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Governor Link calls water ~~crucial~~ to North Dakota

(The following are excerpts from remarks by Gov. Arthur Link of North Dakota at the 25th quarterly meeting of the Missouri River Basin Commission Aug. 2 in Bismarck, N. D.)

The history of North Dakota is filled with incidents underscoring the water needs of our state. Water is our lifeline. It touches every facet of our economic and social existence. Water is crucial to agriculture, crucial to growth and crucial to development.



Governor Link

The Missouri River and Garrison Diversion provide the adjustment to meet the needs of the harsh realities of North Dakota. The scope of water management and the Missouri River bind us together to provide a part of the planning and coordinating apparatus needed for our own well-being.

This seems a fitting time to reemphasize the North Dakota perspective regarding the Missouri River and, more specifically, Garrison Diversion. It is a perspective tempered by the hard historical frustrations of the struggle for survival in a semiarid climate.

It is a perspective disciplined by a continuing effort to see Garrison Diversion to its full conclusion. And, it is a perspective nurtured by the hope that states and the federal government can plan and cooperate with one another for our common good.

Historically, the climate of North Dakota dramatized the need for a long-term solution for our water needs. Many of our early towns relied on water shipped by the railroad, or for many years, purchased water from water peddlers. This life style and environment conditioned us to be forward-looking while reminding us that we cannot recklessly regard or squander our resources.

As early as 1889, harnessing the Missouri River and the diversion of its water lingered in people's minds. The first irrigation works were built in 1905 and 1906 by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation on the lower Yellowstone and on the Missouri River.

It was the drought of the 1930s which stimulated new interest and made the state more conscious than ever of its delicate balance with nature. The legislatures of 1933, 1935 and 1937 organized and revised regulations concerning water and its use.

However, the great hope was the Missouri River, and the emphasis was irrigation. The Sloan Plan, presented by W.G. Sloan of the Bureau of Reclamation in 1942, addressed itself to

irrigation and hydroelectric power needs. But, the damaging floods on the lower Missouri in 1942 and 1943 stressed another problem—flood control.

Colonel Pick of the Army Corps of Engineers presented a plan for six dams on the main stream of the Missouri River and more than 99 dams on its tributaries. The Pick Plan was aimed at flood control and navigation. Compromises were made and Congress accepted a revised Pick-Sloan Plan and passed it as the Flood Control Act on December 22, 1944. It provided for flood control, power and storage of water.

December 22, 1944, marked an end as well as a beginning. It was the end of over 50 years of waiting for a commitment to harness the Missouri, and it was the beginning of the realization of a dream to be built over the next 60 years.

To date, North Dakota has been largely a provider in the scheme of things. North Dakota sacrificed over one-half million acres of fertile land for water storage. The annual income loss from that land exceeds \$90 million.

The benefits of water control for downstream areas have been realized for many years. Those benefits in flood protection approach \$1 billion.

Seventy-two percent of the low-cost hydroelectric power generated in Montana, South Dakota and North Dakota is consumed in states other than the producing states where the dams are located. Minnesota alone consumes 36 percent of the hydropower. The three states storing water and generating the electricity consume less than 28 percent.

Besides providing flood control and hydroelectric generation, stabilizing the flow of water in the Missouri River below the dam has resulted in an expansion of barge traffic below main stem reservoirs.

Although North Dakota is proud of its contribution to the overall stabilization of the Missouri River Basin, we still look to the future for the benefits we believe we deserve. Broadly speaking, we expect a stabilization of the state and regional economy. We envision increased farm income, increased trade, new businesses, new fish and wildlife areas and a stable water supply for many of our cities.

We look forward to the irrigation of 250,000 acres which will produce during both the lush and lean years. We see much higher yielding crops and a more diversified agricultural economy.

The respending of the increased farm income would have an impact of at least \$160 million annually. The new fish and wildlife areas will provide over 146,000 acres of expanded hunting and fishing areas. Many municipalities and rural and domestic water users see the Garrison Diversion Unit as the most dependable source of water they so greatly need to survive and grow.

These are the benefits we in North Dakota are waiting for. If we are to realize these long-awaited goals it requires a commitment

by all of us to plan, coordinate and work with each other and the federal government so we don't fall short of our goal.

