Committee to Study the Development and Coordination of Water Resources

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
The Chaplain, Rev. Frederick Brown Harris, D.D., offered the following prayer:

Eternal Father, Thou who art the light behind life's shadows, and the love behind love's tears,

...coming into this temple of our democracy to pray, we would not catalog the sins of others; we would not exult that we are not as other men. But, rather, confessing our own sins, we would pray for Thy forgiveness and Thy cleansing.

...We beseech Thee to make us such public servants, so captured and possessed by Thy vast designs for human brotherhood, that Thou canst trust Thy ageless purposes to our willing and eager hands.

...We ask only for light enough for the next step, courage enough to face the present duty, truth enough for today's decisions, as into Thy hands we commit our ways.

We ask it in the dear Redeemer's name.

Amen.

THE JOURNAL

On request of Mr. Mansfield, and by unanimous consent, the reading of the Journal of the proceedings of Friday, January 23, 1959, was dispensed with.

MESSAGE FROM THE HOUSE

A message from the House of Representatives, by Mr. Maurer, one of its reading clerks, communicated to the Senate the intelligence of the death of Hon. George H. Christopher, late a Representative from the State of Missouri, and transmitted the resolutions of the House thereon.

ORDER FOR ADJOURNMENT TO TOMORROW

Mr. Mansfield, Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that when the Senate concludes its session today, it adjourn to meet at 12 o'clock noon tomorrow.

The President pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

COMMITTEE TO STUDY THE DEVELOPMENT AND COORDINATION OF WATER RESOURCES

Mr. Mansfield. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and my distinguished senior colleague from Montana (Mr. Murray), I submit a resolution which I feel will make a substantial contribution to the Senate's legislative work in the field of water-resource conservation and development.

During this first session of the 86th Congress, the U.S. Senate is faced with many significant and important issues of nationwide importance. Federal aid to education, airport construction, housing, a new farm program, community facilities, foreign aid, and defense are but a few major issues. However, I feel that the congressional program would not be complete if we did not devote considerable time and effort to water conservation. This is a pressing issue, despite the fact that in recent years there has been substantial and significant progress in water-resource development and conservation.

Two of the Senate's standing committees—the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, and the Committee on Public Works—are to be highly commended for their work in this area. Both distinguished chairmen of these committees, my able and distinguished colleague, Montana's senior Senator (Mr. Murray), and the distinguished senior Senator from New Mexico (Mr. Chavez), have taken the lead in the enactment of a number of legislative proposals which affect our water resources.

In spite of the conscientious work of these standing committees, and in spite of the unsaluting support of water-resource projects provided by the Committee on Appropriations under the eminent chairmanship of the great senior Senator from Arizona (Mr. Hayden)—in spite of the virtually unanimous effort of all of us who are concerned with water-resource matters—we are failing dismally in our responsibility for the Nation's water resources.

Let me explain what is meant by the statement that we are failing in our responsibility for the Nation's water resources.

An abundance of readily available water of suitable quality is a principal requirement of the American way of life, and it is essential for continuing agricultural and industrial production. But responsible authorities warn that provision for the needed water supplies is far short of adequate.

In 1959, we use water at the rate of about 240 billion gallons a day. By 1975, the rate of use will be about 350 billion gallons a day. There is not now under construction or planned for construction, by public and private agencies combined, water-resource projects that will provide daily 350 billion gallons of water of acceptable quality.

Let us remember that the United States is blessed with an abundance of water—fully enough to meet all national requirements, provided that we wisely and fully develop it for us. Dr. Leopold, Chief Hydrologist of the Geological Survey, points out that, although we as a Nation are not short of water as a whole, "As matters now stand, most water that is immediately available and inexpensive to use at each individual point is in use already."

Mr. President, the United States is not able to tolerate a scarcity of water supplies, available and suitable for use at economic costs. By 1975, our present population of 175 million is expected to be over 225 million, a 30-percent increase; and by 1980 it is expected to be 245 million, a 40-percent increase.

Even at the present rate of per capita water use, this 30 or 40 percent population increase would of itself greatly strain our ability to meet water requirements. Authoritative reports have, however, demonstrated that per capita water use must increase very substantially over present use. The Chief of Engineers, U.S. Army, has stated that it will rise about 28 percent.

The increase in the rate of per capita water use reflects both the rising standard of individual living and the increased use of water in industry. More water for individual living results from such things as more home washing machines and dishwashers, more air conditioners, more suburban lawns to sprinkle—the incidents of the high standard of living that we are determined to maintain in this
country. Increased industrial use of water reflects such requirements as 200,000 gallons in increasing amounts to produce a ton of rayon, 300,000 gallons of water needed to produce a ton of aluminum, and 600,000 gallons of water needed to produce a ton of synthetic rubber. The Nation's industry is geared to a high-level output of thousands of products that require water in increased amounts.

These two factors—population increase and per-capita-use increase—are the basis for the authoritative findings that by 1976 use requirements will be of the order of 350 billion gallons a day, about 90 percent more water than the amount used in 1930.

The quantity required is one aspect of the water-resources problem. Another important aspect is the quality of water. Technical experts warn us that water quality deteriorates with population and industrial expansion. They point out that untreated industrial wastes now pouring daily into streams are equal to the sewage produced by 110 million people—double the 1920 rate. Mr. Gordon MacQuarrie, Public Health Service estimates that pollution is costing us at least a billion dollars a year.

