

STATE AND GOVERNMENT MUST CO-OPERATE ON IRRIGATION

During the greater part of the last two days we have listened to complaints of existing conditions—fault finding, to a certain extent, with existing laws—and a recounting of difficulties and failures in various enterprises. In this there is much good. I find no cause to criticize these things. The lamp of experience has always lighted the pathway of the future. The errors of the past must be recounted in order to be warned against the pitfalls yet to be encountered; and besides, it is the history of all constructive and remedial legislation that there must be an evil or a necessity which calls for a remedy before legislation is forthcoming.

We meet here, however, to consider various plans for constructive legislation. We are here in response to the demand of one who asks, not to give us something, but that we co-operate with him in obtaining something. A man who has shown himself to be one of the wisest councillors of the present administration and whose first chapters in the administration of his office argue well for the future, and whose grasp upon the serious and mighty problems which confront his department shows him to be standing in the forefront of the statesmen of the day. Is it not well, then, that we hesitate for one moment and pay tribute to Franklin K. Lane, the great western secretary? In speaking of the officers of the government, let us say a word regarding the Reclamation Service and other offices. Confessing and conceding that there have been mistakes made in the past still do not charge that entirely against the officers themselves, but remember that their hands and their policies have been, to a large extent, bound by the terms of the congressional act under which they were operating. We should also remember that since the reclamation act was passed, every man in this assemblage and every state of the western states, knew more about irrigation and the problems of irrigation than they did when these different reclamation projects were inaugurated.

There is one thought which I want to come down to immediately, and that is to meet the purpose of the secretary. My understanding is that he is not desirous of embarking upon untried legislation, but that he desires state co-operation along well defined lines; so that there will be no upheaval of present conditions, but a bettering of those conditions. The territory of the United States of America, comprised as it is, is a huge parallelogram extending about 1500 miles from the north to the south and about 3000 miles east and west. In the extreme northeast corner of that parallelogram there is a state named after our first president. A coastal range—the Cascade mountains—divides the state in twain, but it is only in the eastern half that we need irrigation, and in that section all of the smaller projects, all of the easy and cheap projects, are in process of operation.

There are new projects in contemplation and in process of construction in our state which demand more sinews of war than we can command through state resources or through local resources; there are projects which contemplate the ir-

No problem confronting the states of the Pacific Northwest is more important and pressing than the development of our arid lands. The plan outlined in the address of Judge Carroll B. Graves and which we reproduce herewith, is regarded as a most practical one for the financing of irrigation projects beyond the scope of private capital.

The plan was first approved by the Washington State Irrigation Institute following which Judge Graves attended the Conference on Irrigation under appointment as a delegate by the Governor. That body endorsed the plan unanimously and with great enthusiasm. From the time of his arrival in the Yakima valley in the early eighties Judge Graves has been continuously identified with irrigation questions, not only as an attorney and as a Judge of the Superior Court of that district for eight years, but also in the promotion of a number of large irrigation enterprises including the Horse Heaven project covering 450,000 acres; Brewster with 20,000 acres; the Kittitas High line canal covering 82,000 acres and the Indian Reservation district comprising 120,000 acres. Because of his great and varied experience, therefor it will be seen that no one in the Northwest is better qualified to speak on this subject.

rigation of 82,000 acres, of 400,000 acres and as great as 500,000 acres, and other smaller projects, and this is true of conditions all over the West.

Now, there must be some definite plan of co-operation or assistance. Under the existing circumstances we have got to go to the acre, make the acre go behind the money, and we have got to have somebody lend us financial aid and credit, and the only person in the world that I know of who can do it, is Uncle Sam himself. Therefore, in view of these weighty questions, and for the purpose of suggesting some plan to this conference for its serious consideration, the Washington State Irrigation Institute, a few weeks ago, devised a plan, and I am requested to submit it. I shall do so as briefly and succinctly as possible. I believe it to meet with the suggestion of the secretary and to meet the situation fully.

That plan is, that the government of the United States provide one-half of the funds for any project that is examined and approved and the state provide the other half. Now, the constitutional provisions and limitations of all but one or two states west of the Missouri river prevent the state, itself, from doing these things. It may not, out of the public treasury, take the funds. Therefore, before the state itself as an organization, can do anything of this character, you must first proceed by adopting a constitutional amendment. But what the state itself may not do, it may do through its agencies as through the agency of a Carey Act project, if you please, or preferably through irrigation districts, because irrigation districts are, in their nature, more for imposing local assessments for special benefits.

The plan of co-operation between the state and the federal government in connection with reclamation work, as proposed by the Washington Irrigation Institute, provides for three things:

1. New legislation to develop and carry out co-operation through districts:

In that regard the government is already moving, as I understand it, with legislation that is in harmony with this plan, and most of our states have legislation upon irrigation district subjects that are sufficient, with very slight amendments.

