

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Boulder City, Nevada
Region 3

Statement submitted to the Special Committee to Study Problems
of American Small Business - United States Senate at
Los Angeles, California, August 2, 1944

By

E. A. Moritz, Regional Director

Society advances by the mutual helpfulness of all its members—the farmer, the banker, the professional man, the laborer, the business man, big and little, and not the least of these social elements—the Government. It is my conviction that the Bureau of Reclamation, as an agency of the Government, has been of tremendous help to this important southwest area. We are, however, to examine what can be done to strengthen small business in this area during the postwar period. I shall endeavor then to point out what the Bureau has done, and what the Bureau hopes to do, all with particular reference to small business.

Region 3, which I represent for the Bureau of Reclamation, is, roughly, the Colorado River basin below the Utah line, including Arizona, southern California, southern Nevada, and some of New Mexico.

The Region is one of remarkable contrasts: barren desert and rich orange groves; high mountains and lands below sea level; tremendous obstacles barring travel, yet transportation to all the world; a thirsty land, but a land of clear blue water. Obviously, it is a region of obstacles, but a region where some obstacles have been magnificently conquered.

No better example can be given than that of securing water and power, the embodiment of which is Boulder Dam. Initially, the compelling reasons for building Boulder Dam had little to do with power, but, fortunately for our present war effort, foresighted individuals conceived of multiple use of this dam, needed primarily for river regulation. At the lower end of the Colorado, the Imperial Valley, destined to become one of the richest agricultural areas in the United States, was alternately threatened first with drought, then with floods of the Colorado River; it had gone through one life-and-death struggle with flood, a fight which ended in victory over the river but with, so to speak, an armistice. The river was beaten but ready to renew the conflict.

The obvious remedy for the droughts and floods was an upstream reservoir sufficiently large to store water against the periods of low runoff and to contain the floods. It was the support and willingness of the Los Angeles area to obligate itself to pay for the power which made it possible to build Boulder Dam as a self-liquidating project. Thanks to those who buy the power, the Treasury of the United States is being paid back, with interest, its investment in Boulder Dam.