

possibility that it may militate against "an abundance of electricity at the lowest possible cost," cannot be presumed to be "compatible with the public interest."^{6/} Those background facts plainly signaled a situation that should be investigated thoroughly, and set for hearing if necessary, for the purpose of determining whether the operation of the undertaking, as proposed, would be "compatible with the public interest" and "consistent with the proper performance . . . of services as a public utility," or could be made "compatible" and "consistent" therewith by the exercise of our conditioning power.^{7/}

The standard of "the public interest" is not surplusage or Congress would not have placed it in the statute. Its meaning is contained within the four corners of the Act of which Section 204 is a part (not the railroad law). Its statutory environment shows that the standard of the "public interest" by which the subject proposal must be tested, and with which it must be "compatible," is that method of "interconnection and coordination" which will assure, or at least not frustrate or preclude, "an abundant supply of electric energy . . . with the greatest possible economy and with regard to the proper utilization and conservation of natural resources."^{8/} As a matter of fact, its legislative history shows that the attainment and safeguarding of the public's interest in this particular matter was the primary reason for

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- ^{5/} each of these elements appears in the documents cited in footnote 2 at dissent page 3; and again in the hearings on S. 3153 in the 87th Congress before the Senate Subcommittee on Irrigation and Reclamation, and in hearings on the Bonneville inter-tie planning funds before the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Some of these matters lie within our jurisdiction and some do not. But all of them affect and are affected by the public interest. An understanding of them is necessary to an understanding and identification of the public interest.
- ^{6/} The issue is not that applicant failed to demonstrate that its proposal will "promote" the public interest or provide a "public benefit," Pacific Power & Light v. FPC, infra. The question is whether applicant's undertaking "will be compatible with the public interest" as defined by the entirety of the Federal Power Act.
- ^{7/} "Section 204 (b) The Commission, after opportunity for hearing, may grant any application under this section in whole or in part, and with such modifications and upon such terms and conditions as it may find necessary or appropriate, . . ."
- ^{8/} Sec. 201 (a) and Sec. 202 (a) - (d).