

Dam Closure Set; Holt Irrigation Soon?

A historic milestone in the Missouri river basin's flood control and water resources development program known as the Pick-Sloan plan will be reached at the end of July when the mighty Missouri will be closed off at Gavin's Point dam, near Yankton, S.D.

To celebrate this event, a public ceremony will be held at the damsite beginning at 2 p.m., Sunday, July 31.

The project is located on the Nebraska-South Dakota border about four miles west of Yankton.

The program is being arranged by a Nebraska-South Dakota citizens' committee with Yankton acting as host city. The closing of the river section of the dam will require about nine days, starting July 26 and ending August 4.

This dramatic closure of the Missouri river will symbolize the results of more than 20 years of construction on a system of main stem controls on the Missouri stretching from Ft. Peck, Mont., to Yankton, built or under construction by the U.S. army corps of engineers. It will mark the closure of the river section of the Gavin's Point dam, a David among Goliaths on the "Big Muddy."

Smallest of the main stem system, Gavin's Point is the farthest-most downstream, but its location and functions are essential to the successful operation and greatest public benefits from the entire system.

The six main stem dams, three of which are now in full or partial operation, will comprise an integrated system of reservoirs for control of the nation's longest single river.

These dams will create a chain of lakes stretching almost 1,000 miles through a generally dry and thirsty land; a region which some geographers of little more than a century ago described as the "Great American Desert."

Today, the Missouri basin, comprising one-sixth of the land area of the United States and the home of eight million Americans is entering a new era of growth and economic stability through control and development of its water and soil resources.

Thousands of basin residents are expected to gather at the Gavin's damsite for the celebration to demonstrate their faith in the importance and vital need of these works to give the basin and the

nation greater tools for progress and security. Governors and members of congress will join in the program, along with federal agency officials and representatives of the states and local communities.

The physical setting will enable celebrants to see the giants of modern earth moving equipment in action—huge draglines, a large hydraulic dredge, and 50-ton earth moving trucks. This equipment will be called into play by

the contractor to close the 600-foot gap in the earth dam.

In 1954 the bigger Ft. Randall dam, only 15 miles north of the Holt-Boyd county border, was put into operation. First power to be generated at Randall was directed to O'Neill, which is a power distribution center.

Portions of Holt county are incorporated in the Niobrara river development plan, which is a part of the overall Missouri basin program. Under present plans now hurdling congress, water will be impounded near Long Pine and sent by canal to the O'Neill unit. Sixty-six thousand acres of irrigable land in the O'Neill unit would be benefited by the plan.

Meanwhile, Niobrara develop-

ment is progressing faster at Mirage Flats (on the west end of the basin), where extensive irrigation has been accomplished since World War II, and at the Ainsworth unit, where districts have already been formed.

July Nears End, August on Its Way—

The hot July days will soon be gone and cooler August days are on their way.

Most every one has taken advantage of the weather to enjoy family and friends at informal picnics and outings this month. After a hot day it is wonderful to go out in the back yard in the evening and enjoy the cool breezes and perhaps refreshments.

The country drives are unusual-

ly beautiful this year. The lush, dark green of the corn contrasted with lighter greens or the yellow of a stubble field is a thrilling sight.

The fruit and vegetable harvest has been quite good in the county this year and of above average quality. Homemakers are working overtime freezing and canning this surplus in order to enjoy their gardens next winter.

The average lifetime of motor vehicles has doubled and their average lifetime mileage has tripled since 1930. Cars and trucks scrapped today average 14.3 years, with a mileage of 125,000.

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The O'Neill region is one of Nebraska's richest rural marketing areas with an economy based on cattle, hogs, hay, blue-grass, poultry, eggs, dairy products. Per capita purchasing power ranks high nationally, and THE FRONTIER readers are proved loyal and responsive. O'Neill (pop. 3,350) is North Nebraska's biggest retail, wholesale, communications center; it is a ranking livestock, farm produce and hay mart; O'Neill is noted as a medical and financial center; it is served by two railroads, three federal highways, five bus lines. The business directory counts most automobile and farm implement lines. O'Neill, which gained 600 persons in the decade (1940-'50, U.S. census), and THE FRONTIER, North Nebraska's fastest-growing newspaper, are marching along together, hand-in-hand.

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