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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
DEDICATION OF LIBBY DAM

LIBBY, MONTANA

1:58 P.M. MDT

Minister Macdonald, Governor Judge, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

At the outset, Mike, let me express to all of your wonderful friends from Montana my deep appreciation for the warm welcome here in this great part of our country. I thank each and every one of you.

Obviously, I am deeply grateful to the more than generous and very kind words by my long and dear friend, Mike Mansfield.

I had the privilege of coming to the Congress of the United States when Mike had been in Washington a number of years as a Member of the House. Our friendship began then. It has continued over the years.

One of the great things that I feel about our country is that people of different political persuasions can sit down and try to work out the kind of problems that we face in this Nation.

I can say to all of you from Montana that you are most fortunate to have a man like Mike Mansfield not only as your Senator, but as the Majority Leader in the United States Senate.

Mr. Minister, would you please express to Prime Minister Trudeau my very, very best wishes. One of the fine experiences a person has as President of the United States is to meet heads of Governments throughout the world.

I can say to those from Canada who are here today that the working relationship between Prime Minister Trudeau and myself has been constructive and will continue to be so as we seek to solve these problems between Canada and the United States.

Please give to him my very best wishes.

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Obviously, I am tremendously pleased to be here to participate in the dedication of the Libby Dam, another multi-purpose project, one of the superb projects that the Army Corps of Engineers has constructed for the benefit of you in Canada, but for all of us in the United States, as well as the benefit of Canada.

As I look at this structure and know that some \$500 million has been spent to build it, I congratulate the Corps of Engineers for spending our tax dollars wisely.

But I am also very pleased to be here because it provides me with an opportunity to visit this beautiful "Blue Sky" country, the kind of country that I have heard about, not only from my son, Steve, who spent the last year over in Rawlins, and more recently up in the grizzly country, but my knowledge of Montana goes back to my friendship with your delegation in both the House of Representatives and the United States Senate.

The problem is that we in Washington sometimes forget how refreshing and how beautiful America is, particularly this part of America, which has been the inspiration for so many poets, as well as painters.

Flying across this vast continent, to those of us who come from the Middle West, is an inspiration, and I am filled with awe by how much we have accomplished in two short centuries. We have carved a civilization out of a wilderness. Let us now make sure that we keep some wilderness carved out of our civilization.

All of you know better than I that Montana is one of our most rugged and untouched areas. It stands as a symbol of our natural resources and of our native soil. Libby Dam is also a symbol of how a commitment to the environment can be balanced with our technological needs.

It is a multi-purpose project that shows it is possible to take a natural resource and use it wisely to satisfy a wide variety of human needs.

America needs more home-grown energy. This dam will provide clean electrical power for the equivalent of some 235 (thousand) homes in the Pacific Northwest.

In addition, the Libby Dam will provide security for jobs, and for industry and for agriculture. But most important, this power will be created without using expensive and depletable fossil fuels. Here at Libby Dam, the marriage of technology and nature will be a happy and constructive one.

The second welcome purpose of Libby Dam, of course, is flood control. A television commercial tells us it is not nice to fool mother nature. On the other hand, Libby Dam will keep mother nature from fooling us.

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As an outdoor enthusiast, another purpose of Libby Dam, which millions of other Americans welcome, is, of course, the recreational opportunities of this magnificent lake. It will provide the activities that will firm muscles, clear minds and renew spirits.

I doubt if medical science will ever come up with a better tranquilizer than a boat, a fishing pole and a lazy afternoon.

There is one area where contentment can only lead to chaos, and that is if we fail to get cracking on a solution to the problem of our increasing dependence on insecure overseas sources of energy.

To satisfy their needs, as you heard from the Minister, our good friends to the North have had to reduce and may, in the distant future, eventually have to eliminate their exports of oil and natural gas to the United States.

These exports to the United States represent more than one million barrels of oil per day, or its equivalent, which the United States will have to make up from its own energy resources or become more and more dependent on OPEC nations primarily in the Middle East.

This is one more indication of why our energy independence is an absolute necessity to the well being of our Nation. Although Libby Dam will provide power for this reason, it is not the answer to the energy scarcity nationally.

In the final analysis, each nation must ultimately cope with its own energy needs and problems of supply. Enlightened self-interest, as the Minister said, is the key phrase. We will cooperate with all others to ease our energy dilemma in the short-range, as well as the long haul.

In my conversations with the Minister before coming here for this occasion, I assured him -- and I believe he assured me, as he indicated in his speech to you -- that the United States and Canada will work together.

We can't solve all the problems but, if we approach the difficulties with an open mind and an understanding of the problems of the others, I am confident that many of the difficulties can be resolved.

The fact that the United States, as well as Canada and 14 other nations, are working together as consuming nations in the International Energy Agency is another indication of how not two, but 16 nations can work together to solve a problem that affects us on the North American Continent and those in Western Europe, our allies in NATO.

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We have resolved in this area, the 16 nations that are part of the organization, to share in research and development to find an answer to the financial problems that have arisen because the high prices charged by OPEC nations, and resolve the problems and work together in conservation of energy in the free nations, the industrial nations of the world.

And if 16 nations can do it, as we are seeking to do, I am absolutely confident that Canada and the United States can do even better.

But I must say, on the other hand, that we must -- all Americans and Congress must -- realize that this is our problem to meet and to solve. We cannot look elsewhere for the total solution despite the efforts of cooperation.

More important, we can no longer pretend the national energy problem does not exist. We must develop new sources of energy, not only oil and gas, but others such as solar, geo-thermal and nuclear. We have delayed far too long. Our vulnerability increases daily. We must act now to achieve the energy self-sufficiency vital to all.

I will continue to work with the Congress and particularly with Senator Mansfield and others on the leadership on the other side of the aisle so we can get this effort off dead center.

Together we must succeed in this effort, not for any personal glory or party gains, but for the benefit of the American people and the free world in which we live.

Before closing, let me say how deeply pleased I am that the harmony this multi-purpose project has created between technology and environment is equally reflected in the warm relationship that we in the United States have with our neighbors to the North. Relations between Canada and the United States have long been characterized by friendship and partnership.

This dam stands as a powerful reminder of the mutual benefits such close cooperation can accomplish.

The poet Tennyson once wrote, and I quote, "Nothing in nature is unbeautiful." End quote. I believe that mankind has the responsibility of preserving that beauty. Let us, therefore, take heart as well as pride in the creation of the Libby Dam. It will enhance the best we and our environment have to offer. It offers the message loud and clear, we are the defenders, not the despoilers of this great land.

Thank you very much.

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(AT : 2:12 P.M. MDT)