

THE INAUGURATION OF FIFTEENTH NATIONAL IRRIGATION CONGRESS

(An address by Jas. T. Taylor, C. E., delegate from Hawaii to the Congress, before the Hawaiian Engineering Association, Nov 14, 1907.)

There was never a convention that began its session more auspiciously than the Fifteenth National Irrigation Congress, which opened in Sacramento Monday, September the 2nd, 1907.

The gathering of delegates was larger and more representative than that in attendance at any convention of a similar kind ever held on the Pacific Coast. The number of prominent men present and the enthusiasm evinced has never been equaled on any like occasion in the history of California. The Vice-President of the United States, the Governors of six states, a number of Senators and Congressmen, legislators, judges and officials of importance—Federal, State and municipal—from every section of the country, were in their places when the president's gavel called the convention to order. One of the very notable groups on the floor of the vast convention hall consisted of a number of the most distinguished officials of the departments of the Washington Government, under the auspices of which is conducted the great project of conservation and development of natural resources.

A number of official representatives of foreign governments were on hand to participate in the proceedings of the congress.

In addition to these governmental figures the delegate body included hundreds of men of prominence in every line of human activity from every portion of the United States. No convention ever held in this country has brought together so large a proportion of distinguished men.

The opening function was one of great brilliancy. The vast auditorium, constructed expressly for the occasion, was magnificently decorated with bunting and flags and rare foliage. Every detail that could add to the pleasure and comfort of the delegates was perfectly worked out. Nothing was omitted. A perfect service was provided to prevent confusion and facilitate the business of the congress, and it resulted in the preservation of the best order and a complete absence of annoyance and delay.

Delegates and visitors were seated without the slightest disorder and when the time fixed for opening the convention arrived, everything was in readiness to proceed. Promptly at 1:30 p. m. Executive Officer Beard introduced Governor Chamberlain, president of the National Irrigation Congress, who took the chair. After an invocation, the "Irrigation Ode," a superb composition written for the occasion by Mrs. G. McClurg of Colorado, was sung by the Ogden Tabernacle choir of two hundred voices, one of the finest musical organizations in America. The rendition of this masterpiece was a magnificent performance and evoked thunders of applause.

Mayor Beard, in a clever speech of a few minutes' length, welcomed the delegates and visitors to the congress at Sacramento and extended to them the freedom of the city during their stay. He was followed by Governor Gillett, who offered to the city's guests the larger and far-reaching hospitality of the State. He gave them out of hand everything that California possesses, to have and to hold and to enjoy during the time they were within her borders, and said it was such a gift as no other State, and no other Governor, could offer. The Governor's talk won the audience by its heartiness.

Governor Chamberlain responded to these addresses on behalf of the congress. After paying a glowing tribute to the enterprise and hospitality of Californians, Governor Chamberlain said in part:

"The Federal Government has under consideration and construction projects of reclamation in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington and Wyoming, covering

more than three million acres, much of which is in private ownership and the balance owned by the States and the United States. The work entails the expenditure of vast sums, but the money involved is a mere bagatelle in comparison with the benefits received and to be received in providing homes for thousands and adding millions to the wealth of the Nation.

"In addition to the work now being done under government supervision, contracts have been entered into with private contractors for reclamation of large tracts of land in all the States which have accepted the provisions of the Carey Act. Some of these are making favorable progress; my experience has been, however, that whilst the government moves slowly, the work done by it is more substantial and in the end better, and more lasting results are likely to be attained."

Vice-President Fairbanks was the next speaker, and when he arose he was greeted with a storm of cheers. Mr. Fairbanks has always been an earnest and influential advocate of all that the congress stands for. He has attended several previous sessions and has always manifested the liveliest interest in the movement and its purposes. He spoke in part as follows:

"The effect of irrigation in this Western country can be appreciated only by those who are familiar with it from personal observation. The change made in the conversion of an arid waste into fruitful fields seems almost incredible. There is no more radical transformation to be found anywhere than in the parched valleys and plains which have been irrigated, and which prior thereto produced nothing but sage brush. The most unproductive land has become the most fertile. From the worst, it takes rank with the best. There are promising fields today where there was no sign of habitation before we entered upon the present reclamation policy, and what has been done is but a part of what we shall accomplish if we faithfully adhere to the policy upon which we have entered and carry it out to the limits of its possibilities.

