

Ida M. Tarbell
120 East 19th St.
New York City

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WHY ARIZONA THREATENS SECESSION

The arrested

If the Federal Government is never again to hear talk of secession in these states it must take care to never again put over such an outrageous injustice as that which the Bill authorizing the Hoover Dam inflicted on Arizona. Congress seems to have thought that because Arizona was weak in numbers there would be no come back. She failed to reckon how great the State is in spirit. She also failed to reckon with the kind of women you find in Arizona.

I first heard talk of secession in Arizona three years ago - a hint darkly dropped at a dinner table, but laughed off. Inquiring into it later I was told, "Of course *it is may* too late to stop the big Dam, but they will never put one through at Parker. Nellie won't stand for it." "And who was Nellie?" I asked.

I soon had my answer. The legislature was in session at that moment and I was reading the animated reports of its doings in the Tucson Press. Nellie - Mrs. Nellie Bush - to be more formal appeared frequently in those reports and always to her credit. You were not long in finding out that she was the person to be reckoned with no matter how big her opponent even if ~~he~~ were Uncle Sam himself, that is providing

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he was attempting to swindle Arizona.

Mrs. Bush I found was one of seven members in the legislature at that time - the Dean of them - then in her sixth term. Officially she was a lady from Yuma. Now Yuma is a huge territory at the Southwest corner of the State. It is separated from California by the Colorado River and it is on this River at the town called Parker that Nellie Bush lives and it is there that for many years she has run a ferry; it is there at the present moment the war between the United States and Arizona is threatened. Mrs. Bush's devotion to this ferry and the profits thereof are well enough known to all Arizonians and there was very genuine admiration expressed for her when she came out in the legislature, the time that I was following her, with a Bill to put a bridge across the River at Parker. Now that bridge would have done away with her ferry, but as she argued, "Travel between the States has become too great to be properly taken care of by the ferry, therefor we must have a bridge."

The Bill was passed because, as one of the legislators said, "I admired her for fighting for her people at her own expense."

As fine as this was Nellie Bush soon did something that was still finer in my way of looking at it, something that really touched me very much, for finding that there was not money enough on hand in the State to build her bridge -

which you must remember was a real feather in her cap with her constituents - and at the same time to take care of what was called, "The Barefoot Boy Bill", a bill extending opportunities for vocational training, she told the legislature, "You have just voted me \$25,000.00 for my bridge, but something for the children is more important. If we can't have both I'll give up the bridge."

Now that is the kind of a person she is and that is what makes her stand today against the United States building a dam across the Colorado^{River} at Parker so worth attention. If she were for herself first, or for Yuma first, she would be for the dam; new big local developments generally dazzle those of narrow views and flabby consciences, but Nellie Bush is not that kind. She is for Arizona first.

But why were they all so stirred up about the possibility of the United States building a dam across the Colorado River at Parker? Why were they all so indignant that the United States should be building a Hoover Dam? I could not understand until I followed the advice of one intelligent wise woman to look at the map and form my own ideas of what the United States was doing.

Well, a little study of the map of the Colorado River from source to mouth made me entirely sympathetic with Arizona's anger and not a little curious about the political procedure which had "convinced" Congress. Look at the map yourself, and see if you do not share my sympathy with Arizona - also my curiosity about the deal!

There are seven states "on the Colorado", that is, seven states which rightly have something to say about its water:-

Three of them, Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico, because they furnish it water:-

Two, California and Nevada, because it separates sections of their Eastern boundaries from Arizona - they give the river little water and no part of it lies within their territory:-

One, Utah, because the river is formed in her territory by the union there of two of her largest rivers, the Green and the Grand, also because some one hundred and fifty miles of the river, as the crow flies, is within her territory:-

One, Arizona, for all three reasons - she furnishes more water to the Colorado than any other state - the river forms her Western boundary for some five hundred miles and also most important three hundred and fifty miles of it are entirely within the state - three hundred and fifty miles along which are, so I am told, several possible sites for Dams.

Now Arizona has always looked on the Colorado as her greatest future natural resource. The river would be there to irrigate her deserts and give her power long after her mines were exhausted.

California had not been long at the problem of protecting the Imperial Valley from floods than she began to figure how she might use the river to develop power to light Los Angeles and vicinity - how she might still further use it to irrigate still more land in the Imperial Valley. She could do the first if she built a division dam at Parker, Arizona; she could do the second if she built still another division dam at Yuma, Arizona.

