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IRRIGATION TO REDEEM WILLAMETTE

The following excellent article on irrigation in the Willamette valley was written by A. R. Black of Eugene for the Portland Chamber of Commerce Bulletin and is of such timely importance that it is reproduced in the East Oregonian. It is Additional sunshine and heat cannot be obtained to grow crops in the cold spring rainy season, but more water can be put on the dry land in the hot summer. Investigation will prove that; sufficient heat and moisture combined at the proper time, are necessary to enhance production from the soil to its maximum capacity. Existing conditions positively establish the great necessity of irrigation in the Willamette valley.

The official rainfall records, for the last twelve years, establish the fact that the fruit trees, hop vines and crops, on an average, do not receive one-fourth the necessary amount of moisture at the proper time to produce the best results, and also that in some seasons there is less than one-fourth inch rainfall in sixty days in the hot summer.

The results are that the hop vines, fruit trees and crops then struggle for life, for want of the necessary moisture at the proper time. The products are stunted and dwarfed, made inferior in quality and mature late. The above would seem like almost perishing with thirst, within sight of sparkling water, for want of energy to go and drink. Nevertheless the climatic records and existing conditions prove the above statements are facts.

An object lesson to the fruit growers of this valley has been practically demonstrated in the field by the orchardists of the Rogue river valley, which valley is similarly situated between the coast and Cascade ranges of mountains, with identical climatic conditions in the summer season. There irrigation has increased the yield, doubled the net income, trebled the former intrinsic value of the land, placed the fruit on par with the Hood river production, and created a demand for their fruit in the east, and in foreign countries. Willamette valley orchardists, with care and irrigation, can produce the same results.

Millions of dollars are annually sent abroad for eggs, poultry, meats and sugar which are consumed in Oregon and Washington west of the Cascade range. Irrigate the Willamette valley and you can keep a majority of that money in western Oregon.

After fifty years of work there is less than one-half the arable land in the Willamette valley under cultivation. The production from the land tilled, on a general average, is not over one-half what the yield from the same land would be with modern irrigation. Alfalfa, beets rich in saccharine matter, celery and other valuable crops that cannot now be successfully grown in this valley, can be made a commercial success with irrigation.

The sugar beet scientifically farmed has been proven a very valuable food for stock. Cattle, sheep and hogs fatten upon them and the sugar is converted into meat. Dairy cows give valuable returns therefrom. Stock growers take their stock to where alfalfa and such sugar beets are grown to fatten them for market. When the sugar beet industry is scientifically developed it will warrant the operation of beet sugar factories in the valley. Modern irrigation will make the Willamette valley the greatest deciduous fruit, dairy farm and stock feeding section in the entire northwest.

If you will view this matter impartially you should be able to convince yourself that the agricultural and horticultural production of this valley, at this late day, is only in its infancy until modern irrigation is applied, that diversified farming will then become a reality that ten, twenty and forty acres intensely cultivated farms will then become the rule instead of the present 160, 320 and 640-acre poorly cultivated farms, that it will more than quadruple the rural population in the districts irrigated, and more than double the population and volume of business in towns in such districts; but very few men realize the great possibilities of production from the soil in this valley.

Water can be made available to irrigate the entire Willamette valley without transgressing on vested rights. That the land in the Willamette valley was not put under irrigation twenty-five years ago, has been and is a great detriment to western Oregon.

Diversified farming under irrigation, green feed all year, dairy cows, pigs, poultry and stock feeding combined will largely increase their owners' bank account, make him independent of the summer drouth, enrich his land each year and enable the farmers to produce more from forty acres than they now can from a hundred acres without irrigation, quadruple the dairy industry, establish many new creameries and canning plants and build and support thousands of desirable new homes in the valley.

This article is not intended to cast any reflection on the present production from the soil in the Willamette valley; nevertheless the fact cannot be denied that the burning sun in the last half of June and in July and August, without the necessary moisture, causes decreased yields. Remedy this defect with irrigation and you will create new production from nature's storehouse of undeveloped resources. Modern irrigation in the Willamette valley is feasible and practicable, also commercially advisable. It will insure a bountiful agricultural and horticultural yield as long as crops grow and water runs. When this valley is irrigated it will support a larger population than Southern California. The business men and the press of the cities and towns in the valley can well afford to give the important subject of developing the latent agricultural and horticultural resources their hearty support.

