

# Boulder Dam To Control River

No photograph can give a true understanding of the vastness of Boulder Dam, man's greatest engineering feat. No amount of written or spoken words can describe it adequately. Only by seeing it can one get some comprehension of the herculean task involved in its construction and only by deep study can one get a conception of its beneficial uses to millions of people in southwestern United States.

Boulder Dam was built between the rock walls in Black Canyon on the Colorado river, that same treacherous torrent which carved out the Grand Canyon and which forms the Arizona-Nevada boundary line near Las Vegas, Nevada. This city is reached by only the Union Pacific railroad, and from Las Vegas, motor bus tours take visitors to the dam on regular schedules.

Such a project to control the dangerous floods of the Colorado and to provide against the drouth periods which ensue after its springtime rush to the Gulf with the melting Rocky Mountain snows had been conceived many years before it was begun. Even the location in Black Canyon or in Boulder Canyon, eighteen miles up the river, had been agreed upon by engineers. But there was no way of

financing the project, which cost \$165,000,000, until the demand for power in the rapidly growing southern California cities and the intermediate area made it feasible.

It is to be paid for entirely out of earnings. Authorized during President Coolidge's administration in 1928, it was started under President Hoover and completed under President Roosevelt. Actual work on the main project was completed in five years, two years less than anticipated. At times there were more than 5,000 workmen employed in the night-and-day operations, and trucks, machinery and other equipment of unheard-of proportions were built just for the project.

The dam face is 726 feet high. From a bottom thickness of 660 feet it tapers to a top thickness of 45 feet, and this mass of solid concrete has pushed back the waters of the Colorado to form Lake Mead, the largest artificial body of water in the world. It is 115 miles in length, will attain a maximum depth of 585 feet, and varies in width from the narrow Boulder Canyon gorge which separates the two main lake sections to expanses of water many miles across. Its fjord-marked shore-line eventually will be 550 miles long.

Several important purposes are served. There is manufacture of electric power (capacity 1,835,000

impounding spring torrents above the dam; and release of water as needed for year-round irrigation and other purposes below the dam.

In order to build the great dam, engineers diverted the Colorado river from its normal course around the site by a series of tunnels which were great engineering feats in themselves.

Today, completed and in operation, Boulder Dam draws visitors by the tens of thousands, and it has become the center of one of the nation's newest and finest vacation areas.

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