Still another important aspect of the water problem is one equally valuable to Americans, even though we may not measure it in billions of dollars. With increase in pollution are decrease in measure, closely dependent on the wise conservation and development of water resources. From ducks or trout to summer resorts and swimming holes, concern with wildlife and recreation is inseparable from concern with water resources.

All aspects of the water-resources program—adequate quantity and acceptable quality for population and economic expansion, wildlife, recreation, and others that I have not taken time to discuss—such as navigation development, hydroelectric power generation, irrigation, flood control, and like purposes—all of these must be fitted together in our water-resources program. This multiple-purpose coordination of water-resources works so well under the present legislation, as it has been since 1926 and earlier, makes multiple-purpose legislation even more essential as the Nation expands its use of water. This is because our water resource is, after all, a limited resource, and increasing demands upon it can be met only by continually improved coordination and conservation.

There is widespread public concern over the inadequacy of water-resource programs. This concern stems from recognition that water supplies now available in many areas of the United States will be insufficient in quantity and unacceptable in quality for the use requirements of 1975. In many areas, the future water supply is the key to economic development. It is feared that inadequate and unsuitable water will limit expansion.

I am reminded of the newspaper account I read of a recent address made to a meeting in Texas, the State to which we are indebted for furnishing us with our water resources majority leader, Mr. Johnson. At that meeting, the head of one of the Nation's largest industries explained to his Texas listeners why his company would not expand its plants in Texas, but instead, it is locating new plants elsewhere. The reason is, this industry assures us that his company would make large investments in plant sites only where it felt secure about the adequacy of future water supplies.

I regret that I am probably speaking for most of my colleagues in the Senate in what I say that this experience is repeated in many of our home States. I do not believe that company arrived at a valid judgment regarding Texas water resources, but I do know that the adequacy of future water supplies is a major factor in the selection of plant locations in many industries.

There are, of course, many bright spots on the water-resource horizon. We are on the threshold of an amazing era of technical advancements. New technologies, new processes, and new materials are opening up possibilities in many fields of endeavor. There is no doubt in my mind that these new technical developments can be applied to increasing the usefulness of available water resources. This is a conviction strengthened by my discussions with a distinguished colleague, the junior Senator from New Mexico (Mr. Anderson). There are many fields in which new techniques of weather modification, evaporation reduction, desalination of brackish water, conversion of water, and new processes for water treatment will be made, and in which increased usefulness will be added to our water resources.

I have sketched some too synoptically. I fear, the magnitude, the complexity, and the urgency of the water-resource problem. My senior colleague, Mr. Murray, and I believe that there is need for a broad, long-range program as the basis for comprehensive water-resources development by Federal, State, and local agencies. This comprehensive program should furnish the impetus for coordinated development at a rate that will provide the quantity and quality of water that the Nation needs in the coming years. It should encourage the adoption of new technical discoveries and improvements.

Since 1949, a number of reports, prepared principally under direction of the executive branch, have dealt with broad questions of water-resources policy. Notable among these is the 1950 report of the President's Water Resources Policy Commission, under the chairmanship of Morris L. Cooke. This and the other reports are helpful in identifying certain of the problems. It must be noted, however, that these reports have not become the basis for congressional action; and, in fact, they are not actually addressed to congressional action. Probably this is because they were made under the direction of the executive branch, rather than under congressional direction.

It is our view that such a comprehensive legislative program on water resources necessarily will consist of many, many individual enactments. Experience has demonstrated that the great diversity of conditions and circumstances requires a variety of considerations that bear on the water problems of different portions of the Nation, or on the impact of federal legislation or any single formula or any single mechanism that would blanket the water-resources problems. Rather, we believe that the legislative attempts to be like a mosaic, in which many individual enactments fit together in a composite pattern.

To this end, the purpose of our resolution is to secure recommendations for such a legislative program. Those recommendations should delineate the amount, the character, and the timing of water-resource development necessary to meet national requirements in the years ahead. The recommendations should also outline legislation that will encourage new and improved methods of water-resource conservation and development—public and private.

This view of the needed legislative program is, I believe, shared by many other Senators. Formulation of the broad, multi-faceted comprehensive and integrated legislative program overlaps and impinges on the established jurisdiction of the regular committees of the Senate and House of Representatives. The Senate, therefore, has great present need for an overall legislative development, in which the Committee can function to mutual advantage.

A closely parallel situation arose in the 84th Congress, and a precedent established then has guided us in this resolution. In the 84th and the 85th Congresses, the Senate felt the need for an overall review and coordination of its foreign-aid legislation. That review impinged on the jurisdiction of the Committee on Foreign Relations, the Committee on Armed Services, and the Committee on Appropriations. It was my privilege to sponsor Senate Resolution No. 285, of the 84th Congress. That resolution was broad, with the amendments added by the Committee on Rules and Administration, established a temporary standing committee of members of the three standing committees concerned. That committee to study the foreign-aid program has performed outstanding service to the Senate, through providing an informal basis for Senate action.

The resolution on the water-resources program, submitted today for myself and the senior Senator from Montana (Mr. Murray), is closely patterned on the precedent of the foreign-aid study resolution, S. Res. No. 285, 84th Congress, and provides for a special study committee composed of eight Senators who are members of the standing committees concerned. With respect to water resources, the standing committees principally concerned are the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, the Committee on Public Works. The Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce is affected as to its concern with the fish and wildlife conservation.

As in the case of the foreign-aid program, any Senate action consequent to the Subcommittee's report in the water-resources committee would, of course, be