

Representative Albert Gore  
WSM, February 20, 1949

Good Morning, Friends:

I have something to report upon this morning that pleases me very much. We finally won a smashing victory for the TVA steam plant in the House of Representatives. ~~and~~ That was the most important action of Congress during the week, and for the six million people served by the TVA, this is the most important action of the Congress in a long, long while.

As a member of the Appropriations Committee and the only member of the committee from the TVA area, it was my duty and privilege to take a considerable part in the fight. The same was true last year when we lost the fight twice in the House of Representatives, one time by a heart breakingly narrow margin. ~~close fight.~~ The fight on this question last year attracted the nation's attention and it became an issue in the Presidential and Congressional campaign of last fall, as did the whole question of public power.

The 80th Congress not only struck down the proposed steam generating plant at New Johnsonville, Tennessee, but they struck from appropriation bills for western public power projects every customer facility, every facility that readily made the power <sup>from fast dams</sup> available directly to the people. Even in one case in Montana, the right was reserved to a private power company to construct the power house at the base of the dam built by millions of dollars of the people's money.

The philosophy that prevailed in the 80th Congress was what has generally become known as the ~~bu~~-bar philosophy --that is, let the government

buy the land and build the dam and then let the private power interests have the power at the bus-bar. *Is it any wonder that this became an issue in the campaign? And is there any wonder that the 81<sup>st</sup> Congress acts differently? I not only fought this philosophy as it was applied to the TVA, but I fought it as it was applied to the western projects as well. So you see, the winning of this fight last Wednesday was a source of genuine personal pleasure for me.*

What is the TVA any way? It is a vast program of integrated development of an entire river valley. There has been so much controversy about the electrical program of TVA that a great many people lose sight of the other programs and the overall objectives of the TVA. Before the TVA was created, the Tennessee River was a wild, turbulent stream, racing through its rapids of 650 miles; uncontrolled, floods occurring both regularly and irregularly, wrecking destruction and ruin. This long, powerful stream, surging with unharnessed power, meanders through a region of great natural resources, but was unnavigable because of its rapids and turbulence.

*For many years <sup>before</sup> hence the government had embarked upon a program of making its principle streams navigable and of controlling disastrous floods. <sup>But</sup> Nothing had been done either to control the floods or for navigation on the Tennessee River. The damage wrought by the floods was not confined to the Valley, but when a flood occurred on the Tennessee River simultaneously with a flood on the Ohio River, damage was wrought all down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico.*

So there was the unsolved problems of flood control and navigation on the Tennessee River and then there was the problem of power.

The area was low ~~and~~ <sup>in</sup> supply and use of electric energy.

But most important of all, there was a human problem in the Tennessee Valley.

The industrial and economic development of the people had been retarded.

Their per capita income was only 40 percent of the national average.

A great American proposed an audacious experiment of building dams on the Tennessee River not just to hold back the flood tide, not just for the purpose of installing locks to make the steam navigable, not just to dam up the water for the purpose of generating electricity but to serve all three purposes.

But the dream of President Roosevelt did not stop with these multiple ~~problems~~ purpose physical structures -- the dream grew ~~as~~ <sup>the</sup> contemplated and pretty soon it encompassed the wider field of economic and social betterment of the people in this undeveloped and underprivileged area. The husbandry of the great natural resources, the conservation of soil, the reforestation of its hill sides, the diversities of its agriculture and industry, the lifting of the level of life, of its men, ~~and~~ women and children.

The program has been phenomenally successfull - no more disastrous floods occur on the Tennessee River; its flood tides are well in hand. A nine foot navigable ~~flow~~ channel has been created from Knoxville to the Tennessee's confluence with the Ohio River. The power of surging stream has been harnassed and that power has been used not only to electrify the homes and the farms of the valley and surrounding area, but it also played a vital part in bringing victory to America in World War Two. To indicate the

the importance of this, had it not been for TVA and the other great power

development at Bonneville, neither of the two atomic bombs which ended the

war with Japan would have been manufactured. The atomic energy plant at

Oak Ridge, Tennessee, today is the largest single user of TVA electricity, ~~using~~  
~~more electricity, for instance,~~ <sup>to four hundred</sup>  
~~even larger~~ than the great city of Memphis with its ~~two~~ three thousand

people with all of their homes, shops and industries.

