UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau of Reclamation
Coulee Dam, Washington

CBP-483

For release a.m.'s of April 5

COULEE DAM, Wash., April 5--Queries are being sent to five nationally known geologists to invite their opinions on the length of time since water last flowed through the Grand Coulee, ice age channel of the Columbia River, as the Bureau of Reclamation prepares to pump water once more into the historic gorge.

Reclamation engineers will start the world's biggest water lift at the Grand Coulee Dam about May 1st to pump the water 280 feet out of the reservoir behind the dam. The ice age channel which is 27 miles long, will be filled with irrigation water, and from the lower end, canals will deliver the water to the dry sagebrush lands of the Columbia Basin Project, beginning in spring 1952. Ultimately, 1,029,000 acres, an irrigated area the size of Rhode Island, will receive the water.

The queries are being sent to Dr. William Herbert Hobbs, Ann Arbor, Mich., professor emeritus of geology at the University of Michigan; Dr. Richard Foster Flint, Yale University, New Haven, Conn.; Dr. J. Harlen Bretz, University of Chicago; Dr. Charles Campbell, Washington State College, Pullman, Wash.; and Dr. Ernst Antevs, Globe, Arizona.

The age of this gorge, since the Columbia last flowed through, is variously estimated from 8,000 to 25,000 years. The 25,000 year figure was rather generally accepted, although recent experiments in the radioactive isotope of carbon by Dr. Harold C. Urey resulted in the answer 11,300 years interval since the end of the Pleistocene (ice) age.

The gorge was carved when giant glaciers formed an ice dam across the river in much the same place as Grand Coulee Dam now is located. The ice age channel later was stranded high and dry as the glaciers melted, and the Columbia was allowed to return to the present channel.

Some settlers, whose farms in the basin receive water from the plan, have been waiting almost 50 years to see the duplication, even on a small scale, of Nature's plan which once sent billions of gallons of yellow glacial waters cascading over the lands.

Some say, whether the water has not gone through the Grand Coulee in 11,300 years or in 25,000 years, it seems at least the longer period they've been waiting. Broken down, deserted homes stand as tombstones in the hanging valley today, where the settlers went broke dry farming on the fertile, but arid soil.

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FOR RELEASE AFTER 12:45 P.M. THURSDAY, MAY 11, 1950

COULEE DAM, Wash., May 11--Frank A. Banks, the Bureau of Reclamation engineer who has been often referred to as "the builder of Grand Coulee Dam," today received the highest commendation for service in the U. S. Department of the Interior, the Award for Distinguished Service. The presentation was made at a luncheon which followed the formal dedication of the dam and Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake by President Truman.

Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman read the citation. President Truman tendered his congratulations.

It was the fourth time Banks has played host to a presidential visitor in 17 years at the dam.

Banks visited this site on September 9, 1933, with the advance party which set the stakes for the axis of the dam, and he has been closely associated with the project ever since.

There was only one farmhouse and the old Seaton ferry on the site which today comprises the government town of Coulee Dam and the largest man-made structure in the world.

Banks' association with reclamation projects dates far before his appointment to the Grand Coulee project. He joined the Reclamation Service in 1906, 44 years ago, when the Bureau was four years old. Banks was a young graduate out of the University of Maine at the time. His first job was as survey gang rodman on the Yellowstone Project, in Montana.

Since that time, he has served as regional director of reclamation for the Pacific Northwest, as acting Bonneville power administrator, as U. S. member of the international committee on high dams and as U. S. representative on the international Columbia River Engineering Committee.

His accomplishments within the Columbia river system read like a history of reclamation for the Pacific Northwest. They started at the headwaters, as construction engineer on the Jackson Lake enlargement.

Banks left behind him, downstream, the American Falls Dam of the Minidoka Project, Ida., on the Snake river; the Owyhee Dam, Oreg., in its day the nation's outstanding engineering structure; the Thief Valley Dam, Ore.; and the Grand Coulee Dam.

Banks has supervised the development here not only of the largest man-made structure in the world, but twin powerhouses which are the greatest single source of electric energy in the world today. Still under development is the largest pumping plant in the world, which ultimately will irrigate one million acres in the Columbia Basin Project.

The Citation for Distinguished Service concludes:

"While little the Department of the Interior does can add to or detract from the autobiography that Frank Banks wrote in steel and concrete and dams across the valley of the Columbia, which will aid the nation as long as water runs downhill, this citation is tendered in recognition of his service to all the people."

