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BY COTY

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OL' MAN RIVER

America's Huge Flood Control Scheme Has Lesson For N.Z.

WHILE on a tour of Canterbury and Otago recently, Sydney Greenbie, Special Assistant to the American Minister, and General Representative of the U.S. Office of War Information, saw the damage done by flooded rivers and streams. He considered that there was a similarity in New Zealand to the problems faced in the United States with two of the most undisciplined rivers, the Tennessee and the Cumberland. In a talk from 2YA, Mr. Greenbie told how those rivers had been harnessed to provide security and prosperity, dealing particularly with the story of the Tennessee Valley Authority. We quote from Mr. Greenbie's talk:

WHEN the warnings of flood began to come in I thought, not without a certain impatience: does this little country also have to go through the mad, irrational experience of flood followed by famine and want and dust storms and desolation, just as we have done in America, and as Australia and Asia are doing, and as all the children of selfishness and misuse of Nature have done from the days of Noah and Destruction?

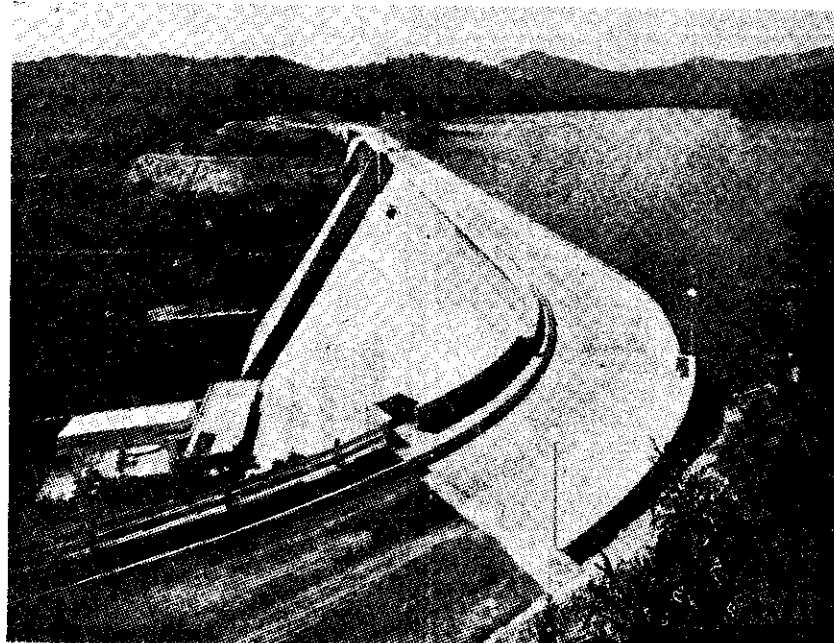
You New Zealanders don't really know how lucky you are. You have no vast open prairies, swept by the winds into dust storms or flayed under blizzards or gnawed by great river systems over thousands of miles. Speaking as a layman who has seen both the North and South Islands for a second time in 30 years, I am convinced more than I was on my first trip that you could make a paradise for yourselves, free from flood and want, and convert the energy of your million and a-half people into the energy of a thousand million, if you would properly harness these torrents, make them save your soil, nourish your lands, and turn the wheels of industry for you all in one well-organised system of co-operation of Nature with man.

Through the Cotton Fields

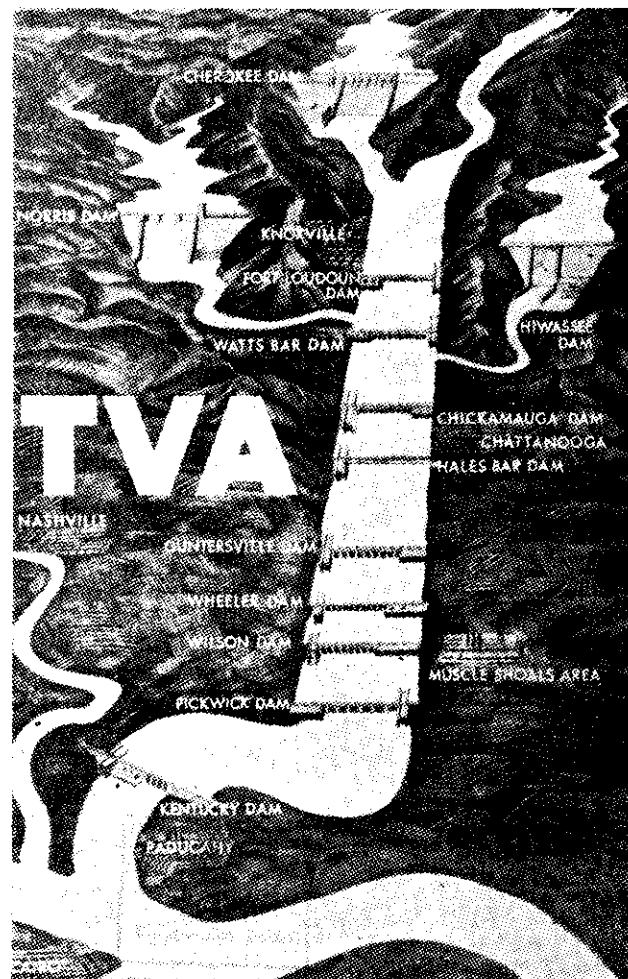
I want to tell you the story of a river valley in my own country and a great mountain watershed and the means by

which the land and the people have been rescued from flood, drought, and poverty by the application of modern science and engineering. It is a story of 4,500,000 people hitherto bound down with unremunerative toil stepping within ten years into comfort and culture and all the benefits of modern civilisation.

The Tennessee and its twin river, the Cumberland, run down into the Ohio River. The Ohio runs along for hundreds of miles till it pours into the Mississippi, which then goes on for a thousand miles to the Gulf of Mexico, gathering in the waters of other rivers all the way. It spreads through 15,000 miles of earth, with 4,221 miles of running water in its own right. Starting in the north, amidst ice and snow, this great stream flows out by hundreds of channels through the cotton fields. There the Negro wharfies, who heave the cotton on the river steamers, sing a song which has come to



HIWASSEE DAM is said to be the tallest spillway dam in the world. Situated in the midst of the North Carolina highlands, it is a vital part of the TVA scheme



express to us all the eternal, inevitable might of the water that is shed from our continent—"Ol' Man River."

Hill-Billy Settlements

The Tennessee and Cumberland are formed by streams pouring down high mountains through which valleys and gorges run in all directions. The mountains are heavily wooded. From very early days settlers lived here. Some of them were what we call hill-billies. Through all the history of the United States this primitive region baffled all attempts to bring the people into line with the rest of the development of the country. Then a man of wide vision and experience was stricken with infantile paralysis in his prime and came to the warm springs in Georgia to regain his health. That was Franklin D. Roosevelt. Lying there in the sunshine, he thought of the life of the people all round him, and tried to understand why they were cut off from all the comforts and amenities he knew in his own State of New York.

So, when he became President, one of his first acts was to send a message to Congress, explaining what he thought could be done in this region by harnessing the river. So the Tennessee Valley Authority was born. It was a Government organisation which differed from all other Government attempts to deal with the problem of a region in two ways. Instead of a lot of separate Government agencies in Washington, each doing something for the region, when and if they got around to it, independently of each other, the departments of agriculture, marketing,

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