

FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

In Address at Commonwealth Conference State Engineer John H. Lewis Discusses Irrigation Development, Pointing Out The Advantages of State Aid and National Co-operation

At the Commonwealth Conference held at Eugene last week State Engineer John H. Lewis delivered an address dealing with the development of Oregon's resources, from which the following paragraphs are extracted:

"It is generally agreed that large scale irrigation development cannot be had through the agency of private capital. * * *

"This fact is recognized by other countries. Australia has provided a system of state aid to promote irrigation development. A cash payment of only 3 per cent is required at the outset and 5 1/2 years with interest at 4 1/2 per cent. is allowed in which to complete payments. Thus 6 per cent of the original cost paid annually will in such time pay both principal and interest. Houses are built for settlers on a cash payment of about one-fourth the cost, payment of the remainder may be extended over 20 years with 5 per cent interest, and similar aid is also given in the purchase of live stock, and farm equipment.

"While Australia and New Zealand have led in the movement to aid settlers, their example is now being followed in other developing countries. South Africa has adopted it, and the newspapers report that British Columbia intends to adopt it. * * *

"With such competition from other countries, we should not be surprised if fancy colored literature fails to attract settlers to irrigated lands in Oregon. We must eventually make some change in our present policies. The building of vast engineering structures is only one-half the problem. It requires an equal amount of money as a rule to build houses, fences, and make other necessary improvements to bring the land to its maximum state of production.

Water Power.

"We are confronted with somewhat similar conditions with regard to water power development. In Oregon, we have over 3,000,000 horsepower going to waste. Instead of trying to encourage its development and use, and the sale of electric energy at the lowest possible cost to the consumers, we have imposed obstacles which unquestionably tend to drive private capital to other states and countries.

"Both Oregon and the United States impose special annual charges on each horsepower to be developed in the future and which charge is not required of those companies now operating. The Oregon charge is somewhat indefinite and varies from 25 cents to \$2 per horse power year. The state also limits franchises to 40 years with a preference right of renewal, but for power projects under the control of the United States, only an indefinite grant can be secured which is revocable at will by Government authority.

"Conservation is supposed to mean right use. The imposition of heavy annual charges on those who use hydro-electric power seems to be in direct conflict with the theory of conservation. The charge is inevitably passed along to the consumer, who in addition to his regular taxes must pay the public a special license through increased rate for the privilege of using a resource which is largely going to waste.

"We have in the Columbia river basin approximately one-third of all the undeveloped water power in the United States. Would not the development of this power with its direct aid to navigation and irrigation be of far more value than any policy of direct revenue? The increase of taxable wealth with consequent reduction in taxes and increased opportunities for labor should not be overlooked.

"Cheap money is essential to rapid development. At the last session of the Legislature, a constitutional amendment was submitted for vote of the people, which provides for loaning the state's credit to the extent of two per cent of the assessed valuation, for the construction of irrigation and power projects, and for developing the untitled lands of the state. We will be called upon to vote upon this amendment at the general election in November of this year. In this connection it may be of interest to note that six of the eight candidates for the office of Governor who answered the questions recently propounded by the Oregonian, favored loaning the state's credit for irrigation, one was opposed, and one was non-committal.

"Safety of investment is the proper consideration. If the people can be assured that the money will be wisely expended, and ultimately returned with interest, I am unable to think of any class who could oppose the plan. We have only 7 people to the square mile as compared with 508 for the state of Rhode Island, and it is apparent to all that some new plan of financing these vast enterprises which are so important to the future prosperity of our state, must be devised. With our conditions and problems peculiar to the West, we can hardly expect Congress to provide sufficient funds to accomplish much, unless we who are familiar with Western conditions are willing to divide the risk and share some of the responsibility.

Co-Operation.

"If this constitutional amendment is approved, we will be in a position to co-operate with the United States in its endeavor to develop our state. To hasten the improvement of our water ways, we have joined hands with the United States and the same plan should work as to other development projects.

"If the superior credit of the United States could be loaned for this

co-operative work, the interest rate could still further be reduced. Instead of selling say \$10,000,000 of state bonds bearing 4 per cent interest and an equal amount of Federal bonds at 3 per cent, the entire \$20,000,000 of Federal bonds could be issued and sold at 3 per cent interest rate, and the United States secure itself for one-half the amount by retaining the state bonds in its vaults without sale. If fifty years could be allowed the farmer for paying back the principal this saving of one per cent would in such time at compound interest, fully wipe out the original indebtedness. The small payment of only 4 per cent annually would thus pay both principal and interest.

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Bend Company to Irving B. Snell, It. 16, blk. 36; 7, 8, 9-37; 1, 8, 9, 15, 16-39; 1, 8, 9, 16-44; 8, 14-52; 1, 7, 8, 14-53, Center Add, Bend.
Tumalo Project contracts from the State to the following persons have been filed: Vernon A. Forbes, SE NW 2-17-11; William Brown, SE SW 8-16-12; J. B. Minor NE SE, 22-16-11; R. H. Bayley NW NE 35-16-11; Wm. G. Phoenix NE SE 7-16-12;

E. R. Post SW SW 17-16-12; Jens Hasselberg, (2) SWNW, NWNW 27-16-11; R. U. Flickinger SE NE, 19-16-12; Jno T. Park SE SE 29-16-12; P. S. McNutt (4) NW SW, SW NW 26, NE SE, SE NE 27-16-11; W. W. Long NW NW 7-16-12; A. J. Harter (2) SW NE, SE NW 24-16-11; Harvard Solberg (4) NW NW, SW NW, NE, NW, SE NW 19-16-12; Albert Harper (4) SW NE, NW NE, NE NW, SE NW 8-16-12; Grover G. Gerking (5) SE SW, NE SW, NW SE, SW SE, SW SE, SE SE 7-16-12; Dan R. Smith NE NW 23-19-11; Chas. J. Mock (5) SW NE, SE NE, NE NE, NW NE 35-16-11, NW NE 2-17-11.
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