The citation is signed by Oscar L. Chapman, Secretary of the Interior.

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NOT TO BE RELEASED BEFORE 12:45 P.M. THURSDAY, MAY 11

Photo Caption

Frank A. Banks, District Manager of the Columbia Basin Division of the Bureau of Reclamation, today received the Award for Distinguished Service, the highest commendation for service by the U. S. Department of the Interior. The presentation was made following the formal dedication of Grand Coulee Dam and Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake by President Truman.

PROGRAM FOR MEAD CIRCLE DEDICATION OF GRAND COULEE DAM

AND FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT LAKE

10:00 A.M. - Band Concert - Coulee Dam and Grand Coulee High School bands.

10:30 A.M. - Introduction of distinguished guests by Hu Blonk, Regional Information Officer.

10:55 A.M. - President arrives at Mead Circle.

11:00 A.M. - President reaches speakers platform. Band plays "Hail to the Chief," followed by "The National Anthem."

Regional Director Harold T. Nelson, Bureau of Reclamation, Boise, Idaho, presents Commissioner of Reclamation Michael W. Straus as chairman.

Commissioner Straus presents Secretary of the Interior Oscar L. Chapman as Master of Ceremonies.

Secretary Chapman in two-minute response introduces Governor Arthur B. Langlie of Washington.

Governor Langlie welcomes the President and visitors in two-minute address.

Secretary Chapman presents other governors, U. S. Senators and Representatives, and Frank A. Banks, builder of Grand Coulee Dam, and others.

11:15 A.M. - Nation-wide broadcast begins

Secretary Chapman presents Senator Warren G. Magnuson of Washington.

Senator Magnuson in two-minute address introduces the President.

President delivers 20-minute address and unveils Franklin D. Roosevelt plaque.

11:45 A.M. - President inspects plaque.

12:00 Noon - Luncheon for the President, his party, distinguished guests and members of the White House press in the gymnasium behind the speakers platform.

12:30 P.M. - Presentation of Distinguished Service Award to Frank A. Banks, District Manager, by Secretary Chapman.

12:45 P.M. - President's party departs for Wilbur. Band plays selected numbers.

1:30 P.M. - President's party arrives at train at Wilbur. Departs for Spokane.

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Coulee Dam, Washington

CBP-452

For immediate release

COULEE DAM, Wash., Sept. 21—New world's power production records are being set almost daily at the Grand Coulee Dam this week, the Bureau of Reclamation announced today.

The latest world's record for a 24-hour period was set Wednesday, with a production of 40,340,000-kilowatt hours. An hourly record of 1,751,000-kilowatt hours was set Monday. It was anticipated that Thursday's production might top both of these records.

The seasonal increase in load in the Pacific Northwest Power Pool and the seasonal drop in rivers all over the area is throwing an added load on the Grand Coulee plant. The installation of two new, 108,000 kilowatt generators at the dam this year has made it possible for the plant to carry heavier loads than ever before.

Within the next few weeks, another 108,000-kilowatt unit will be placed in service to increase the capacity and clear the way for even greater production records. Three additional units will be placed in service in 1951 to complete the installation of 18 large generators.

The previous daily record for electric power production, before the recent upsurge began, was 35,894,000-kilowatt hours for a 24-hour day set on January 18, 1950. The hourly record, set on January 4, 1950, was 1,544,000-kilowatt hours. Both of these records were made with 12 large units on the line. There are now 14 large units in service.

2-2-2-2 New power production records

Last Monday, a daily record of 39,521,000-kilowatt hours topped all previous world's records in any one location in history. Daily production has continued on an upward scale, and it was predicted by Bureau of Reclamation officials that still higher records will be set in the coming week.

The flow of the Columbia River is still sufficiently high that the Grand Coulee plant can produce at the higher capacity without lowering water in the storage reservoir, Franklin D. Roosevelt Lake.

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Photograph by
Bureau of Reclamation
Coulee Dam, Wash.

2 - 4234

Photo No. 4234-2

This is the Grand Coulee, ice age channel of the Columbia River, which has been a suspended gorge since the glaciers melted. Now Bureau of Reclamation engineers are about ready to lift water back into the channel for the irrigation of a sagebrush empire. Five nationally famous geologists have been sent queries as to the approximate length of time since the river last flowed through the canyon. Walls here vary from 400 to 800 feet high.

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