

SOME FACTS ABOUT THE WEST EXTENSION

The West Extension of the Umatilla project lies along the Columbia river in Northern Morrow county, one hundred and sixty miles east of Portland. It is a strip of land two to four miles wide and twenty-five miles long, and comprises some thirty thousand acres, of which only about eleven thousand are to be irrigated under the present arrangements, but a reservoir site is convenient to the center of the project that will supply water for the entire thirty thousand acres when completed.

The main canal is twenty-seven miles long, and is lined with concrete the entire distance. The reclamation service has kept a large force of men and teams busy all summer, one hundred men and as many teams now being employed constructing the laterals of the distributing system for the land that is to be ir-

rigated the coming year. All the ditches are being lined throughout with concrete, and all the headgates are heavy concrete. It is considered the most perfect irrigation system yet built by the government.

The first unit of the West Extension was opened last June. Since that time settlers have been buying land and locating on the homestead tracts and at this time, about twenty-five new farms have been selected, and work on many of them has been started. Only about three thousand acres were opened for irrigation in June, but the balance of the first eleven thousand acres will be opened later this fall, perhaps sometime in November. When this opening is declared there will be forty new homesteads of an average area of forty acres. All of this is good land, and easy to reclaim.

Two good towns are located on this

project. They are Irrigon and Boardman. Irrigon is in the eastern part, and has been a good town for a number of years, but with the opening of the government project, it has taken on new life. Many improved places surround it where alfalfa and fruit are produced in the first prize-winning class at the county fairs.

Being located on the river, it is free from frosts and the fruit crops are always certain. Four crops of alfalfa are harvested each season. The town has good schools and churches, and a fine class of people.

The plat of Boardman was filed last December, and it now has a post-office, railroad station, school, U. S. commissioner (for homestead filings), boat landing, lumber yard, feed store, drug store, hardware store, general store, livery stable and blacksmith shop. A water system is being installed.

Twenty-five homesteads have been opened by the government around this new town, most of them having been filed on; and about forty more will be opened this fall or early winter. These homesteads comprise 40 acres. This land is an good alfalfa land.

Private lands are also sold over the entire West Extension at reasonable prices and on easy terms.

The success of the new project is assured, and two large and prosperous communities will be developed in the near future. It is one of the best new sections in the entire west. The climate is very mild, the elevation under 400 feet; transportation by water and rail is already available, markets are near, and the soil is of the very best kind for alfalfa and diversified products. It will stand the highest intensified farming, and support a dense population.

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Irrigation Projects in Umatilla County

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thereof it makes the supply last longer.

Naturally in the first three or four years of reclamation there were many ideas as to what were the best crops to raise and consequently most everything was tried out, and much time and money was wasted following wrong leads. I say wasted but it was hardly that for someone had to do the experimenting although it was a shame that the individual farmer had to stand the brunt of the mistakes. It was about the time that the fruit industry was having one of its periodic booms. Something by the way that does more injury to the fruit industry than any one other thing, and thousands of acres were put to orchards of all descriptions and all varieties of fruit. Now, no one district can raise a number one fruit of all kinds and varieties, for they require different climatological and soil conditions and so it resulted that the majority of these orchards failed. Some few varieties of fruit can be raised successfully on these projects and it is also true of garden truck and berries. Now they know just what to raise; they are past the experimental stage.

I might enumerate many more troubles that were experienced in the first rush of reclamation but the above gives you some idea of what the people were up against. It is simply history repeating itself and is typical of all land reclamation in the new world. Few of the pioneers make a success and many of the original settlers have been forced out on these irrigated projects, but now conditions are changing and a settler now has the advantage of the accumulated experiences of others. If a man has sufficient capital to pay for his land there is no reason why he cannot make a success providing he will take the advice offered him by those in charge of such work, and provided further that he is not afraid of work. He must not expect to reap returns the first year and even the second may show no balance but what good solid business does pay right from the word go? If he is developing his land properly he need have no fear but that he will come out on top and join the ever increasing band of those who are becoming independent and happy in the great work of reclaiming arid lands of the Northwest. And compared with the majority of other sections of the U. S. he has an ideal climate in which to live and raise his family.