"We have long since passed the experimental stage, and it only remains to push the work wherever feasible with the utmost vigor.

"The reclamation of every ten or twenty acres of land means the creation of a homestead which will comfortably support a family of industrious, intelligent and patriotic American citizens.

"The development of irrigation by the National Government must have a profound and far-reaching influence upon the general subject of irrigation throughout the country. It will tend powerfully to the extension of irrigation into portions of the country which have hitherto relied largely upon rainfall in the cultivation and growing of crops. There is no more important subject for the consideration of farmers in many of the humid and semi-humid regions than that of so-called supplemental irrigation. We must prepare more and more for the increased demand upon our food supply which comes with the multiplying millions of our population. Therefore, the development of the subject of irrigation is of interest not only to the farmers of these great Western regions, but to farmers and consumers everywhere.

"We do a substantial and permanent service to our country by enlarging the area into which men and women may come from congested cities and find occupation for their energies and homes for their heads. Let a man own a piece of ground which he may cultivate, put him into partnership with nature, and it will intensify his love of country and make him a more stable, conservative and patriotic citizen. Increase the home builders and the home owners of the Republic and you augment its real abiding strength.

"The development of the Reclamation Service in this Western country means the increase of migration hither of many desirable citizens.

"Closely related to the subject of irrigation is the work of forestry preservation. The two subjects go hand in hand. We have pursued a somewhat reckless policy with regard to the

forests of the United States. In some sections of the country, in fact in almost every section, we have denuded our lands of timber in what now seems to have been almost a wanton fashion. We have thought only of today, having no proper regard for the future. The demand of the country for timber needed to build our railways, construct our cities and homes, has been tremendous. We have cut away our forests and paid no attention to the necessity of taking steps for their ultimate restoration.

"We now see that some of the older countries in their experience have seen that it is necessary to adhere to a rational, scientific forestry system, not only in the interests of our future forests, but in the interests of the important subjects of irrigation and navigation. It is but a truism that if the forests are swept away the rainfall quickly flows into the streams and is washed into the sea, whereas if the trees are properly preserved upon the watersheds the rainfall and melting snows are stored in nature's reservoirs and are gradually fed into the streams for the benefit of both agriculture and navigation.

"We have not fairly begun to appreciate the full value of our streams and rivers. We have not fairly begun to appropriate them to the benefit of our agriculture, industry and commerce. The waters which come down from the sides of these mountains may be converted into electrical power and carried hundreds of miles with but little loss to the initial energy, and appropriated to lighting and heating cities, operating mines and driving the wheels of industry. We have thousands of miles of rivers which may be made navigable with the benefit flowing from their use in carrying commerce. There are thousands of miles of rivers which are navigable in a degree but which should be deepened and improved so as to meet our growing needs.

"It is impossible to give too much emphasis to the importance of this subject. Our rivers are the natural highways of commerce and the growing density of our population makes it essential that there should be additional facilities to insure cheap and ready transportation. The capacity of the railways of the country is already taxed to the utmost, and the rapid development of traffic makes it necessary that we should largely augment the means of carrying it in the future.

"Moreover, there is no better equalizer of rates than water competition. Water transportation is a perpetual and certain guaranty against monopoly on the part of the common carriers. We are earnestly carrying forward the construction of the Panama Canal, confessedly a work of great importance, not only to our commerce but to the commerce of the world. Important as this matter is, it is not more important than the improvement of navigation upon many of our rivers. The improvement of navigation upon them may well go hand in hand with work upon the great canal. The one is in a very considerable degree the complement of the other. This is a large subject and must be considered in a large way.

