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A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE HURON DAILY
PLAINSMAN'S COVERAGE OF THE OAHE
ISSUE FOR THE YEAR OF 1975

BY

RON JAMES VOLESKY

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree Master of Science, Major in
Journalism and Mass Communication,
South Dakota State University

1977

A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE HURON DAILY
PLAINSMAN'S COVERAGE OF THE OAHE
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To write a thesis can be an educational and pleasurable experience, if one has the cooperation, encouragement and expertise of the faculty to inspire one.

It is with the greatest appreciation and gratitude that I thank the following friends for their contributions which made this thesis possible.

This thesis is approved as a creditable and independent investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master of Science, and is acceptable for meeting the thesis requirements for this degree. Acceptance of this thesis does not imply that the conclusions reached by the candidate are necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

The entire Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at South Dakota State University, especially, Mrs. [redacted]

/ Thesis Adviser

Date

Dr. John P. Hendrickson for his understanding and help, and for his help have been invaluable.

Head, Journalism and Mass
Communication Department

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To write a thesis can be an educational and pleasurable experience, if one has the cooperation, encouragement and expertise of the faculty to inspire one.

It is with the greatest appreciation and gratitude that I thank the following friends for their contributions which made this thesis possible:

Mrs. Robert D. Lusk, owner and publisher of the Huron Daily Plainsman, for the privilege of using the facilities of the newspaper for the research and Laverne J. Maher, associate publisher and editor, for the many hours he spent with me discussing and explaining the issue of Oahe.

The entire Department of Journalism and Mass Communication at South Dakota State University for their concern and advice.

Lastly, Mrs. Ruth Laird, Mr. John Lytle, Dr. Eric Brown and Dr. John P. Hendrickson for their understanding and guidance, which have been invaluable in the completion of this study.

RJV

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CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND

The Oahe Irrigation Project has been a political issue in South Dakota for several decades. In the last several years and particularly this year (1977), the debate has become extremely heated and complex. Ramifications of the project offer South Dakotans a wide range of questions and arguments.

Introduction: Local Press Coverage

This study is an attempt to provide insight into the Huron (S.D.) Daily Plainsman's handling of the Oahe issue.

Many studies have examined local news coverage by the press. Some studies have been critical; others have lauded the local press for its daring and responsible reporting.

Media critic Ben Bagdikian has charged that "America's grass-roots press generally is not performing to high journalistic standards."¹

Ernest C. Hynds, in a contrary view, concluded that "most newspapers are taking stands on important issues and most are providing for the exchange of ideas through their letters and columns."²

Many studies have explored the performance and effect of the press on political attitudes and behavior. John P. Robinson described the press's political coverage of the 1972 presidential

campaign as a rediscovery of the power of the print media. He described election coverage and the subsequent Watergate affair as indications of newspaper's role as both "king-maker" and "king-breaker."³ Robinson noted that 93 per cent of the nation's daily newspapers endorsed Richard Nixon.⁴

While no political election was held to select Oahe Conservancy Sub-District board members in 1975--an election which might be expected to gauge influence of the Huron Daily Plainsman on political behavior--the author believes that studies of the newspaper's presentation of the Oahe issue are relevant to the broad area of newspaper influence. In providing a forum for issue information, a newspaper can be crucial in the process of attitude formation. On local issues, such as Oahe, the press is confronted with the responsibility of providing its readers with well-balanced coverage and reliable information. N. J. Spector singled out the press's editorial responsibilities in the area of local issue coverage due to an increased need. He wrote

Because most citizens do not attend public meetings at city hall, and others are reluctant to read long descriptions of events in the news columns, the contents of the editorial page take an increased significance.⁵

Spector found a high correlation between position on the page and placement in the issue of editorial page and subsequent voting margins.

James E. Gregg, in a study of editorial endorsements, concluded that "by failing to editorialize on local problems . . . newspapers forfeit the opportunity to exercise a vital journalistic

function."⁶ Nortone E. Long stressed the agenda-setting function of a local newspaper.

In a sense, the newspaper is the prime mover in setting the territorial agenda. It has a great part in determining what most people will be talking about, what most people will think the facts are, and what most people will regard as the way problems are to be dealt with . . . To a large extent it sets the civic agenda.⁷

The Problem

Coverage of the Oahe issue by the Huron Daily Plainsman should be of extreme local concern. The study might also be of interest to others concerned with the part played by newspapers in local issues. Much of the research in the area of local newspaper influence is based on editorial policies of particular newspapers. The present study offers a situation in which the local newspaper (Huron Daily Plainsman) has vigorously pursued a leading role in promoting the development of the Oahe Irrigation Project. Focus is on the message, appearing in both news and editorial pages. This study does not address the effect of the coverage on readers.

Reasons for the Use of Content Analysis

The study by Spector was based on a comparison of the count of favorable, unfavorable and neutral editorial items with vote on a municipal referendum. Spector found a high correlation between editorial position and the election outcome. The editorial policy of the Bridgeport daily newspaper was decidedly against the municipal referendum. Spector coded 23 unfavorable editorials

(against the referendum), one neutral in content, and none favorable. Bridgeport voters voted 73 per cent against the referendum.⁸

Voters in the 15½-county Oahe Conservancy Sub-District in 1960 voted overwhelmingly (85.5%) to establish the sub-district board to monitor and promote the Oahe project. The history of the role of the Huron Daily Plainsman, described by Associate Publisher LaVerne J. Maher, shows that at the time of the election to form the sub-district board, the newspaper actively (through its editorials and the efforts of its publishers and editor) campaigned in favor of establishing the board. Whether the newspaper's stance significantly contributed to the 85.5 per cent favorable vote is a matter for research, but it does shed light on the area of local newspaper involvement in a local issue.

After reasoning that editorial policy and a newspaper's active pursuit to affect an issue could lead to substantial influence, this researcher sought to determine the content of news about Oahe in the news columns of the Huron Daily Plainsman. The writer concluded that the use of content analysis to quantify the Oahe content of the Huron Daily Plainsman would contribute to an understanding of the treatment (or news "play") given news about which the newspaper has established an editorial stance.

Area of Influence

The Huron Daily Plainsman, with a total circulation of 13,666, is distributed in 18 counties in South Dakota. Nine of

these counties are in the Oahe Conservance Sub-District, which is comprised of $15\frac{1}{2}$ counties. In these nine counties the Huron Daily Plainsman has a total circulation of 12,461. This represents 76.6 per cent of the newspaper's entire circulation.

Counties in the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District, where the Huron Daily Plainsman is the dominant daily newspaper, are:

	Total Households	<u>Huron Daily Plainsman</u> Paid Circulation
Beadle	6800	6318
Clark	1900	266
Hand	2700	1030
Hughes	4500	869
Hyde	800	446
Sully	700	268

The Huron Daily Plainsman shares three counties with the Aberdeen American News. These counties are:

	Total Households	<u>Huron Daily Plainsman</u> Paid Circulation
Faulk	1100	285
Potter	1300	178
Spink	3100	801

The six and one-half remaining counties that make up the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District are dominated by the Aberdeen American News. These counties are Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, McPherson, Walworth and half of Marshall.

While Oahe can easily and justifiably be expanded into the context of a statewide issue, the author has taken a special interest in the Oahe question because it is predominantly one of local

concern. Because the Huron Daily Plainsman is one of the major newspapers situated in the area of immediate consequence with regard to the construction of the Oahe Irrigation Unit, a study which undertakes to measure the content of the paper on the issue of Oahe is of high interest. Because a major function of a newspaper is to inform its readership about issues and events, the content of the newspaper offers a significant means of judging the performance of a newspaper as it relates to that particular function. In theorizing about the responsibility a newspaper has to provide its readership with information, Hynds wrote:

Newspapers would appear well-suited to explore issues, especially local issues, and the better newspapers, at least, have used both editorial pages and news pages to achieve this goal. They have identified issues and advocated causes in their institutional expressions and they have served as a public forum for the introduction and discussion of issues in their letters, columns and other editorial page features.⁹

The Role of the Huron Daily Plainsman

In order to provide the reader with background on the role played by the Huron Daily Plainsman over the past several decades in the area of the Oahe Irrigation Project, the writer conducted an interview with the associate publisher of the newspaper, Laverne J. Maher. Beginning with the Flood Control Act of 1944, the Huron Daily Plainsman has been a proponent of water development. With that goal in mind, the newspaper vigorously advocated the Oahe Irrigation Project. In the early stages of the development of the project, Robert Lusk, then publisher of the newspaper, took a

leading and active role in helping to promote Oahe. In the 1940's Lusk served several years on the board of the State Water Development Association. For part of that time he was national director at the federal level. According to Maher, "The Huron Daily Plainsman three decades later is still carrying forth the idea that the Oahe Irrigation Project is in the best interest of the citizens of east-central South Dakota for a better quality of life."¹⁰

 Maher pointed to 1952 as offering an example of the newspaper's leadership in its fight for irrigation. At that time power company interests were lobbying hard in South Dakota for a discontinuance of the high dams then being constructed on the Missouri River. Maher said that the newspaper quickly rallied public support by sponsoring an important public meeting on the issue. He added that the meeting was a great success in demonstrating support for continued construction of the high dams. Only through the construction of the high dams on the Missouri River was the Oahe Irrigation Project to become a viable undertaking. Subsequently, federal funds for the dam projects were put back into the federal budget, thus making irrigation for east-central South Dakota a future possibility.

 In 1960, the newspaper actively supported and promoted the formation of the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District for the purpose of monitoring development of the Oahe project. At that time, Maher, while associate publisher of the Huron Daily Plainsman, served as chairman of the Huron Chamber of Commerce Water Resources

Committee. He organized a petition drive which helped get the question of forming a sub-district on the ballot. The result was an overwhelmingly favorable vote for creation of the present board structure.

The involvement by Maher and Lusk in promoting the Oahe Irrigation Project has been extensive. As a result, the Huron Daily Plainsman has been a strong and significant vehicle in furthering the goals of irrigation in east-central South Dakota. In 1962, the newspaper received a community service award from the University of Missouri's School of Journalism for its leadership in community and local affairs. Maher said the newspaper's continual backing and encouragement for the Oahe project had much to do with the recognition.

In more recent years, the newspaper has received two John Wesley Powell Awards for its work in promoting ground water research by the Bureau of Reclamation. Maher pointed out that the newspaper took a major role in supporting passage of state legislation that afforded the means for such research.

Maher said that the Huron Daily Plainsman has never wavered in its role as an active participant in development of irrigation for South Dakota. There was a time when farmers didn't believe in the benefits of irrigation, he recalled, but the recent drought cycle has helped convince many area farmers of the need for irrigation. Maher said the Huron Daily Plainsman has vigorously striven to provide the public with needed information on the

benefits of irrigation. "In the thirty-three years since the 1944 Flood Control Act," Maher said, "I would imagine this newspaper has spent \$100,000 in cash plus three times that amount in personal time and effort in promoting the Oahe Irrigation Project."¹¹

The present study is not concerned solely with editorial policy of the Oahe issue by the Huron Daily Plainsman. It also aims to quantify the coverage given to the Oahe issue throughout the entire paper. Besides employing methods of quantitative content analysis, this study endeavors to provide additional information about the Huron Daily Plainsman's coverage of the Oahe issue by using qualitative content analysis to determine direction of the content.

Purpose for the Study

The Huron Daily Plainsman's three decades of involvement in reporting the Oahe issue stimulated this researcher to conduct a content analysis of the newspaper's coverage of the issue for one year--1975.

An effort has been made to quantify Oahe-related content in the Huron Daily Plainsman and to determine the amount of space and treatment afforded by the newspaper to favorable and unfavorable information about Oahe. Several factors contributed to this researcher's decision to conduct a content analysis.

1. There has been concern on the part of Huron area businessmen for the past several years because of threats of boycotts

against Huron by Oahe opponents. Banks, retail stores and the newspaper have been particular targets.

