

PROBLEMS OF THE COLORADO RIVER AS REFLECTED

# PROBLEMS OF THE COLORADO RIVER AS REFLECTED IN ARIZONA POLITICS

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THIS ARTICLE is confined to consideration of the interrelationship of Colorado River problems upon domestic politics in Arizona, including both incidentally and secondarily the more spectacularly publicized interstate aspects of those problems and facts, which must be recalled here, are presented in order to make possible a clear, brief depiction of some of the influences of the River situation upon political behavior in Arizona.

The interstate and the Arizona controversies about Colorado River water are closely associated with the Colorado River Compact of 1922, which was designed to make basic legal provision for future apportionment of water among the seven so-called "Colorado River Basin" states. Fundamentally, the Santa Fe Conference was the result of increasing apprehensions to the upper states that prospective large-scale water use in California and Arizona might jeopardize upper state water supply for consumption and use under specific contemplation, to which it was hoped might ultimately be developed. Because of the pressure from the Southwest, Congress, in the summer of 1921, authorized the President to enter into a compact for "an equitable division and apportionment among said states of the water supply of the Colorado River and of the streams tributary thereto." A Colorado River Commission, composed of representatives from the seven states and Secretary Hoover, who was appointed by the President, met at Santa Fe in the fall of 1922.



Lack of definite data on the amount of water available from the River and on feasible irrigation projects in the various states made it impractical to agree upon any specific apportionment among them. The general agreement finally reached was to the effect that the estimated water flow be split on approximately a 50-50 basis between the four so-called upper-basin states,<sup>1</sup> as a group, and the three lower-basin states,<sup>2</sup> as a group. The agreement stipulated that an average yearly flow of 17,500,000 acre-feet was to flow to the lower-basin area.<sup>3</sup>

Arizona's representation at the conference obtained in the basic agreement on the amount of water to be apportioned to the state of water in each basin, and the amount of water to be apportioned to the state of water in each basin.

**WESTERN POLITICAL QUARTERLY**

V. 4:4 [DECEMBER 1951], PP. 634-643