In the following I am briefly giving a few facts about each project. A glance will show that alfalfa is fast becoming the principal crop and corn is fast taking its place as the rotation crop with it. This means stock raising and dairying is developing into quite an industry, and silos are being erected more each year. Hogs are also extensively raised and some have small bunches of sheep. Alfalfa enriches the soil, nitrifies it and breaks up the soil particles so that it holds moisture better. This year much of the older land on the best soils required no irrigation until after the first cutting of alfalfa. Some of the land is now more or less sub-irrigated and requires a little or no water and in some cases drainage systems have been installed leading the water back to the river again making it available for more irrigation further down. The West Extension of the Hermiston project is supplied entirely from return waters and it probably has the best water supply on the Umatilla river.

Development is now showing a little speed on the three projects and they are on the verge of rapid settlement. The days of doubt and trouble are about over and the projects are showing up fine. A trip over them should convince the most skeptical that wonderful results are being obtained that way and that good things are in store for the project farmer. I have visited several fine fields of alfalfa this season which were seeded late in the spring. They were cut about the end of July and showed up poorly, but by the middle of August they certainly made a fine appearance, good heavy stand and almost knee deep in growth. Those newly seeded fields have yielded this year from one to one and a half tons of alfalfa to the acre and next year will yield a splendid profit.

H. R. S. Hermiston Project. That project contains about 25,000 acres. West Extension contains about 60,000 acres just thrown open this year. That project contains about 14,000 acres under application, i. e. includes reclaimed and developed land, partly developed land and balance ready for development. 10,000 acres of holdins, part of each ranch developed or all developed.

4,000 acres actually irrigated and improved.

The water right is very good as the project has a right to water direct from the river during all the summer months and for this season Cold Springs reservoir with its 50,000 acre feet storage was constructed. The water rights sell at \$70 per acre, 20 years graduated payments and no interest charges.

The land is going faster and faster now and most of the contracts make it compulsory for the buyer to get busy and improve his land. Good land on East Project can now be obtained for \$25 to \$45 per acre which a few years ago was held for \$175 to \$200. On this project N. P. land in 1908 sold for \$55 to \$90 per acre while now on the West Extension smoother and more attractive land held by the same company is valued at \$19 to \$25 per acre. This reduction is fairly typical of the entire project and shows that land owners are doing away with flim-flamming and are endeavoring to give straight facts and figures.

Although the character and quality of the soil is not so good on this project as on most of the other two surprising results have been obtained, for the soil improves rapidly with the production of alfalfa. The system of water distribution is very good and the management is excellent. The acre foot plan of water disposal and measurement is used and this is the best of systems as it gives the rancher the benefit of any saving of water by reducing his maintenance charge, and this, naturally, is an incentive to the farmer to use the best methods of irrigation which in turn means better crops.

At least 50 per cent of the land is in alfalfa, the balance in orchards, corn and small fruits and melons. Watermelons do fine here and command top prices on the market as they are both early and of good size and quality. Considerable of the hay is baled or chopped and shipped, but as dairying keeps increasing more of it will be used at home.

The Furnish project, located at Stanfield, consists of about 10,000 acres of which probably 5,500 are under application and 2,500 actually under irrigation and improved. This



project has the best soil of the three and is probably able to produce a greater diversity of crops than either of the other two.

The water right to the project is fairly good, the supply for the summer months coming from a storage reservoir on the Umatilla river which has a capacity of about 5,500 acre feet. The water right for the reservoir and also for spring flow in the canal are very good, the only place where some doubt might exist as to good water service being in the small size of the reservoir and in the small size of the main canal. However, with proper methods of distribution, enlargement of the canals, and cooperation on the part of the farmers there is no reason why there should not be sufficient water for the entire project when it is fully developed. Steps are already being taken to accomplish these ends.

