many Agencies and Departments of the Federal Government. I continue to feel that our water resources problem is serious enough to demand such far reaching recommendations, ^{and} however, it does require considerable study and thought. It was for this reason that I decided the establishment of a Select Committee to study the problem would be the best way and would devise the best means of coordinating our efforts in this area.

It is my sincere hope that the Select Committee on National Water Resources will leave no stone unturned in probing the diverse problems of water. The Select Committee has at its disposal many existing studies and reports, the talents of many experts in private industry, from our colleges and universities, and from the various agencies and departments of the Federal Government. Above all the Select Committee is composed of Senators who have a genuine interest in the water problems of the United States. This is indeed a fine and representative committee of the United States Senate.

I have a great deal of confidence in both of my senior colleagues, Senators Murray and Kerr. They both have enviable records in water resource development. I am confident that under their guidance the Select Committee will finish its work expeditiously and will bring to the Senate recommendations which will tie together the many segments of the water resource problem, so

that we may have a unified and integrated program for the continued development of the nation's water resources.

The State of Montana has an abundance of water, in fact we probably are more fortunate than most, but certain areas of the State are almost arid and suffer from the lack of adequate moisture. Many of our streams and rivers are becoming polluted from inadequate protection from sewage and industrial wastes. The Treasure State has an abundance of natural resources but to date they have been extracted for processing outside of the State. Montana provides excellent opportunities for developing new industries, but this requires the harnessing of our waters for the generation of hydroelectric power. There are a number of excellent power sites in Montana which are awaiting development. Only after generators are established at these dam sites can we offer the necessary inducement for new industry.

Pollution is a problem which has ^{risen} its ugly head in Montana in the past several years. Our State is largely a rural State, but many of our cities are experiencing rapid growth and at the same time they are confronted with some very serious pollution problems because of inadequate sewage disposal. In certain areas of the State uncontrolled industrial wastes have contributed to the pollution of the rivers and streams. Pollution is something that should not be tolerated, it may not be pleasant but it is something that has gotten too far out of hand. Pollution of our rivers contribute to disease and most of all it destroys the productivity of our rivers and streams.

This last consideration is vital in a State such as Montana because one of its major attractions is its excellent fishing streams and lakes and recreation areas. The rivers along the densely populated East Coast give ample evidence of what can happen. These rivers have become unproductive, unsightly and contaminated because of inadequate pollution control. I do not want this to happen in Montana.

If properly treated the waters of our State can serve multiple uses, power generation, recreation, processing and for human consumption, but this takes planning and cooperation.

In areas where water has become a scarcity or where demands have outgrown the supplies, we must learn how to conserve the existing supplies.

The Federal Government is active in many areas of water resource development and we have many different programs and agencies. What I hope can be done in the not too distant future is to have these various programs coordinated under a unified operation. Water has become too precious an item to allow its use and conservation to extend in every direction without a single purpose.

In the past year I have discussed the magnitude, the complexity, and the

urgency of the water-resource problem with my colleagues in the Senate; I have given testimony before Committees of Congress, and I have discussed the issue at length on the Floor of the United States Senate. I believe that I can safely say that there is a great and serious need for a broad guage legislative program as the basis for comprehensive water-resources development by Federal, State and private agencies. This legislative program should furnish the impetus for coordinated development at a rate that will provide the quantity and quality of water that will be required in coming years. It should encourage the adoption of new technical discoveries and improvements. It was for these reasons that I was prompted to introduce Senate Resolution 48 which created the Select Committee.

The Federal Government and its agents have an extremely important role to play in water resource development and conservation, but it is not Uncle Sam's responsibility alone. The individual States, the local Governments and in fact every citizen has an important role to play. If we are to be successful in reaching the goals that are established it must be a cooperative effort. It is up to each and everyone of us to participate in deciding what we want in the way of fully developed water resources and how we should go about doing it. The purpose of these field hearings here in Montana and elsewhere throughout the country is to bring together this valuable testimony.

In conclusion, I wish to say only that the United States is blessed with an abundance of water fully enough to meet all national requirements, but this is dependent on its wise use and full development. The Select Committee on National Water Resources of the United States Senate can provide the means to this end.