

# IRRIGATED LAND OPENS NEW FARM LIFE PROSPECTS

Over Million of Former Dry  
Acres Have Been Put Under  
Cultivation in Recent Years.

**Oregon Irrigation Progress**  
Area irrigable, between 2,000,000 and 4,000,000 acres.  
Area irrigated, about 1,500,000 acres.

Irrigation projects number 68. Lands requiring reclamation by water are found in Eastern two-thirds of Oregon, from the Columbia river on the north to the California line on the south. There are also irrigation projects in Rogue River valley of Southern Oregon and proposals for summer irrigation in parts of the Willamette valley.

Irrigation, that magic that unlocks the desert to bloom and bounty, has played, and is playing, a vitally important part in the development of Oregon. It has converted hundreds of thousands of acres of sage brush plains into producing fields, orchards and farms, and, in the next few years to come, will raise those totals many fold. It has transmuted the bare existence of the "dry farmer" into the comfort and prosperity of the irrigator and has made certain the continual production of dormant and fickle acres that needed nothing but the touch of moisture to make them actively and continuously fertile. It is the key that has partially unlocked and in time will entirely unlock the boundless prosperity of the great Eastern, Central and Southern Oregon districts to make them the garden and the orchard places of the state and the Northwest.

### IRRIGATION HISTORY

The real history of irrigation in Oregon began to be written in 1901 with the acceptance by the Oregon legislature of the provisions of the federal Carey act. Prior to that time as far back as 1850 there had been small irrigated tracts brought into productivity here and there by individual effort and expenditure, but no organized movement for irrigation development had been attempted, or was possible.

The Carey act, in its general terms, granted to each of several designated semi-arid states, of which Oregon was classed as one, a total of 1,000,000 acres of government land for the purposes of irrigation development.

The method of this development was left to the discretion of the state, which could, following the policy of the United States reclamation act, conduct its own reclamation and development work as the federal government does, through state financing, or, as Oregon decided to do, enter into contracts with private corporations for the irrigation of the lands selected by it, and the sale of these lands to settlers.

### UMATILLA IS FIRST

The D. C. Brownell project in Umatilla county was the first of the Carey act projects to be undertaken in the state. It was completed and is now one of the highly productive irrigated sections of the state. The Deschutes Reclamation & Irrigation company project near Bend was the second project, and it has been completed. Both were commenced in 1901.

The federal reclamation act was passed by congress in 1902, and the geological survey, which was at first given the administration of the act, at once sent a force of engineers into the state to survey and estimate the construction cost of all projects which might be deemed feasible. The work of this department was separate and distinct from the Carey act projects.

In 1905 the first state water code was enacted by the legislature. It provided for the appointment of a state engineer to administer the law and specified that the governor should appoint an engineer that might be recommended for the position by the director of the geological survey. John H. Lewis, who was at that time stationed in Eastern Oregon in charge of reclamation survey work, was recommended for the position, and was appointed by Governor Chamberlain.

### THREE ERAS NAMED

Oregon's irrigation development may well be divided into different eras. The first, the Carey act era, covering the period from 1901 to 1915.

During this time many Carey act projects were initiated, and many of them fell by the wayside. This was due, in large part, to the inexperience of the engineers and the consequent low estimated cost of irrigation per acre. This resulted in financial difficulties both for the companies and the settlers who went upon the land, brought about reorganizations, dissension and trouble, but at the same time advanced the cause of irrigation in no negligible degree.

The state water code was enacted in 1909, the drainage district act in 1915 and the irrigation district act in 1917. These laws enacted subsequent to similar laws of other states, were made to profit by the experience of those other states.

The irrigation district act empowered contiguous land owners to band themselves together in quasi-municipal corporations with the power to finance their irrigation development by the issuance and sale of irrigation district bonds.

In 1917 also the irrigation securities commission was created, providing that the attorney general, superintendent of banks and state engineer, acting as that commission, could investigate any irrigation district making application for such examination, and, in their discretion, recommend to the secretary of state the certification of the bonds of the district. This certification makes these bonds legal investments for trust funds and savings banks.

