

RE: SECOND BACON SIPHON, FOLEY V. TONASKET, CAMPAIGN '80

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(PAGE 1 OF 2 PAGES)

Foley's Bacon stand attacked

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Republican congressional candidate Mel Tonasket attacked incumbent Democratic Rep. Thomas S. Foley Friday for supporting a \$2 billion Washington state irrigation project which he said would force farmers off their land.

Tonasket said the Second Bacon Tunnel and Siphon Irrigation project, which would double the present irrigation system from the Grand Coulee Dam to the Tri-Cities, was "not economically feasible," according to a Washington State University study.

Nonetheless, Tonasket told the governmental affairs committee of the Spokane Area Chamber of Commerce, the government "shoved the project down our throat, and you and I are going to have to pay for it for a long time to come."

The Colville Indian leader said the first time Foley was challenged on the project "he didn't even have the information on it . . . but he said, 'I'm sure it's not \$2 billion.' But that's what it's proven out to be."

That \$2 billion figure represents the total cost for the project to expand the irrigation system. Construction of the

tunnel and siphon alone costs \$43 million.

Tonasket said the way the project works, all the farmers along the irrigation canal are included whether they want to be or not — and it can run some of them out of business.

"Dryland farmers are going to be forced to become irrigation farmers. They will have to buy expensive new equipment. Operating costs (per farm) will go up \$32,000 a year," he said. "I make half that much, so it's hard for me to imagine increasing costs \$32,000 a year."

"These farmers tell me that amounts to the government condemning their land. Strong words. But eventually they're going to be losing more and more money, and then they'll have to sell out."

Tonasket said he couldn't understand why Foley, "one of the most influential, one of the most powerful — ask him, he'll tell you" — men in the House, supported "such a thing that is going to condemn people's land."

The Second Bacon issue came up in the 1978 campaign, when Tonasket ran against Foley as an independent. At that time, a Foley spokesman said farmers had been on record as supporting the

RE: SECOND BACON SIPHON/FOLEY V. TONASKET/CAMPAIGN '80

SOURCE: SPOKESMAN-REVIEW ~~(P. 2)~~
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(PAGE 2 OF 2 PAGES)

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project; but he added that if farmers didn't want the irrigation project, Foley would withdraw his support.

Tonasket, who said Thursday he was "not throwing mud — and I'm not attacking his personality, it's his professional business that I'm attacking" — continued his attack by saying he didn't like the way Foley conducted his office.

"It gripes me — and this is a quote, maybe it's not exactly word for word — but when Tom Foley says 'I don't vote the 5th District, the 5th District might be wrong,' that's a slap in the face for those of us who live in the 5th District," he said.

"That's like saying I'm dumber than Tom Foley. Well, I might be, intellectually. But I know what I need in my house so I can feed my family, so that I can go to work every day and be a donating part of society.

"The elderly who live down the river know what they need so they can put food on their table, so they can have good health and a reason to wake up tomorrow. Tom Foley has not that feeling. He doesn't experience the day-to-day kinds of anguishes that people go through, worrying whether they're going to survive tomorrow."