

# White River Development

Traveling from Seattle to Tacoma over the Pacific highway but partially discloses the agricultural and industrial possibilities of the White River valley. Those fertile and alluvial acres practically extend from the gates of Seattle to the Pierce county line and though the most of them have been in the possession of individual owners for the past seventy years, yet the entire valley is still in but a semi-developed state. As you sweep along the highway you get the impression that that valley is the cornucopia from a fruit and vegetable stand point (and it ought to be) for mighty Seattle and her surroundings, but it is safe to say, that it does not furnish her a hundredth part of the fruit and vegetables she consumes from day to day. Just why the white man, with all his pent up energy and persistency, should fall asleep at the switch and permit those vast and fertile acres to go undeveloped for all these years and still making little or no effort to put them in a high state of cultivation is beyond American explanation. Two million dollars would go a long ways toward draining the flooded lands of the White River valley from the hills on the east to the hills on the west and from the Duwamish on the north to the Stuck on the south, which when fully reclaimed, every foot of it would be as productive as the land of the Nile and it would hardly be stretching a point to say, that the first year those reclaimed acres were farmed the returns in dollars and cents would reach the four million dollar mark, thus repaying the reclaim outlay twice over the first year. In the midsts of the White River valley acres is the city of Kent which is rapidly developing into a manufacturing center, to the north of the valley is the great city of Seattle, with its almost 400,000 inhabitants, to the south is the city of Tacoma with a population of nearly 200,000 and the inhabitants of all them to be fed. As said above this valley furnishes not to exceed a hundredth part of the berries, vegetables and fruits these cities consume, and yet properly cultivated the White River valley could be made to produce almost enough of such food stuff to fully supply the most of the wants of the above named cities and communities. The above cities are for the most part dependent on California for their fruit, vegetables and berries and all because this valley, from an agricultural stand point, has been sadly neglected by both capital and labor. On either side of this valley is a splended paved highway, over which the farmers in their auto trucks could haul tons of produce to Seattle reaching the city in an hour's time after leaving their homes. If after thoroughly draining these lands they should be divided into five and ten acre tracts, the latter preferably, and sold to industrious families, and they given instructions by agricultural experts how best to farm them, it is here predicted that there is not another valley in the whole world that would prove more highly productive. Railroads are by no means absolute necessities for the development of this valley as paved highways and the auto truck have long since supplanted the choo choo train.

The residents of Seattle and Tacoma, and even Kent for that matter, are paying fabulous prices at present for a bit of green stuff for table food, simply because

the demand quadruples the supply. If on the other hand hundreds and thousands of ten acre farmers occupied the lands of this valley they would be relieved of such a cramped condition of eating affairs in the big cities and at the same time give employment to thousands of persons, who have tired of everlasting job hunting.

Speaking about capital and labor working in harmony and with an eye single to putting this particular valley in a high state of cultivation the exact opposite seems more their determination. Had not capital and labor worked at cross purposes the Renton coal mines lying directly at the north east head of the White River valley would uow be in full blast and five hundred men employed in its operation. That industrial plant alone would have consumed multiplied tons of the products of truck farmers in the White River valley. In the city of Kent, the original home of Carnation milk, capital and labor so critically clashed that the plant has been indefinitely closed down, thereby sadly crippling the onward and upward industrial march of the entire valley. So frequently have capital and labor clashed in this particular community that the necessary capital to drain and otherwise develop those lands have not been forth coming and men with families likewise hesitate in seeking small homes there. At present a great majority of the farmers of the White River valley are Japanese and Italians. But few white and no black men play any part in growing food in that valley for the teeming thousands who live in the surrounding cities. It seems almost a crime against nature to continue building great cities as is Seattle with no more agricultural surroundings than has Seattle. If she could induce 100,000 or more of her citizens to seek rural homes such as might be had in the White River valley, if properly developed, her importance as a commercial industrial center would be far in access of what it now is. Multiplied thousands of dollars worth of food stuff put up in cans might be shipped from the small farms of this valley, if the proper preparations were made for doing so. While the vegetables of the White River might not come into the markets quite as early in the year as those from California, yet they would come in longer in the fall and early winter than those from California and best of all, it would be keeping things all at home. A more inviting field for small farming can no where be found than the valley lands between Seattle and the Stuck and if Seattle capitalists are wise they will see to it that the proper inducements are made to industrious Americans to find homes herein.

It has been recently predicted that South America will go bone dry even before North America does, and that too, despite the fact the latter has a great big dry lead over the former. Perhaps humanity per se will be little or no better with a bone dry world than was it when it was a wet world, but man, mortal man, has set his heart on seeing the world in an arid condition and nothing short of that will satisfy him, hence the sooner the better.