The upshot of the matter was, to be brief, the passage of a bill by Congress, the Swing-Johnson Bill, which appropriated \$165,000,000.00 to build a dam, not in the upper reaches of the Colorado River leaving opportunity for a succession of dams - Arizona's plan - a plan by which floods could be perfectly controlled, but at the lowest point, a point on the border of Nevada and Arizona, a dam which will flood back in such a way, so engineers tell me, as to destroy all or at least the best sites in Arizona making it impossible for her ever to use the water of the three hundred and fifty miles of river running within her borders.

Why should Congress have consented to such an arrangement and to the division dam as well? I suppose that it was because California had the trading power to get what she wanted which was light and power for Los Angeles and smaller towns of Southern California, as well as irrigating more acres in the Imperial Valley - at least the bill which

provides for the Hoover Dam makes arrangements for giving some sixty six percent of the power generated to Southern California and also allows thirty six million dollars to build a canal from near Yuma to the Imperial Valley, "an all-American Canal," the present irrigating canal tapping the Colorado in Old Mexico below Yuma and flowing through a part of Old Mexico before it reaches the Imperial Valley.

This Canal, seventy five miles long and in some places nearly three hundred feet, cuts through tremendous sand dunes. It will redeem the desert to produce more vegetables, although the Imperial Valley hasn't a market for all she raises now. Another of our "economic monstrosities" - developments to produce what can't be used - another surplus factory. At least that is what irate Arizonians say. They would like to use their share of the water to grow vegetables themselves, I presume!

However, Arizona is going to have her chance to dispute the "all-American Canal" for its Eastern half of the necessary "division dam" will have to be in her territory. It looks now as if the negotiations necessary will be showing whether by that time Arizona is in or without the Union!

There is another side to it. The United States is spending \$35,000,000 on the theory that the Imperial Valley

will pay it back. It doesn't seem probable the Imperial Valley irrigation district hasn't yet been able to pay interest on its outstanding bonds. In the judgment of not a few sober and informed observers of our big irrigation schemes they never will pay the charges and eventually the United States will cancel the debts.

Still another possibility in the Hoover Dam which gives irate Arizonians satisfaction is that by the time it is finished hydro-electric power will be too expensive since Los Angeles and vicinity will be getting it cheaper by using natural gas. That is they argue that while in 1920 when California made its coup, hydro-electric power had an advantage, practically all that advantage is already wiped out at certain points and they sigh with content as they tell you, "There is good ground to believe that the government will never be repaid for the cost of the Hoover Dam. After all is said and done, it means simply that the government is building a municipal water works and a municipal power plant for Los Angeles, while the "all-American Canal" is being built for the advantage of real estate speculators who hope to unload thousands of acres of desert land on a gullible public."

Sour grapes? Time will tell.

But who can wonder at Arizona? Congress has arranged to spend an immense sum of public money to give to

California at least sixty six percent of the water of the Colorado River, leaving Arizona about eighteen percent and the rest to Nevada. Look at your map and call it just if you can. Then contemplate the marvels that political strategy can work!

Arizona was "mad" - properly enough - after Mr. Hoover signed the bill in 1929 and she appealed to the Supreme Court.

"Congress should be forbidden to go ahead with Boulder Hoover Dam," she continued. "It meant taking from Arizona something which belonged to her. Was it not unconstitutional for a Congress to take the wealth of one state to give to another?"

But the Supreme Court held that Congress did have a right to build the Dam but - most important - Arizona also had a right to her share of the water of the River.

"Will the state secede?" I asked the editor of the Arizona star after the decision was announced.

"No, no," he answered, "Arizona has submitted to the inevitability of the Hoover Dam. She has lost that battle. The dam will be built. In the future she will battle for a more equitable distribution of the water. Under the terms of the Swing-Johnson Bill and the accompanying compact Arizona is already using her share of the water. She will never accept

such a division. She feels that the Colorado River is her greatest potential asset and that the water and the revenue from its development means much to her citizens a generation in the future. Arizona will be in a strong position to get an equitable division of the water because Los Angeles cannot take a drop of it for the cities of the Los Angeles basin until she secures permission from Arizona to build a division dam at Parker."

Well, the day has come when the United States is ready to build the division dam at Parker which is to furnish power and light to Los Angeles and vicinity, and Arizona is in arms - a woman commanding its fleet of ferry boats. No dam will be built until the state makes sure that she has what the Supreme Court calls her "share of the water of the River." Is it possible to give that to her if ^{to} the Hoover Dam, which gives her little, a dam is built at Parker in the interests of Los Angeles ^{and} another at Yuma in the interests of the Imperial Valley? I don't see how. It looks as if there was nothing for Arizona and Nellie Bush to do but just what they propose to do - fight for their rights. For my part I like their spunk.