

line, that the proposal "could provide an important link" in a full-length intertie, and that applicant had "expressed willingness to lease capacity in the intertie to Bonneville and other northwest utilities."

The Administrator pointedly did not endorse applicant's proposal, nor did he comment on the terms of lease offered to BPA by applicant. Instead he volunteered this significant comment:

"In view of our region's concern for protecting its power supply, BPA will make no commitment to export surplus Bonneville power outside the region until Congress has acted upon regional preference legislation. Announcement of the companies' plans makes it imperative that our entire region get behind the enactment of such legislation."

It is important that we take note of the significant differences between the two proposed lines. The Federal line is to be nearly 900 miles long, instead of 110; it is to have all the necessary terminal facilities for EHV operation between the Columbia River and the major California market areas; and it is to operate at extra high voltage from its inception.

The circumstances allow it to be said with complete fairness and accuracy that the main characteristics of applicant's proposed line, viewed in the light of the impending policy decisions in the Congress, are political. Its location was chosen for political effect. Its design and intended use have clear political overtones. The timing of its application before this Commission and the urgency with which immediate construction is advocated, reflect and reveal the forces of the political arena rather than the sober, deliberate business judgment with which utility executives ordinarily approach such an investment.

Because of the absence of an investigation, hearing, or adequate record in this proceeding, it is impossible, as I have already pointed out, to "find" that an isolated segment of line such as this, located in sparsely populated country with no heavy industry, connected at both ends to several hundred miles of lower-voltage conductors, and lacking any high-voltage terminals of its own, is "compatible with the public interest." The anomalies in its design and intended use are enough to give anyone immediate pause for reflection.

It is equally, and for the same reasons, impossible to reject the line out of hand as being uneconomic, imprudent or otherwise incompatible with the public interest. There simply is no record on which to base either approval or rejection. I therefore have not advocated rejection of the project in the present proceeding and I do not advocate rejection now.

On the other hand, it is comparatively easy to point out facts, probabilities and possibilities concerning this proposed line which at