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IRRIGATION BY ELECTRICITY

MOUNTAIN WATERS USED IN GENERATING POWER.

Chief Hydrographer to Visit Oregon in July to Make Measurements of Streams for Irrigation and Power.

Irrigation by electrical power promises to work a revolution in many sections of the arid West. The streams are to be used in the mountains to generate power, and the power is to be transmitted to the fields below for pumping water on the land.

Mr. Frederick H. Newell, the hydrographer of the geological survey has just returned to his office from a surveying tour of the West, and he states that this power development will add immense and, at the present time, unknown areas to the irrigable land of the arid region, while at the same time the water supply under the system will be certain and most satisfactory to the irrigator.

"The feasibility of transmission of electrical power for not 20 or 30 miles, but for 150 or 180 miles has opened the way," says Mr. Newell. "For this new and enormous additional development to the hitherto supposed resources of the arid West."

"The method by which additional area can be brought under irrigation with a given visible supply of water, is this: We will suppose that a stream flowing from the mountains down into a large broad valley or a plain a hundred miles below. The water from this river is sufficient to irrigate only one-half or one-third of the plain; all the rest is, then, dead land. There is, however, an underflow, beneath this remaining, or 'dead' land, which can be found at a depth of from 20 to 50 feet. This furnishes an inexhaustible supply of good water for irrigation could it be gotten economically to the surface. The great bulk of the lowlands of the valleys adjacent or tributary to the forest areas of the Rocky Mountains or the Sierra Nevadas are underlaid with this water—a practically inexhaustible supply against pumping.

"Fuel for pumping, however, is expensive, and it does not seem practicable to get water out to the land except at a prohibitory cost, but here is where the power can be brought into operation. Storage reservoirs can be constructed way off in the mountains in such manner as to utilize the power of the river or its fall to the full extent, and from this plant or plants the power generated can be transmitted down the valley to the twenty or forty acre irrigated farms, where it can be applied to an electric motor operating a centrifugal pump lifting water upon the land required. This should be the ideal irrigation system. The farmer starts his motor and the water comes; when he has enough he shuts it off. His water supply is right under him in great abundance, and he does not have to jump on his horse and tear off 20 miles to a canal headgate to find out why his water does not come down the ditch."

"But is this a theoretically possible development, Mr. Newell, or is it something which has been actually been tested?"

"The practicability of this development has already been demonstrated by the number of plants already in operation in San Joaquin valley. It is claimed that water is actually being pumped at a less cost than it is supplied by gravity ditches. There are many opportunities not only in California, but also in Colorado, Utah, and other states where power plants can be economically installed in the canyons, and the water from these used to irrigate the fields. The power from these plants can be conducted out to points beyond reach of canals, and employed in lifting the underground waters to the surface. The ultimate development of this class of work must rest largely upon water conservation, the holding back of the floods of the spring to supply a continuous discharge during the summer, keeping the power

plants in operation, as well as furnishing water for the ditches.

"This complete conservation must rest largely upon the government completing its work in the forest reserves, not only in protecting the growing timber, but also by constructing large reservoirs where the conditions are favorable. By such works the largest possible use can be made of the irregularly distributed water supply, and the moisture which exists beneath the surface and which now is practically useless, can be recovered and made to assist in the creation of thousands of homes upon the public lands."

TO VISIT OREGON IN JULY.

The Oregonian correspondent at Washington, writes under recent date: At some early date in July, as yet undecided, F. H. Newell, Chief Hydrographer of the Geological survey, will visit Oregon, and in all probability begin operations looking to a systematic measurement of the streams east of the Cascade Mountains, with a view to determining the amount and rate of their discharge, and their high and low stages. In short, Mr. Newell will collect all information concerning their waters which would be valuable to people intending to install irrigating or power systems in that part of the state. Mr. Newell visits Oregon at the express invitation of Representative Moody, who pressed the matter in person while in Washington, and has kept up a steady and insistent correspondence since his return to the state. Because of the apparent lack of interest shown by Oregon farmers in this matter heretofore, and the great interest of other states, the attention of the survey has been turned to localities where the people themselves took an active interest in the irrigation of arid and semi-arid areas, and where they eagerly sought the aid of the survey. Now that the people of Eastern Oregon, through their representative and otherwise, have come forward and manifested an interest in the development of their semi-arid lands, the survey is glad to turn in and lend them what assistance it can with the limited appropriation on hand for stream measurements.