My predecessor, former Gov. Bill Guy of North Dakota, was one of the first to recognize the advantages of states planning and cooperating together for the attainment of mutual goals. As we all know, Bill Guy was instrumental in organizing the Missouri River Basin Commission. He saw it primarily as a planning tool providing a unique opportunity for the Missouri River Basin states to speak with a united voice representing the needs of all its members.

That united voice is needed now more than ever before if the attainment of the historical, legal and moral commitment between the Missouri River Basin states and the United States is to bear fruit for North Dakota. Let us not neglect that responsibility. Every three months we have the opportunity to sit down with the federal government and comprehensively review the directions we should be going. We welcome the opportunity and must take full advantage of it.

MRBC meetings set

The 26th regular quarterly meeting of the Missouri River Basin Commission will be at the New Tower Hotel Courts in Omaha Nov. 1-2.

The 27th regular quarterly MRBC meeting will be held in Denver Feb. 7-8 at a site to be selected.

The 28th regular quarterly meeting of the commission will be held in Kansas City the first week in May in conjunction with the fourth annual Missouri River Basin Governors' Conference.

Yellowstone report undergoes 90-day review

The draft "Final Report and Environmental Assessment" of the Yellowstone Basin and Adjacent Coal Area Level B Study is undergoing official 90-day review.

The review was initiated July 12 by John E. Acord, Montana, state-elected MRBC vice-chairman and acting MRBC chairman.

The review is being conducted by the governors of the 10 states of the Missouri River Basin and by the heads of the federal and interstate agencies which are MRBC members.

The official review is required under section 204(3) of Public Law 89-80, the Water Resources Planning Act of 1965. The final report and official comments will be transmitted to the U.S. Water Resources Council before the end of this year.

Copies of the final draft report are available to the public at no charge for as long as they last. They may be obtained by writing MRBC, Suite 403, 10050 Regency Circle, Omaha, NE 68114.

Missouri River storage reaches second highest peak

Water stored in the six Missouri River main stem reservoirs reached its second highest peak in late July.

Brig. Gen. William E. Read of the Army Corps of Engineers told the Missouri River Basin Commission meeting in Bismarck that the storage level crested in late July at 69.3 million acre-feet.

The largest storage ever recorded was 72.1 million acre-feet in 1975.



General Read

"The runoff volume above the main stem reservoir system in the three months of March, April and May was the greatest ever recorded since records began in 1898," General Read reported.

"June and July inflows, though not as dramatic, were well above normal, and August inflows are expected to continue above normal. With continued normal runoff from September, the annual runoff above Sioux City in 1978 would total 39 million acre-feet. That's 5 percent greater than the previous high in 1927 and 10 percent greater than the second highest runoff which occurred in 1975," he said.

General Read credited the reservoir system with preventing "a major flood along the entire length of the Missouri River" at the height of the runoff in late March and early April.

"True, some flooding did occur along the lower river due to high inflows from tributary streams below the main stem reservoirs,"

he said, "but Missouri River stages would have been from 8 to 18 feet higher without the main stem reservoir control."

Meantime, releases from the reservoirs have been increased in order to completely evacuate the stored flood water prior to next year's flood season, Read said.

"Power production at all of the projects has increased sharply with four of the six projects now operating at maximum output around the clock. Total energy generation in 1978 is estimated to be 28 percent above last year," Read said.

High water levels also permitted the reservoirs to be operated this spring to improve fish spawn conditions, he said.

Navigation also benefited from controlled flows on the Missouri River and is expected to continue into December this year. Shipments in 1978 will be between 3 and 3.5 million tons but short of the record level set a year ago, Read said.

MRBC publishes revised appendix to framework study report

The Missouri River Basin Commission has published a revised appendix to the 1971 Missouri River Basin Comprehensive Framework Study.

The revised appendix is titled "Volume 3, Laws, Policies, and Administration."

The original appendix was published by the Missouri Basin Inter-Agency Committee.

Objective of the document is to convey a general understanding of water laws, policies and administration in each of the 10 states in the Missouri River Basin and of applicable laws and policies of the federal government.

The revised publication includes all important changes that occurred through 1975 and some which occurred as recently as this year.

Copies of the revised publication have been distributed to MRBC members and alternates, public libraries and other institutions and individuals with interests in water and related land resources planning.