2. Anti-Oahe leaders have accused the Huron Daily Plainsman of partisanship because the newspaper has taken a consistent pro-Oahe stance. The question in the mind of the researcher is whether the Huron Daily Plainsman has presented both sides of the issue to its readers.

3. The Oahe issue is of such magnitude that the Huron Area Chamber of Commerce and the Huron city government, notwithstanding the above accusations and threats, still assigned promotion of the Oahe Irrigation Project its highest priority for 1977. Because of this, the writer felt that research on the issue could contribute to greater understanding of local press coverage.

4. In South Dakota few studies, if any, have been done on coverage by local newspapers of local issues. The fact that the Oahe issue is one of the most important issues in the state and that after several decades the affected population area remains in disagreement on a project of such great importance in a semi-arid region also challenged the writer to begin research on the role played by the Huron Daily Plainsman.

The objective of this study is to assess coverage by the Huron Daily Plainsman of the issue of Oahe; to analyze news content and treatment concerning Oahe; and to find if the newspaper ran a consistent, continuous and constructive editorial campaign.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated:

Ho₁: Pro-Oahe AP stories will not significantly outnumber anti-Oahe stories.

Ho₂: The number of pro-Oahe stories written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers will not significantly outnumber neutral-Oahe articles written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers.

Ho₃: The combined number of pro-Oahe news articles (AP and staff written) will not be significantly different from the combined number of anti-Oahe news articles (AP and staff written).

Ho₄: There will be no significant difference between the total space in column inches given to either of the three categories; pro-Oahe, neutral-Oahe or anti-Oahe.

Ho₅: There will be no significant difference in the page numbers of the three categories.

Ho₆: There will be no significant difference in the placement on the page of the three categories of Oahe news articles.

Ho₇: There will be no significant difference in the headline size given to the three categories of Oahe news articles.

Ho₈: More total space (column inches + column width) was given in 1975 to pro-Oahe items than to anti-Oahe items.

Ho₉: Pro-Oahe news stories written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers were assigned more space than anti-Oahe news stories written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers.

Ho₁₀: The Huron Daily Plainsman afforded more space to pro-Oahe AP news stories than anti-Oahe AP news stories.

Ho₁₁: The Huron Daily Plainsman printed more pro-Oahe letters-to-the-editor than anti-Oahe letters-to-the-editor.

Ho₁₂: The average cumulative attention-score for pro-Oahe AP stories was greater than the average cumulative attention-score for anti-Oahe AP stories.

Ho₁₃: The average cumulative attention-score for all pro-Oahe news stories (AP and locally written articles) was greater than the average attention score for all anti-Oahe news stories (AP and locally written articles).

FOOTNOTES

¹Gerald C. Stone and Janet Morrison, "Content as a Key to the Purpose of Community Newspapers," Journalism Quarterly 53 (Autumn 1976):494.

²Ernest C. Hynds, "Editorial Pages are Taking Stands, Providing Forums," Journalism Quarterly 53 (Autumn 1976):532-535.

³John P. Robinson, "The Press as King-Maker: What Surveys From Last Five Campaigns Show," Journalism Quarterly 51 (Winter 1974):587-594.

⁴Ibid., p. 592.

⁵N. J. Spector, "The Impact of the Editorial Page on a Municipal Referendum," Journalism Quarterly 47 (Winter 1970):762-766.

⁶James E. Gregg, "Newspaper Editorial Endorsements and California Elections 1948-1969," Journalism Quarterly 42 (Fall 1965):538.

⁷Norton E. Long, "The Local Community as an Ecology of Games," Journal of Sociology 64:3 (November 1958):259-260.

⁸Spector, op. cit., p. 766.

⁹Hynds, op. cit., p. 533.

¹⁰Interview with Lavern J. Maher, Huron Daily Plainsman, Huron, S.D., 10 May 1977.

¹¹Ibid.

CHAPTER II

THE ISSUE

South Dakota's economy is based on agriculture. Since the state was settled, residents have been concerned with drought. As early as the turn of the century, South Dakota explored the feasibility of developing a comprehensive irrigation system that would divert water from the Missouri River Basin to the farmlands of eastern South Dakota.

Historical Background

The search for a plan of action led South Dakota, in conjunction with the Federal Government through its Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation, to investigate the possibilities of combining flood control with irrigation. Planning culminated in 1944 and became known as the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Program.¹ With passage of the Flood Control Act of 1944, flood control and irrigation became a workable prospect for South Dakota. Testifying before the U.S. Department of the Interior "Water Projects Review Panel" of March 21, 1977, Governor Richard Kneip described the situation:

The passage of the 1944 Flood Control Act opened a new era in the development of the water resources of the Missouri River Basin. It meant development not only for flood control and irrigation, but also for hydroelectric generation, for municipal and industrial use, and for recreation and fish and wildlife development.²

After the initial Pick-Sloan Program was passed by Congress as part of the 1944 Flood Control Act, the long fight for completion of the Oahe Irrigation Project began. Under Pick-Sloan the state agreed to construct four mainstem reservoirs on the Missouri River in return for the construction of the Oahe Irrigation Unit.

To achieve the needed flood protection for downstream states meant the construction of dams and reservoirs in the upstream states. In South Dakota it meant the use of over one-half million acres of Missouri River Valley lands for these dams and reservoirs. The trade-off was to be the development of the Oahe Irrigation Project and other irrigation projects along the main stem of the Missouri.³

With completion of the mainstem dams and reservoirs, the state began its efforts to gain the irrigation trade-off. In 1968, Congress passed legislation authorizing the initial stage of construction for the Oahe Irrigation Project.⁴

Battle to Gain Continued Funding

Much debate about Oahe has centered around the annual authorizing of appropriations by the Federal Government. Those who oppose the project lobby against continued funding by the Federal Government of the project and, in essence, call for a stop in its construction. Without federal funds, the Oahe Irrigation Project is not feasible. In testimony before the Water Projects Review Panel Governor Kneip confirmed that "the Oahe project simply cannot be constructed without initial federal assistance."⁵

Since 1970 the annual federal budget has included requested funds for Oahe. At this writing, however, the funds for fiscal

1978 remain in doubt. President Carter's decision earlier this year to cut off funds for a number of federally sponsored water projects has brought Oahe in South Dakota to a new level of controversy. As of July, 1977, federal funding for Oahe has been stopped. Funding for the project is a year-to-year process; thus the possibility that funding may resume sometime in the future still remains.

The Arguments Pro and Con

Opponents of Oahe base many of their arguments on environmental factors. Questions concern return flows, possible channelization of the James River, harmful effects on the soil as salt content increases degradation of James River water quality, destruction of wild life habitat, run-offs from irrigation, and the break-up of small family farms as large land corporations threaten to take over. In addition, anti-Oahe voices are raised about lack of local support for the project.

At present the Oahe Conservance Sub-District Board, a body formed to monitor the course of the project, is virtually split on the merit of going forward with the project.

Proponents point to possible economic benefits to the state. Besides protecting the east-central portion of the state against drought periods, proponents argue that the project will help diversify the state's economy by contributing to industrial expansion. Those who favor the project cite statistics showing

per capita income in South Dakota below the national average.

Governor Kneip has stressed the need to stabilize and at the same time diversify the state's economy.

The historic result of this economic instability has been out migration, not only of farmers and ranchers, but of people from our towns and cities. Water development can provide agricultural stability and economic diversity. It can stabilize the population of the immediate area and can provide urban employment for people from other agricultural areas within the state. This consequence is of value both to this state and to the beleaguered, over crowded cities to which our people would otherwise be forced to migrate.⁶

The climate of controversy about Oahe seems to have steadily increased as the make-up of the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District Board has changed. The present Oahe Conservancy Sub-District was established through enactment by the South Dakota legislature in 1959 and through a referendum formally instituted in 1960 by a favorable vote of 85 per cent of the voters in the 15½-county sub-district.⁷ The legislature empowered the Sub-District Board "with full authority to contract with the federal government for water development projects."⁸ A paper published entitled "History: Oahe Conservancy Sub-District," describes the Sub-District and its purpose.

The Sub-District's purpose is to assist local people within its boundaries with the planning, sponsorship and development of desired Water Resource Project.

The Oahe Conservancy Sub-District consists of 15½ counties in north-central South Dakota namely: Campbell, McPherson, Brown, Day, Edmunds, Walworth, Potter, Faulk, Spink, Clark, Hand, Hyde, Sully, Hughes, Beadle, and the West ½ of Marshall.⁹

The paper lists six major functions of the Sub-District.

1. The Sub-District is a taxing power entity which meets the requirements of Federal Agencies and the Congress for sponsorship of Federal water development projects.
2. It is a management organization stressing optimum multiple purpose water use and water control developments.
3. It provides for the participation of indirect as well as direct beneficiaries in planning, constructing, operating and maintaining water resources developments.
4. It is a negotiating organization for compromise and resolution of the inevitable conflicts of special and competing interests.
5. It forms a spearhead for determining courses of action.
6. It provides a means by which the desires of the public may be determined.¹⁰

As of 1974 the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District demonstrated a marked degree of unity in favor of the continued construction of the project.¹¹ The eleven board members until recently voted for continued construction. Following the 1976 election of new board members to the Sub-District Board, this unified support began to dissolve, to the point where the board has now voted to halt the project in its present form.

Press coverage has largely centered on arguments between board members opposed to the project and those wishing to see it completed as proposed under the original Pick-Sloan Program of 1944. Others (politicians, engineers and interest group leaders) have taken significant and sometimes leading roles in the Oahe

debate. But the focus of the media has centered on actions of the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District Board. Groups such as the United Family Farmers, the South Dakota Environmental Coalition and similar state and national environmental organizations have actively pursued the election of board members sympathetic to a moratorium on the Oahe project. During the last election, held in 1976, these groups succeeded in placing on the board a majority of members who had campaigned to discontinue federal funding to allow more time for study of the project. The current board of eleven members has voted 6 to 5 for a moratorium on Oahe.

This political change has left proponents of the project in a defensive posture. The result is that charges and counter-charges on merits of the project have flooded the media in South Dakota. The pro-and anti-Oahe forces have actively engaged in efforts to discredit each other. While the present political circumstances surrounding Oahe have produced a new surge of controversy, arguments and discussions about the project have long occupied the attention of the state's media. Oahe is a sensitive issue, with repercussions that extend into a variety of issues.

The importance of the print media to the Oahe issue is highlighted by a survey conducted after the 1976 elections and prior to the convening of the new board in 1977. An officially sanctioned survey by the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District showed that of the 25 per cent who responded to the survey, nearly 50 per cent listed

newspaper articles as their most important source of information concerning the Oahe Unit.¹²

Literature Review

A vast amount of literature relates to the use of content analysis from which to draw inferences about a particular medium's handling of an issue. Master's theses and doctoral dissertations employing content analysis to document media behavior in political elections are numerous. After examining Journalism Quarterly, Cumulative Index to Volumes 1-40, 1924-1976 and Journalism Abstracts, M.A., M.S., Ph.D. Thesis in Journalism and Mass Communication, the author chose the following as pertinent to establishing his own methodology.

Bolen, John Harold. "Daily Newspaper Coverage of the 1970 Texas Gubernatorial Campaign." Master's Thesis, University of Texas, 1970.

Budd, Richard W. "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News 'Play,'" Journalism Quarterly. 41: 259-262, Spring, 1964.

Budd, Richard W. Content Analysis of Communications. New York, MacMillan Company, 1967.

Caldwell, Donald Wilson. "An Analysis of Selected Newspaper Coverage of the 1968 National Democratic Convention." Master's Thesis, University of West Virginia, 1969.

Huey, Rodney Alan. "A Content Analysis of Alabama Daily Newspapers During the 1970 Democratic Gubernatorial Primary." Master's Thesis, University of Alabama, 1971.

Markham, James W. and Stempel, Guido H. "Analysis of Techniques in Measuring Press Performance," Journalism Quarterly. 34: 187-190, Spring, 1957.