*Moreover,*

During the heat of the conflict when the contest was <sup>as to</sup> who would

dominate the air of Europe, over the heads of our soldiers, over the Atlantic

and the Pacific, it was TVA that manufactured fifty one percent of the

aluminum that went into our war plants. In addition, ~~there were vital~~ <sup>vital</sup> munition manufacture, machine tooling and ~~arsenals~~ <sup>where</sup> arsenals made possible

by the TVA power.

Now what has happened to the people in the Valley and in adjacent areas served by the TVA? Well, before the TVA only about one farm in thirty had electricity. Now a little more than one out of every two have <sup>yet</sup> electricity, ~~and~~ that is not all. Five thousand new farmers are having electricity turned on <sup>in</sup> their homes every month this year. In fact, every quarter of this year, in other words, every time three months pass, more new farms are being electrified <sup>in the TVA area</sup> than the total number of farmers who had electricity in the entire Valley before the TVA was created.

But the development has not been confined to the farms.

Because the energy has been made available at reasonable rates, all of our <sup>and on the farms</sup> homes ~~in the farms~~, in the cities <sup>in</sup> the villages have been able to use

more washing machines, refrigerators, electric irons, hot water heaters.

And then there is the important question of industrial development. Little shops have sprung up and in many cases have grown into thriving local industries.

The result has been that the per capita income of the people of the area has

climbed, not yet to the national average by a long way, but has climbed

from 40 percent of the national average to 60 percent of the national average.

And just to show that the whole nation has benefitted, let us look at what

has happened ~~to~~ <sup>With augmented</sup> the income of the people of the TVA region. We have been

able to buy more automobiles made in Michigan, more shoes manufactured in

St. Louis, more washing machines made in New York; and while we paid only

three percent of the Nation's income tax before the TVA, last year we paid

six percent of the nation's income tax.

Nor has the TVA been a losing proposition for the government from the strict standpoint of an investment. It is making a clear profit,

after all expenses and ~~making~~ allowances for depreciation, of approximately

20 million dollars this fiscal year. It made a net profit last fiscal year

of 17 million and the year before of 20 million. All in all, the TVA has made

a net profit for the government of more than 130 million dollars.

Now with that success, a stranger might wonder why we need a steam plant. Well, the very success of the undertaking has made it necessary to expand the system. The use of power in the TVA area has increased more than one thousand percent and with rural electric lines extending further out into the country, up the creeks and over the hills, with the people

buying more electrical appliances in their homes, more little workshops and industries established and expanding, it is absolutely necessary that more electricity be made available or else development in the area will have to stop.

Shortage of electricity is a phrase that is familiar all over the country. What is being done about it? The private electrical interests have plans underway to augment their generating capacity by six billion dollars worth of plant capacity within the next six years. That is well and good. I applaud the industry for their efforts. But what about the people in the Tennessee Valley? As I said, demands there have been growing and growing by leaps and bounds. We will face a shortage of electricity with black-outs just around the corner unless more electricity is made available. By directing the TVA to buy out all of the private utility interest in the TVA region, the Congress made the TVA the sole supplier of electricity in that region. The people must look to the TVA to supply their power needs. There is no other agency, private or public, to which they can look. Therefore, it is necessary that a steam plant be built to firm up the hydro electric power that is necessarily curtailed during the dry season of the year, and that is just what the House of Representatives decided to do last Wednesday by passage of an appropriation bill providing for the immediate construction of a \$4 million dollar steam generating plant at New Johnsonville, Tennessee on the shores of the Kentucky lake. The bill now goes to the Senate where it is also expected to be acted upon favorably.

*I say Hurrah!*