Mr. Newell will go to The Dalles, on arrival in Oregon, where he has planned to meet Mr. Moody, and with him will make a tour of the eastern part of the state, making a general inspection of the various streams and other sources of water supply. After this inspection and consultation with stockmen and others interested, it is his intention to begin the actual work of measuring the various streams which seem to offer encouragement to irrigators. Mr. Newell and his party expect to measure all of the principal streams of Eastern Oregon, including the Deschutes, Grand-Ronds, John Day, Umatilla, Malheur, Powder, Owyhee and Silvies Rivers. It is possible that a few of the streams west of the Cascades may be measured, more with a view to determining their adaptability for developing water-power than their availability for irrigation.

It is said by Mr. Newell that in order to obtain accurate results, and results which will be of real value to prospective irrigators or those who propose to install power plants, the system of measurements to be conducted should cover a period of about five years. This is necessary in order to observe the condition of the streams under all climatic conditions, in times of drought as well as in wet summers, and to get measurements during the summer as well as the winter. It is proposed to establish stations at various points on the several rivers, where instruments can be installed, and readings taken at stated intervals each day, so as to have a correct record the year round. Present indications seem to indicate an abundance of water during the coming summer, while next summer may be dry. Thus, two directly opposite conditions will be encountered at the outset, and two widely divergent sets of results will be found.

In the opinion of Mr. Newell, much of Eastern Oregon is susceptible of successful irrigation. He, however, estimates that the water now available, if properly utilized, will irrigate but 2 or 3 per cent of the entire area of arid Eastern Oregon. Asked if this estimate was not low, he replied that under the conditions there existing, it was not. The streams of Eastern Oregon are for the most part small. While each will irrigate but a small area, yet in the aggregate, when the vast extent of the state is considered, it will be found that a considerable area will have been artificially watered. There are a few large rivers, of course, like the Snake and its tributaries, which are capable of supplying vast quantities of water for both irrigation and the generation of power.

The fact that but a small percentage of the aggregate area of arid lands can be irrigated is not discouraging to Mr. Newell. He says the most of that section would only be good for grazing under any circumstances. Of course along the streams, where plenty of water is to be had, small farms will thrive, but it will not be possible to irrigate the entire area with the water of the streams above mentioned. Yet the watering of this 2 or 3 per cent will work wonders, especially when the drought-resistant grasses being introduced by the department of agriculture have been given a fair start. The irrigation will afford frequent watering places for stock, which can find plenty of fodder on the more arid ranges.

Good Times in Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties.

Quite a goodly delegation of prominent men and women from various parts of the inland livestock empire arrived in Sumpter yesterday and took the 9:40 a. m. train for Portland and other Western Oregon points, says the Sumpter reporter. Among the party were Dr. and Mrs. Marsden and Mrs. L. Woldenberg, of Burns, Harney county, who are going to Portland as delegates to the Masonic grand lodge and the grand chapter of the Order of the Eastern Star; District Attorney Wm. Miller, of Ontario, Malheur county, who is returning from circuit court at Canyon City, and also goes with his family to Portland to attend the Masonic grand lodge; Attorney C. W. Parrish, of Canyon City, who is going to Salem to transact business before the supreme court; ex-State Senator G. W. McHaley, Wm. Starr and J. W. Tucker, of Prairie City, summoned to Portland as witnesses in the U. S. district court in the timber cases against the O. L. Co., J. B. Stoddard and A. W. Ellis.

Dr. Marsden is a leading physician of Burns and has closely observed business and livestock conditions in Harney county, wherein the cattle, horses and sheep are numbered by the tens of thousands. Hon. Geo. W. McHaley is one of the heaviest holders of livestock in Grant county. District Attorney Wm. Miller has an excellent opportunity to observe affairs in Malheur county, as well as throughout other parts of the ninth judicial district, which includes the counties named.

Each of these gentlemen, as well as others of those great growing sections, told of the splendid condition of the livestock, the general prosperity of the people and the bright prospects promised for the coming busy summer and fall season.

A mixup occurred yesterday morning in the Maze saloon between Tom Stevens, of Burns, Harney county, the old time sport, and Bob Smith, a dealer of a twenty-one game. Stevens was playing at the game and lost, it is said, \$420. Stevens was sore over his loss and reached over to "swipe" the funds. Smith was not asleep and landed good and hard on Stevens' face, knocking him down and kicking him for falling. It was a lively mill, so bystanders say, and Stevens got decidedly the worst of it.—Baker Democrat.

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