

I am your moderator for the Keynote Seminar "Environment and the Snow Resource". To set the stage for the expert panel that has been put together to discuss the various aspects influencing our subject, we might spend a moment looking at what has been and what is now. It won't come as any shock to you if I tell you that we live in a changing time. Some of us with receding hairlines and disappearing waistlines have long shared interests with the whereabouts of the snowline.

Our part of this wonderful beautiful land was once the underpopulated west where unlimited, or seemingly so, land resources needed only the magic of water to create prosperity. Food, fiber in ever-increasing quantities was required back east, where people were hard at work creating manufactured wealth and more people. We needed dams to hold the melting snow until the crops could use the water. A rurally dominated legislative body could understand this need, and western representatives had the power to provide the resources required.

What vision the courageous engineer displayed as he set out to protect the fertile valleys from the ravages of flood, drought, and to produce useful electric power from energetic flow that was once wasted on the sea. Environment, that was the word that psychologists use to compare you with heredity and it was a way of explaining how you could have gotten all your father's good points while your brothers received all of his faults.

Those funny looking cabins in the high places with chimneys that weren't really chimneys, they were emergency shelters for men who actually made their living skiing in to measure snowfall. Imagine they worked on skis, and played on skis--not hardly--unless you were something of a nut, and a loner to boot. After all, what sane man would spend 15 minutes sidestepping up a hill so he could slide back down in 15 seconds. And what Mother, with any regard for her daughter, would let her go off skiing in the mountains with a boy. After all, she had seen those crazy Norwegians on the Pathe News jumping through the air on skis. The last thing she wanted was her daughter doing that, particularly not very far on the first jump.

Today, things are a little different. The girl that you couldn't take skiing is a Mother now. She cheerfully sends her daughter off to weekend at one of the many multimillion dollar ski lodges, and she hopes that she will spend quite a bit of time on the slopes and not come home as pale as she did last time. Her husband, who probably came out of the east to work at a plant, moved westward to escape the crowding in the east. He can discuss with you what a tough time he is having raising a lawn on an arid mountain slope that previously was a turkey ranch that had no water of its own or did it need any. He can tell you of the joys he has in motor boating in his high-powered rig on Lake Tahoe. Although his son is apt to regale you with the insensitivity that engineers displayed in flooding, irreplaceable land, and indescribable natural beauty.

The breadwinner and his associates are probably concerned about quality and quantity of processed water at the plant, but they have little concern for flood and fiber production. After all who needs it. Aren't we already paying people now not to produce crops. And the principal, now well-established, a legislature constituted on the one man one vote basis must pay primary attention to the problems of the City where everybody knows that the water is something that comes out of taps. This is the stage that I would set for you as our panel begins to discuss the topic that contributes to our concern about the environment in the snow resource.

^{1/} Chief, Division of Atmospheric Water Resources, Management, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, Colorado