

Woody Guthrie, Talking Columbia

Well, down along the river just a-sittin' on a rock
I'm a-lookin' at the boats in the Bonneville lock.
Gate swings open, the boat sails in,
Toot that whistle, she's gone again.
Gasoline goin' up. Wheat comin' down.
Well, I filled up my hat brim, drunk a little taste,
Thought about a river just a-goin' to waste;
Thought about the dust, an' thought about the sand,
Thought about the people, an' thought about the land.
Folks runnin' round all over creation,
Lookin' for some kind of little place.

Well, I pulled out my pencil, scribbled this song,
Figured all them salmon just couldn't be wrong;
Them salmon fish is mighty shrewd,
They got senators and politicians, too.
Just about like the president. They run every four years.

You just watch this river, though, pretty soon
Everybody's gonna be changin' their tune;
The big Grand Coulee and the Bonneville dams
Run a thousand factories for Uncle Sam.
And everybody else in the world. Turnin' out
Everything from fertilizers to sewing machines,
And atomic bedrooms and plastic --
Everything's gonna be plastic.

Uncle Sam need houses and stuff to eat,
Uncle Sam needs wool, and Uncle Sam needs wheat,
Uncle Sam needs water and power dams,
Uncle Sam needs people, and the people need land.
'Course I don't like dictators none myself,
but then I think the whole country had ought to be run by
e-lec-trici-ty.