Sachman, David B. "A Test of 'Coding:' New Measure of Bias," Journalism Quarterly. 47: 759-762. Winter, 1970.

Seddon, William G. "A Content Analysis of the News Coverage of the 1968 Presidential Campaign by Florida Daily Newspapers." Master's Thesis, University of Florida, 1969.

For purposes of quantification the author relied heavily upon Budd's attention score.¹³ Budd found that column inches and item count were not sufficient to determine news content treatment. He thus developed an attention score based on the following five variables.

1. Headline Size
2. Position on the Page
3. Page
4. Use of Accompanying Photographs
5. Length of Story

To obtain information on the importance of these five variables as indicators of the importance and treatment of the news story Budd sent letters to eight editors requesting their judgment with regard to the significance of the five variables. Only the fourth variable received a split decision from the editors while the remaining variables were unanimously considered important. Thus the fourth variable has been dropped in computing the attention score.

Budd's study of United States news coverage in two Australian newspapers found a total attention score of 370 points for the Christchurch Star, compared with 519 points for the West

Australian. A search of the literature revealed no similar studies undertaken to validate or disprove Budd's attention score method. While Budd's analysis was in terms of comparing two separate newspapers, the present study will utilize a similarly devised attention score for comparing the treatment of pro, anti, and neutral news stories on the Oahe issue in one newspaper.

Regarding the value of the attention score method Budd wrote:

Again, with the attention score to rely on, a quantitative measure (however rough) of the emphasis in the presentation of favorable and unfavorable matters was available, and invariably showed a difference that was not apparent by comparing the other two systems of measurement used.¹⁴

The other two systems of measurement referred to by Budd were simple item count and measurement of item length.

A thesis on the analysis of the 1970 Texas gubernatorial campaign by Bolen employed Budd's attention score. For purposes of determining position on page, Bolen divided the page into three zones:

- Zone I - touching top of page
- Zone II - above the fold but not touching top of page
- Zone III - below the fold

Bolen also found a high correlation between score and amount of space.

The present study uses the same procedure for coding page position of news stories. The present study also draws upon the Bolen thesis for devising a coder reliability test. For purposes of determining direction, Bolen used one coder. He randomly

selected twenty-five news stories for a test-retest method. A 94 per cent rate of agreement was established between Bolen and his one coder. The method of test-retest employed by Bolen was also used in this thesis to establish coder reliability. Chapter III will cover in greater depth the coder reliability test.

A thesis by Donald Wilson Caldwell also used the Budd attention score method to describe the newspaper coverage of the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

FOOTNOTES

¹U.S. Department of Interior, Testimony Submitted to the Water Projects Review Panel, Richard F. Kneip, Governor State of South Dakota, 21 March 1977, p. 3.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., p. 7.

⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁶Ibid., p. 11.

⁷History: Oahe Conservancy Sub-District, Published by Oahe Conservancy Sub-District Board, Huron, South Dakota, 1973, p. 25.

⁸Kneip, op. cit., pp. 6-7.

⁹History: Oahe Conservancy Sub-District, op. cit. p. 25.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 25.

¹¹Ibid., p. 41.

¹²Official Survey by Oahe Conservancy Board, p. 10.

¹³Richard W. Budd, "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News 'Play,'" Journalism Quarterly 41 (Spring 1964):259-262.

¹⁴Richard W. Budd, Content Analysis of Communications, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), p. 50.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research for this thesis was conducted on two levels of inquiry. The first level involved itemizing and measuring all items with Oahe-related content. The author refers to this as quantitative content analysis.

On the second level of analysis the author sought to categorize Oahe items in the Huron Daily Plainsman by assigning a directional assessment of the content. Categories used were pro-Oahe, anti-Oahe and neutral.

Categorization

Determination of the direction of content was undertaken to establish to what degree the Huron Daily Plainsman covered the opposing sides of the Oahe issue. In his book, Content Analysis of Communications, Budd wrote that such an effort can be most productive.

Determination of direction in content analysis is probably one of the most frustrating problems facing the researcher, because it is one area in which the element of subjectivity is difficult to control and impossible to eliminate entirely. At the same time, content analysis can be most productive when it is able to show direction--or lack of it.¹

In establishing directional categories for coding Oahe content, the author relied on the central themes of the Oahe question. Pro-Oahe content was understood to be agreement for

continued funding and construction of the Oahe Irrigation Project. The pro-Oahe category also includes items which defend the Oahe project as a source of irrigation and municipal water supplies.

Anti-Oahe items refer to a moratorium on the Oahe project. This category includes arguments against the project on environmental grounds, stories calling for more study and discontinuance of federal funding for the project.

The Neutral category is comprised mainly of those items which reported the proceedings of Oahe Conservancy Sub-District Board meetings and items which simply announced the agenda of upcoming board meetings. Items which reported both sides of the central arguments in the story were also categorized as neutral.

Examples of each content item and category direction are listed in the Appendix for purposes of illustrating quantification and qualitative coding criteria.

The Variables

The following five variables were used to construct the attention index.

1. Page
2. Placement on the page
3. Column width
4. Column depth
5. Headline type size

These five variables were quantified and assigned to each item categorized by the researcher. The five variables were then

used to compute the attention scores for the content under investigation.

The validity for the use of these particular variables was established by the Budd Attention Score Study as discussed earlier in the literature review in Chapter I. Also in a study entitled "Analysis of Techniques in Measuring Press Performance," James W. Markham and Guido Stempel III established the use of headline size and space allocation as significant indicators of the importance placed on a particular story by a newspaper. No studies since have questioned the validity of these indicators.

Originally the author included type size of article as a possible variable, but after the variable revealed no significance for measuring treatment of content, the variable was dropped from the attention score equation. Type size of all items was 10-point type with the exception of the newspaper's own editorials, which were 14-point.

The researcher established 19 possible appearances for Oahe content in the Huron Daily Plainsman. An example of the form used for item classifications can be found in Appendix A. The classification of photographs and ads proved relatively inconsequential but were included to offer the most comprehensive and exhaustive research possible.

Total space was computed by adding column depth and column width. The measurements were carried to 1/8 of an inch.

The Attention Score

In order to assign the most meaningful numerical measurement to the Oahe content of the Huron Daily Plainsman, this thesis utilized an expanded version of Budd's attention score. This numerical value is computed by adding the page number and placement value (number) and dividing the total into the total of column width plus headline size.

Several modifications were made on Budd's attention score equation. For purposes of providing a more inclusive measurement of space, this thesis added the additional dimension of column width. In addition, the author attempted to add greater numerical detail by using measurement to the nearest 1/8 inch of column length and column width. Budd's attention score was based on points being assigned for three groups of column lengths. For example, 1-4 inches received 1 point; 5-9 inches received 2 points; 10 or more inches received 3 points. Two examples demonstrating use of the attention score can be found in the appendix.

For this thesis, each category (pro-Oahe, anti-Oahe, neutral) will have an average cumulative attention score for all item classifications. Item classifications are defined as the assigning of content to each of 19 possible classifications, as found on the content analysis form in the appendix. The attention score index utilized in this thesis is not valid when based on sum of measurements. Rather the validity of the attention score index is based on average of measurements.

After establishing 1975 as the most representative and current period for analysis, the author proceeded to code all issues of the Huron Daily Plainsman for that particular year.

Each issue was analyzed for all possible Oahe content items for purposes of assigning each item to one of the nineteen classifications. In all, 202 items were classified and coded.

Coder Reliability of Measurement Instrument

In an effort to insure coder reliability, the writer used the test-retest method outlined by Budd.

For the content analyst, the test-retest method requires more than one coder using the same instructions to classify the same material. Thus the method tests the clarity of coders to follow instructions and comprehend definitions.²

The test-retest method was selected because of its recurrent uses in other content analysis studies. Bolen's use of the test-retest method established a coder reliability of 90 per cent. This thesis also secured a 90 per cent coder reliability value.

The writer used two coders to check the reliability of the criteria for the three categories (pro-Oahe, anti-Oahe, netural). The following formula of Budd's was used to determine reliability with regard to the coding of content material.

Thus intercoder reliability was tested using the following formula:

$$\text{Reliability (R)} = \frac{2(c_{1,2})}{L_1 + C_2}$$

1,2 is the number of category assignments both coders agree on, and $C_1 + C_2$ is the total of category assignments made by both coders.³

Five per cent of the 202 total items on Oahe were randomly selected. Each coder was then instructed to code the items (pro-Oahe, anti-Oahe, or neutral) according to criteria discussed earlier.

A 90 per cent reliability factor was obtained. Each reader coded 10 items randomly selected from the universal set of 202 total items. There was disagreement on one category classification. The item which resulted in the coding disagreement was a guest editorial written by Senator James Abourezk. The writer coded the editorial anti-Oahe because its content was characterized by a discussion calling for a moratorium and possible alternatives to the Oahe project.

The following is the coder reliability test employed in the Present study.

$$\text{Reliability (R)} = \frac{2(C_{1,2})}{C_1 + C_2}$$

$$R = \frac{2(9)}{10 + 10}$$

$$R = \frac{18}{20}$$

$$R = .9$$

Validity

A method of direct validity was relied on as the basis of determining whether the content variables were relevant to producing

significant results. Assuming the categories of pro-Oahe, anti-Oahe, and neutral-Oahe content are sufficiently defined for purposes of revealing to the coders the direction of content and that the measurements of the variables (page, placement on the page, column width, column length, headline type size) are accurate, the researcher has adequately established the basis of validity for the present study. Budd described direct validity as also including a high degree of reliability. He writes:

Judging from the literature, direct validity (also called face or logical validity) is often assumed by the content analyst. This method of validation presumes that a measure self-evidently measures what it is supposed to if the categories are sufficiently defined and the coding has a high degree of reliability.

Definition of Terms

Direction: The direction of content was based on the broad themes of pro-Oahe and anti-Oahe content. For an article to be coded as pro-Oahe, it had to infer explicitly or implicitly that the Oahe Irrigation Project was *needed* and that the project should be continued. Arguments in favor of the project were thus based on the theme of continued funding, support and construction of the project.

Anti-Oahe content was understood to be that content calling for a halt to construction. The writer also understood arguments asking for a moratorium and more study on the project as anti-Oahe in thematic makeup.

This study also used the category neutral-Oahe for all content which on the whole gave equal space in the article to both pro-and anti-Oahe.

Item: The item was any editorial, guest editorial feature column, letter-to-the-editor, photograph, ad, article by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers or AP news story which the researcher concluded was predominately related to or based on Oahe content. This researcher coded and classified 202 items of Oahe content for the year 1975.

The Variables

Page: The study was undertaken on the assumption that placement near the front of the newspaper constituted better treatment of content than placement on a page farther to the back of the newspaper. Thus placement on page one is perceived as receiving better treatment and emphasis than placement on page 2, etc.

Placement on the page: The closer to the top of the page on which the item is placed, the better the treatment in terms of preference. Thus the page was divided into three zones, top, middle, and bottom. Any item touching the top received a numerical value of one. Any item not touching the top of the page but above the fold received a numerical value of two. For an item to be classified in the middle zone, at least half of the item needed to be above the fold. An item with over half of its content below the fold was recorded in the bottom zone and received a numerical

value of three. Thus the lower the numerical value, with regard to placement on the page, the better the treatment.

Column Width and Column Length: Space was determined by adding total column width and total column length of an item. It was assumed in this study that the more space an item received the better the treatment afforded it by the newspaper.

Headlines: The headline of each item was recorded according to size of type. The larger the size of type used for a particular item the better the treatment given the item by the newspaper.

Sources of News

Only two types of sources were coded: (1) wire service (AP) and correspondent, or (2) local writer. If a story was not credited to a news service or correspondent, it was assumed to be written by a local staff writer.

The Attention Score (or Display Score) and Treatment

The purpose of the attention score is to give meaning to the treatment afforded the different categories of content. Assuming that placement at the top of page one represents the best possible treatment for a news item and that greater column width and length along with a large headline size also represent a variable of significant proportion as to the 'play' or treatment given a particular item, the final average attention scores for news story items are consistent with the hypotheses stated in Chapter I.

