

## Doesn't Understand The West

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That the western states are up against an uphill fight in their efforts to gain sympathetic consideration of their problems from Secretary Harold Ickes of the interior department, is brought home rather strikingly in a recent communication from Congressman James G. Scrugham of Nevada revealing that the secretary has expressed himself as opposed to any further irrigation developments in the west and denied approval of the sum of \$200,000.-000 asked for by the reclamation service from the public works fund.

The denial, the Congressman states, included the \$1,500,000 asked for the upstream storage project on the Truckee River, the \$2,000,000 for the Humboldt, Upper Carson and other projects which had previously been tentatively approved for Nevada.

The secretary justified his stand on the grounds that the country is already suffering from an overproduction of agricultural products and that further expenditures for land reclamation would be unjustified.

That was the same argument that aided the opponents of Boulder Dam to hold up the project for so many years—an argument which was too often proven fallacious during that period to warrant discussion here. Even granting for the purpose of discussion, that the argument is well-founded, it still would not apply to the projects advocated for Nevada.

Upstream storage on the Truckee River has for its principal purpose the conservation of the waters of that stream to insure all who now hold water rights, and who are now irrigating or attempting to irrigate their farms with waters from the river, of a regular supply.

The Humboldt River project has a similar goal in mind. This river dissipates much of its flow thru subterranean runoff. Flood waters of early spring are lost entirely. The proposal is to conserve these waters in order that the ranchers in the lower vally will b protected against water shortage, which have occurred all too frequently in years gone by.

In neither instance does the argument of the secretary apply, and yet his opposition provides a major obstacle to final approval. Latest word from Washington indicates, however, that the group of western senators who took the matter straight to the president himself, may be successful in overriding the secretary's veto.

It's hard for anyone, no matter how well-educated or experienced they may be, to understand the peculiar conditions of this western country, without having lived among them, and experienced these problems themselves. The stand taken by the secretary, while undoubtedly sincere and with a view to doing what he himself believes to be the best for the country as a whole, indicates a woeful lack of sympathy and understanding for western problems with which the interior department is almost wholly concerned.

The effect of the secretary's argument is that because of a fancied surplus of agricultural products the west must remain undeveloped, and that public works funds which might be assigned to this area will therefore be transferred east—a stand which most certainly will never be long tolerated from the head of a department of the government concerned purely with western problems.