"Upon such an occasion as this I would not venture to obtrude politics—nothing could be more inappropriate. The fact is that we have a surfeit of politics. What we need most is more business and less politics. Unless the business affairs of the people are arrested by unwise policies; unless the seeds of distrust are sown among ourselves; unless commercial unrest is encouraged by doctrinaires, we shall continue to expand our industries, and the great West will continue to grow and fulfill her mighty destiny. Can we stand prosperity? We are in the midst of a prosperity the like of which was never before seen. Can we utilize it to our benefit? Can we retain it, or will we distrust each other and involve it all in hopeless confusion? There never was an hour when it was more important that we should be governed by sober judgment. We should sedulously cultivate a tolerant spirit and a spirit of justice toward each other. We should not forget that confidence is the sure foundation of prosperity and progress, and we should have a care that we do not undermine it.

At the conclusion of Mr. Fairbank's address Gifford Pinchot, government forester and personal representative of President Roosevelt at the congress, delivered the following message of the Country's Chief Executive, which came by telegraph:

"I send you hearty greetings, and my earnest wishes for the fullest success of your convention. I congratulate you on the progress of the great movement you represent. There is no movement more emphatically for the benefit of the small farmer and the small ranchman. There is no other way to assist the actual settler and homemaker who owns and tills his own land so powerfully as through this movement of yours for the wise use and preservation of the waters and the forests. The Reclamation Service and the Forest Service are directly adapted to help the small man make and maintain a prosperous home, and they are doing it. These services were recently inspected on the ground by the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, who have them in charge, and I congratulate you on the high standards of integrity and efficiency they have attained.

"It is a matter of sincere satisfaction to learn that you will not confine yourselves to questions of irrigation and forestry, nor even to the control, use, and conservation of streams, vastly important as these are to every citizen of the United States. I am glad to know that you will give attention also to that problem of which forestry and irrigation and water conservation form but a part, the fundamental problem of the conservation of all natural resources. The work of the Government along the line of this greater problem cannot be made effective without the approval and support of the whole body of citizens.

"By educating, guiding and crystallizing public sentiment in this direction, by bringing the needs of the people clearly and forcibly to the knowledge of their representatives, you are rendering a service of the first importance to the Nation as a whole.

"THEODORE ROOSEVELT."

Mr. Arthur Briggs and Senator Perkins followed the reading of the President's message with able and interest-

ing addresses, which were cordially received.

Following the addresses of welcome came the responses of Governors and representatives of foreign nations. Governor Albert Mead of Washington extended the thanks of his State for the kind welcome and Governor J. C. Cutler of Utah made a happy address.

As the Chinese Consul-General, Sun Sze Yee, did not speak English fluently, the Vice-Consul spoke for him. Mr. King complimented the congress on the splendid work and declared China to be a pioneer in the work of irrigation. Franz Bopp, the Imperial German Consul-General, spoke as the representative of his country.

Andros Aldasora, sub-secretary of the Mexican Legation at Washington, D. C., was called upon as the representative of the Southern Republic, and made an eloquent address in Spanish.

CONSERVATION DAY—A NOTABLE SESSION OF THE CONGRESS.

The second day of the congress opened quite as auspiciously as the first. The attendance of delegates was large, filling the great auditorium comfortably. The deepest interest was manifested by the audience at the morning and afternoon sessions in the splendid papers and addresses. The enthusiasm of the delegates was kept up to a high pitch by a number of spirited exchanges on the floor of the convention during the progress of both sessions. Mr. Newell's illustrated lecture in the evening was immensely enjoyed by a large and appreciative gathering which included a majority of the leading delegates and prominent visitors. After the brief preliminary business of the meeting was disposed of, Governor Chamberlain, president of the congress, introduced U. S. Senator Francis G. Newlands of Nevada, father of the Reclamation Act and a member of the Inland Waterways Commission.

INLAND WATERWAYS COMMISSION.

Senator Newlands delivered a highly instructive address on the formation of that commission and the purposes of its work. After referring to the appointment of the Inland Waterways Commission by President Roosevelt, Senator Newlands said that the letter of instructions from the President enjoined upon the commission the study of all questions relating to inland waterways, with a view to recommending practical legislation upon the subject. The President's purpose was to undertake now a plan of practical utilization, improvement and development which might in the coming years be worked out comprehensively and successfully. "Whilst the primary purpose of this inquiry is to facilitate water transportation, it is impossible to perfect the machinery of the waterways without taking into consideration the related questions of forest preservation, of irrigation of arid land, of reclamation of swamp land, of bank protection, of clarification of streams, and other kindred questions.