The final average attention score for anti-Oahe news content was 3.05. The final average attention score of 6.70 for pro-Oahe news content was more than double that of the anti-Oahe news content. The higher attention score for pro-Oahe news content represents a smaller denomination (page + placement) divided into a larger numerator (column width + column depth + headline size).

The attention score of Richard Budd's was based on the simple addition of the variable (page + position on the page), while the attention score employed in this thesis is based on the median or average of page and placement values. Thus Budd's findings in his content analysis of two Australian newspapers revealed scores of 519 against 370 for demonstrating differences in the treatment of U.S. news.⁵ His findings did show a high correlation between column inches and the attention score value. The averaged data of the Australian publications showed a correlation coefficient of $r = .98$.⁶

The present attention score method employed in this thesis is based on the high correlation (as researched by Budd) between space and treatment as revealed in the page and placement on page numerical values. The present research also includes size of headline type as a significant variable in devising the attention score.

Procedure

Several reasons dictate choice of year. The writer wanted the research to be as current as possible. The researcher also

wished to avoid analyzing 1976 because it was an election year, with six positions on the Oahe Conservancy Sub-District Board up for election. Thus 1976 could be a year in which campaign rhetoric dominated the Oahe content of the newspaper. This might diminish the underlying thematic structure on which the present study's qualitative content analysis is based.

FOOTNOTES

¹Richard W. Budd, Content Analysis of Communications, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1967), p. 67.

²Ibid., p. 68.

³Ibid., pp. 68-69.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Budd, "Attention Score: A Device for Measuring News 'Play,'" p. 260.

⁶Ibid., p. 261.

CHAPTER IV

THE RESULTS

In all, 202 items printed in 1975 were coded and classified. Some of the classifications were academic, such as in-house editorials written by the Huron Daily Plainsman and the guest editorials printed by the newspaper. But these were coded and classified due to their input into the development of the hypothesis. Still other classifications proved to contain so few items that it would be idle to project such data or to conclude anything about the newspaper's coverage regarding those categories. This data is included in the tables to provide a complete content description. Classifications of photographs and ads were too small for purposes of hypothesis projections. Only three ads and eleven photographs were coded. But for purposes of total space calculations, the items (photographs, editorials, guest editorials, and ads) were included.

The writer coded 17 pro-Oahe editorials written by the Huron Daily Plainsman in 1975. At the same time, the inclusion of guest editorials with similar content and issue stance by individuals, groups and other newspapers is also in keeping with the established viewpoint of a newspaper. In the case of the Huron Daily Plainsman's editorial policy, the newspaper printed 23 guest editorials. The researcher coded 21 of the guest editorials as being pro-Oahe,

while one was viewed as being neutral in content and one (a column editorial by Senator James Abourezk) as being anti-Oahe in content.

Based on the information contained in the tables included in this chapter, the following results about the hypotheses stated earlier were reached.

The use of chi-square tests were employed to find any statistical significance.

1. The data failed to reject the first hypothesis. Thus no significant statistical difference was found between the number of pro-Oahe AP stories and anti-Oahe AP stories used by the Huron Daily Plainsman. Chi-square equaled 2.28 at a critical value of 3.84 with one degree of freedom.

2. The data also failed to reject the second hypothesis. No significant difference was found between the number of pro-Oahe stories written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers and neutral-Oahe articles by staff writers. Chi-square equaled 1.14 at a critical value of 3.84 with one degree of freedom.

3. Hypothesis three was rejected. The research data revealed a statistical significant difference between the combined number of pro-Oahe news articles (AP and staff written) and the combined number of anti-Oahe news articles (AP and staff written). Chi-square equaled 26.6 at a critical value of 3.84 with one degree of freedom.

4. The fourth hypothesis was also rejected. The chi-square test revealed a statistical significance between the total space

(in column inches) given to the three different categories of pro-Oahe, neutral-Oahe and anti-Oahe news stories.

5. The results showed no significant difference in the page numbers of the three categories; thus the fifth hypothesis failed to be rejected.

6. Hypothesis six also was not rejected. In terms of placement on the page of the three categories of news articles, there existed no significant difference.

7. The results also failed to reject the seventh hypothesis. The chi-square test showed no significant difference in the headline size given to the three categories of Oahe news articles.

8. As hypothesized, the Huron Daily Plainsman allotted more total space to pro-Oahe content ---1,013 column inches. Total anti-Oahe content was 243 column inches.

9. The data failed to reject the ninth hypothesis. The results revealed no anti-Oahe stories were written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers; subsequently pro-Oahe news stories written by staff writers of the newspaper amounted to $326\frac{1}{2}$ column inches while anti-Oahe news stories by staff writers received zero space.

10. The results failed to reject the tenth hypothesis. The Huron Daily Plainsman afforded 179 total column inches for pro-Oahe AP news stories while giving anti-Oahe AP news stories $77\frac{1}{4}$ total column inches.

11. The eleventh hypothesis was rejected. The Huron Daily Plainsman printed more anti-Oahe letters-to-the-editor than pro-Oahe letters.

12. The results failed to reject the twelfth hypothesis. The average cumulative attention score for pro-Oahe AP stories was 6.65, compared to the average cumulative attention score of 3.05 for anti-Oahe AP stories.

13. The results failed to reject the last hypothesis. The average cumulative attention score for all pro-Oahe news stories (AP and locally written articles) was 6.70 while the average cumulative attention score for all anti-Oahe news stories (AP and locally written articles) was an index of 3.05.

The Attention Score and Treatment

Recognizing that the purpose of the attention score, as outlined earlier, is to give meaning to the treatment afforded the different categories of content, the writer concludes that the final average attention score figures are helpful. Since placement at the top of page one would represent the best possible treatment afforded a news item and that greater column width and length along with a large headline size also represent variables of significant proportion as to the "play" or treatment given a particular item, the final average attention scores for news story items are consistent with the hypotheses stated in Chapter I and tested in Chapter III.

The final average attention score for anti-Oahe news content was 3.05. The final average attention score of 6.70 for pro-Oahe news content was more than double that of the anti-Oahe news content. The higher attention score for pro-Oahe news content represents a smaller denominator (page + placement) divided into a larger numerator (column width + column length + headline size).

COLUMN INCHES--COMBINED AP AND STAFF WRITTEN

	1-4 7/8 inches	5-9 7/8 inches	10 + inches	
Pro	Fo = 1 Fe = 1 $X^2 = .0$	Fo = 26 Fe = 29 $X^2 = .3$	Fo = 23 Fe = 18 $X^2 = 1.4$	N = 50
Neutral	Fo = 3 Fe = 2 $X^2 = .5$	Fo = 37 Fe = 37 $X^2 = .0$	Fo = 23 Fe = 23 $X^2 = .0$	N = 63
Anti	Fo = 0 Fe = 0 $X^2 = .0$	Fo = 10 Fe = 5 $X^2 = 5.0$	Fo = 0 Fe = 3 $X^2 = 3$	N = 10
	4	73	46	Total = 123

$$X^2 = 10.2$$

Critical value = 9.49

d.f. = 4

p .05

significant, reject null hypothesis

PAGE--COMBINED AP AND STAFF WRITTEN

	Page 1	Pages 2-3	Page 4 +	
Pro	Fo = 22 Fe = 21 $\chi^2 = .0$	Fo = 10 Fe = 11 $\chi^2 = .1$	Fo = 18 Fe = 16 $\chi^2 = .3$	N = 50
Neutral	Fo = 31 Fe = 27 $\chi^2 = .5$	Fo = 14 Fe = 14 $\chi^2 = .0$	Fo = 18 Fe = 21 $\chi^2 = .4$	N = 63
Anti	Fo = 1 Fe = 4 $\chi^2 = 2.3$	Fo = 4 Fe = 2 $\chi^2 = 2.0$	Fo = 5 Fe = 3 $\chi^2 = 1.3$	N = 10
	54	28	41	Total = 123

$$\chi^2 = 6.9$$

Critical value = 9.49

d. f. = 4

p .05

not significant, fail to reject null hypothesis

PLACEMENT--COMBINED AP AND STAFF WRITTEN

	Top	Middle	Bottom	
Pro	Fo = 13 Fe = 10 $\chi^2 = .9$	Fo = 25 Fe = 28 $\chi^2 = .3$	Fo = 12 Fe = 10 $\chi^2 = .4$	N = 50
Neutral	Fo = 11 Fe = 13 $\chi^2 = .3$	Fo = 39 Fe = 36 $\chi^2 = .3$	Fo = 13 Fe = 13 $\chi^2 = .0$	N = 63
Anti	Fo = 1 Fe = 2 $\chi^2 = .5$	Fo = 7 Fe = 5 $\chi^2 = .8$	Fo = 2 Fe = 2 $\chi^2 = 0$	N = 10
	25	71	27	Total = 123

$$\chi^2 = 3.5$$

Critical value = 9.49

d. f. = 4

p .05

not significant, fail to reject null hypothesis

HEADLINE SIZE--COMBINED AP AND STAFF WRITTEN

	12-18 pt.	24-36 pt.	48 pt. +	
Pro	Fo = 9 Fe = 11 $X^2 = .4$	Fo = 37 Fe = 35 $X^2 = .1$	Fo = 4 Fe = 4 $X^2 = .0$	N = 50
Neutral	Fo = 13 Fe = 13 $X^2 = .0$	Fo = 45 Fe = 45 $X^2 = .0$	Fo = 5 Fe = 5 $X^2 = .0$	N = 63
Anti	Fo = 5 Fe = 2 $X^2 = 4.5$	Fo = 5 Fe = 7 $X^2 = .6$	Fo = 0 Fe = 1 $X^2 = 1.0$	N = 10

$$X^2 = 6.6$$

Critical value = 9.49

d. f. = 4

p .05

not significant, fail to reject null hypothesis

CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

PRO-OAHE - AP

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	
Jan.	5	2	M	1 3/4	4 1/2	18
	16	8	T	3 1/2	2 1/2	24
	26	6	B	1 3/4	4	18
	26	6	B	5 1/2	9	30
Feb.	9	8	T	5 1/2	11	48
	11	1	M	1 3/4	10 1/2	30
	13	1	T	13 1/2	2 1/2	36
	13	5	B	5 1/2	3	30
March	5	15	T	7	2 1/2	30
	7	1	T	13 1/2	2	30
	9	1	T	5 1/2	3	60
May	1	1	M	1 3/4	5 1/4	18
June	17	1	T	7	3	48
July	9	6	M	1 3/4	3	18
Aug.	27	14	M	3 1/2	7 1/2	30
Sept.	29	1	M	3 1/2	4	30
		1	M	5 1/2	4	30
Dec.	7	1	M	5 1/2	4 1/2	30

TOTALS-Page 1-9 8 - M 93 1/4 85 3/4 558
 2-1 7 - T
 5-1 3 - B
 6-3
 8-2
 14-1
 15-1

