

For Release Thursday, November 16, 1961

Press only

CONGRESSMAN'S REPORT

by Morris K. Udall

Local Issues and Congress

Congress is made up of people representing localities. For this reason, local issues are pondered and acted upon no matter how grave the international and national problems. The past session was no exception.

A "temporary" bridge spanning the Colorado River a mile east of Needles, California, became the subject of scrutiny by individuals, private groups, local governments, federal departments, congressional committees and, finally, by Congress as a whole. No longer needed by the Corps of Engineers, the bridge was nevertheless useful to citizens of Arizona and California for whom it saves a 40 mile journey.

So Congress authorized the Secretary of Interior to transfer the bridge to the counties of Mohave, Arizona and San Bernardino, California. The counties will maintain it.

Congress also turned its attention to the prehistoric red sandstone pueblos of Wupatki National Monument in Coconino County. Given approval was a bill to allow a land exchange to improve the monument and increase accessibility.

Other bills largely of a local Arizona nature were introduced in the first session of the 87th Congress. Such measures are still very much alive for the second session which begins January 10. Many of them are being studied right now by various groups.

These carry-over bills include proposals to establish Fort Bowie, in Cochise County, and Hubbell Trading Post, in Apache County, as national historic sites; to make possible long term leasing by the Colorado River Indians; to add about 16,000 acres to Saguaro National Monument, Tucson; to help Yuma County airport achieve international port of entry status; to honor Father Eusebio Francisco Kino, illustrious early missionary.

Two subcommittees of the House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee scheduled Arizona hearings because they are considering bills which would affect the state greatly. The bills deal with sale of mineral rights to surface owners of urban and suburban land and with release of public lands deemed most suitable for urban uses.

Every representative and senator introduces bills for his own district and state. All these proposals must compete, not only for the attention of members of Congress, but for the taxpayers' dollars too.

Where the local interest is not at variance with the national interest, a diligent effort may carry the day. It seldom happens, however, that such a clear-cut distinction can be drawn.

Arizona fared reasonably well in the first session; it probably will do as well or better in the next; but the real test of Arizona's ability to advance a local interest will come when Supreme Court litigation has ended and the Central Arizona Project is introduced once again in Congress. In countless ways the actions of Arizona's congressional delegation today may affect the votes cast on that bill in the future.