

# HOW DISTRICT OFFICE WORK IS DONE RELATED

## QUESTIONS ABOUT DISTRICT'S BUSINESS ANSWERED

### Fiscal Agent Gives Details of Where Money Comes From And How It Is Spent

By Charles Tylor, Project Fiscal Agent

(Note—How are the books of the Hermiston Irrigation district kept? Where does the money the water users pay go and for what? These and similar questions are answered in detail in the following article which was prepared by Mr. Taylor at the request of The Herald for the information of water users and prospective water users.)

#### Water Charges and Their Purpose

There are two different charges made against the land annually, the construction charge and the operation and maintenance charge. The construction charge is for the purpose of paying off the district's indebtedness to the United States for the construction of Cold Springs Reservoir, the feed canal and diversion, the main canals and laterals of the distribution system, together with all buildings, warehouses, sheds machinery and equipment, tools and equipment and materials and supplies turned over to the district.

The operation and maintenance charge is for the purpose of paying all expenses incurred in operating and maintaining the project.

#### How Charges Are Arrived At

The annual construction charge per acre is set by the secretary of the interior and the district notified early in the year so that there may be no delay in preparing the assessment roll. Accompanying the notice of the construction charge amount to the district is a list giving the description and serial numbers of all lands to be assessed, together with the amounts.

The annual construction charge is five per cent of the average gross crop yield per acre for the project over the past 10

years period. As each new crop year is added, the crop year at the head end of the 10 year record is dropped so that the 10 year average is always the last 10 years.

The list of lands furnished by the secretary of the interior is checked against the "water users' ledger" in the district office as to description, irrigable acreage and serial number and should be in complete agreement. The construction charge is then entered against each individual account in this ledger. The charges for construction on the district assessment roll are taken from the "water users' ledger" accounts.

The operation and maintenance charges are set by the district board of directors, based on an estimate furnished by the manager, of money required to operate during the ensuing year. The estimate is presented to the board in budget form, showing by months the estimated amounts of expenditure and for what purposes. Presented to the board in budget form, each member is better able to scrutinize and weigh the need for the appropriation. When the total amount of operation and maintenance appropriation has been passed by the board the charge per acre for all lands with water rights is established, after making allowance for default on certain acreages.

#### How Charges Are Levied

All annual charges are placed on the county assessment rolls and are payable to the sheriff who is also the tax collector.

Before these charges can be placed on the county rolls a district assessment roll is prepared in duplicate. The board of directors meets on the first Tuesday in October and acts as a board of equalization. The board has the newly prepared district tax roll and is ready to hear reasons from any landowner why his land should not be assessed in the amount stated on the roll. Any necessary corrections of the roll are then made and the roll signed by the secretary. The roll is then ready for the county assessor, and a copy

is placed in the district office.

#### Preparing Assessment Roll

Before preparing the district assessment roll the county roll for the current year is gone over and the district roll is brought into agreement with the county roll, both as to description and ownership. This is done to make it easy for the assessor to locate the right land in copying assessments from the district roll to the county roll. By preparing the district in agreement with the county roll the same description appears in both, and there is less chance for error in transferring the assessment amounts. After the county assessment roll has been prepared by the assessor it is turned over to the sheriff for collection of the various assessments.

#### How Money Is Collected

All money collected by the sheriff, or tax collector, is receipted in duplicate. The original receipt is given the property owner for the amount paid, and the copy is retained in the sheriff's office. All copies of receipts are filed in binders numerically and from these entered to the collection register. In transferring the total amount of payment shown on a tax receipt to the register, the amount is divided and the various amounts entered under their proper column headings.

At intervals during the year the sheriff turns over all money collected to the county treasurer, together with a list of the various funds and the amount each fund is to be credited with. In the treasurer's books the various funds are credited with the amounts collected by the sheriff as shown in the collection register. At the end of each month the county treasurer sends a statement to the district showing the amounts credited the district funds, the amounts charged against them for payment of warrants and the balances left.

The district books have accounts with the tax collector and the county treasurer. When collections are turned over by the tax collector to the county treasurer, the district credits the tax collector and charges the county treasurer fund with the amount. When money is expended by the county treasurer in payment of warrants, the treasurer's funds are credited and the various district accounts show what the expenditures were for. In this way the district books show at any time how much money is in the funds, and are in

agreement with the county treasurer's books.

#### How Money Is Spent

All payments made by the district are paid from funds in the hands of the county treasurer. The county treasurer acting as treasurer for the district. When a payment is made a voucher in duplicate is made out, showing what the payment is for. All papers in support of the amount shown are attached to the voucher, and all vouchers are presented to the board of directors at the monthly meeting. The card passes on the validity of the vouchers, and the amounts are incorporated in the minutes of the secretary. The vouchers are signed by the president and the secretary of the board. The originals are sent to the county clerk, and the copies are retained in the district office.

The county clerk issues a warrant in the amount of each voucher, turns the warrants over to the county treasurer and retains the vouchers for his files. If there is money in the treasury fund to pay the warrants, the treasurer issues a check for the amount of each warrant and sends the check to the district office where they are mailed or delivered. If there is not enough money in the treasury fund to pay the warrants they are registered in numerical order and sent to the district office marked "no funds," and when enough money has accumulated in the treasury fund the warrants are called in for payment in the order of their numbers. This is done by advertising in a local newspaper the numbers of the warrants to be paid. The warrants bear six per cent interest.

