

XMAS CHEER IS DISTRIBUTED

Ladies, Aided by Hank, and Lara's Send Out Gifts.

On Christmas day there was a generous effort made in Bend that every one should have at least a small share of fun and gifts, and baskets were distributed to many whose Christmas might otherwise have been cheerless. These were distributed by the Ladies' Library Club, the bills being paid by the First National Bank and A. M. Lars & Co.

During the morning Lara's wagon, decked out with Christmas trees, carried an elaborately outfitted Santa Claus, who distributed baskets to grown folks and gifts to the children. The gifts given out by the library reached 66 people, and in all more than 100 "grown folks" and kiddies were recipients of something, to eat, wear or play with.

MEN WORK ON PLANS

(Continued from first page)

impractical for two reasons. The first is that it would require the expenditure of a considerable sum of money and that it would take a number of years before the various investigations and appropriations which would be necessary could be made by the government. In the second place the Reclamation Service has yet to demonstrate that they are capable of reclaiming lands with any degree of success or at any reasonable cost and I do not believe in putting myself into the hands of anyone who has not demonstrated his ability to deal successfully with problems similar to your own. To my mind this plan should simply be used as a last resort.

Another plan, and one which has many advantages, is that of having these lands reclaimed through a specific appropriation by the State Legislature and under the direction of the Desert Land Board. I do not believe that anyone familiar with the conditions will dispute the statement that the situation on this segregation is the result of criminal negligence or gross carelessness on the part of state officials. For this reason it appears to me to be clearly the duty of the state to assume the responsibility for the completion of the work of reclaiming these lands. The fact that the Governor of the State has signified his willingness to use his influence toward securing the necessary appropriation and toward having the necessary legislation enacted is a very strong point in favor of this plan. I believe that any other plan that might be suggested should be suggested merely as a substitute in the event that the so called Governor's plan should fail to carry in the Legislature. Any plan that could be

construed as a precedent for the state entering into the reclamation business on other projects is sure to meet with strong opposition from powerful influences who are now heavily interested in Carey Act projects throughout the state. It is my personal opinion that the above plan will not secure enough votes in the Legislature to enable it to be carried out. Another feature in connection with the above plan is that the influences that will work against it, if defeated in the Legislature, are certain to invoke the referendum. In that event we can expect a delay of at least two years. Anything that smacks of appropriation and consequent increase in taxes is almost certain to be defeated when put to a vote of the people.

As stated above I believe that the plan which contemplates having the state take up and complete this project is one which should receive the endorsement of all and that a very strenuous effort should be made to carry it through. However, we should not put all our eggs in one basket, and an alternative plan should be worked out and ready to spring in the event the so called Governor's plan should fail. Speaking personally, I am not enthusiastic over any plan which puts the control of the expenditure of the money in any person's hands other than the man who will be forced to repay it. The only really successful irrigation projects that we have in the state are those which have been put in by the farmers themselves and out of which no profit except a reasonable contractor's profit has been made. Before we become too enthusiastic over the state taking up this or any other project, I think it well to carefully consider all sides of the question.

The other plan that has suggested itself as a means of accomplishing the purpose for which we are working and which to me has the greatest number of attractive features is that of organizing an irrigation district and having the settlers themselves put in the system.

The main reason why this plan appeals to me is that it more nearly approaches the basic principals which underlie the most modern and most successful of all systems of water distribution; the city water systems. If no land had been reclaimed in the Laidlaw District and we were starting from the beginning to install a reclamation system, I should say unhesitatingly that the irrigation district plan was far and away the best that could be adopted and with modifications to suit this particular case I still believe it to be the best.

You are of course familiar with the various conditions under which purchasers are now claiming title to the lands in the Laidlaw District, but in order to make my position clear I will enumerate them as I under-

stand them.

First: Those lands to which a water right has been adjudicated and to which an inchoate right now exists until November First of next year amounting to 3784.68 acres.

Second: Those lands for which water right contracts have been sold but of which 15 per cent of the irrigable area had not been cultivated prior to November 1st, 1909, and the owners of which signified their willingness to enter into a new contract with Mr. Katz on the basis of \$30 per acre, they receive full credit for any and all payments theretofore made. These lands amount to 3469.15 acres.

Third: Land to which water right contracts had been sold but the owners of which, not caring to enter into any new arrangement such as contemplated under the Katz contract, were to be refused the amount which they had paid, amounting to 10,764.27 acres.

Fourth: Unclaimed Cary Act lands under the original segregation, 8,995.73 acres; temporarily withdrawn lands 4725.58 acres; homesteads, desert claims, etc. about 4000 acres.

In so far as those lands under the first heading are concerned, I can see no reason why their owners should obligate themselves to do anything further than maintain the present ditches and canals. These lands have an adjudicated water right and the only benefit that can possibly accrue to the owners of such lands, from the completion of the entire project, is in the increase in the value of their lands that will naturally follow with the settlement and development of the entire country.