2. A plan for financing the co-

operative work.

3. A method of handling the co-operative construction of the works when financed.

Federal and state co-operation means equal participation and responsibility in the approval and financing of reclamation and other projects. Any plan, to succeed, should be simple and should not require amendment to any state constitution. It takes too much time. Money for construction should be provided at the lowest possible rate of interest, which requires gilt edged security. In order to provide first-class security, the project undertaken must be feasible from an engineering, agricultural and financial standpoint. These projects must be able to repay the interest, which will be a first lien on the land. Expert investigation and approval by some responsible and experienced agency must precede the taking up of a project for co-operative construction. When a project has received such expert approval and has been taken up for construction, the work must be conducted by some responsible organization experienced in the class of work being done.

Consider the procedure through the agency of an irrigation district: Let the people under any given project petition for an examination of that project; let the Reclamation Commission of the United States, under the direction of the secretary, and a commission to be appointed by the governor of the state, proceed with the examination of the project and determine whether it is feasible considered from agricultural, financial and engineering standpoints. When they have found and reported favorably, let the project be organized into a district and its bonds voted according to the estimate fixed by the joint commission—the cost of the investigation being borne jointly by the National and the State governments.

When the bonds have been voted, let the United States take one-half of these bonds and supply the money upon the faith of the security which its engineers have approved. The other one-half, then, may be made, if you please, a matter of investment for general state funds at least, the moment that the project has been approved both by the National and State governments, and the United States has absorbed one-half of the bonds, you can go into the money market and sell the remainder of your bonds as readily as any bonds issued on the faith of any project on the face of the earth.

An essential and indispensable part of this proposed co-operation is that the land benefitted must bear the charge and cost. The Federal Government lends its aid and credit upon the approved security offered by the land by approving the undertaking and advancing one-half of the cost of construction, and the state aids and co-operates by approving the security, and by advancing the other one-half of the cost through the irrigation district, its created agency

or sub-division. The district bonds may be made a subject of investment for state funds, not as an essential part of the scheme, but only as an incident to it, if any state should so elect. By this course, what the state may not be able to do itself, it may authorize to be done by its district sub-divisions of property benefitted. If the state provides a plan whereby it raises a dollar for the dollar from the Federal Government, it becomes a matter of just co-operation.

Now as to time for the payment of the cost: Let me say to you that the first years are the difficult years, and under the state irrigation district system, the principal is deferred, in all cases, for a period of at least 10 years, but even then interest should not be paid. The United States should at least forego the interest for a certain period of years, if not entirely; but if it be necessary before its funds can be invested that it must be guaranteed interest, let the interest be added to the principal and collected when the farms are producing wealth and abundance.

There is one other suggestion. Who is going to construct the works? Governor West made a suggestion last night that meets with my approval, that the Secretary of the Interior direct the supervising engineer of any particular region to co-operate with an engineer to be appointed by the governor, or with the governor himself—preferably the latter—and the two select a project engineer, and under the supervision of that project engineer, the construction work will be carried on. There is your dollar for dollar plan. There is your co-operative system of investigation, and there is your co-operative method of construction; and when the construction is done, the works will be turned over to the district for operation, and the private discord and disagreement arising out of community interests may be settled and the system managed by local government, and without that irritation which inevitably comes when there is supervision by some outside or foreign power, such as the federal government.

I have taken up more time than I expected to this afternoon, but if I talked to you for an hour I could not explain this thought to you more fully. You now have the general proposition. We believe it to be good. We think all the propositions that have been advanced heretofore have been good although not sufficient. We believe that all of the complaints which have been lodged here are well founded, in a way, but let's get away from the personal element and get down to the actual financial consideration. The thing to be obtained in all of these things is the money, and the plan that will produce that money is the plan that should be taken.

The plan which we have suggested means not the overturning of our present district legislation, for irrigation districts are now in vogue in nearly all the western states. The supreme court of the United States has upheld the constitutionality of the district acts, and every court of last resort within the states where they have come into contest, has upheld the constitutionality and all the operative features of these acts. In our own state there is no instrument of security that has been as well adjudicated and so well determined or which stands so firmly upon adjudicated courts as does the Irrigation District law.

In conclusion, let me say this: One-half of the territory of the United States is wholly or partly dependent for successful agriculture upon the irrigation of the land, and any man who gives his time, his energy, his thought and his best efforts to building up the irrigation system of this vast West lends himself and connects himself in name, fame and character with that which is and must be, from its very nature if not as durable as the frame of human society, at least as durable as our form of government.