

THE IMPERIAL PRESS

"Water is King—Here is its Kingdom."

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Published at the center of the greatest irrigated territory in America, in the heart of the Colorado desert, San Diego county, Southern California, 67 feet below the level of the sea. Under present canals, 250,000 acres; under irrigation system when completed, 400,000 acres. Adjacent to irrigated land in Arizona and land to be irrigated by the National Government from the same grand Colorado river which will make a combined body of more than a million irrigated acres.

IT WAS A GREAT DAY

Visit of the Government Commissioners to Imperial Valley---They View the Country Talk With the People and See the Need of Government Ownership.

The greatest event in the history of Imperial Valley since the waters of the Colorado were first turned upon its lands is the movement to make the distribution of those waters a matter of government ownership and control. To this frequent reference has been made in these columns, and now it has arrived at the important and critical point of a personal inspection of the situation by the government officials.

To this end there came Monday morning the following government officials and accompanying gentlemen:

F. H. Newell, Chief Engineer, Reclamation Service.

Arthur P. Davis, Supervising Engineer.

J. B. Lippincott, Supervising Engineer.

B. M. Hall, Consulting Engineer.

Morris Bien, Legal Adviser for Reclamation Service.

Wm. E. Smythe.

B. A. Fowler, President Salt River Valley Water Users' Ass'n.

Chas. W. Eberlein, Land Agent Southern Pacific Railway Co.

To the government officials at least, this was not their first visit, by a long ways. They were here in January, 1903, when they descended the Colorado in a small boat from away up river, to the heading of the Imperial canal, down the canal to Calexico, and thence by team (for there was no Imperial and Gulf road then,) to Old Beach, so they know the country already better than most of the settlers in it.

The visitors were met by Imperial people as follows: Shirley C. Ward, I. W. Gleason, Frank N. Chaplin, S. J. Ulrey, Thos. Beach, R. D. McPherrin, Mr. Perry, (of Calexico,) F. G. Havens and W. F. Holt, and in five teams, furnished by Messrs. Ulrey, Chaplin Bros., Beach, Perry and Mc Pherrin, driven about the country.

They went west across the main canal, south to Wilsie's place, west to a point north of Blue Lake, and south to the lake, where they rested and lunched, admiring the beauties of the lake. Thence, on the homeward route east to the Date canal and scattering homeward according to the fancy of the drivers.

The visitors expressed appreciation of the wealth and fertility of the valley, as indicated by the crops where there was enough water, and they realized from the looks of other crops that many were suffering for want of water. They remarked that it must be galling to farmers to be doing without sufficient water while so much was running to waste in the Colorado river. They appreciated the magnitude and importance of the situation and indicated personally—though of course not officially—that they were willing to do all in their power to relieve it.

The urgent necessity of an adequate water supply was apparent. All were

impressed with the insufficiency of that supply for the present season, as indicated by the shortness of the crop, and showed a decided willingness to come to the relief of the settlers. The fine crops in some places showed what could be done all over.

TO CALEXICO.

Tuesday morning the meeting was planned for, but Supt. Ingram of the S. P. who brought the party down in his special train, thought the party ought to see the whole valley under present conditions, so by his courtesy and that of Mr. Holt his train was run down there, carrying all the members of the visiting party, the local reception committee and a Press representative.

The good country and some well improved places, on the way were much admired, and at the Border city the party crossed the line and surveyed briefly the situation. Several climbed to the top of the water tower and were shown by engineer Lippincott the features of the country, chief of which is the 1,000,000 acre ranch of the California-Mexico Cattle Co. which extends from the international line to the Hardy river and is owned by Editor Otis, of the Los Angeles Times, and associates.

At the Calexico Hotel, kept by Dool & Rockwood, the party enjoyed the hospitality of R. D. McPherrin Esq. at dinner, and appreciated not only the generosity of their host, but the excellence of the services.

THE MEETING.

At 2:30, or rather long before, the big tent was crowded, and U. S. Commissioner Havens called the meeting to order. Hon. Wm. E. Smythe was made chairman, and he introduced

MR. NEWELL.

Mr. Newell read the law under which the Commissioners came, and invited information. The water, he said, was the property of its appropriators and users, emphasizing the latter words. Appropriation alone would not suffice. He complimented Mr. Holt, Chairman of the Water Users Association, on his ability and fairness, and urged all to stand by and work with him and his colleagues. He spoke of the unfortunate and troublesome location of the international boundary line, and called attention to the fact that the United States cannot buy property outside its own territory. Hoped the water users might be able to handle the international situation, in which case the government may be able to afford relief.

Mr. Smythe then said Mr. Heber, President of the C. D. Company, had complained of the reclamation service, and particularly of one man in it. That man he now proposed to introduce as the engineer under whom the Yuma work was to be done, and he would tell the audience about it.

J. B. LIPPINCOTT

then appeared and remarked upon the difficulty of a government official telling anything worth knowing without the danger of betraying matters confidential between himself and his superiors. Mr. Lippincott then, in a general reference to the Yuma work stated the amount of water available in the Colorado for irrigation. He was in-

duced as "the man behind the gun" in engineering work, and said the commission did not want to "butt in" to the local situation unless most unmistakably asked to do so, in which case it would do its best to include the Imperial Valley in the scope of its work. It was possible to ultimately make a canal here without going through Mexico though the present situation involved a crossing of the international line. The total minimum of Colorado water available was about 3000 cubic feet a second, and total irrigable area from it about 1,200,000 acres.

