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Another Victory for the Power Interests

IT WAS a serious blow to Western North Carolina and a lucky break for the power companies operating in this and adjacent territory when a House committee in Washington last week struck from the TVA appropriation bill a sum of \$6,000,000 for commencing work on the proposed Hiawassee river dam in Cherokee County.

Although Chirman Morgan of the TVA had urgently requested an appropriation for this project and his request had been approved by the Budget Bureau, the House committee held that development of the Hiawassee dam was not essential at this time to the TVA program.

Many people in Western North Carolina will regard this turn of events as another victory for rich, influential private power interests in their efforts to bar the gate on TVA entry into Western North Carolina.

The Hiawassee dam is the largest construction project, in our knowledge, ever contemplated by the federal government in this state. The total cost has been estimated at \$12,000,000. Chairman Morgan asked half of that sum at this time and said it was planned to begin work on the dam immediately.

Congressman Zebulon Weaver of this district, who only a few weeks ago sponsored legislation directing the Tennessee Valley Authority to play hands off in areas such as Macon, Swain and Graham counties, where the Mellon controlled Aluminum Corporation of America owns hydro-electric properties, manifested surprise and concern when he learned that the Hiawassee dam appropriation had been killed in committee. Now, with the aid of Senators Reynolds and Bailey, he is endeavoring to have this appropriation restored in the Senate. But neither of North Carolina's senators has been wholeheartedly in support of the Roosevelt program to bring the power companies under proper control, and many of their constituents are wondering how effectively they will go to bat for it in this particular instance.

It is sincerely hoped they will be successful in obtaining the Hiawassee Dam allotment. It will mean jobs for hundreds of men and sorely needed competition for private power interests which have had things pretty much their own way for many years. With TVA setting the pace, it is far more likely that private companies will undertake long delayed development of hydro-electric power sites which they now own than they would if TVA remained out of the field.

If TVA is successful in its plans to bring Western North Carolina into its development area, this section may well look forward to industrial progress greater than it has ever experienced. On the other hand, if it is defeated, if a barrier is raised against it at the Tennessee line, we may well expect to continue under the handicap of what amounts to a private monopoly in the all important field of hydro-electric energy.

Subtle efforts are being made by powerful groups to wreck the whole TVA program, and unless many Democratic senators and representatives change their tactics and strive more earnestly to support this phase of the administration's New Deal, it stands in a fair way to suffer a fate similar to that of Muscle Shoals, which for nearly twenty years produced nothing but fodder for debate.

Let thy discontents be secrets.—Ben Franklin.

Burdens become lighter when cheerfully borne.—Ovid.

THE LAWN FETE

by A. B. Chapin



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