

UNITED STATES AND MEXICO TO DIVIDE WATERS

Parley At Washington Will Study Three Great Rivers

By Joseph H. Baird
(United Press Staff Correspondent)
Washington, Oct. 24—(UP)—Commissioners of the United States and Mexico seated themselves around a council table here today to divide the waters of three great international rivers.

These highly-prized streams—the Rio Grande, Tia Juana and Colorado, represent food and clothing as well as drink for millions of Americans and Mexicans living on the irrigated land along their borders. Division of these waters has posed an international problem whose solution was sought unsuccessfully by commissioners at a three-week session in Mexico City last August.

Today these commissioners settled

down here to renew their labors. If they agree on a compact, it will be submitted to the State departments of each nation to be translated in a treaty.

Six Commissioners
Three members, all engineers, represent each nation. Their task is to effect an equitable distribution of water for irrigation and to agree on measures for flood control in the lower delta of the Colorado. Although this danger will be mitigated by Boulder Dam, engineers believe, they also are convinced a Mexican outlet channel must be dredged.

The Tia Juana river has tributaries on both sides the international boundary line. It begins south of this line and empties into the Pacific Ocean two miles north of it. During the Spanish occupation of Mexico it was valuable chiefly as a watering place for cattle. Development of irrigation projects near San Diego, Cal., as well as on the Mexican side of the river, have made its waters valuable. The City of San Diego looks to the stream to re-enforce its water supply. Resort developments near Tia Juana, Mexico, likewise, will depend on the stream for water.

The Mexican Government is spending \$14,000,000 on a dam and reservoir on the international boundary line to conserve this nation's water surplus. It is contemplated by the United States investment of \$20,000,000 in irrigation projects along the Rio Grande has made this river of great importance to the United States, according to the Interior Department. On the American side of the river 560,000 acres are irrigated and 291,000 on the Mexican side. American water diversion from the Rio Grande was estimated last year at \$56,000 acre feet.

Faced with a loss of 4,000,000 acre feet of Rio Grande water which ran to waste last year, Government engineers believe two or more large storage dams should be built in the main channel of the stream.

Living for 2,000,000
The Interior Department estimates conservation of this wasted water will irrigate 1,000,000 acres of land on either side of the river to provide a living for 2,000,000 persons.

One of the problems confronting the commission is to devise plans for building these dams as an international enterprise. A plan, if agreed on, probably will be incorporated in a treaty.

The effective drainage area of the Rio Grande is 177,500 square miles, of which 54.8 per cent lies in the United States and 45.2 in Mexico. The total river yield for irrigation is estimated at 7,757,000 acre-feet. Forty-eight per cent of this comes from the United States and 52 per cent from Mexico. The problem raised by the Colorado River has as one of its angles the pending construction of Boulder Dam, which will change conditions on the lower river in Mexico.

Mexico's claims to Colorado water are relatively small as 242,000 square miles of the river's 244,000 square mile watershed lies in the United States. Mexico according to the Interior Department contributes but approximately 100 miles of the river channel area in the southern republic.

Flood Control Problem
This lower channel flows through a delta built up through the ages by silt deposits. Before irrigation began, the river in flood wandered all over the delta, without any definite channel.

Imperial valley irrigation projects necessitated keeping the river within bounds. Levees for this purpose were erected. A tendency of the river to raise its channel by silt accumulation has required constant heightening of the levees. Engineers decided some more satisfactory means of controlling the Colorado must be found. That is one major reason for building Boulder Dam. This project will create a reservoir sufficient to store one entire year's flow, according to the Interior Department.

Control of flood until the time when Boulder Dam is completed is one of the problems the commission will try to solve. It will discuss also the construction of an outlet channel to the Gulf for whatever surplus water flow down

beyond the United States boundary after Boulder Dam is completed.

Says Gas Tax Money Should Be Used On Roads
Indianapolis, Oct. 24—(UP)—All of the \$50,000 a day being collected from Indiana motorists under the 4-cent tax should be used for building and maintaining roads in the state highway system, Todd Stoops, secretary of the Hoosier Motor Club, contended in a statement today.

The state will collect \$17,000,000 in the first year of the 4-cent tax, Stoops said, adding that "rumors are current that an effort will be made to certain groups and politicians to deflect a part of the gasoline tax money into channels other than for the purpose which the tax was imposed."

Reviewing the history of the Indiana gasoline tax, Stoops said it "shows continual encroachments and attacks on the purse of the automobile owner."

"It is now time to face about and make a determined effort to see that the state highway department keeps all the gasoline tax money under the acts of 1929 and if possible to have the cent which goes to counties, cities and towns returned to the state highway department," Stoops said.

The motor club will resist any

legislative effort to increase the share of counties, cities and towns in the gasoline tax, Stoops said.

"The expense of maintaining gravel roads in the state highway system is enormous and out of proportion to the cost of maintaining paved roads," the statement declared. "For this reason no more roads than absolutely necessary should be added to the present state highway system until the present paving program is completed."

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