NEUTRAL-OAHE - AP

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	
Jan.	10	2	M	1 3/4	6 1/2	18
	24	2	M	5 1/2	8	30
Feb.	3	1	M	5 1/2	10 1/2	48
	16	15	M	1 3/4	4	18
	19	14	M	1 3/4	3 1/4	18
	20	3	M	1 3/4	3	18
	24	1	M	1 3/4	4	18
	26	1	T	13 1/2	2 1/2	48
	28	2	M	3 1/2	8 1/2	30
March	2	6	M	7	6 1/2	30
	4	1	M	5 1/2	3 1/4	30
	4	3	T	5 1/2	5 1/2	36
	5	1	T	5 1/2	3 3/4	60
	12	1	B	1 3/4	8	18
	17	6	B	1 3/4	5 1/2	24
	20	1	M	3 1/2	3	30
	21	1	M	3 1/2	4 1/2	30
	30	7	M	1 3/4	4 1/2	12
April	17	8	M	3 1/2	2	18
	28	1	B	3 1/2	4 1/2	24
June	8	1	M	5 1/4	4 1/2	30
	15	24	T	3 1/2	5	36
	18	1	T	6	3	36
July	2	2	M	1 3/4	7	24
	3	10	M	1 3/4	4 1/2	24
Aug.	12	1	B	8	2 1/2	30
	18	1	M	5 1/2	9 3/4	48
	27	3	B	3 1/2	3 3/4	24
Sept.	26	1	B	4 1/4	5 3/4	30
	28	1	M	5 1/4	2	30
	30	1	B	10 1/4	2 1/4	30
Oct.	1	1	B	3 1/2	5 1/2	30
	2	1	M	3 3/4	3 3/4	30
	7	2	M	5 1/8	3	30
	12	2	M	1 1/8	2 3/4	18
Nov.	9	1	T-1	3 1/2	9	36
	26	2	M-2	1 3/4	4 1/2	18
Dec.	5	2	M	5 1/4	4	30
	26	1	M	5 1/4	6	30

TOTALS - Page	1 - 20	25 - M	163 3/4	190	1122
	2 - 8	6 - T			
	3 - 3	8 - B			
	6 - 2				
	7 - 1				
	8 - 1				
	10 - 1				
	14 - 1				
	15 - 1				
	24 - 1				

CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

ANTI-OAHE - AP

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES
Jan. 26	6	M	3 1/2	4	24
Feb. 7	2	T	1 3/4	8	18
18	2	M	3 1/2	5	30
June 29	1	M	5 1/4	3	36
29	6	M	1 3/4	5	18
July 18	12	B	1 3/4	4 1/2	24
20	2	M	3 1/2	5	18
23	35	M	1 3/4	6 1/4	18
Aug. 20	2	M	1 3/4	4 1/4	18
Sept. 2	13	B	5 1/4	2 1/2	30

TOTALS - Page	1 - 1	1 - T	29 3/4	47 1/2	234
	2 - 4	7 - M			
	6 - 2	2 - B			
	12 - 1				
	13 - 1				
	35 - 1				

CONTENT ANALYSIS - HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

ARTICLE BY PLAINSMAN, PRO, ANTI, NEUTRAL

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES
Dec. 1	1 - P	T	5 1/4	5	30
2	2 - P	M	1 3/4	9	18
2	2 - P	B	1 3/4	7	18
3	3 - P	M	1 3/4	6 1/2	18
8	2 - P	M	5 1/4	10 1/2	30
9	1 - N	M	5 1/4	5 1/4	36
10	27 - N	M	5 1/4	2 1/2	30
11	15 - P	B	1 3/4	4	18
14	1 - P	B	7	5 1/2	36
18	6 - N	B	3 1/2	9	30
19	1 - P	M	3 1/2	6 1/2	30
19	8 - N	B	5 1/4	12	30

TOTALS - Page	1 - 24	T - 11	234 1/4	335	1568
	2 - 10	M - 31			
	3 - 2	B - 14			
	6 - 5				
	7 - 2				
	8 - 2				
	9 - 2				
	11 - 1				
	12 - 1				
	13 - 1				
	15 - 2				
	27 - 1				
	32 - 1				
	50 - 1				
	P - 32				
	N - 24				

CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN
PLAINSMAN EDITORIAL - PRO, ANTI, NEUTRAL

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	
Jan.	16	4 P	T	5 1/4	8	36
	22	4 P	T	5 1/2	7	36
Feb.	5	4 P	T	5 1/2	7	36
	12	4 P	T	5 1/2	10	36
March	3	4 P	T	5 1/2	6	36
April	1	4 P	T	5 1/4	7	36
	16	4 P	T	5 1/4	7	36
	30	17 P	T	5 1/2	6 1/4	36
May	5	4 P	T	5 1/4	15	36
	22	4 P	T	5 1/4	7	36
June	25	19 P	T	5 1/4	6	36
	29	4 P	T	5 1/4	6 3/4	36
Aug.	27	4 P	T	5 1/4	9 1/2	36
Sept.	21	4 P	T	5 1/4	9 3/4	36
Sept.	30	4 P	T	5 1/4	7 3/4	36
Dec.	2	4 P	T	5 1/4	6	48
	14	4 P	T	5 1/4	7 1/2	36

TOTALS - Page 4-15 17-T 90 1/2 133 1/2 624
 17-1
 19-1

PLAINSMAN
 CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

GUEST EDITORIALS - PRO, ANTI, NEUTRAL

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	
Jan.	2	4 P	M	5 1/4	4	30
	16	4 P	M	5 1/4	1 1/2	24
	23	4 P	M	5 1/2	2	24
Feb.	24	4 P	M	5 1/4	3	24
March	4	4 N	M	5 1/2	3 1/4	24
	7	4 P	M	5 1/2	4	30
	9	4 P	M	5 1/2	2	30
	19	4 P	M	5 1/2	5	30
April	24	4 P	M	5 1/2	7	24
May	29	4 P	M	5 1/4	3	24
June	25	19 P	M	5 1/4	3 1/2	24
July	3	4 P	M	5 1/4	4	24
Sept.	9	4 P	T	5 1/4	6	30
	28	4 P	M	5 1/4	3 1/4	24
	29	4 P	M	5 1/4	4	24
	30	4 P	M	5 1/4	11 1/2	30
Oct.	2	4 P	M	5 1/4	3 3/4	24
	2	4 A	T	5 1/4	3 3/4	30
	5	4 P	M	5 1/8	6 3/4	24
	10	4 P	M	5 1/8	3 3/4	24
	15	4 P	M	5 1/8	2 3/4	30
	28	4 P	M	5 1/4	3 1/4	24
Nov.	20	4 P	M	5 1/4	4 1/2	24

TOTALS-Page 4-22 21-M 121 7/8 95 600
 19-1 2-T

21-P
 1-A
 1-N

CONTENT ANALYSIS - HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

ARTICLE BY PLAINSMAN, PRO, ANTI, NEUTRAL

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	
Feb.	11	1 - P	B	3 1/2	10	30
	14	3 - P	M	3 1/2	6	24
	24	6 - P	M	3 1/2	7 1/2	36
March	5	6 - P	T	7	4	36
	12	6 - P	T	3 1/2	12	36
	20	2 - N	M	3 1/2	4 1/2	36
	20	11 - N	M	3 1/2	9	36
	21	2 - N	T	5 1/2	5	36
Apr.	29	1 - N	T	5 1/2	5 3/4	30
	30	1 - P	M	2 3/4	6	30
May	15	1 - P	B	6 1/4	4	30
	18	1 - P	M	2 3/4	7 1/2	24
	25	7 - P	T	7	5 1/2	36
June	4	6 - N	B	1 3/4	2 1/4	18
	4	9 - N	M	7	3 3/4	36
	13	1 - N	T	3	6 1/2	30
	19	1 - N	B	3 1/2	4	30
	20	1 - N	M	2 1/2	5 1/4	30
	24	2 - P	M	3 1/2	5	24
	27	2 - P	M	5 1/4	5	36
July	8	1 - P	B	4 1/4	4	30
	16	1 - P	M	3 1/2	3	30
	24	1 - P	M	4	3 1/2	30
Aug.	6	1 - N	T	3	13	60
	14	1 - N	M	1 3/4	6 1/2	24
	17	15 - P	M	10 1/2	11 1/2	36
	21	1 - P	T	5	3	30
	24	50 - N	M	5 1/4	4	30
	24	32 - N	T	4 1/4	5 3/4	30
	26	1 - N	M	1 3/4	5 3/4	18
	31	7 - P	M	3 1/2	15	36
Sept.	26	12 - P	M	3 1/2	2 1/4	24
Oct.	1	9 - N	M	1 3/4	5 1/4	18
	2	1 - N	M	5 1/4	3	36
	3	2 - P	B	3 1/2	3 1/2	24
	17	1 - P	B	5 1/4	3 1/2	30
	17	1 - N	M	3 1/2	7 1/4	36
	19	2 - N	M	7	3 1/4	24
	28	1 - N	B	1 3/4	7 1/2	24
Nov.	4	2 - P	M	5 1/4	3 1/4	30
	10	6 - N	M	3 1/2	5	24
	13	8 - P	B	1 3/4	6 1/4	18
	23	1 - P	M	5 1/4	5	30
	30	13 - P	T	8 3/4	8 3/4	48

CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pro, Anti, Neutral

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	
Jan.	16	4 P	B	1 3/4	5 1/2	12
	17	4 A	M	3 1/2	7	12
Feb.	2	4 P	M	1 3/4	3 1/2	12
	16	4 A	B	1 3/4	6	12
	21	4 A	B	3 1/2	8	14
March	20	4 A	M	1 3/4	4	12
April	10	4 A	M	1 3/4	5 3/4	14
May	15	4 A	M	1 3/4	5 1/4	14
	16	4 A	B	3 1/2	5 1/4	12
	22	4 P	M	6 1/4	3 1/2	12
	22	4 A	M	5 1/4	1 3/4	12
	28	4 P	B	3 1/2	5 1/2	14
	29	4 A	M	1 3/4	3	12
June	4	4 A	M	1 3/4	5	14
Aug.	13	4 A	M	1 3/4	6 1/2	14
	19	4 N	M	1 3/4	7	12
	25	4 A	M	3 1/2	11	12
Sept.	4	4 A	M	1 3/4	3	12
	5	4 P	M	1 3/4	4	12
	16	4 A	M	1 3/4	7 1/2	12
Oct.	3	4 A	M	1 3/4	6	14
	12	5 A	M	1 5/8	3 1/2	14
Nov.	26	4 A	M	1 3/4	8	14
Dec.	18	4 P	T	8 3/4	6	36
	26	4 A	M	1 3/4	7	14

TOTALS-Page	4-24	T-1	58 5/8	138 1/4	344
	5-1	M-19			
	P-6	B-5			
	A-18				
	N-1				

CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

PHOTOS - PRO, ANTI, NEUTRAL

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH
Feb. 13	1-P	M	5	4 1/2
March 2	6 N	T	7	4
June 18	1 N	T	6	7 1/2
July 16	1 P	M	3 1/2	4
16	1 P	T	3 1/2	4
24	1 P	T	4	6 1/2
Aug. 17	15 N	M	5	4
17	15 N	B	8 1/2	6 1/2
24	50 N	T	5 1/4	4 1/4
Nov. 7	7 N	T	5 1/4	5
30	13 N	M	5 1/4	5

TOTALS - PAGE 1 - 5
 6 - 1
 7 - 1
 13 - 1
 15 - 2
 50 - 1
 N - 7
 P - 4

T - 6
 M - 4
 B - 1

58 1/4

55 1/4

CONTENT ANALYSIS-HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

ADS - PRO, ANTI, NEUTRAL

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH
Jan. 12	18 P	M	3 1/2	3
June 20	7 A	M	3 3/4	3
25	24 A	M	3 1/4	7
TOTALS-Page 7 - 1		M - 3	10 1/2	13
	18 - 1			
	24 - 1			
	P - 1			
	A - 2			

FINAL FIGURES ON OAHE CONTENT--
HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN, 1975

Classification	Categories	Number
News Stories by AP	Pro-Oahe	18
	Anti-Oahe	10
	Neutral	<u>39</u>
	Total	67
Articles by <u>Huron Daily Plainsman</u> Staff Writers	Pro-Oahe	32
	Anti-Oahe	none
	Neutral	<u>24</u>
	Total	56
Editorials by <u>Huron Daily Plainsman</u>	Pro-Oahe	17
	Anti-Oahe	none
	Neutral	<u>none</u>
	Total	17
Guest Editorials	Pro-Oahe	21
	Anti-Oahe	1
	Neutral	<u>1</u>
	Total	23
Letters-to-the-Editor	Pro-Oahe	6
	Anti-Oahe	18
	Neutral	<u>1</u>
	Total	25
Photographs	Pro-Oahe	4
	Anti-Oahe	none
	Neutral	<u>7</u>
	Total	11
Ads	Pro-Oahe	1
	Anti-Oahe	2
	Neutral	<u>none</u>
	Total	3