The present generation, without any further delay, should apply the water to the dry land, utilize the summer sunshine and heat to create new agricultural and horticultural production, make the conditions more inviting for rural home-seekers from other states, establish the most desirable little empire within itself on this continent, secure and hold our equitable share of the population of the coming coast empire, and place the people of the Willamette valley in the light in which they should strive to stand, viz., as active and enterprising as the people of any section of any state or nation.

A Washington dispatch says of the comparative wages paid labor in different sections of the United States: The frontier west has disappeared, and a new west has been born, nevertheless it would appear that it holds out greater inducements to the wage earner of today than any other section of the United States.

The western man or woman who is employed in a manufacturing establishment receives a much greater compensation than his fellow workmen elsewhere, according to a statement issued today by the census bureau. The average per week throughout the west is \$13.65 as against \$10.63 in the central north states; \$10.11 in the north Atlantic; \$8.33 in the south central, and \$7.31 in the south Atlantic.

Ten dollars is the average weekly wage throughout the country. Some trades average double this amount—diamond cutters earn \$21.68 per week—and, on the other hand, the ignorant, illiterate workers in the turpentine industry, those who gather the crude gum, receive only an average of \$5.23 a week. Workers in the cotton seed oil and cake industry receive on an average only \$6.64 a week.

Both of these last two classes are largely employed in the south, and their poor compensation emphasizes the fact that the southern workman receives less than his brother craftsman anywhere else in the country. The census bureau explains the low average in a measure by directing attention to the comparatively recent development of the factory system and the large percentage of women and children and negroes employed.

In all statistics which the bureau has compiled, including 123,703 establishments and 3,297,819 wage earners, it is shown that women earn far less than men. In the cotton mills, female operatives make \$6.03 a week; in shoe factories they earn \$7.60.

Many Women Workers.

As evidence of the extent to which women earn their own livelihood, out of three million old employees, 588,599, or 17.9 per cent were of the gender sex. However, women drew only 11 per cent of the total list, or \$3,623,481, as against \$29,240,237 earned by the men.

Statistics of child labor are starting. Out of the total of employees,

90,167, or 2.7 per cent were children, receiving \$312,023 per week. Thus the average child worker received only \$3.46 a week, as contrasted with the man's average earnings of \$11.16 and the woman's of \$6.17.

In cotton mills, children earn only \$3.21 per week, on an average; in tobacco factories the earnings were still lower, the average being only \$3 a week, while in pickle factories the average was only \$1.84 a week.

In connection with the cotton industry, the census office makes an interesting comparison of the earnings in the north and those in the south. By confining the comparison to establishments engaged in the manufacture of print cloths, it eliminates to a considerable extent the differences between the character of the industry in the two sections, and thus presents a fair basis to measure differences in earnings.

This comparison shows that the average earnings of men were, in New England \$8.52; in the south \$5.14. For women the average was, in New England \$7.23; in the south \$3.77; while for children the average in New England was \$4.45, and in the south \$2.73.

For all classes of cotton operatives the average weekly earnings in the north were \$7.63 as contrasted with but \$6.16 in the south.

One of the most striking conclusions inferred by the census report on this subject is that the figures indicate that the differences in average earnings between large and small establishments are slight. In those employing less than 10 wage earners or more, it was \$10.24.

Week End Excursions to Hermiston. Beginning Saturday, May 2 and continuing indefinitely during the summer, the O. R. & N. will run excursions to Hermiston and the government reservoir, on Saturday and Sunday of each week. The ticket over the railroad will include the passage by stage from Hermiston to the government dam. A round trip rate of \$2.80 has been made from Pendleton, including the stage trip to the dam. Excursionists going down on Saturday must return Sunday; those going down on Sunday must return on Monday. This promises to be a delightful trip and offers every inducement to visit and inspect the \$1,000,000 government irrigation project, six miles from Hermiston.

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Irrigation Talk No. 18.

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