
EQUITABLE USE OF THE WATERS OF THE RIO GRANDE
BELOW FORT QUITMAN, TEX.

MAY 6, 1924.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the state
of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. ALDRICH, from the Committee on Foreign Affairs, submitted the
following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 8371]

The Committee on Foreign Affairs, having had under consideration H. R. 8371, providing for a study regarding the equitable use of the waters of the Rio Grande below Fort Quitman, Tex., in cooperation with the United States of Mexico, reports thereon with recommendation that the bill do pass without amendment.

The bill has the indorsement of the Secretary of State, Acting Secretary of the Interior, and Secretary of Agriculture, as set forth in the following communications:

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
Washington, April 21, 1924.

The Hon. STEPHEN G. PORTER,
*Chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. PORTER: I am in receipt of your letter of April 15, 1924, in which you refer to my letter of the 10th instant, with regard to H. R. 8371, which provides for a study of the equitable use of the waters of the Rio Grande below Fort Quitman, Tex., in cooperation with the United States of Mexico. You request me to supply you with more information, especially as to the need for such a study.

In reply, I beg to inform you that the records of the department indicate that it has had considerable correspondence during the past few years with regard to this question. Much of that correspondence apparently originated with the Lower Rio Grande Valley Water Users' Association of McAllen, Tex. This organization has at various times pointed out the need for an adjustment of the problem involved in the division of those waters between the United States and Mexico and it informed the department in September last, in a letter which was referred to me by Senator Sheppard, that Mexico had created a commission known as the board of international waters with special reference to the Rio Grande and Colorado Rivers.

At that time the association suggested that a similar commission be created by this Government to make a study of the interests of the United States, with full authority to act in conjunction with the Mexican board, and that the American commission should work out some basis for the distribution of the waters of the Rio Grande and also some plan for joint development under international

control, such plan to be used as a basis for a treaty to be negotiated between the two countries. It was further suggested that the American commission should be composed of the American section of the International Boundary Commission, United States and Mexico, and some engineer or engineers of the United States Reclamation Service.

The department's response to these suggestions was to the effect that the boundary commission's activities are restricted by the terms of the treaty between the United States and Mexico of 1889, by which the International Boundary Commission was created, and the treaty of 1905, by which its jurisdiction was enlarged, and that investigations of the character in reference do not properly come within the scope of the commission's duties under those treaties. The department added, however, that if the investigations and surveys were to be made by an appropriate agency of this Government it would be given the benefit of all helpful information which the boundary commission has collected, and that the department would be pleased to extend suitable assistance at the proper time in any negotiations in this connection with the Mexican Government. Furthermore, the department expressed the opinion that some preliminary investigations and surveys should be made by an appropriate agency prior to taking up the matter with the Mexican Government, and suggested that the parties interested might consider it advisable to communicate with the Department of the Interior.

I am, my dear Mr. Porter,
Sincerely yours,

CHARLES E. HUGHES.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
Washington, April 23, 1924.

HON. H. C. LODGE,
*Chairman Committee on Foreign Relations,
United States Senate.*

MY DEAR SENATOR LODGE: Your letter of April 5 has been received, with copy of bill S. 2998 and request for expression of opinion by the department.

The portion of the Rio Grande described in the bill is a part of the international boundary between this country and Mexico. The problem of utilizing the waters of this river is a complicated one, as the interests of both countries are materially involved. The knowledge thus far obtained indicates that by means of appropriate engineering structures the waters can be conserved by storage and distribution for irrigation and other purposes in such a way as to benefit both countries.

The proposed cost seems to be reasonable. It is hoped that the study contemplated by this bill will lead to an understanding satisfactory to both countries and provide a plan for the utilization of these waters to the fullest extent practicable for development on both sides of the river.

In my opinion, the enactment of this bill is advisable.

The foregoing was submitted to the Bureau of the Budget, and on April 18, 1924, the director advised that it is not in conflict with the financial program of the President.

Very truly yours,

E. C. FINNEY, *Acting Secretary.*

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE,
Washington, April 26, 1924.

HON. STEPHEN G. PORTER,
*Chairman Committee on Foreign Affairs,
House of Representatives.*

DEAR MR. PORTER: In accordance with your request for memoranda giving the results of investigations of the agricultural development of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, we are sending to you a copy of an official report submitted April 18, 1921, by a committee appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture. We are sending also on a supplementary sheet a statement of the percentages of the water supply that come from the Mexican and United States tributaries of the Rio Grande. This report represents the latest official report in the department.

If we can be of further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call upon us.

Sincerely,

HENRY C. WALLACE, *Secretary.*