

RECLAMATION OFFICIALS' VISIT

Uncle Sam's Engineers Spent Two Days Looking Over the Flood Situation Along New River.

Last Thursday morning's train brought to our Valley the following officials of the United States Reclamation Service: C. E. Grunsky, chief consulting engineer; W. S. Sanders, consulting engineer; L. C. Hill, resident engineer for Arizona; J. B. Lippincott, resident engineer for California; Homer Hamlin, engineer in charge of Yuma project, and H. Vincent, construction engineer of the Laguna dam.

These gentlemen went to Calexico and after an interview with H. T. Cory, general manager of the California Development company, for about two hours, they went to dinner. After that they procured teams and drove to Sharps' Heading, returning to Calexico in the evening and spending the night there. Friday they went out to where the channel cutting is going on in New river, and saw for themselves what is taking place and has taken place in that respect.

From conversation we had with members of the party we learned that they were very much concerned over the cutting back of this channel in New river, for they can foresee that unless the Colorado river is restored to its old course as soon as possible, the cutting of this channel will continue till it will destroy the Yuma dam. Mr. Grunsky was in the Valley and investigated conditions about two months ago, and since that time the channel of New river has cut back about twenty miles, and eroded a course averaging 1000 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Much of this has been in harder soil than is contained in the rest of its course to the Colorado. With less than 100 miles to go and all of it easy digging Uncle Sam has begun to "sit up and take notice" of what is being done with the water of the Colorado river. The Colorado is now at flood tide and is flowing 90,000 cubic feet of water per second, of which only about five per cent is going down the old channel. The rest is coming down the Imperial river and the way it is showing up at Calexico is something immense. The high lands are all under in Number Six and the water stretches in an unbroken flood from the levees at Calexico to the foot of Signal Mountain, with the exception of about two sections that are protected by strong levees which have kept the floods out. The water is rising at the rate of about one inch per day at Calexico, but the levees are very strong, and stand a foot or more above the water. The channel cutting in New river will undoubtedly reach opposite the town during the coming week. When this is done all danger of flood will be gone forever, and Calexico can tear down her levee.

We saw parties from No. 6, and they were much concerned about the cutting back of the channel, for in a short time it will not only put them out of water, but it will cut them off from communication. They can cross the overflowed lands in a boat even if they are ten miles wide, but when all that water gathers into a channel 1000 feet wide and 40 feet deep, and running like a millrace, it will be

impossible to cross it.

The gentlemen composing the party of engineers were reticent about the object of their visit further than, as Mr. Grunsky said, the situation was such that it was necessary that a number of the officials of the Reclamation Service should examine it personally, so as to be familiar with the problems it presented. He also pointed out that the difficulty presented by the fact that the break in the river is in Mexico, made it impossible for the Reclamation Service to undertake the work of closing the gap and returning the river to its old channel from the fact that the reclamation fund cannot be expended outside of the United States. It was also intimated that the purchase of the California Development company's property would not be desirable on account of their contracts to deliver water in Mexico, as the only way the Reclamation Service can deliver water in that country is in pursuance of a treaty between this country and Mexico, like the one just concluded concerning the Rio Grande.

After the officials left on their trip to Sharps' Heading we inquired of Mr. Cory what they were catechising him about, and he said they asked all manner of questions about water discharges, velocities, quantities, and such matters. In reply to the question as to whether they made an offer for the property, Mr. Cory said no, but laughingly added that he wished they would.

The visit of these gentlemen at the present time we believe is very significant, for it shows Uncle Sam is interested in the matter of closing up the Imperial river. This work will be done just as quickly as it can be by the California Development company, who now have everything in readiness for the work the minute the water goes down.

The Reclamation Service engineers will no doubt report, and this will enlighten the Commissioner of the General Land Office regarding the volume of our water supply so he won't be longer guided by the idea that our irrigation supply has been oversold, in passing on final proofs in this valley.

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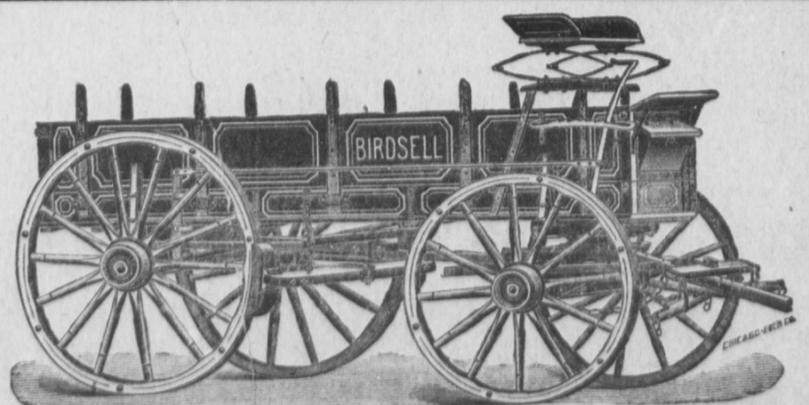
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