Mr. Smythe then introduced

MR. DAVIS

as the author of the best of the Isthmian canal work, and also of the Colorado river irrigation exploitation. Mr. Davis modestly disclaimed so much credit, and said the latter work at least was that of Mr. Lippincott. He stated the very interesting fact that the Imperial Valley was the largest arid tract in America that could be irrigated. The only obstacle is the troublesome and unfortunate location of the international boundary line. Extensive irrigation work has become too large for private enterprise, and must henceforth be prosecuted by the power and the purse of Uncle Sam—a sentiment that elicited tremendous applause. He referred particularly to the provisions of the Reclamation Act and apprehended they would be strictly enforced. That act is ample and no further legislation is needed.

Mr. Smythe said this was the biggest irrigation project involving the welfare of the greatest number of people. Would Uncle Sam turn his back on it? No! (applause.)

D. N. Hall was called for, but modestly declined to come forward, and Mr.

MORRIS BIEN

was called for to present the legal problems of the situation. He said the biggest problem was the international complication, but trusted the Water Users Association would solve that.

T. A. FOWLER

of Phoenix proved a witty speaker, and being introduced as the "biggest man" in irrigation said he was sorry his wife was not here that she might know how big a man she had married.

He recounted the many difficulties his company had encountered, and thought Imperial had gained a year's time by their experience.

R. H. INGRAM

Superintendent S. P. Co. Los Angeles division was next called for and thought he was on the wrong side of the platform—he ought to be in the audience. He said his company was in sympathy and hearty accord with the people in every movement for their good. Their interests were in common and the S. P. would use every effort to promote the welfare of the people it had the honor to serve.

Mr. Smythe acknowledged the receipt of a check from the local committee and said his expenses only were borne by the Water Users. His services were free. He then presented the following resolutions which were enthusiastically adopted, and with the singing of America, led by D. R. Chaplin, closed the most important meeting Imperial has ever had, with three rousing cheers for the Reclamation Bureau and three for Mr. Smythe:

RESOLUTIONS

The men and women of Imperial valley, assembled at Imperial on May 31, 1904, extend a hearty greeting to Chief Engineer Frederick H. Newell and the other distinguished representatives of the United States reclamation service, to President Fowler of the Salt River Valley Water Users' association and to all other members of the party who honor us with their presence here today, and we rejoice inexpressibly in this evi-

dence of the deep interest of the government in the future of this community.

We declare that the national irrigation policy is the outcome of the greatest constructive movement of modern times and agree with President Roosevelt when he says "it is not only one of the greatest steps in the progress of the United States, but of all mankind."

We declare that the fertile delta of the Rio Colorado in the counties of San Diego and Riverside, California, offers the grandest opportunity to be found in the length and breadth of arid America for the building of homes under the beneficent policy embodied in the act of June 17, 1902, and that the government is alone able to deal adequately with the situation.

We came here in response to the invitation of private enterprise. We invested our capital, our labor and the best years of our lives in the effort to reclaim this desert wilderness and to make it blossom with products of the soil, with schools, with churches and with homes. We have loyally done our part to this end and faithfully observed our contracts. But today, while the annual flood of the great river flows past to the gulf, many of our fields are suffering for water, the returns of our labor are diminished or destroyed and our future is filled with apprehension.

We have no unkind words to say of the private enterprise, which attempted a task now clearly seen to be beyond its power of accomplishment. We would have it treated justly, but "with malice toward none and charity for all" we ask the California Development company to co-operate with the reclamation service in preparing the way for a magnificent public enterprise capable of making homes for a million men, who shall combine in one inalienable ownership the four elements essential to human existence—land, water, sunshine and air.

We are today the living embodiment of the president's immortal declaration that "private ownership of water apart from land cannot prevail without causing enduring wrong."

And when monopoly of water is protected by the possession of canals on foreign soil and thus entirely beyond the possibility of regulation by the public authority to which we owe allegiance, such monopoly becomes intolerable and fraught with perils which we cannot permanently endure.

We appeal to the secretary of the interior to exercise his ample authority to emancipate us, and our children after us, from "private ownership of water apart from land."

We express our absolute unflinching faith in the government at Washington and now declare that wherever Uncle Sam shall lead there we will loyally follow.

VOLCANO SPRINGS

Two Imperialites Make a Week's Visit and Bring Great Reports

James Heatley and G. B. Sisson have lately been on a trip to Volcano Springs, 35 miles from Calexico and about 25 from the line. They report them very interesting and well worth a visit. They are beneficial to health, the mud baths curing rheumatism and blood impurities. The volcanic section is about 7 miles square and the erupting cones only about 2 to 5 feet high. The mud is a rich dark green, and hardens soon, a bottle immersed in it coming out coated as with cement. The Cocopah Indians know its virtues, and resort thither in cases of ailments for which it is good. A combination of salt, sulphur and alum exists in large quantities in a crystallized state, and can be readily picked up, as it forms in bunches. Quail are plentiful, but the party found the water of the Hardy river too muddy to fish in. Mr. Sisson brought back samples of the mud, which is very pretty and also of the mineral crystals.