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## Perspective

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### Feeding Hungry Horses

by RAYMOND MOLEY

**P**ORTLAND—One of the newest and biggest of the Federal projects that I have seen on this trip through the Northwest is at Hungry Horse, Mont., in the Flathead River Canyon. There in the early stages of construction is a dam which, it is said, will be the fourth largest in the United States. According to the Hoover commission, which has a good deal to say about these projects, the cost of this dam was first estimated at something more than \$6,000,000. Now the estimate is \$93,500,000 and, as in all such projects, this will be far less than the final bill.

A visitor from another section of the country is likely to say to himself as he looks down at Hungry Horse: "How many more deep canyons are there ahead; how much active local pressure for development with Federal money? How many congressmen can link their projects with the projects of other congressmen for mutual benefit? How many bureaucrats in Washington live through the satisfaction of these demands? How can all this be controlled and directed fairly and in the interest of the nation as a whole?"

A partial answer to the first of these questions is in an immense report of the Army Corps of Engineers, popularly called "308" and now the basis of much discussion in the states of the Northwest. This report says there are 90 dams in the Northwest, built or building. Five others are authorized, on which construction has not yet started. Seven more are recommended in the report. Twenty-seven are "proposed," and 132 are called "potential." The cost of these future developments is, of course, wholly speculative at this time.

**I** AM not discussing here the desirability or need of any or all of these projects. That question involves many relative values. The State of Washington can with truth claim that, since it has no coal or oil, it must use whatever it has in abundance, which is water power. It cannot develop this without help. It can claim that ultimately there will be economic production which will pay back in taxes all that it now receives, and thus ease the

saddle sores of those states throughout the whole country that now bear so much of the cost of the Federal government.

The real issue comes down to the number of years over which the required expenditures would be spread, the relative needs of other parts of the country, and the means of budgetary control in Washington which will guide the President, the Congress, and the public in fairly balancing demands with the capacity of the taxpayers of the nation. More immediate is the question of the administrative setup by which these projects should be planned and carried through.

Two agencies of the Federal government are concerned with the latter problem: the Army Corps of Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation of the Interior Department. There has long been rivalry between those agencies. On this point John D. Millett, an outstanding authority on Federal administration and one of the experts on the Hoover commission, suggests the Missouri Valley plans as an illustration. Both agencies made competitive plans for that project and, despite the so-called Pick-Sloan merger of the two, according to Millett there is basic conflict. Such competition over the nation is expensive and tends to project these agencies, especially the Army Engineers, into the business of needling communities and congressmen into pressure drives for special projects.

**T**HE Hoover commission proposes the consolidation of the civil functions of the Army Engineers and the Bureau of Reclamation. Hoover as President tried to do this but was thwarted by Congress. Even now, and largely because of the kindly feeling of Senator McClellan for the Army Engineers, the Hoover reorganization bills will not permit the President to order this merger. Congressman White of California has introduced a bill for the merger which will probably have hard sledding in Congress.

With the President making light of efforts to limit the deficit and with the immense influence of the forces behind spending for public works, the outlook is not bright.

