

tric projects have been built by government through its programs for developing the river valleys of the United States. The situation has progressed so far today that we now find some of the owners of private power companies actually praising and encouraging the idea of government electricity production. And many of the private owners who do not praise the idea, have at least been frightened into silence.

IRRIGATION FALLACY

THESE HYDROELECTRIC projects usually are first advanced under the guise of the "comprehensive development of an entire river valley — flood control, navigation, irrigation, and any incidental electricity that may result as a by-product of these other primary aims." But surely no one now believes that the primary purpose of the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Bonneville Administration, and other similar government projects is either flood control or navigation. All of these projects now stand exposed for what they were primarily intended to be in the first place: government ownership of the means of producing electricity. And as for the irrigation features of Bonneville and other similar projects, consider this question: How can government justify the expenditure of public funds to bring new land into agricultural production while, at the same time, it is spending public funds to purchase and store agricultural products and keep them off the market? With one hand the government

is trying to force abundance by means of its irrigation programs; with the other hand the government is trying to force scarcity by means of its price support programs. And with both hands the government is bleeding the taxpayers and consumers in the process — all in the beguiling name of irrigation and river valley development.

SOURCE OF A FALSE IDEA

THE ADVOCATES of government ownership and operation of the means of producing electricity offer many reasons for their philosophy of common ownership. In the first place, they claim that they can "prove conclusively" that the government can do it better and cheaper than private enterprise. They advance the thesis that no person should be denied the use of electricity merely because he is unable or unwilling to pay the market price for it. They claim that private producers charge "too much," and that such a vital and necessary product as electricity should not be entrusted to misuse and neglect by private owners who are motivated by a desire for profit instead of by patriotism and the unselfish desire for a planned and controlled national prosperity.

COMPULSORY INVESTMENT

THE ADVOCATES of common ownership who advance these collectivistic arguments are probably sincere. They may honestly believe that