INFORMAL REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
Grand Coulee  
August 4, 1934  

Senator Dill, Governor Martin, my friends:  
I go back a long, long way in my interest in the Grand Coulee. Some people in this country think that this is a new project but I remember very well that in the campaign of 1920, when I was out through the Northwest, it was a very live subject at that time.  

My old friend, Senator Dill, being of an historical turn of mind, went back into the dark ages of 14 years ago and dug up a speech I made in Spokane. He brought it to me on the train and I am going to read it to you -- not the speech but about two sentences of it for the historical record -- to show that people have been thinking about the Columbia River for a great many years.  

In 1920, I said this: "Coming through today on the train" (I was coming through from Montana and Idaho) "has made me think pretty deeply. When you cross the mountain states and that portion of the coast states that lie well back from the ocean, you are impressed by those great stretches of physical territory, just land, territory now practically unused but destined some day to contain the homes of thousands and hundreds of thousands of citizens
Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in italics indicate words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

Dear Mr. Governor:

I echo a song I heard many years ago, which runs:

The Grand Canyon — some people in this country think I am a bit too young, but I remember very well first going to the Grand Canyon in 1929, when I was only fourteen years old. It was a very fine experience for me.

My only fault with Senator Dirksen's speech of so far.

I do think it's a bit long, and you want the main points of it. As part of what I have to say, I am going to take it on the hoof, and I am going to lend it to you. I do not speak out of the context, but I do speak from the context. As the President noted, to speak from the context, or to speak the context, means to show what people have been thinking about the Grand Canyon. It has a great many reasons.

Yes. I mean "canyon phonograph" today.

The Grand Canyon (I am coming from Congress and Cabinet) has made me think pretty deeply. When you close the mountain scenes and feel portion of the ocean, you are impressed by those great sections of physics, geography, and geography. Your brain still feels those great sections of physics, geography, and geography.
like us, a territory to be developed by the nation and for the nation. As we were coming down the river today" (this was 14 years ago) "I could not help thinking, as everyone does, of all that water running down unchecked to the sea."

Well, there is the text of what we are trying to do in this country today. I went on and said:

"It is not a problem of the State of Washington; it is not a problem of the State of Idaho; it is a problem that touches all the other states in the Union." It is a problem, as I said then, that interests us way back in old New York State. We have made beginnings -- scratching the soil -- and I like to think that they are only beginnings; that even in our lifetime we are going to see with our own eyes these problems taken up on a vastly greater scale.

It took 14 years for that prophecy to come true, but it is on its way and most of us who are here today are going to be alive when this dam is finished and the Bonneville and a lot of other dams are finished. As I said to the Secretary of the Interior when we were on the other side of the river a few minutes ago, we are in the process of making the American people "dam minded."

People are going to understand some of the implications of building dams in the higher stretches of rivers all over the country. The Chief Engineer here was telling me a few minutes ago that the eventual completion of this
dam is going to mean the doubling of potential power of every site on the Columbia River between here and the mouth of the Snake, and that is a lot of power.

It is going to mean from the Snake down to sea level, adding 50% to potential power they have today. That means a lot. It is going to affect not only the Columbia River Basin, but the whole of the mountain states and Pacific Coast territory. We are going to see, I believe, with our own eyes, electricity and power made so cheap that they will become a standard article of use, not merely for agriculture and manufacturing but for every home within the reach of an electric transmission line.

The experience in those sections of the world that have cheap power proves very conclusively that the cheaper the power, the more it is used in the homes and on the farms and in small businesses. And that makes me believe that this low dam which we are undertaking at the present time is going to justify its existence before it is completed by our being able to contract for the sale of practically all of the power that it will develop. If we are justified in that belief, and hope, then we come down to Chapter II, which is the building of the high dam.

I want to take this opportunity, my friends, of telling you something about the amount of money the Federal Government is spending in the three states of
the Coast. I should have liked personally to have been able to say to the Secretary of the Interior to proceed from the very beginning by setting aside, allocating, the money for the complete project here. But the fact is that out of the total sum made available to the Administration by the Congress, we have allocated in these states of the Coast a much larger proportion of that fund than the population of the three states justifies. I am talking to you frankly -- it has meant that by allocating a larger portion of the three billion dollar fund to the Coast than a mere figure of population would justify, we have had to take some money from other states and give them less than they would have got normally on a population basis. Many other states have got less than what might be called their normal quota. Why did we do it? We did it, in my judgment, with perfect propriety and with the knowledge that those states that didn't get quite as much as the Coast got would understand and approve it. We did it because out here in the Mountain States and in the Coast States you have unlimited natural resources; you have vast acreage, capable of supporting a much larger population than you now have. We believe that by proceeding with these great projects it will not only develop the well-being of the Far West and the Coast, but it will also give an opportunity to many individuals and many families back in the older settled parts of the
Nation to come out here and distribute the burdens which fall on them more heavily than they fall now on the West.

You have great opportunities and you are doing nobly in grasping them. A great many years ago, 75 or 80, a great editor in the City of New York said, "Go west, young man." Horace Greeley is supposed to be out-of-date today, but there is a great opportunity for people in the East, in the South and some of the over-crowded parts of the Middle West. You here show them the opportunity of still going west.

I am going to try to come back here when the dam is finished and I know that this country is going to be filled with homes not only of a great many people of this state, but by a great many families from other states of the Union -- men and women and children who will be making an honest livelihood and doing their best successfully to live up to the American standard of living and the American standard of citizenship.

So I leave here today with the feeling that this work is well undertaken; that we are going ahead with a useful project and that we are going to see it through for the benefit of our country.
Stenographic report of the President's informal remarks at Grand Coulee, August 4, 1934:

Senator Bill, Governor Martin, my friends:

I go back a long, long way in my interest in the Grand Coulee. Some people in this country think that this is a new project but I remember very well that in the campaign of 1928, when I was out through the northwest, it was a very live subject at that time.

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In 1920, I said this: "Coming through today on the train I was coming through from Montana and Idaho" "I have made me think pretty deeply. When you cross the mountain states and that portion of the coast states that lie west and from the ocean, you are impressed by those great stretches of physical territory, just land, territory now practically unused but destined some day to contain the homes of thousands and hundreds of thousands of citizens like us, a territory to be developed by the nation and for the nation as we were coming down the river today" (this was 14 years ago) "I could not help thinking, as everyone does, of that vast river running down unchecked to the sea."

"Well, there is the text of what we are trying to do in this country today. I went on and said:

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