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November 12, 1969

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D-MONT)

GREAT FALLS - BROWNING TRANSMISSION LINE

Mr. President:

This year both the House of Representatives and the Senate Committee on Appropriations have recommended the appropriation of \$450,000 for the construction of a transmission line between Great Falls and Browning, Montana. This new line has been supported by the administration for several years now, and it is essential to insure adequate and efficient sources of power to the cooperatives in north-central Montana.

This line has not been constructed because of prolonged negotiations between the Bureau of Reclamation and the Montana Power Company in an effort to develop a satisfactory wheeling agreement.

This year the report states, "In the event no satisfactory agreement can be reached, the Bureau of Reclamation is directed to report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees and secure prior clearance before any of the \$450,000 available is expended for initiation of construction of the Federal line." This language underscores the interest that the Congress has in this project. One thing I would like to state at this time is that I hope the negotiations between the Federal agencies and the private utilities will get down to the hard, cold facts in the situation or report to the Congress that it is impossible to reach an agreement. Those who will be dependent on this new transmission line cannot wait any longer. I am most appreciative of the attitude that the Senate Committee on Appropriations has maintained in recent years.