FINAL AVERAGE FIGURES OF VARIABLE
MEASUREMENTS FOR NEWS STORIES

	Average Page	Average Place	Average Width	Average Length	Average Headline
AP--Pro	4.38	1.77	5.18	4.76	31.00
AP--Anti	8.10	2.10	2.97	4.75	23.40
AP--Neutral	3.43	2.05	4.19	4.86	28.73
Total Average	5.30	1.97	4.11	4.79	27.71
Article--Pro	4.00	2.09	4.39	6.21	31.12
Article--Anti	none	none	none	none	none
Article-- Neutral	7.29	2.00	3.92	5.66	23.83
Total Average	5.64	2.04	4.15	5.93	27.47

FINAL: NEWS STORY BREAKDOWN (AP AND ARTICLES
BY HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN STAFF WRITERS)

Cumulative Attention Scores:

Anti-Oahe (AP)	3.05
Anti-Oahe (Articles)	<u>none</u>
Average	3.05
Pro-Oahe (AP)	6.65
Pro-Oahe (Articles)	<u>6.75</u>
Average	6.70
Neutral-Oahe (AP)	6.82
Neutral-Oahe (Articles)	<u>3.59</u>
Average	5.20

Average Cumulative Attention Scores for News Stories

Pro	6.70
Neutral	5.20
Anti	3.05

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The editorial policy is the prerogative and privilege of any newspaper. In the case of this far reaching, complex, economic and political Oahe issue, the editorial stance of the Huron Daily Plainsman is strongly pro-Oahe. In fact, for the last 30 years, the Huron Daily Plainsman has assumed state and local leadership, through its editorial policy, in the conception and promotion of Oahe and its potential.

It is the conclusion of this researcher that the pro-Oahe editorial stance of the Huron Daily Plainsman seems to permeate much of the Oahe content of the newspaper. For example, this policy is seen in the consistency of pro-Oahe news articles written by the newspaper's local staff writers.

However, of the 25 letters-to-the-editor printed by the Huron Daily Plainsman on the issue of Oahe, 18 were coded anti-Oahe. Another six were coded pro-Oahe, while one letter-to-the-editor was understood to be neutral in content.

In all, 202 items were classified as having predominately Oahe-related content. The largest classification category was the AP group, with the Huron Daily Plainsman printing 67 wire stories on Oahe. While the pro-Oahe AP stories outnumbered the anti-Oahe AP stories 18 to 10, the neutral category received the majority of

items, with 39 AP stories being coded as neutral in content. It is the conclusion of this researcher that the AP story breakdown is indicative of a well-balanced coverage and selection of wire stories by the Huron Daily Plainsman.

Articles written by Huron Daily Plainsman staff writers were either neutral in content or pro-Oahe. No article written by a staff writer of the newspaper received an anti-Oahe classification. A 4 to 3 ratio of pro-Oahe to neutral-Oahe content was found. The pro-Oahe direction of content for locally produced stories seems consistent with the established editorial policy of the newspaper.

Keeping the public informed about public issues is certainly one of the major functions of a newspaper. On the issue of Oahe, the Huron Daily Plainsman published 202 items, or at least two items every three issues for the year 1975. This is indicative to the writer that the Huron Daily Plainsman endeavored to keep the public informed in a consistent and continuous manner on the issue of Oahe.

Interpretation as to the effectiveness of the Huron Daily Plainsman in influencing the direction of the Oahe issue is left to the reader and future research. The purpose of this thesis was simply to present and analyze, for the benefit of those interested, a comprehensive classification and categorization of all Oahe-related content published by the Huron Daily Plainsman for one year. This thesis is the product of the need for an analysis of the coverage given an important issue by a major local newspaper deeply concerned with the outcome of that particular local issue.

The area of locally produced stories is an area where a newspaper has control, and in this case the control is evident. No anti-Oahe, locally written news story was coded by this researcher. Whether or not coverage shows purposeful bias on the part of the Huron Daily Plainsman is an open-ended question for readers to decide. The present study concludes that the Huron Daily Plainsman has striven for consistency between its editorial page stance and staff written articles.

Recommendation for Future Research

As alluded to earlier in this study, the question of good newspaper coverage of an issue remains highly debatable. Further research into the influence and effect of a newspaper's coverage of issues is recommended by this researcher.

Exactly what the final figures mean with regard to the performance by the Huron Daily Plainsman and its coverage of the Oahe question might be further explained on the basis of a comparative content analysis with other daily newspapers in South Dakota. Furthermore, an in-depth historical approach to the Huron Daily Plainsman coverage policy on the Oahe issue would be of benefit in gaining an added perspective to the role of the newspaper in that particular issue area.

An historical approach based on interviews of pro-and anti-Oahe leaders with regard to their opinions of the role of the Huron Daily Plainsman would offer an approach to the more intangible factors influencing the efforts of the newspaper.

In addition, researchers might attempt a gatekeeper study based on wire stories which were printed and those which may not have been used.

Measurement of opinion formation might be undertaken through a survey of those who subscribe to the Huron Daily Plainsman as opposed to those who do not. Many additional variations might be developed based on classifications of the time spans which members of various age and occupational categories have been reading the newspaper.

1. Editorial--Pro-Oahe, February 12, 1975

Editorials

Use it or lose it!

Individual legislators confronted with opposing resolutions on the Oahe Irrigation Unit would do well to familiarize themselves with some rather well-documented facts and some carefully-considered opinions before casting a vote on an issue which will have a major impact on the future of the entire state.

In the first place, as Gov. Richard F. Kneip said Monday, "A moratorium could sound the death knell for the Oahe Irrigation Project."

The governor is probably right, for the simple reason that the United States Bureau of Reclamation, which has constructed 140 operating irrigation projects to the tune of \$6 billion during its 73-year history, now has a backlog of \$6.1 billion in projects which have been authorized by the Congress. Obviously the scramble for those federal irrigation dollars is going to be intense, and once this project is stopped any chance of ever getting it started again would be minimal.

In the second place, downstream states are enviously eyeing the water which has been promised South Dakota since the start of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin plan 31 years ago. In a letter to an attorney for the opponents of the project dated Feb. 5, 1975, Sen. George McGovern warned that: "We must face the fact that if South Dakota does not soon get a firm commitment for the use of the Missouri water, it will be obligated to other preference users downstream. We would then be in the unhappy posture of serving, more or less, as a conduit for water for the benefit of other states."

A federal court could not support a request for a moratorium on the project on the basis of evidence presented by the opponents. Neither did the findings of a South Dakota State University task force, organized to present unbiased facts as some of the best qualified technicians in the state found them.

Contrary to some opinion the Environmental Protection Agency, or at least its administrator, Russell Train, is not opposed to the Oahe Project, nor does it have the authority to stop it.

1. Continued

Train told a South Dakota delegation, including congressional representatives, last summer that his agency was responsible simply for raising questions that the Bureau of Reclamation should answer, and that it would welcome an opportunity to cooperate in a water quality management plan. The bureau is working on answers to the EPA questions, which should not be confused with other questions raised by opponents of the project for the purpose of causing delay or distrust.

And finally, there is the question of the quantity and quality of the future water supply for the city of Huron and a number of other communities in the project area. Huron is the only city which is currently dependent upon the James River for a water supply. And it is the only city which is currently paying the federal government water fees to cover the cost of a facility which will actually become a part of the Oahe Unit when it is completed.

The Huron City Commission, after years of study of possible alternate water supplies and careful comparison of both quality and quantity of the present water supply and that which will be provided by the Oahe Unit, has voted unanimously to ask the legislature to memorialize the Congress to support and accelerate construction of the Oahe Irrigation Unit.

One can respect the objections of some of the opponents of this project, particularly those who will have to sell land to make way for the development. That is a very personal reason, and certainly steps should be taken to assure that no individual suffers personal loss.

But legislators must have the welfare of the entire state in mind. And the evidence in favor of the project as far as the economic welfare of the state is concerned is overwhelming.

This is one time when a positive vote from a large majority of the legislature is mandatory. Anything less could lose us the right to this Missouri water, one of our most precious assets, for all time.

We must use it, or we will lose it.

2. Guest Editorials--Pro-Oahe, May 29, 1975

*Other Opinions***Adequate water supplies****Aberdeen American News**

The number of South Dakota municipalities approaching the summer months with anxiety about the adequacy of their supplies of water is growing. These municipalities include several major cities such as Sioux Falls, Mitchell and Huron as well as Aberdeen. Many small towns face dire prospects and are urgently seeking remedies for their water shortage problems.

Aberdeen has immediate and long-range need for an expanded source of water and is among the cities that could profit from a speed up of the construction of the Oahe Irrigation Unit.

A preliminary request for Oahe reservoir water for municipal purposes has been submitted and recently the request has been given a higher priority for study.

Water users of Aberdeen would have a feeling of greater assurance if Aberdeen's City Commission would follow the example of the

Huron City Commission and approve a resolution urging and requesting the South Dakota Legislature to ask the Congress to appropriate sufficient funds to complete the Oahe unit at the earliest possible date.

Displaying keen awareness of South Dakota's need for fullest utilization of Missouri River water, the Huron City Commission, in its resolution, said swift completion of the Oahe project is imperative because Huron depends on James River water for its municipal supply and the present condition of the James River makes it an undesirable source.

The Huron city fathers commended Gov. Richard Kneip for "the positive position he has taken on vitally needed projects for the people and the economy of South Dakota" and said the Oahe development would have a stabilizing effect on the economy, especially in years of drought such as 1973 and 1974.

2. (Continued) Guest Editorials--Pro-Oahe, January 2, 1975

*Other Opinions***A positive approach**

Aberdeen American News

ANNOUNCEMENT last week of the organization of Friends of Oahe came as good news to South Dakotans who want this state to get the full benefit of Missouri River water impounded behind the huge dam near Pierre.

Since the Missouri River development program reached South Dakota in the 1940s irrigation of the James River Valley has been one of the features most appealing to residents of this part of the state. The significance of other advantages of Missouri River development is now well known. The program has accomplished flood control, generated electrical power, provided recreation, enhanced wildlife areas and increased tourist visitations.

BUT IRRIGATION — one of the benefits that is to compensate for the thousands of acres of fertile river bottom land lost to the state when the dams were built and the huge lakes created — has been slow incoming.

The progress has been orderly but gradual and until recently the completion of the Oahe unit and its ultimate benefits have been taken for granted.

During the past year a small, well organized group of landowners has sought to find flaws in

the results of studies that cited the economic advantages of the irrigation project. The members of this group have recommended calling a halt to the work under way.

Proponents of the irrigation project have expressed willingness to consider some alternatives in the plan but maintain there is time for changes as the basic work goes ahead.

FRIENDS OF OAHE is an organization which has as its goal a program to present the positive aspects of the Oahe irrigation unit. Its members believe the younger generation of farmers and ranchers has to be re-informed about the merits of the project which an earlier generation brought into being.

Members of this organization believe the facts developed during the history of the project justify moving forward full speed. They plan to review the facts for the benefit of the public and serve as a steering committee which will prove the case for irrigation and rally the support needed to keep the project on schedule.

Interest that has been shown in the Oahe project for a quarter of a century would indicate public encouragement in reaching its goals will be given Friends of Oahe.

2. (Continued) Guest Editorials--Neutral, February 24, 1975

Other Opinions

Important special meeting

Pierre Capital Journal

The chairman of the directors of the Oahe Conservancy Subdistrict, Fred H. Holscher of Faulkton, has called a special meeting of the directors to be held Feb. 28 beginning at 10 a.m. in the Associated General Contractors Building in Pierre.

The purpose of the meeting, Holscher announced, is to provide an orientation and review of the Oahe Unit project for subdistrict directors. An extensive agenda has been prepared, calling for a full-scale review of the history of the project, its current status, and scheduling for future development.