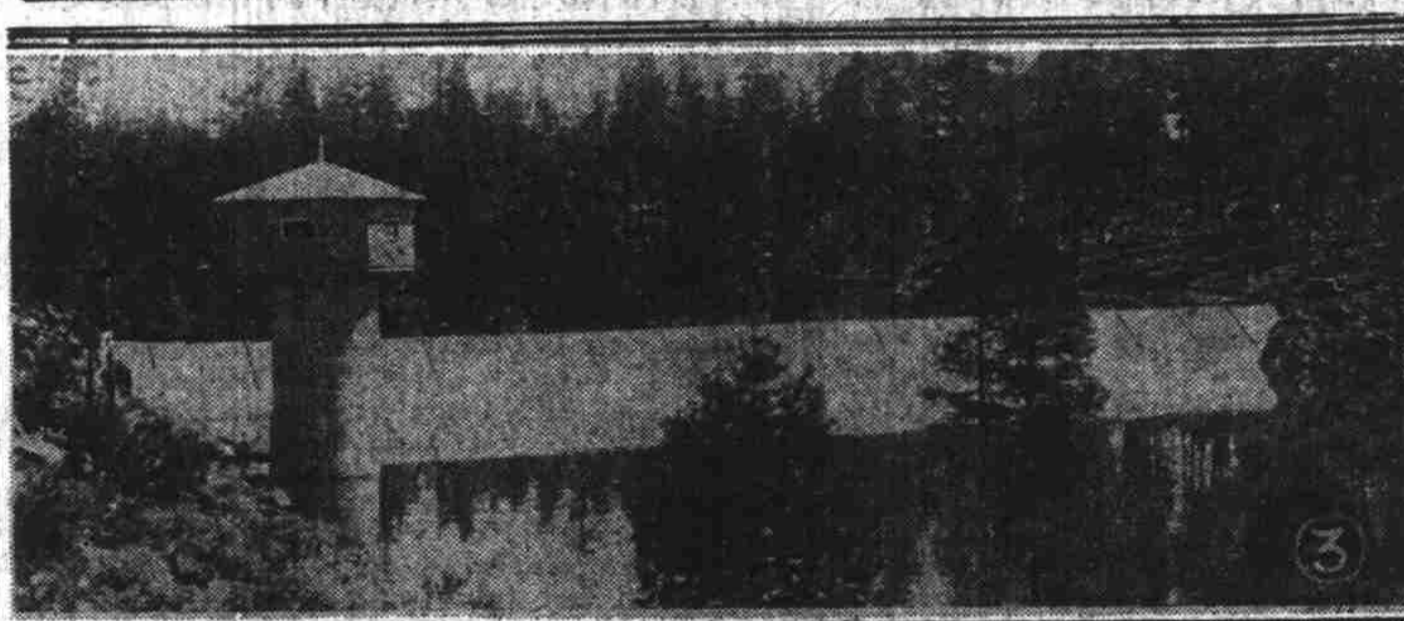
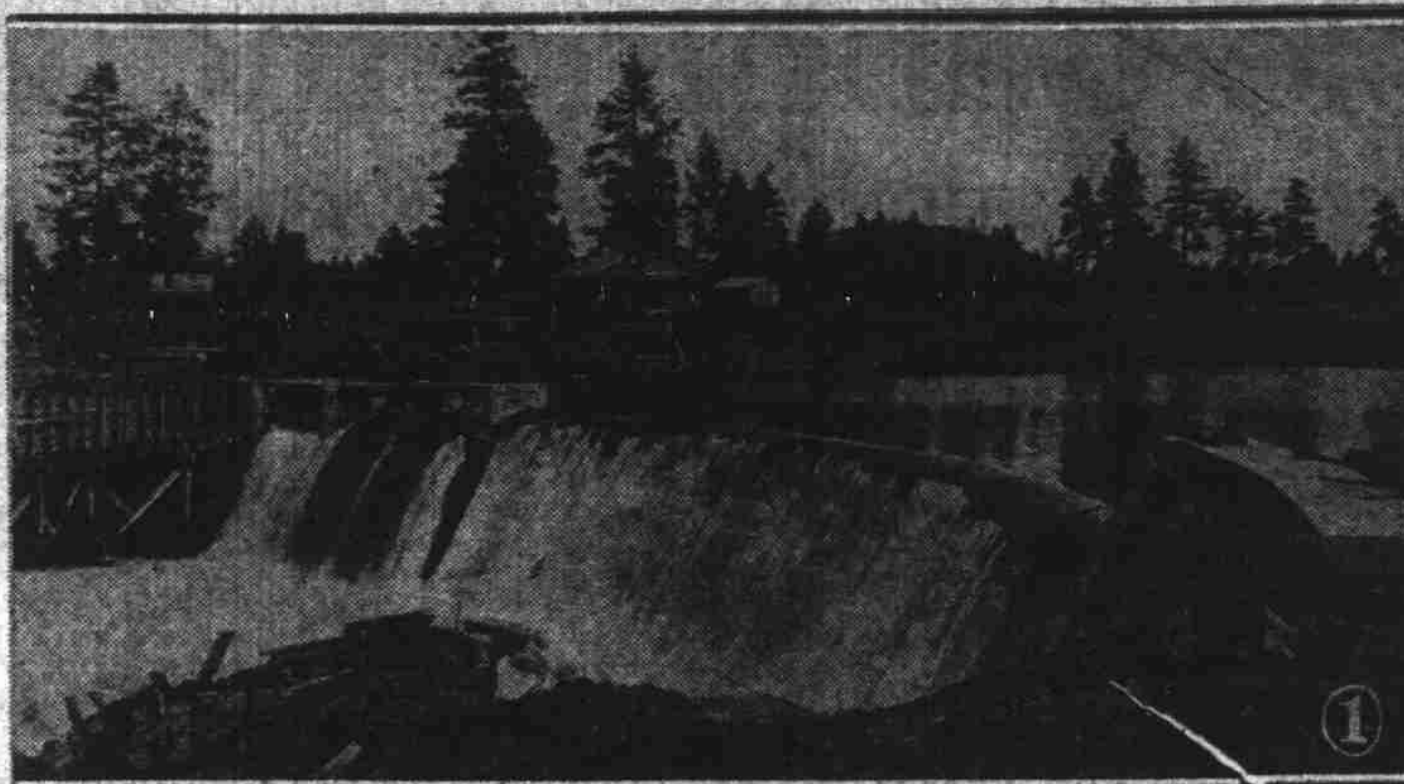
### INTEREST GUARANTEED