The benefit from this source will be very great of course, and I feel that every owner of land in that district, even though he have an adjudicated water right, should take a keen interest in any move which has for its object the reclamation of all the lands in the Laidlaw District. I do not, however, feel like saying that they should be asked to go so far as to further incumber their lands or in any way put their present titles in jeopardy. For this reason I feel that in working out a plan for the reclamation of the balance of the lands in this project we should deal with the above lands as owning the present system and all its water rights, canals, diversion works, etc. In consideration for, and in payment for such water rights, canals, etc., which it will be necessary for any new organization to acquire, the holders of present adjudicated water rights and those having inchoate rights, and who have the same completed by November 1st next, should receive water from any new organization without any additional lien being placed upon their lands. If an irrigation district is organized it should include all the lands to be irrigated except the lands described above. When such district has been organized, the directors of the same could then enter into an agreement with the holders of title to lands that have an adjudicated water right by which, the district would be obligated to deliver water to such lands from the new system without cost other than maintenance charges in consideration of acquiring the rights to water, etc., which now belongs to such lands. Of course, such lands would be subject to the same maintenance fee as would be charged against any other lands in the entire district. This clearly can be done under the law as provided in section 6152, Lord's Oregon Laws.

All of the lands to be irrigated other than those which would be included in the above classification should then be thrown open to desert and homestead entry with a preference right to file desert or similar claims being given to those contract holders who have not completed their titles. As previously stated, the Governor, the state engineer and Desert Land Board estimate that the cost of reclaiming these lands should not exceed \$15 per acre. Such being the case, an irrigation district which would provide a means of reclaiming these lands at cost would furnish water to contract holders at considerably less cost than would be the case were the project installed by private corporation or the state, allowing them credit for the amount which they had already paid. At a lien of \$50 per acre, which was the lowest lien on any contract holder's land under the Katz contract, anyone who had paid the full \$14.75 per acre would be obliged to pay an additional \$35.25 per acre. Under the lien of \$40 per acre as proposed by the Governor the contract holder who had paid the full amount of his original lien would be obliged to pay \$25.25 per acre. Under the irrigation district the most that anyone would be obliged to pay, at the outside, would be \$20 per acre and according to the statements of the state engineer, who should know what he is talking about if he does not, no one would be obliged to pay more than \$15 per acre. This plan should appeal to the contract holder who really wishes to make settlement upon and improve his land, as it provides a means of reclaiming his lands at a cost less than any other plan so far suggested, and what is more to the point, the long time which these bonds run before they commence to mature enables him to use all of his available cash in improving his lands. Heavy purchase money payments during the first years upon a raw piece of land have been the cause of more failures among farmers upon new lands than all other causes combined. Those speculators who do not care to improve their lands should be given scant consideration. In fact, if the truth were known I believe that the majority of those contracts which

were to receive a refund of their money under the Katz contract would be found in the possession of and the property of Mr. Laidlaw and his associates. Personally, I believe that the Legislature would be inclined to look with favor upon the use of state funds for the purchase of irrigation district bonds in this particular instance.

Briefly then the plan which appeals to me as being the one most feasible and the one having the most chances of success is as follows:

First: Have all the lands that can be irrigated from the proposed system other than those to which an adjudicated water right has been acquired, thrown open to settlement under the public land laws of the United States, giving to those persons having contracts the preference right to file desert or similar claims upon the lands covered by their contracts. Those contract holders not caring to avail themselves of this opportunity to be considered as having lost their rights.

Second: Endeavor to have the Legislature authorize the loaning of state funds for the purchase of the bonds of such irrigation district when it shall have been organized and the plan of reclamation shall have been approved by the Desert Land Board.

Third: Organize an irrigation district including all of the lands to be reclaimed except those to which a water right has been adjudicated, first having the owners of such adjudicated rights agree that they will turn over such rights as they may have to the district when water has been delivered to them from the new system in like amounts as they now receive.

Of course there are many arguments for and against such a plan which I have not covered in this letter and I would be glad to meet with your people at any time that is convenient for you and go into the subject more in detail. There are many reasons why the above plan might not be feasible, but so far I have heard fewer arguments advanced why it would fail than against all of the other plans combined.

The foregoing is simply the result of my investigations and should not be construed as being the position that the Central Oregon Development League will take in this matter. I give it to you merely for your consideration and will be pleased to be advised as to any features that your greater experience leads you to believe are impractical.

The Legislature will convene within a few days, and it is imperative that a definite plan of action be outlined before that time. For this reason will you kindly advise me as to your wishes in this matter at the earliest possible moment.

Very truly yours,

The Central Oregon Development League.

By J. E. Sawhill, Secretary.

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and it will be our policy to please all our patrons as far as we possibly can during 1913.



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