

## THE WHEREWITHAL

Jack M. Campbell\*

It is indeed a pleasure for me to appear before this Third Annual New Mexico Water Conference. The scope of the program to be presented at this conference is most gratifying and those who are responsible for it are indeed to be congratulated.

I have been asked to discuss with you the matter of possible methods of financing a complete study involving the present water supply, future water requirements, and possible additional sources of water in the State of New Mexico. It is impossible for me to make suggestions as to the financing of such a far-reaching program without making some preliminary remarks regarding the program itself.

It seems to me that almost the whole future of New Mexico depends upon the application of an effective water conservation program to the water we now have and to the development of additional water sources for the future, together with the reasonable allocation of admittedly limited water supplies to agricultural, domestic, and industrial uses. Where the future depends upon such an essential resource which is so limited in quantity, we have the solemn obligation at as early a date as possible, to commence a long-range planning program and, of course, to find ways by which it can be financed. New Mexico is on the threshold of tremendous growth, limited primarily by its water resources and their proper development. Time is of the essence. We cannot expect to stave off the growing expansion into this area while we consume ten years or so in commencing or completing our planning. We need to analyze the problem, determine first where do we now stand, and then, find out whither we are bound.

Before we are in a position to seek financial help from any of several sources which I shall mention, we should first determine where we now stand and what information we now have available as to our present water resources. Only when this is determined can we recognize the magnitude of the planning job, including its cost. I would therefore suggest that, through the Office of the State Engineer, we immediately undertake a collection of all studies, papers and records from the many and various sources in the State of New Mexico, including surface and underground conservancy agencies, and that these be indexed by the Office of the State Engineer and a brief compilation and a summary of these studies be made available. It would, it seems

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to me, be advisable to have this work at least well underway by the time the Legislature meets next year, so that adequate funds could be justified for the completion of the compilation and indexing. Once this central library of information is established and a determination is made of the nature and extent of the material now available, we should be in a position to determine what is then required to complete the job. When this determination is made, only then should we seek from any source, the sizeable amount of money which will be required to complete an adequate survey and plan for the future. Once this basic determination is made, I have several suggestions for your consideration as to how such a project might be financed.

FIRST: I would urge that every effort be made to finance such a study through private fund sources. It occurs to me that such a study in the State of New Mexico would indeed provide a public service of the highest degree should some of the larger private foundations see fit to participate in it. Again, it must be said that these foundations are established by and operated by business men who will need to know in detail what is now available and what we seek. I suggest that private sources be first explored, not to minimize the part that Government agencies can play in the program, but rather to eliminate political implications and to provide the energy and stamina which often seems to be present in privately financed efforts, but often wanting in Governmental efforts. It has been my observation that, in the operation of some Governmental agencies, time is not of the essence.

SECOND: If sufficient private funds are not available to finance a water survey and planning program, we must, of course, seek public funds. If it becomes necessary to do so, I am satisfied that if a present inventory is made available and a comprehensive plan for future action is presented, the New Mexico Legislature will give such a program its earnest consideration. It occurs to me that there may be at least two possibilities insofar as state funds are concerned. That part of the program which can be directly related to irrigation could perhaps be financed through the Permanent Reservoir for Irrigation Purposes Income Fund established under the various acts of Congress at the time of statehood. This fund, now totaling almost one million dollars, has accumulated from the income from 500,000 acres of land set aside under the terms of the Ferguson Act of 1898 and must be used for the development of agriculture. The extent to which these funds might be available would depend upon the program inasmuch as these funds must be used for purposes which will promote irrigation and irrigation projects, but it seems to me that perhaps a legal opinion should be obtained from the Attorney-General to determine the feasibility of using some of these funds for survey and planning purposes. The most obvious source of state funds is, of course, by appropriation and this is perhaps the most straightforward and realistic approach to the matter, but it will require a program of education based upon

Careful planning before Legislative assistance is sought or obtained. If the basic information is obtained, and if a plan is carefully conceived, I can think of no more justifiable appropriation of public funds than one which will finance a program of water survey and planning in our state. In my judgment, it would be an investment in the future which we could justify as a most solemn obligation to future generations.

THIRD: We should, in planning the financing of such a program, carefully explore the availability of Federal funds, either through an outright grant or on a matching fund basis, and in examining these possible sources, we should at the same time determine what, if any, conditions may be attached to the obtaining of Federal funds. So far as I am concerned, I consider this matter to be peculiarly the problem of our state and if I had my way, I would prefer that it be financed either from private sources, or entirely from state funds, but I realize that Federal funds are now an integral part of our state's financial structure and I certainly would recommend that inquiry be made as to the availability of such funds for a study of this sort. I have not made such an inquiry, but based upon my past experience, I have the feeling that somewhere in the vast operations of the Federal Government there must be some agency or agencies with funds available for this purpose.

Whatever funds we may obtain, we should in our planning, utilize all of the materials and personnel available in the state and federal agencies for the studies of this nature. The staffs of the various conservancy districts, the Office of the State Engineer, the United States Geological Survey, and others have much material and well-qualified personnel who, under proper arrangements, could assist materially in the program and thereby contribute to the financing of it.

It seems to me that the first and most essential step toward obtaining adequate financing for a planning program must be the establishment of some planning organization through which the effort may be made. As much as I am convinced that we seem to be top-heavy with Boards and Commissions of various sorts, I am convinced that, in order to properly accomplish this particular job, we should have a Water Resources Planning Board consisting of a limited number of state officials and citizen representatives with a peculiar interest and knowledge of water problems. This planning board should supervise the compilation of information presently available through the Office of the State Engineer, as the active state agency in the matter, and then should conceive an overall plan of operation which would include a realistic estimate of time and cost involved. This proposed program should be published and be available for study by private funds' sources and for Legislative consideration if necessary.

I cannot over-emphasize the urgent need for such a planning agency. We have many state agencies with an interest in this matter. The Office of the State Engineer is, of course, primarily interested in the administration of all water laws of our state. The Economic Development Commission is interested in water supply for possible future industrial development. The Oil Conservation Commission has an interest in the availability of water for secondary recovery of oil from depleted oil fields. The Office of the Commissioner of Public Lands has a legitimate interest in the availability of water under the vast areas of land held in trust for the schools and other public beneficiaries. Each of these agencies has personnel who are qualified to assist in a program. But somewhere, out of all of this diverse interest; there must come some semblance of order if we are to justify the expense necessary for an adequate water planning program.

I have no doubt in my mind but that, if such an organization can come up with a program which has determined our present position and plotted a firm course for future planning and action with regard to water resources in New Mexico, the funds will be available.