

April 9, 1979

The House Natural Resources Committee convened on April 9, 1979, at 4:45 p.m., in room 437 of the Capitol Building with Chairman Shelden presiding and fifteen members present (absent were Reps. Huennekens, Johnston, Keedy and Scully) to hear testimony on the following bill:

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 67

REPRESENTATIVE MELVIN UNDERDAL, District #12, the chief sponsor, said this resolution is to encourage the reexamination of the policy of the Bureau of Reclamation regarding the fencing of Tiber Reservoir in North Central Montana. Rep. Underdal said the dam was built about 25 years ago and used in flood control and has a limited recreational use. This use is limited because of the shale terrain--no trees, shrubs and little possibility of growing anything. The hearing to build the fence was only a formality and about ten miles have been fenced. The cost of the project will be about \$3,000 a mile and in the rough part half again as much for a total of a half million minimum. The upkeep will be high because of snow drifts in the winter and washouts in the spring and summer. Rep. Underdal said there is no justification for this fence. The federal government is running an astronomical deficit for one thing. Also, the ranchers would be excluded from using the water for their cattle and for irrigation. This access is highly important to the ranchers in the area as water is scarce and they are unable to drill for it.

REPRESENTATIVE THOMAS R. CONROY said he was a proponent and was there to verify cost figures.

There were no opponents and Rep. Underdal closed.

During questions from the committee, Rep. Harper asked what the purpose of the fence was. Rep. Underdal said he wasn't sure but the intent at one time seemed to be to fence all the federal water. The Fort Peck project was abandoned because of all the protests.

Rep. Harper asked how many farmers would be directly affected that Rep. Underdal had talked to and was there a feeling for the fence on the part of some of the people. Rep. Underdal said he lived at the head of the lake and knows all the people affected and you bet they are against it. He said there is no benefit to anybody and harm to those who live along it.

Rep. Spilker asked what kind of fence. Rep. Iverson said there were three barbed lines on top and net fence below with heavy posts put close together.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 67 Rep. Harper moved do pass. The motion
carried unanimously with those
present (absent same as stated before).

The meeting adjourned at 5 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


ARTHUR SHELDEN, Chairman

Emelia A. Satre, Sec.