CONSERVATION

Dam Will Harm Wildlife

➤ CESSATION of plans for the huge Rampart Dam proposed for the Yukon River in central Alaska, was urged by a six-man team commissioned by the Natural Resources Council of America.

The project would be costly, could prove ineffectual when completed about 30 years from now, and would bring overwhelming losses of fish and wildlife—more than from any other single water development project in the history of North America, said Dr. Stephen H. Spurr of the University of Michigan and head of the study team.

The Rampart Dam is the most expensive gamble ever suggested in hydroelectric development, he told members of the 31st North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference. It is highly probable that toward the end of the century when Rampart power could be available, it would not be able to compete with nuclear power of the lower 48 states. Building a nuclear plant on the Pacific Coast would be cheaper, he said.

The Rampart Dam has been proposed as a means of luring electroprocess industries, and hence people with their towns and cities, into central Alaska in an effort to populate that vast country. The study team refuted this point by arguing that the proposal is based on the unfounded assumption that there are minerals in sufficient quantity and quality to attract such industries.

The huge lake behind the proposed dam would flood eight million acres or more, and take up to 30 years to fill. The lake, 80 miles across at its widest point and 280 miles long, would flood 400 miles of the Yukon River and 12,600 miles of tributaries. This flooding would destroy the breeding grounds of migratory ducks and other waterfowl and would negate 30 years' endeavor in waterfowl preservation in North America. The habitats of wildlife would be destroyed, as well as vast areas of forest and other undeveloped land.

The dam would block the yearly run of profitable fish, including the chinook, chum and coho salmon, and the catch of commercial and other fisheries would be reduced by one-quarter to one-half.

The team, which spent 16 months on the study, recommended that extra high voltage federal transmission lines be built to link the Kenai Peninsula through Anchorage and Fairbanks. This is in the "railbelt area" associated with the Alaska Railway where 60% of the state's population resides. The line could make low-cost power available almost immediately to most Alaskans.

In its far-ranging report, "Rampart Dam and the Economic Development of Alaska," the team analyzed Alaska's future population, electric power demands, generation facilities and needs, sources of energy, transmission needs and probable power sources.

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Do You Know?

The manipulation of blood *cholesterol* levels through diet is not conclusively accepted by scientists as the best way to prevent or treat cardiovascular diseases.

An electrical digital *recorder* can be used to check hundreds of individual chicken cages once an hour to determine when each chicken has laid an egg.

Chlorophyll-containing *organisms* have been found in the sea, living and reproducing at a depth of almost three miles.

Tartar, the primary cause of gum disease, can be restrained by a dentifrice containing urea which restricts its formation.

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HYDROLOGY

Instant Information On Water Needed

➤ SATELLITES and computers might provide almost instantaneous information of how fast the Mississippi River is flowing, how much snow is falling on Mt. Everest, or how much water there is in Lahore, India.

The idea of a quick system for acquiring and disbursing information of worldwide water conditions was discussed at a meeting of the Scientific Committee on Water Research of the International Council of Scientific Unions. The proposal was presented by Dr. Paul Bock, member of the U.S. National Committee for the International Hydrological Decade, sponsored by UNESCO.

Water data about precipitation, river stages, flow rates, groundwater levels, soil moisture, snow cover, temperatures, lake levels and salt content of estuaries could be recorded daily or more often by a network of stations placed throughout the world, Dr. Bock said. These data would be sent by way of satellites or fast conventional communication systems to central computers where they would be analyzed and then sent to agencies all over the world.

Such an integrated global system would strengthen the national and international programs set forth by the International Hydrological Decade which opened January 1965.

The fast information system would be particularly valuable to developing countries now severely handicapped by lack of water data.

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