

RESPONSE  
TO DR. ROGER B. CORBETT'S WELCOMING ADDRESS TO THE  
NINTH ANNUAL NEW MEXICO WATER CONFERENCE

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Thank you, President Corbett, for your warm and cordial welcome to this, the Ninth Annual New Mexico Water Conference.

May I, in response, express to you our most earnest appreciation for this forum and program which you and your highly competent and fully dedicated staff members have made available to the people of New Mexico during the past eight years.

Much has been accomplished toward the objective of assuring the future water supply needs of New Mexico and, indeed, the entire Southwest through the medium of these conferences.

Much more needs to be done if we are to fulfill the destiny of our great state.

What is New Mexico's destiny? Practically all of the knowledgeable forecasters agree that we are one of the few Western States in which the highest rate of population growth in the Nation will take place during the remainder of the twentieth century. We tend to look only into that promising future when we think of population--sizeable population--in New Mexico.

Few people realize that we here in New Mexico are in the midst of a major population concentration already--today! Would you believe that within 500 miles of the Lea County Courthouse there are nearly as many souls as are within the same distance of the Los Angeles City Hall, sixteen million as compared with seventeen million, plus as a matter of fact?

What does this present and future population trend mean to New Mexico?

It probably means that it's later than we think--waterwise. It means that New Mexico needs to accelerate her efforts to provide the water necessary to supply her exploding population in 1970, 1980, 2000, and beyond.

We need to eliminate wasteful practices of water usage; we must research every feasible means of converting our vast surface and underground stores of brackish water to fresh, potable water.

Sewage effluent must be treated for reuse rather than drained into streams, lakes, the sea or onto land where it serves no purpose

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but to pollute. Careless irrigation practices, one of the most flagrant wastes of our precious water supplies, cannot be allowed to continue.

We might even be faced one day soon with the painful duty of being a bit more definite in our loosely used term "beneficial use." We might even someday find the phrase "priority of use" creeping into our aquatic nomenclature here in New Mexico.

Research is a fitting--perhaps even an overdue--theme for this meeting. It should be an underlying theme in all future meetings.

A plentiful and continuing water supply will be the all-important single key to the future of New Mexico as a major industrial state. Today, we are a long way from that goal.

In comparison with other states, we are woefully underdeveloped industrially. Yet, no other state offers more to industry in available new products for manufacture than does New Mexico.

There are more than 80 commercial minerals within our borders. We produce nearly one-half of the Nation's uranium ore.

Now, not many people in New Mexico need to be reminded that there is now an oversupply of uranium in the open market. In all probability, this situation will exist for a number of years to come.

However, in relation to projected energy requirements beyond 1980, the amount of uranium available, according to present estimates, is not very large. By 1980, it will be necessary to develop improved converters and breeder reactors to develop the full potential of our nuclear fuels and extend the utilization of our nuclear resources.

The Federal Power Commission in July of last year published the results of its National Power Survey on Nuclear Development. It was reported that recent experience with nuclear reactor power plants has demonstrated their capabilities of much higher power outputs than had been provided for in their original conservative design.

The report forecasts that privately owned single reactor plants of 300 to 500 megawatt capacity, if built for service in 1966, are expected to compete in operating costs with fossil-fuel plants.

The present installed nuclear power plant capacity in the United States is approaching one million kilowatts, or about half of one percent of the Nation's total power capacity. By 1980, the nuclear capability may be 40 million kilowatts or about ten percent of total United States capacity.

Demand for water to generate electric power is expected to be more than double the 1960 requirements in 1970 in New Mexico. By 1980, the demand will be between two and three times the 1970 requirements.

We produce in New Mexico 90 percent of the Nation's potash. We rank fourth in the production of natural gas and copper, seventh in the production of oil. Lea County alone produces more oil and gas than any other county in the United States.

We should be a major manufacturing state in the production of intermediate and finished materials from our vast wealth of natural resources. But we are not. Practically all of our mineral products are simply extracted from the earth and shipped in the raw state to processing plants in other parts of the country.

Among the top seven oil-producing states, only New Mexico fails to produce its own requirements in gasoline. Only 49 percent of the State's consumption is refined in New Mexico. Texas, on the other hand, refines nearly four times as much gasoline as it uses, Louisiana nearly six times as much and California, the country's largest user of motor fuel, consumes less than three-fourths of its refined output.

The State of Hawaii, in which there is absolutely no oil or gas production, refines 3300 barrels per day more crude oil than New Mexico.

The future welfare of New Mexico depends on research and development activity at an accelerated pace in the field of water. All of us here today and every citizen of this fabulous state should be vitally interested in this activity. To postpone an aggressive research and development program for even a year or two would cause our state to fall by the wayside in the growth of the western United States. Nor can our research be limited to the field of water. There is a real need now for research in finding ways and means for improving our position industrially in relation to other states. Research in the fields of taxes, transportation, materials handling, manpower training and development is long past due.

President Corbett, we are fortunate indeed to have the opportunity of meeting here today and tomorrow in this conference.

Each of us conferees will benefit greatly from the excellent papers and discussions which will be presented here. Through this medium we individually must become more emphatically aware of our future water problems in New Mexico. Unless we take vigorous and immediate action to solve them, the future of New Mexico will suffer greatly.

We appreciate your warm hospitality. We hope our contributions now and in the years ahead will be worthy of it.