

THE BIG JOB

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BMI PROJECT BIGGER THAN DAM JOB

Boulder Dam--great as was, the task of building it--paved the way for a still greater construction project--the job at B.M.I. Boulder electrified the great Southwest, both scientifically and psychologically. It sent a wave of prosperity surging over a great area. Without it today's war industries of the Southwest would not exist. Because of the energy it generates and the water it impounds the Basic plant is possible.

So it detracts nothing from the splendor of the Boulder accomplishment to point out that the big job at Basic is of even more gigantic proportions.

At the peak of employment the dam project had 5,250 at work. Last week the employment count on the Basic job was 13,618. The weekly pay roll at this project is greater than the monthly pay roll at the dam. Anderson's had a mess hall at the dam that seated 1300. Anderson's here can serve 2500 at a sitting. And all America is still proud of the dam.

CALLING ALL LOCAL TALENT

Can you box, wrestle, sing, or play a musical instrument? Maybe you're a juggler or a clog dancer. All right. The boys at the camp are rounding up all kinds of talent and are planning to stage some bouts and shows. They're fixing to have a close harmony club and maybe a hot band. If you want to help, just leave your name and your kind of talent at the Commissary for Erwin DeValee or go and see him at Tent U-15. If you box or wrestle he wants your weight on the hoof.

PAINTERS LIKE DEEP-SEA DIVERS

McNeil painters ply brushes while doing almost everything but standing on their heads. There's one little job of painting inside exhaust lines that's something like deep-sea diving. The paint used in this work tosses out very obnoxious fumes. So the painters

wear protective clothing and gas masks. They go into the pipe attached to a rope. They can work only about 30 minutes at a time. If, at the end of half an hour, they fail to emerge or quit wiggling, they are hauled out.

DUNKING PIPE BY THE TON AND THE MILE

Painters are dunking tons of pipe: One installation alone is handling the dipping of 7,000 tons or 14 million pounds of cast iron line. Another is immersing conduit and pipe for the electrical job. Three miles of this kind of material are being dunked in lacquer--not to mention tons of electrical fittings. Inside pipe painting includes everything from half inch line to air ducts big enough to drive a truck through.

EVERYTHING BUT LIPSTICK

The job is using about 1100 gallons of paint a day. Every 24 hours the boys cover 44,000 square yards of surface. The whole task will take 200 carloads of paint. This includes every known color and shade, every kind of paint. Some varieties must withstand temperatures up to 1200 degrees Centigrade. Some must be impervious to acids. Some must stand up under high electrical current. And some must resist all three. They're using chlorinated rubber paint. Another job calls for a primer coat and then an enamel which is applied at a temperature of 550 degrees Fahrenheit.

Painting signs alone keeps two men busy. They turn out on an average of 100 signs a day--little tags, billboards, truck numbers, street signs, door designations, direction signs, and tent numbers. Although there seem to be few places where smoking is banned, it took 1400 "No Smoking" signs to cover the hazard spots.

HORSES PINCH-HIT FOR CAMELS

Most of the painters would walk miles for a camel--to get bristles. Chinese camel's hair brushes are gone with the war. Old Dobbin is pinch-hitting. Brushes are part

THE BIG JOB—BASIC MAGNESIUM NEWS-LETTER

domestic bristle, but mostly horse-hair. They wear out three times as fast as the old Chinese variety. The order for brushes broke the world's record.

BMI CLUB GOING STRONG

The BMI Recreational Club is doing all right. Put on a swell party at the Colony last Friday night. Other events are being planned. Club funds provided the Basic softball team with equipment, shirts and shoes. Dutch Wilcoxon, first baseman, played two games barefooted, and didn't get a scratch. The first night he wore shoes he got a bad cut from a spike. Basic's team is in two leagues, the Vegas Sagebrush and the Boulder City circuits. The McNeil team won a tie for top spot in the Vegas Cactus League.

YOU DRINK AND EAT LOTS OF MAGNESIUM

About 2.24 per cent of the earth's crust is composed of magnesium. Among the elements it stands eighth in abundance. Of the salts in the ocean about 10.88 per cent is magnesium chloride; 4.74 per cent magnesium sulphate; 77.76 per cent sodium chloride or common salt. In the Dead Sea, though, there is more magnesium chloride than there is sodium chloride. The same thing is true of a lake in Russia. Magnesium is everywhere. It is in plants. Ashes of plants contain more calcium than magnesium, but seeds contain more magnesium. Of all the wines, Malaga contains the most magnesium--about .04 per cent. When you eat an oyster 2.58 per cent of your gulp is magnesium. But when you devour a crab or lobster the magnesium content of your meal may be as high as 16 per cent.

IT TAKES A LOT TO MAKE A LITTLE

Magnesium occurs nowhere as a free element. Known as a salt for centuries it was not until relatively recent years that it was transformed into a metal. Even today it takes a lot of plant, and a most precise application of electro-chemistry to produce the metal. That is why this plant is so large. At full capacity, Basic will make 30 times as much magnesium as was made in the entire world six years ago. Each day's production will be great in cubic measurement. Yet it will be so light that the employees at the plant would be able to pick up and carry the whole day's output.

Speaking of statistics--if all the unconfirmed rumors going the rounds in a modern war production plant were laid end on end--it would be a damned good thing.

RIGHT ANGLES ON BIG BUSS BAR

A lot of men on this job get paid for going on benders. But they're not the kind you think. They work in the buss bar shop. They're bending thick, wide copper "planks". At first the bending machines were worked by man power. It took six men to bend a big buss bar into a right angle. Now new hydraulic machines do the work with two men at a machine. They're bending 48,240 separate bars. They must be true to 1/32 of an inch. Another world record.

THE BIG TRAIN

If all the material that has been unloaded on this job were put into one solid train, that train would be just about 80 miles long. To provide unloading facilities, McNeil crews have laid 20 miles of standard gauge track. Basic bought a big locomotive to shunt cars around. Average unloading right now--with the peak past--is 50 cars a day. This does not include tonnage coming by truck. The biggest day for unloadings, according to General Stores, saw the boys emptying 122 cars. To facilitate distribution of this huge amount of incoming freight, General Stores operates 12 branches.

TO TOWNSITE RESIDENTS

To residents of the demountables in Basic Townsite: The Housing Department requests that in calling for maintenance service you give the project number of your house and not the street number. Maintenance crews are better acquainted with the project house numbers than with the street numbers--and on houses of certain colors, the bronze street numbers are difficult to read from the highway.

Next time you are near one of the electrical transmission line towers erected by Southwestern Engineering from the plant to the dam, take a good look at it. Although these towers bear the weight of a lot of cable they are built also to resist strong upsurge. When a full load of "juice" is pouring over the cables there is a powerful upward force. The towers are therefore strongly rooted in deep concrete and are designed to withstand lift as well as the cable-weight.