



Boulder Dam and the Men Who Are Building It

Upper Left—Wilson Dam at Muscle Shoals. Upper Right—New United States Customs House at Denver, Colorado. Upper Inset—S. O. Harper, Assistant Chief Engineer. Left Group of Five: Upper Left—J. L. Savage, Chief Designing Engineer. Right—H. R. McBirney, Designing Engineer on Canals. Center—Ivan E. Houk, Engineer of Technical Studies. Lower Left—E. B. Debler, Hydraulic Engineer. Right—W. H. Nadler, Assistant Chief Designing Engineer. Right Group of Five: Upper Left—R. F. Walter, Chief Engineer. Right—P. J. Preston, Engineer Colorado River Investigation. Lower Left—C. M. Day, Mechanical Engineer. L. N. McClennan, Chief Electrical Engineer. Bottom—B. W. Steele, Designing Engineer on Dams.

Harnessers of the Colorado Open Up Untold Possibilities

Builders of This and Other Great Hydroelectric Projects Provide Power That Whole Future
May Change Its Trend

DENVER, Colo.—“Prosperity Center.” That’s what they have been calling the offices of the United States reclamation bureau here since they were called upon to supply a large share of the engineering work required by the giant nationwide public works program the Government has launched; for behind the stirring news these days of the efforts a mighty nation is making to lift itself above economic strife lies another story, a story crammed full of the romance of achievement and the glamour of doing things that have never been done before.

Engineering history is being written on two floors of the beautiful new block-long white marble Customs House here, where the bureau is housed. Significant history, it is, of the work that must precede the rising of great dams that harness mighty rivers to serve mankind and make millions of acres fertile, or before thousands of men can be given useful employment in building seven wonders for the modern world.

From the great Boulder Dam in Arizona-Nevada to the Norris Dam of the Tennessee Valley project, and from the Madden Dam in the Panama Canal Zone to the colossal Columbia River barrier at Grand Coulee in Washington, bureau of reclamation engineers are on the job blazing trails which mean many, many jobs for the workmen who follow soon after. And although engineers are usually rather matter-of-fact fellows who stick close to their figures and drafting boards, or transits and chains, a reflective

gleam comes into their eyes as they contemplate what is being done now.

For many years the bureau of reclamation has accomplished engineering marvels. Their irrigation and hydroelectric projects have long been recognized as engineering advances. When the bureau delivered the plans for the Boulder Dam six months before anybody thought they could, the attention of the engineer-

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staff of 250 men, all technically trained, the bureau was expanded in a very short time to include 500 men, making it the largest engineering organization in the world, the officials say.

In addition to the better known projects named above, which will cost more than \$270,000,000, the bureau has approximately 30 projects both old and new now under its supervision and these will represent, when completed, expenditures of some \$300,000,000.

Activity Is Hidden

Walking down the broad hallways of the bureau offices one does not notice much activity, but behind one of the neatly lettered doors is a man striving to get the stack of papers lower on his desk. Here and there flits a young man loaded down with papers he is transferring from one office to another.

In one room is a group of young college graduates compiling figures and making graphs. Inquiry revealed that most of them had spent the summer months in the laboratories testing concrete and other materials in experimental models and were now getting the results of their researches into shape and into concise form for the use of designing engineers.

Down in the basement they were busily mixing concrete of different formulas in a loudly rumbling machine, and making large cylinders a yard thick and two yards long. When these are properly aged they are tested in a compression machine that applies 4,000,000 pounds of pressure before they crumble.

"I watch 'er," chuckles a young man seated before a board of dials and controls, "and turn this knob slowly. These dials show what is happening, and all of a sudden the cylinder begins to crack and the building shakes and 'that is that."

Chiefs Are All Busy

In a large corner room, almost submerged in reports, plans, and correspondence, sits Mr. Walter who bears the responsibility of the most ambitious engineering man has ever attempted on his broad shoulders with a smile of encouragement for his coworkers. In the next room is Mr. S. O. Harper, assistant chief engineer, who has his hands full in taking care of a mass of executive detail and in keeping touch with the progress of the numerous projects under construction.

Another door opens upon the room of Mr. John Lucian Savage, the chief designing engineer, where on his desk are plans for four of the largest dams in the world, which he has designed in succession. Piled

with the engineering history being made.

Build for the Future

These men of the reclamation bureau are in earnest, fully recognizing the responsibility that is theirs in carrying out some of the most spectacular engineering dreams man has had in the 6000 years that have elapsed since Cheops ordered a pyramid.

They deal in dreams—in what many would term impossibilities—yet they deal in cold facts and figures, too. And over all hangs the insistent demand of speed and more speed so that the humanitarian effect of their doing the “impossible” may be translated into jobs for the thousands of waiting workers.

Perhaps better than anyone else, they realize that theirs is not just the job for a day. Many believe that the consequences of developing these vast projects may change the future development of the nation. The enormous cheap electric power resulting from them will no doubt attract countless factories to center about them.

Perhaps the underfed industrial workers of the eastern slums will be drawn with factories to the wide open spaces where farm lands are cheap. There are endless possibilities that may arise to wield the pen of history, so these engineers of the reclamation bureau are truly men of vision as well as men of action, and that is why they are calling their offices here “Prosperity Center!”