

FROM WHERE I SIT

By A. E. CAHLAN

There is much more to the supreme court decision which halted work on Parker dam the other day than appears on the surface. It was not just a blow at this particular project but rather knocked the entire new deal reclamation program into a cocked hat. In effect, the high court held that any projects calling for the erection of dams on navigable streams must be specifically authorized by congress or they are invalid. Under the original public works appropriations, sums have been set aside for the Parker dam, Grand Coulee, Bonneville and others thruout the country. Most of these were NOT specifically ordered by congressional act, and are affected by this decision.

The net result at Parker, will probably be the abandonment of construction and the loss by Six Companies of the four million dollar contract. For Arizona, battling every inch of the way, is accorded better than an even chance of defeating any measure presented to the United States senate which would validate the controversial project. With the present legislative jam and most of the important measures of the Rooseveltian program still destined to be passed upon, a determined filibuster by those two veteran Arizona senators, Carl Hayden and H. F. Ashurst, will undoubtedly blockade any Parker dam bill. And to those who watched this pair filibuster the Boulder dam bill to its death on a couple of occasions back in the darker days of 1927 and 1928, there will be no doubt of their ability to wage the fight successfully.

The Parker dam is the diversion

dam for the Los Angeles aqueduct. Its abandonment means that some new method of getting water out of the river at that point will be necessary, for the project will hardly wait another session of congress and the uncertainty of congressional approval. Engineers will solve the problem some way, however, probably with a weir device which will allow the Metropolitan Water District to divert water out of California's side of the river and pump it into the aqueduct. The river will probably be clear of all silt by that time, it is believed.

On Grand Coulee, heralded as the successor to Boulder dam as the nation's greatest, the situation is somewhat different. There is no opposition to this project and probably legislation will slide thru without any difficulty, unless complications develop. In this latter instance, there will be no legislation at this session and the dam may remain in its present unfinished status until there is.

Bonneville, according to well-informed sources, has congressional authorization, and will not be jeopardized, although first reports from Washington were to the contrary.

Just who will reimburse Six Companies for the work already done on Parker dam if the project is abandoned, and who, likewise, will pay the Silas Mason company for their efforts to date on Coulee, is somewhat of a stickler. If the government had no business starting the jobs, it certainly is without authority to take money out of the treasury to pay for any part of their construction.