The historical background and legal status of the project will be reviewed by R.B. Hipple, a director of the subdistrict representing the municipalities in the subdistrict. An exhaustive review of the studies, planning, and design work conducted since initial authorization in 1944 will be presented by the Bureau of Reclamation. The Bureau also will review construction status and construction schedule for various features of the project.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will review the fish and wildlife features involved in the project.

The Department of Environmental Protection will review the municipal water supply situation.

The South Dakota Department of Natural Resources will review the problems of flood control on the James River and the status of current studies of those problems.

The meeting has been called primarily for the benefit of directors who are not familiar with all aspects of the Oahe project. However, it should be of high interest to any South Dakota legislators, or for that matter anyone else, who may be wondering what has happened in the past or what is proposed for the future for the purpose of making water resources of South Dakota available for beneficial use by South Dakota people who want to use those resources. We would heartily recommend that any member of the legislature interested in any part of the subject matter to be reviewed attend that meeting.

2. (Continued) Guest Editorials--Anti-Oahe, October 2, 1975

Abourezk

Last Friday I suggested that the boiling controversy surrounding the Oahe Irrigation Project should be resolved in a referendum vote by the people who will be affected by the project.

I regret very much that both the Huron Daily Plainsman, and Friends of Oahe President Mike McHugh, have apparently failed to read what I actually said in proposing a referendum on the Oahe project.

Mike, and all friends of Oahe, happen to be my friends as well. We share a common position in support of the Oahe project. Yet, despite my personal phone call to both Mike and the Daily Plainsman before releasing my statement, and despite the very specific reaffirmation of my

support for Oahe contained in that statement, Mike has seen fit to accuse me of "trying to stop" the Oahe project. The Daily Plainsman has printed that accusation on its front page, not two inches away from my own statement of support for Oahe, and has done so without the slightest comment on the obvious absurdity of the accusation.

Readers of the Daily Plainsman who examined what I actually said know that I asked the State Legislature to consider providing for a referendum on the future of the Oahe Project. They know that I said a vote of the people is the fairest way to resolve the Oahe controversy. And they know that, far from demanding an end to the project, I restated my support for the project and urged its continued funding. If my goal was to "stop the Oahe Project" I could easily stop fighting for appropriations for it.

Why a simple proposal to let the people decide should raise such a storm from friends of a project whose supporters claim the majority of voters are on their side, simply escapes me. It would seem logical to me that any citizen with doubts about the value of the Oahe project would only have those doubts amplified when he sees promoters of the project refusing to submit their case to the people.

As a longtime supporter of the Oahe Irrigation Project, it bothers me very much that opponents of the project have been permitted to claim that they alone are willing to place their arguments before the people. I believe a vote on Oahe would reaffirm support for the project and would display in public debate why the project can benefit the state. It would also give a powerful boost to congressional efforts to secure funding for a project whose backing in Congress might otherwise falter under the con-

3. Letters-to-the-Editor

Pro-Oahe, May 22, 1975

Oahe—McGovern

To the Editor:

I think that Sen. George McGovern should be commended for the testimony he

submitted to the appropriations subcommittee on public works for the Oahe Irrigation Project.

His statement, which traced the history of the project from the Flood Control Act of 1944, demonstrated a thorough understanding of the project and the need that South Dakota has for such an economic boost.

Thirty-one years is a long time to spend primarily on study of any project. Certainly there are questions, many of which have been raised by changing standards, and there will be more. But these can be effectively answered as the project progresses.

This is not the first project of this kind the bureau has built in these United States.

The Bureau of Reclamation claims to have answered 900 questions in the past couple of years. A South Dakota State University task force answered a number of others last year.

Some of these questions are good legitimate questions. Many, that have already been answered, are designed simply to create distrust and undermine the project.

Sen. McGovern's position demands answers and flexibility in the project. It also insists that the project be funded at the maximum feasible rate.

We have spent altogether too much time and money on feasibility studies. What we need to do now is invest money in construction. And that is precisely what Sen. McGovern has asked his colleagues in the Senate to do.

Donald Cook
Huron

Anti-Oahe, May 22, 1975

Open for

Inconsistent stand

To the Editor:

Senator McGovern's recent statement on the Oahe Irrigation Project which was published in this newspaper seems to be a bit inconsistent with his previous positions.

Last year Senator McGovern said, "I don't think any thoughtful person wants to proceed with construction of canals, the construction of the major parts of the system, until we have answered all the questions." The fact, is, the questions haven't been answered.

Senator McGovern also said that he would look upon the Oahe Conservancy Subdistrict elections as a referendum of how the farmers and the people in the affected area feel about the project. The fact is that the farmers elected representatives whose position was a delay in project construction, and that questions be answered.

The senator is now advocating accelerated development of the Oahe Unit, and the expenditures of taxpayers' money as rapidly as possible to construct canals. It seems he is no longer interested in our feelings on the project or in answering questions. I think the senator should either honor his previous positions, as we trusted he would, or come back to South Dakota and explain his recent statements.

Larry Tschetter
Rural Hitchcock

3. (Continued) Letters-to-the-Editor--Neutral, August 19, 1975

Open forum**Save Lake Byron****To the Editor:**

Are you interested in saving Lake Byron? Lake Byron is the only recreation area in this part of the state that can be reached by many in a matter of minutes.

I am asking all service clubs, church groups, trailer or camper groups, Chamber of Commerce, cities, in fact any group, organization or individual interested in the growth of this area, to write to the Bureau of Reclamation, c.o. Mr. Preston Funkhouser.

We expect business to move to this area, but can we give them recreation? They look at this area as well as tax structure and suitable building location.

Some time ago the Lake Byron Association asked the Bureau of Reclamation for an alternate dam site so Lake Byron could be saved. We had been told the hogsback which we had asked for years back, was not feasible.

Speaking for myself, not for Lake Byron Association, as we have not had time to hold a meeting since the article published in the Plainsman Sunday, I am in favor of plan number three as it would retain the lake at the high water level, would not require relocation of any cabins or homes, and we could have a fairly constant water level. Both plans one and two would result in considerable drawdown during the irrigation season. This would result in receding shore lines, which most people would not desire.

I may never enjoy the benefits of the new lake, but I am looking forward to the good of the area. How can we expect to keep young people in this area if we do not plan for their future? It is only the selfish that plan gains for himself. Let us all work together to save Lake Byron for the good of generations to come.

**Corwin R. Wells,
President Lake Byron
Development Association**

4. Associated Press News Stories

Pro-Oahe, January 26, 1975

Anti-Oahe, February 7, 1975

Oahe group praises Kneip

PIERRE, S.D. (AP)—The Friends of Oahe, Inc., praised Gov. Richard Kneip for what they called a positive attitude in support of the Oahe Irrigation Project.

Mike McHugh, Aberdeen, president of the group, said Kneip's state-of-the-state message indicated constructive thinking and a recognition of the value of the project to the state.

"The \$300 million in construction is certainly needed to lift the state's economy in this time of national recession," McHugh said.

"The estimated \$70 million annual increase in business when the project is fully operational will be a substantial contribution in years to come."

He said the group supports Kneip's recommendation for an executive-legislative committee to discuss any questions about the design of the project.

9 legislators ask moratorium on Oahe project

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Nine South Dakota lawmakers introduced a resolution in the 1975 legislature Friday calling for a moratorium on the Oahe Irrigation Project.

The proposed resolution asks Congress to declare a moratorium on further construction of the Oahe Unit until pertinent environmental, social and economic questions about the project have been answered.

The proposal states that there are questions about whether ditches will be made without permission of landowners affected, and says the plan to move water out of the Missouri River natural flood plain raises questions about environmental impact on the land.

It also says the proposed project could cause "irreversible destruction" to wildlife resources.

The resolution was introduced by Reps. Kenneth Stofferahn, R-Humboldt; Richard Barnes, D-Sioux Falls; Marvis Hogen, R-Kadoka; Milton Lakness, R-Hayti; Ingeman Jensen, R-Stockholm; Robert Weber, R-Strandburg, and Sens. Marilyn Kelm, D-Sioux Falls; Henry Poppen, R-DeSmet and Peg Lamont, R-Aberdeen.

Earlier this week, President Ford requested that a \$7.8 million appropriation be included in the fiscal 1976 federal budget for continuation of work on the project, which envisions irrigating more than 100,000 acres in central and north-central South Dakota.

The appropriation would be used to continue work on construction of the pumping station at Pierre and to start work on the first 1.3 miles of the Pierre Canal.

Farmers who support the project say the ability to irrigate their crops would result in substantially increased yields. Other supporters say the Oahe Project is the answer to drought conditions that have prevailed in much of the state in recent years, severely affecting municipal water supplies in some cities.

4. (Continued) Associated Press News Stories--Neutral

February 24, 1975

Suit dismissal in Oahe project denied by judge

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — U.S. District Judge Fred Nichol has denied a motion seeking dismissal of a suit brought against Secretary of the Interior Rogers C.B. Morton and others concerning the Oahe irrigation project.

United Family Farmers Inc. filed the suit on April 29, 1974 in an attempt to restrain the defendant from proceeding with the project until an adequate final environmental impact statement is filed.

The move to dismiss was filed on the grounds that the defendants are subject to inconsistent obligations in the Oahe project.

The suit alleges that the Oahe project would flood fertile land; the James River would be subject to floods; electrical power would be reduced, and natural resources would be destroyed and damaged.

The case will continue to be heard in federal court.

February 19, 1975

Hearings slated on Oahe project

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A hearing is scheduled next Tuesday night on two resolutions dealing with the controversial Oahe Irrigation Project.

One of the proposals supports a moratorium on the project, while another supports continuation of it.

The hearing, before the House and Senate state affairs committees, is scheduled at 8:30 p.m. in the House chambers. Sen. Michael O'Connor, D-Brandenburg, and Rep. Walter Miller, R-New Underwood, committee chairmen, said proponents of each measure would be allowed about 45 minutes each to express their views.

5. Articles by Staff writers--Pro-Oahe

February 24, 1975

New scare tactic by Oahe foes seen

ABERDEEN — Some opponents of the Oahe Irrigation Project, for reasons which seem vague, are dedicated to destroying the project at all costs, Mike McHugh, president of Friends of Oahe, said Monday.

"The most recent scare tactic," McHugh said, "is that you cannot move water from one river basin to another river basin without having a detrimental effect on soils in the basin to which it is moved."

He continued: "You do not need to be a soil scientist or chemist to recognize this as a scare tactic."

He said the compatibility of the soil and water "is the only issue to be considered."

"It does not matter where the water is moved or if it is moved in a pipe, a canal or a bucket," he said.

He continued: "Friends of Oahe believe that after 20 years of study, the compatibility of Oahe water and Brown and Spink county soils is well established."

McHugh accused opponents of choosing to ignore the fact that trans-basin diversion of irrigation water has been successfully accomplished many times.

"The biggest transfer is the Colorado Big Thompson Diversion," he said, "where water is diverted from the east side of the continental divide to the west side. We do not have any bigger 'basin' than that."

McHugh said opponents are also saying that the irrigation project will reduce power production in the main stem dams by 143 million kilowatt hours.

"These are big figures that scare people," he said. "What the opponents of the project fail to tell us, however, is that the water to be used for irrigation represents less than two per cent of the water leaving the system at Yankton and that the percentage of operating error in releases at Yankton is plus or minus two per cent."

December 11, 1975

Program slated on construction of Oahe Unit

A 30-minute television program offering strong reasons why the Oahe Unit construction should continue without a moratorium will be aired Jan. 12.

The program will be aired on channel 9-13, KABY and KSFY from 12 p.m. to 12:30 p.m., and on channels 11 and 3, KELO from 5:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. This will not interfere with the Super Bowl game.

C.A. Kearns, president of Kearns Machinery Company, who produced the film, urges all South Dakotans to watch it as it is a major concern for all people.