"Whilst these questions are important, the use of these great waterways, lakes and rivers for purposes of transportation of men and of products, is the most important. Every creek, every brook, contributes in some degree to the volume of the river or lake which should serve as a part of the great machinery for transportation, and a thorough and comprehensive plan of artificializing waterways should be adopted, with a view of securing stability of channel. It is impossible to indicate now what the form of legislation should be. Individually, I should say that some plan in which the chiefs of the great scientific services of the country could be brought together in a national board of public works, with power to make comprehensive plans and to work them out gradually, might be the most efficient way.

"The people of the United States are awakening to the necessity of utilizing the national power for the promotion of the general welfare. We nationalized banking and currency because we realized the folly of having as many different financial systems as there were States, the danger of inflation and panic arising from careless and inconsiderate State action. We nationalized irrigation because we saw the futility of subjecting the treatment of the sources, the watersheds and valleys, of streams flowing through several States. We realized that every great river must be as a unit, regardless of the State lines, and that the action of the Union on national lines was therefore essential. We nationalized the quarantine because we realized that the health and safety of the entire Nation might be endangered by the carelessness or indifference of a single State. We are now taking up the question of nationalizing the development of the inland waterways, embracing lakes and rivers and connecting canals, and including all the related questions of forestry, of irrigation, of clarification, of bank protection, of channel opening, as well as navigation; and the South in this latter movement is taking the lead for national action, realizing as it does that the promotion of inter-state and foreign commerce was one of the primary causes of the union of the States as a Nation. Under national incorporation, the questions relating to inland waterways, railway and ocean transportation, will be solved."

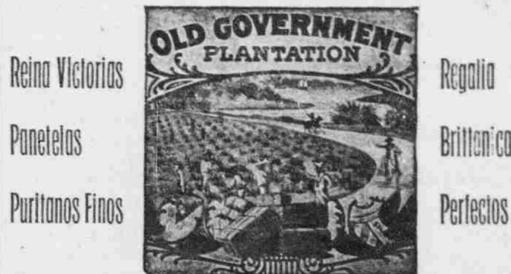
At the conclusion of this address, which elicited the closest attention, W. A. Beard read a letter from Secretary of the Interior Garfield regretting his inability to be present, and commending in the strongest terms the work and purposes of the congress. The letter wound up by asking Governor Chamberlain to "express to the congress his appreciation of the assistance it has been to the Reclamation Service."

"Congresses and conferences," added the secretary, "when conducted in a spirit of suggestive criticism, are always helpful. I am confident that the water users, either individually or through their representatives, will always find the officers of the government willing to meet them half way in the discussion and settlement of any questions or differences that may arise."

At this point the secretary of the congress was instructed to wire the following reply to Secretary Garfield: "Sacramento, Cal., Sept. 3, 1907, the Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D. C. Your message to Honorable George E. Chamberlain, President of the Fifteenth National Irrigation Congress,

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was read today and most cordially appreciated by the two thousand delegates in attendance. I am directed to extend to you the thanks of the congress."

DRAINAGE.

Hon. George E. Barstow of Texas, third Vice President of the congress, spoke on the claims of the National Drainage Association, of which organization he is the president. After extolling the hospitality of California and Sacramento, the speaker made a strong plea for the nationalization of the work of drainage. "Irrigation and deep waterways are related subjects, but why not work also for the drainage of the 80,000,000 acres of swamp lands in the various States from Maine to California? The work is too vast to be carried out on private lines and there is a demand for a national agency to do it and the people everywhere ask that it be done. The work of drainage should be placed under the control of the Reclamation Service. We have a most important precedent for the government's carrying on this

work in the example of other countries, Holland, France, Germany and Italy are all doing it. The soundness of the policy of reclaiming the land stands beyond dispute, and there is no reason why drainage of lands should not be carried out."

(To Be Continued.)

Sunday School Teacher—Tommy, the lesson says it is more blessed to give than to receive. Can you give me an example in which that is true? Tommy Tucker—Yes'm. It's when maw's away from home, and 'stead of writin' to paw she sends him picture cards. —Chicago Tribune.

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