Raw land is held at around \$150 per acre which includes a water right which is paid on long time graduated payments. About 75 per cent of the land is in alfalfa, the balance being in fruit and some vegetables and berries. Small fruits thrive well here because of the earliness of the season and being good market prices because of the earliness of the season.

Dairying is well advanced on this project and new herds are being brought in. A combined creamery and cheese factory has recently been built at Stanfield and it has been a success from the start. A Mr. Adolph Sahli, a Swiss cheese expert is operating this enterprise and it is proving profitable to the owner as well as a good market for the farmers milk and cream. There are a number of silos on the project and the number raised each year.



Development is now going ahead quite rapidly and it is expected that the year 1917 will see more than 1000 acres of raw land put into cultivation, all into alfalfa. This land was bought this season by a colony of Swiss from western Washington who intend transferring their dairy business over to the project.

Under this project which lies along the west bank of the Umatilla river there are about 15,000 acres, of which about 4,000 acres are developed. The soil is good on this project, the best being on their High Line ditch, and the land lies well for irrigation. Due to scarcity of water in the dry years of '14 and '15 what orchards were planted failed and so alfalfa is practically the only crop grown. There

is some corn and early garden stuff and family orchards.

The water right to this project is good for the spring flow but not for the summer months but the soil holds sufficient moisture to raise a good second crop of alfalfa and sometimes a third cutting. They lack a storage unit and steps are now being taken to build two reservoirs which will hold ample water for summer use and when these are completed settlement will take place rapidly for land prices are reasonable, the soil is good, the land lies well and the irrigation system is well constructed. Considerable water has been lost through seepage in the main canals but this is becoming less as the ditches silt up more each year.

In the delivery of water, the rotation system is largely used and although some ranchers are supplied with a steady flow while the season lasts it is becoming less popular each year as they become educated up to the advantages of the rotation system. It is to be hoped that within a few years that both this project and the Furnish will adopt the acre foot plan of water delivery as then a man pays for what water he gets and he can use much or little as he prefers.

Considerable stock is fed on this project during the winter months, large stock men buying up the hay and having it fed right from the stack on the ranches. There are some very fine appearing alfalfa ranches on the W. E. & I. Co. project and good crops are being obtained.

A Poetic Tribute

Will I take in the Round-Up? You can bet I will.
There's the one show in the country that's worth while.
All the time I'm there I'm laughing fit to kill.
Though I've been to shows an never cracked a smile.
At Pendleton it's different. There you get a run
For every piece of money that you spend;
Something doing all the time—har's an' har's of fun,
An' every fellow that you meet's your friend.
Jolly cowboys, pretty cowgirls, liven up the game;
There's injuns—buck an' squaw an'

small pappoose.
Talk about the 6's? Why, it's just the same
When the bunch that goes to Pendleton turns loose.
Every race is on the square. Every horse must buck.
That is if he's a bad one, some don't count.
If you lose you can't feel bad—you just played out o' luck
An' you've no kick a-comin' 'bout the amount.
Seein' the big dolin's at the track is only part
Of the good time at the Round-Up, for at night
Happy Canyon's 'cross the street, and there you get a start
At doin' things out west, an' you'll start right.
There's the gambler's games of every kind; the limit is the sky,
There's the dancier like we had in '64,
Drinkin' too, but it don't count, now that the state's gone dry,
Still what you drink is wet and tastes like more.
I'm lined up for the Round-Up. "Let 'er Buck!"
Is the college yell of all the chaps I know.
Goin' to it once just gets a fellow stuck
So that every year he wants to see the show.
It's better every time an' draws a bigger crowd.
It builds up a big city over night
Every one that takes it in has reason to be proud.
For the Round-Up's a big slice of what's all right.
—John Scott Mills, in Pacific Semaphore.



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