#### What Money Is Expended For

There are two purposes for which money is expended; one is the payment of the district liability to the United States, and the other is for expenses incurred in operating and maintaining the project. All money collected for the construction goes into the construction fund. When a reasonable amount has been accumulated a voucher is made in favor of the special agent, bureau of reclamation, for the amount of the fund. It is passed on by the board of directors of the district, and in the manner already explained, the county treasurer issues a check in the amount.

These payments eventually become a credit to the district capital in-

vestment. As in the case of the county treasurer, the bureau of reclamation acknowledges all receipts and presents a statement to the district, showing payments received to date, the amount applied to the credit of the district on the current construction, the amount applied on penalties and credits allowed the district on the current construction other than from payments.

These statements are checked at the district office and if correct, the district book of accounts are brought into agreement. If in error they are sent back for correction. The principal expenses items for which operation and maintenance collections are expended are administration, storage reservoir, feed canal, distribution system, building and grounds maintenance, auto and truck expense, board of directors and sundry expenses.

Under administration expense are such things as managerial and office salaries, fuel, light, water, postage, telephone and telegraph, stationery and supplies etc. Under storage reservoir and feed canal expenses are feed canal headgate tender and Cold Springs dam caretaker and patrolman's salaries, and labor and materials for repairs. Under distribution system expense are ditch riders' wages, labor and materials for repairs and renewals.

Under buildings and grounds are wages and materials for repairs, painting etc. Under auto and truck expense come such items as gasoline, oil and grease, licenses, tires and auto parts and repairs. Under board of directors expense are secretary's salary, directors' fees, legal expense, miscellaneous expenses, such as publication of notices, election expense etc. Sundry expense covers such items as interest on warrants, depreciation etc.

#### Auditing Tax Receiver's Books

The district makes periodical audits of the books of the sheriff's office. The purpose of these audits is to check all collections of construction and operation and maintenance assessments and the amounts turned over to the county treasurer. From these audits the district also obtains a list of all individual payments made by the district water users, together with the receipt number and date of payment. From this list the individual accounts at the district office are credited.

#### Correspondence Work

During the year correspondence is

maintained between the district and bureau of reclamation at Washington, D. C., the chief engineer, Denver, Colorado, the state engineer, Salem, officials of different county departments, department of agriculture federal land bank and the general public. The correspondence covers requests on land description, ownership, land classifications, assessments, costs, crop reports, hydrographic reports, meteorological reports, financial reports, land settlement etc. Several hundred letters are received and answered during the year.

#### Contracts

When the district took over the operation and maintenance of the project lands it obligated itself to the fulfillment of certain contracts with others outside the district. These contracts include rental of water to the city of Hermiston, Echo Mills, lands near Stanfield, 40 acres in Newport's addition to the city of Hermiston and to land at the end of the "A" canal. The district collects rental and operation and maintenance charges under the contracts.

#### Rentals

The district rents water to certain lands at a price per acre set by the board of directors for the current year, based on the cost of delivery. Rentals are collected by the district before delivery of water. All money collected by the district for rentals or other purposes is placed in the county treasury fund, and expenditures of such money are made through the county treasurer.

"Georgie, who taught you to use those dreadful words?"

"Santa Claus, mamma."

"Santa Claus?"

"Yes, mamma, when he fell over a chair in my room on Christmas eve."

Sandy MacPherson, after being shown to his room in a hotel, looked from the window and noticed a large illuminated clock in a tower across the street. He stopped his watch.

"Kind lady, I was not always like this," said the beggar.

"No. Last week it was your other arm that was missing."

"Does 'at smile mean you forgive me?"

"Stay away, fella; I'se just smilin' to rest mah face."

# TO MAKE A GOOD COUNTRY BETTER

Is often a difficult task, particularly if the country has much to its credit that is desirable, as is the case in the Hermiston district.

The dairy cow has a rich history of accomplishment in making poor countries good and good countries better. The gradual growth of dairying in the Hermiston country has been a factor in promoting stability and making profitable farming a reality in times when not all branches of agriculture have made profits.

The records already made and now in the making by herds on this project offer an inspiration to others to emulate, wherever they live. An abundance of good alfalfa hay, rich pastures of bluegrass and sweet clover and an excellent climate make the project an ideal home for the dairy cow.

Good dairy stock of excellent breeding has been used by project dairy men since the early days of the project, and the oldest dairy sire association west of the Mississippi is in operation here to make possible the use of the best blood in the Jersey breed at a low cost to the individual member.

All of these advantages have resulted in a gradual growth of interest in dairying. The industry deserves to continue in its expansion. Many local dairy men are increasing the size of their herds.

There is room and real opportunity here for new settlers in the dairy business, and a cordial invitation is extended to those interested in the dairy cow to investigate the possibilities of the Hermiston project.

## EXPAND THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

Dr. J. L. Sears

This advertisement paid for jointly by—  
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