Additional copies will be made available to the public for no charge for as long as they last. They may be obtained by writing MRBC, Suite 403, 10050 Regency Circle, Omaha, NE 68114.

New MRBC member, alternates named

The Department of Health, Education and Welfare has named a new representative to the Missouri River Basin Commission. James R. Bergfalk, acting principal regional official, Kansas City, replaces Thomas J. Higgins.

The Environmental Protection Agency has named Dale B. Parke, Kansas City, as its new alternate member. Parke replaces Walter F. Robohn.

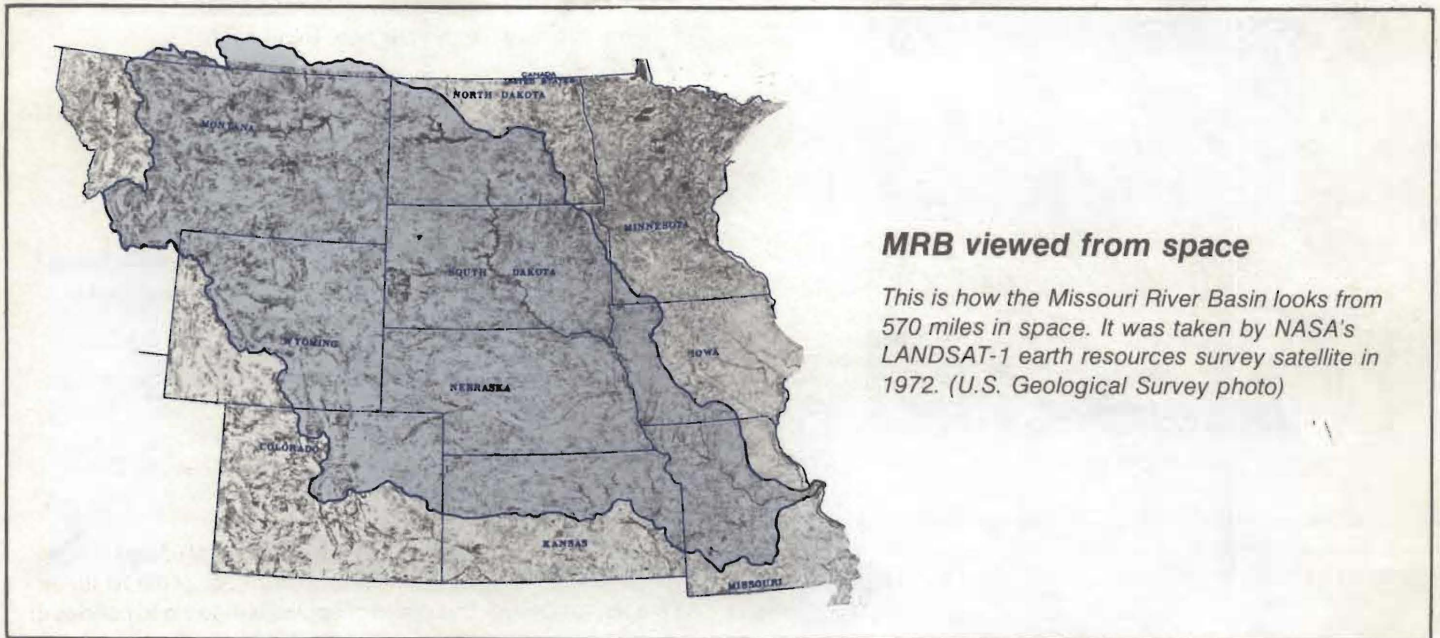
The Yellowstone River Compact Commission has added a second alternate to MRBC. He is Walter R. Scott, Bismarck, N. D., a U.S. Geological Survey employee who serves as the compact commission chairman.

Governors' conference proceedings at the printer

Proceedings of the third annual Missouri River Basin Governors' Conference held in Great Falls, Mont., in May are at the printer.

Copies will be distributed to the governors and other conference participants and observers as well as libraries, legislators and governmental agencies

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MRB viewed from space

This is how the Missouri River Basin looks from 570 miles in space. It was taken by NASA's LANDSAT-1 earth resources survey satellite in 1972. (U.S. Geological Survey photo)



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