

SILT SURVEY OF COLORADO RIVER BEING PRESSED

Reservoir Will Be Filled
With Silt at End of
500 Years, Said

BOULDER CITY, Mar. 20 (U.P.)
—Survey of the 230 square miles
to be inundated behind Boulder
dam to determine the extent of
silt that may possibly choke the
huge barrier was underway to-
day.

Dr. Walter C. Lowdermilk, vice-
director of the soil erosion service,
announced that a constant check
is to be maintained on the amount
of silt and other erosional debris
deposited in the water storage
plant by the Colorado river and its
tributaries.

THE SURVEY will map the
country which ultimately is to be
covered with water, so as to be
the basis for future comparative
studies in studying the lake's floor
for changes in topography due to
deposits of sediment.

The information thus obtained
is hoped to furnish a factual basis
for developing protective measures
of erosion control and silt deten-
tion in the Colorado watershed.

Engineers estimated that during
the first 50 years of operation
there will be a deposit of about
3,000,000 acre feet of silt which is
approximately 10 per cent of the
reservoir capacity of 30,500,000
acre feet.

DURING construction plans were
made to care for 10,000,000 acre
feet of silt, the engineers said.
They estimated it would take more
than 150 years for the river to de-
posit that much silt and something
like 500 years before the reservoir
is filled.

"A proper concept of Boulder
dam demands that steps be taken
now to prevent any future curtail-
ment of its utility," Dr. Lowder-
milk said. "The necessity for accu-
rate information on the rate of
damage due to sedimentation is ob-
vious if we are to devise and in-
stall protective measures in the
watershed of the Colorado."

The bureau of reclamation, Dr.
Lowdermilk disclosed, is planning
a series of silt retention dams to
be built above Boulder dam to pro-
long the structure's life. Revegeta-
tion of ranges which have been
overgrazed also will aid in lessen-
ing the silt danger, he explained.