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PEACE RIVER POWER

More than 500 engineers and workmen are now on the construction site transforming the dream of Peace River power to reality. They are tackling the first major job in one of the world's giant power developments in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

The assignment, as bold as any previously undertaken in British Columbia, is to create a temporary by-pass for the Peace River round part of the existing stream-bed, to permit construction of Portage Mountain Dam, due to begin early in 1964. Completion is scheduled for the 1970's.

Portage Mountain Dam will rise 650 feet and stretch 1.3 miles across the Peace River valley. A storage reservoir covering more than 950 square miles and impounding some 88 million acre-feet of water, will provide the nucleus for generating 2,500,000 kilowatts at the main dam power-house site. A smaller dam and a 650,000-kilowatt power-house located 12 miles downstream from Portage Mountain Dam and an extra-high voltage power delivery system stretching 600 miles from the Peace River to the province's southwest corner are also part of the project.

First power from the Peace River is expected to be flowing to the lower mainland in 1968.

POTENTIAL RECOGNIZED

For decades the Peace River, rising from the mingling waters of the Finlay and Parsnip Rivers at Finlay Forks, has been considered a potential source of hydroelectric power. But only within the past five or six years has it been recognized as a major power source.

In mid-March, a \$16,900,000 contract was awarded for construction of diversion tunnels to reroute the Peace River round the dam-site of the existing river-bed. Diversion entails excavation of a channel 175 feet deep, approximately 600 feet wide and 1,200 feet long in the west bank. Water from the Peace will be directed by this channel into three diversion tunnels, each 2,500 feet long, with an inside diameter of 48 feet. If the concrete-lined tunnels are completed before August 15, 1963, the contractor will receive a bonus of \$250,000. On the other hand, delay after this date, or such later time as the consulting engineers allow, will result in damage payments of \$25,000 a day up to a limit of 55 days.

DIVERSION SYSTEM

As the diversion tunnels near completion in 1963, work is scheduled to begin on coffer-dams to direct the river into the diversion system.

Diversion of the river will leave dry a 3,000-foot section of the river-bed. Workmen will excavate the gravel, sand, and loose rock to give the dam a solid seating on bedrock. Some 65,000,000 cubic yards of gravel, sand, rock, and clay will then be moved from nearby deposits. This, dumped into the Peace River canyon, will form Portage Mountain Dam.

ELECTRONIC ASSISTANCE

Before machines start moving construction material to the dam-site, however, the mammoth dam will be completely built in the complex circuitry of an electronic computer located in Vancouver.

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