The importance of the Oahe Unit for increased and stabilized crop yields, municipal needs, fish and wildlife needs, recreational needs and general South Dakota economic growth are all within the program.

Vern McKee, executive secretary of the Greater South Dakota Association; Ned Leonard, Huron, of the Bureau of Reclamation; Tony Dean, Pierre sportsman, and others will appear on the show.

5. (Continued) Articles by Staff writers--Neutral, December 19, 1975

Made by new Oahe conservancy board member

Holscher critical of statements

The chairman of the Oahe Conservancy Subdistrict's board of directors Saturday rapped comments made by a new member of the organization during the group's annual reorganizational meeting in Pierre last week.

Fred Holscher, Faulkton, who was re-elected chairman of the board, said he couldn't believe that new board member, John Sieh, "would make such irresponsible statements concerning legitimate actions of the entire board of directors taken at the last previous meeting."

Sieh, who was attending his first meeting as a member of the subdistrict's board, criticized actions taken at the December meeting with five outgoing directors on the board.

Sieh said that decisions made at that time should have been deferred until the new board (which met Thursday in Pierre) convened in January.

"There was nothing improper or illegal about any of the actions taken at the December board meeting," Sieh said. "Matters before the board were handled in a timely and responsible manner."

The actions questioned by Sieh included the hiring of an attorney, the hiring of an information specialist, the awarding of a bid in information pamphlets and a contribution to the Greater South Dakota Association.

"The board did agree in December to rehire legal counsel as it has in previous years," Holscher said. "Counsel that was retained in December has acted for the board for a number of years. The information specialist in question has been in the employ of the subdistrict for the past 1 1/2 years."

He continued: "Costs and other factors of the three bids for the information pamphlet were reviewed by the board before awarding the job to the lower bidder."

Holscher said the \$100 authorized to the Greater South Dakota Association was for membership "and was not a contribution any more than any other member's dues could be considered a contribution."

"It is my intent as chairman of this board to conduct meetings in a fair and impartial manner," Holscher said, "and with the dignity decorum required of a responsible governmental body of this type."

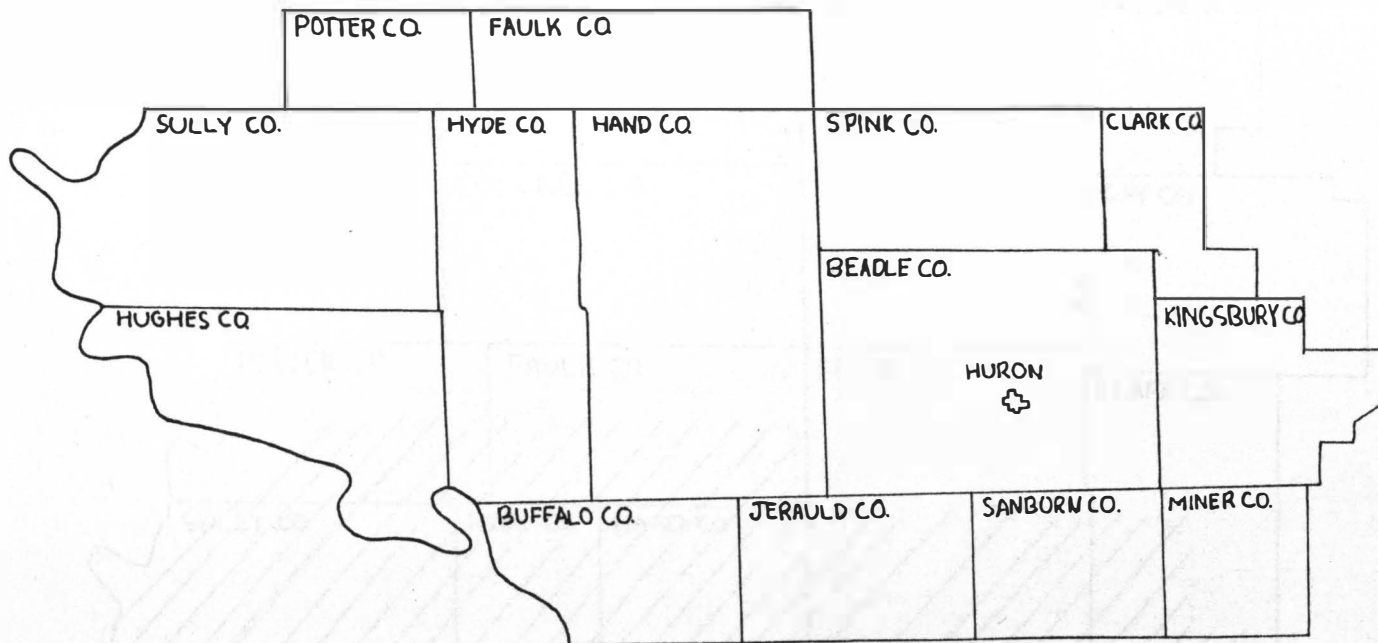
He added: "I appreciate John Sieh's request for a special meeting to review for the new directors the background and present status of the Oahe unit. It is unfortunate that this

project has become so entangled in emotional and wild speculation in recent months."

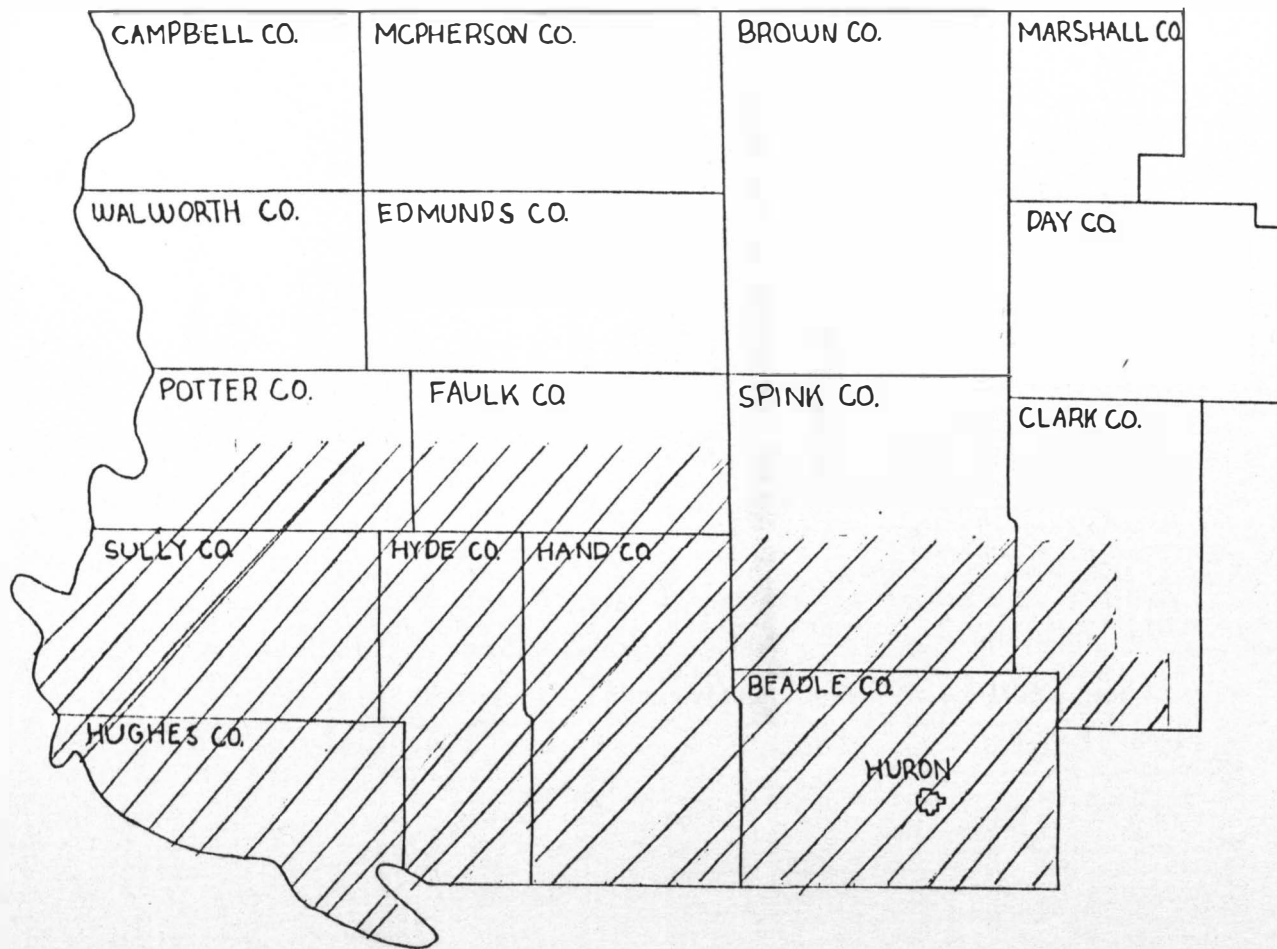
"It was only after the members of the board had discussed the merits of a special meeting that I decided to call for one," Holscher said. "I must agree with Sieh that such a meeting will be extremely valuable as a vehicle to provide new members with factual information and answers to the questions they might have."

APPENDIX B

MAPS



Map showing the area of distribution of the Huron Daily Plainsman



Shaded area represents the area of distribution of the Huron Daily Plainsman within the 15½ county Oahe Conservancy Sub-District.

APPENDIX C

EXAMPLES OF ATTENTION SCORE COMPUTATION

Pro-Oahe February 11 Article: Huron Daily Plainsman

Page (1) plus Placement (2) divided by Column Width ($1 \frac{3}{4}$) plus Column Length ($10 \frac{1}{2}$) plus Headline Type Size (30) equals Attention Score

$$1 + 2 \div 1 \frac{3}{4} + 10 \frac{1}{2} + 30 = \text{Attention Score}$$

$$3 \div 42.5$$

$$42.5 \div 3 = 14.16 = \text{Attention Score}$$

The figure was then rounded off to the nearest whole number.

$$14 = \text{Attention Score}$$

Anti-Oahe February 7 Article: Huron Daily Plainsman

Column Width ($1 \frac{3}{4}$) plus Column Length (8) plus Headling Type Size (18) divided by Page (2) plus Place (1) equals Attention Score

$$1 \frac{3}{4} + 8 + 18 \div 2 + 1 = \text{Attention Score}$$

$$27 \frac{3}{4} \div 3$$

$$27.75 \div 3 = 9.25 = \text{Attention Score}$$

The figure was then rounded off to the nearest whole number.

$$9 = \text{Attention Score}$$

The pro-Oahe news story of February 11 rated an attention score of 14 while the anti-Oahe news story of February 7 rated an attention score of 9.

CONTENT ANALYSIS--HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	TYPE SIZE ARTICLE
March 4						
Pro Oahe- AP						
Anti- Oahe- AP						
Neutral- AP	X 1	Middle	5 1/2	3 1/4	30	12
	X 3	Top	5 1/2	5 1/2	36	12
Editorial by Plainsman Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Guest Editorial Pro, Anti, Neutral	4	Middle	5 1/2	3 1/4	24	12
Letters to Editor- Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Article by Plainsman- Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Photo-Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Ads-Pro, Anti, Neutral						

CONTENT ANALYSIS--HURON DAILY PLAINSMAN

DATE	PAGE	PLACEMENT	COLUMN WIDTH	COLUMN LENGTH	TYPE SIZE HEADLINES	TYPE SIZE ARTICLE
September 30						
Pro Oahe- AP						
Anti- Oahe- AP						
Neutral- AP	X 1	Bottom	10 1/4	2 1/4	30	12
Editorial by Plainsman Pro, Anti, Neutral	4	Top	5 1/4	7 3/4	36	14
Guest Editorial Pro, Anti, Neutral By McGovern	4	Middle	5 1/4	11 1/2	30	12
Letters to Editor- Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Article by Plainsman- Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Photo-Pro, Anti, Neutral						
Ads-Pro, Anti, Neutral						

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