

## **Corps of Engineers Blasted**

# **Dam Plans Draw Colville Indian Ire**

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NESPELEM, Wash. — "We've about given up all the land we're going to give up for anything."

That's how Mel Tonasket, chairman of the Colville Confederated Tribes business council, feels about Corps of Engineers plans to add generators to Chief Joseph Dam at Bridgeport, Wash., a project Tonasket says will raise Rufus Woods Lake — the reservoir behind the dam — by 10 feet and inundate prime recreational land on the Colvilles' reservation.

### **Indians Said Ignored**

Tonasket charges that while a battery of federal and state agencies were brought into the planning, the Corps "never talked to us."

The Colvilles' 1.4 million-acre reservation is bounded on the north by the Okanogan and Colville National Forests and on the west, south and east by the Okanogan and Columbia rivers. Citing the Winters Doctrine, a 1908 U.S. Supreme Court ruling, the Colvilles claim prior and paramount rights to use of waters within their reservation boundaries.

Now, Tonasket says, it is Indian water which spins the gener-

ators at Chief Joseph and Grand Coulee dams and moistens 500,000 acres of the Columbia Basin Irrigation Project.

"We've made the Columbia Basin rich but we haven't had one irrigation program (on the reservation)," he said.

"We've given up lands and we've given up water but we haven't received any benefits. That's what makes me so damn mad."

### **Goals Spelled Out**

So the tribe has spelled out what it wants from the Corps:

— A share of the revenue from power the dams generate. "They can make those kinds of agreements with Canada but they've never thought Indians owned anything," Tonasket said.

— A Bureau of Reclamation training program in power plant operations for Indians at Grand Coulee Dam "so we could get GOOD jobs."

— Indian job preference clauses in contracts for dam and reclamation work.

— A task force consisting of Indian-approved representatives of the involved departments to study past land acquisitions in conjunction with the dam and reclamation projects and to determine actual values.

Tonasket admits "it will be a

real hassle to get any money from the dams" but chances for the training programs, he said, "look good."

The water issue is just one of the questions which have moved the Colvilles to take a series of stands that have alarmed and aroused some of the interests affected.

Sherwin Broadhead, superintendent of the Colville Indian Agency which is in the process of moving from Coulee Dam back to Nespelem where it will be able to work more effectively as an implement of the council, says his goal is to facilitate self-determination for the Colvilles.

### **Examples Pointed**

There are some conspicuous examples of the tribe's moves along that line.

They have sparred with the state and Okanogan County over reservation law enforcement in which they want the controlling hand.

They irked sportsmen to whom some reservation recreation areas have been closed because of alleged poaching and pollution.

They charged discrimination

in Grand Coulee Dam School District 301J and said they want a high school in Nespelem where the present school goes only through grade six. School Supt. Harold O. Beggs, who denied any discrimination, said such a school is between the Colvilles and the State Department of Public Instruction but he feels loss of the Indian students would hurt the Coulee Dam school's programs in all fields.

Lucy Covington, a member of the tribal business council, said the Bureau of Indian Affairs will support the high school request in September and plans for the move could be geared to 1974.

### **Some in Tribe Opposed**

Factions within the tribe also have challenged some of the council's moves.

An organization called Voice of the Colville People issued an open letter charging formation of the Colville Indian Tribal Enterprise (CITE), a development corporation, was the "beginning of endless raids on the tribal treasury. The letter expressed a fear that corporate operating expenses may cut into enrolled members' per capita payments.

But Tonasket says the venture

must be tribal rather than private to qualify for federal funding. He said CITE will have a dual benefit for the tribe: "As a good, sound business venture it will put more money into dividend payments" and it will "get more people employed."

### **Some Termed "Apples"**

He linked the criticism to termination sentiment and attributed it to what he called "apples — they're red outside and white inside."

Tonasket said, "Most of these people denied their Indian blood" until they heard about termination payments of \$43,000 apiece to southern Oregon's Klamaths who gave up their reservation and most of the special rights that went with it.

Tonasket, elected to the council mainly on his antiterminationist stand, says the termination issue likely will be revived before council elections in April.

### **Most Look to Future**

But, he said, most tribal members now are looking to the future of the reservation.

"We feel that with a developed land base and resources," he said, "we can get a hell of a lot more in 10 years than a termination payment."