In 1919 an amendment to the constitution was proposed and later ratified by the people, providing for the guarantee by the state of the interest on irrigation district bonds for a period of not to exceed five years from the issuance of the bonds. The administration of the provisions of this amendment was entrusted to the securities commission.

As a result of all this legislation Oregon irrigation district securities have been brought up to the standard of recognized investment securities and irrigation development of large scope has been financed and is in course of completion.

Oregon's irrigation development has been hampered by its mistreatment by the reclamation service as regards the appropriation of federal reclamation funds for Oregon projects. Millions of money has been contributed in Oregon funds to the reclamation fund of which proportionately but very small part has come back for improvement work here.

## ON FIVE OF STATE'S 68 IRRIGATION PROJECTS



(1) North canal dam, Central Oregon irrigation project; (2) Ochoco reservoir, Prineville; (3) Thompson valley storage dam, Silver Lake project; (4) Willow creek pumping plant, Warm Springs project, near Vale; (5) Diversion dam, Jordan valley project.

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### OREGON IS READY

It has been the persistent policy of the reclamation service to spend this money in the construction of irrigation projects in other and older irrigation states. This practice has delayed federal irrigation development in Ore-

gon, but the time undoubtedly will come when, these outside projects completed, the attention of the federal department will be turned to Oregon and the many projects declared feasible by government engineers will be undertaken and carried to completion.

Oregon is now ready, so far as the law is concerned, for the completion of its vast irrigation program. The adjudication of its water rights by the state water board practically has been completed, the Deschutes being the only large stream in the state where

the various conflicting rights to the use of the water have not been definitely ascertained and determined. Ample legal machinery has been provided for the formation and financing of irrigation projects. Bonds of irrigation districts, soundly and properly financed, most with a reasonably ready market.

The major problem that now confronts the irrigation program is that of settlement, and this in many instances perhaps, has been and is being hampered by the speculative element in the

land values as fixed by the owners of these lands. These values, in many cases have been held so high that when the irrigation construction cost per acre and the annual water charge were added to them, the totals could not be capitalized from the earnings of the sector. This has caused slow sales and failure to carry the load by some of those who have purchased, thus, by reaction, throwing an overheavy burden on the remaining settlers of the district.

Irrigationists are coming to realize that reasonable land costs and a systematic settlement program by which every acre would be brought under the ownership and active personal operation of small holders go hand in hand for the prosperity of any district.

As a result much attention by those interested in irrigation development is being given to this phase of the work. The state has an estimated total of 1,150,000 acres of irrigated land at this time, meaning land upon which the water has already been or is ready to be turned. It is estimated that the total area of irrigable land runs between three and four million acres. There are less than 1,000,000 acres in well organized districts that have not yet been reclaimed.

There are 68 irrigation districts in the state in various stages of development, ranging from those in the course of organization and financing to those that have been completely turned over to the land owners for full operation. The largest irrigation district in the state is the John Day irrigation district

with 285,000 acres. The second is the Jefferson water conservancy district of 106,984 acres, neither of which has progressed far towards the construction stage.

In the financing of these districts, from figures compiled in January, 1922, there has been a total of \$19,484,000 of bonds voted. Of this total \$7,755,500 has been certified by the securities commission. Of that amount \$7,562,500 has had the interest guaranteed by the state for various periods ranging up to five years. These figures, with the lapse of a year, have doubtless been increased to some extent, but they serve to show the magnitude of the irrigation development that has been undertaken in the state up to the present time.

### Number of Vessels Docked Shows Gain

Vessels berthing at the four municipal terminals during the dock commission's fiscal year, which ends November 30, were 65 per cent more than during the preceding fiscal year. At terminal No. 1, 254 vessels docked in 1922, as compared with 178 in 1921. At terminal No. 2 the comparative figures are 141 and 109; at terminal No. 3 the figures are 10 and 2, and terminal No. 4, 294 and 165. At all the municipal terminals in 1922, 739 vessels were docked and in 1921 the number was 447.

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