ENTIRE STATE NOW DISCUSSING IRRIGATION NEEDS

By W. W. WATSON.

Those who may have concluded that we are talking and writing about irrigation quite regularly in this valley lately may also have observed that men are doing a similar thing all over the state, and in many sections of Oregon where the annual rainfall is much greater than it is in the Rogue River valley. Reclamation of arid lands and sour lands is the big issue in all parts of the state. Oregon is awakening slowly on this important subject—but it is awaking with alarm. A state conference will be held in Salem by those intelligently interested in irrigation, drainage and rural credit legislation on March 9. So momentous have these questions become to the prosperity of the state that some of the big men behind the movement to organize for statewide concerted action thereon have asked if it may not be possible to hold the meeting earlier. They have awakened with a start. Two months ago I was told that too much space in the Mail Tribune was being given to discussion of the need of irrigation in this valley. During the past two weeks some of the same men have called on me for more information about it.

What Does This Mean

To the observing person this means that they have been awakened to a sense of their danger without irrigation. It means that they have been induced by this agitation to count their losses during the past two or three years and to conclude that they must apply adequate provision against their recurrence or they are ruined. They have figured it out slowly, but carefully. The result is sufficient to arouse them to action. Some of the men whose farm lands lie under the Rogue River Canal company's conduits told me a few weeks ago that they would need no artificial supply of water. Since the rainfall has to date given them poor prospect of water storage in the ground to a depth at which it may be held for use during the dry months, some of these men have had the courage to boast of their security because their lands are under the big ditch. These men, too, have had a vision. In it they discerned the portentous danger. Another season without a harvest will ruin them. They are awaking, slowly, but surely. Many of the owners of land under the proposed high-line canal on the east side are losing sleep in their worry over the possibility that others who own land in that area will not hurry to meet the conditions of the canal company and thus secure the big ditch without fail.

Others on Anxious Seat

W. W. Caviness of Vale, eastern Oregon, where the water plane is nearer the surface than it is found in a general survey of this valley, is one of the leaders in the state conference proposition. He said to a Portland paper the other day:

"Irrigation is a vital question with us; and it is vital to the whole state, for that matter. We are mighty well pleased to see the way the rest of the state is swinging into line to get water on the land. We are hoping that the best minds of Oregon will gather at Salem and enter with all their might into an effort to solve this great Oregon problem. What is done there may not mean much to us old-timers, but it will mean opportunity for our children and our children's children."

Frank J. Miller, who is known all over the state and has for many years served the people in responsible capacities, being a farmer meantime, both in the Willamette valley and in Southern Oregon, said in an interview in a Portland paper:

The Broad View Needed

"The time has come for the people of Oregon to take up these problems and proceed with organization and determination toward their solution. The time has come for those who believe in drainage to work with those who believe in irrigation. We have got to acquire a broad view and a generous spirit. We have got to lay aside the narrow and restricted viewpoint. We must give encouragement to the man who wants a better home on his land."

Mr. Miller is a member of the Oregon public service commission. Mr. Caviness is a pioneer of eastern Oregon.

Other big and broad-minded men of the state are speaking in the same earnest manner about these things of paramount importance to the producers. So, we of this delightful valley are not alone in the outcry for irrigation—more water. When Colonel John G. Boyle once addressed a political meeting at North Yakima some years ago he uttered just one sentence. He hit the keynote in that—and it was enough. It was during the panic of '96. He said: "Ladies and gentlemen: What we want today is more money." He got no further. Had it not been nearly midnight that speech might have caused a run on the banks. It was "powerfully true" then. It is true now, here. What we want is more money—and we'll never get it until we have more water.

A Beneficent Enterprise

The greatest and most beneficent enterprise ever organized in this valley is the Rogue River Canal company's irrigation system. The utility of the plan and the generous use of its supply of water, when the canals are in operation, mean fortunes to the land owners who know how to cultivate the soil intensively. With it will rank the Ashland-Talent irrigation project. Bountiful harvests, full bins, thousands of carloads of produce of all kinds for shipment to hungry markets, fat stock, comfortable homes abundantly supplied, prosperous business houses, busy banks—all of these things will follow in the wake of abundant prosperity on the farm. All we need to add to what we have to produce that condition is water for irrigation. Proper cultivation of a soil as rich as ours out of doors will do the rest.

"FETERITA" NEW SORGHUM YIELDS IMMENSE CROP

BY W. W. WATSON

Feterita is a non-saccharine sorghum of recent introduction in the west. It yields wonderfully and possesses marked drouth resisting qualities that recommend it to farmers in semi-arid regions where irrigation is not available. I have read an authority on the growth and value of feterita who stated that he had known feterita to produce an "immense crop without a drop of rain from the time it was planted until it matured." I have good reason to doubt that statement. My brother and I tried it last year in this valley, "without rain" and without irrigation, and it was a failure. It was placed in an unusually well prepared seedbed and was cultivated scientifically. So many other things failed last year in this valley without water, however, that feterita, with all its drouth- resistant qualities, could not reasonably be expected to succeed.

A reader of this paper has asked several questions about it. I will try to answer them in a general way:

The Seedbed Important

In this, as in all cases, the seedbed is of prime importance. Plow the soil deeply and pulverize it well. This, too, is a necessary part of good cultivation, where favorable results may be expected. In order to give the soil proper tilth, the surface should be only moist enough to pulverize readily. Good seed will germinate quickly. If the soil moisture is of proper percent at the time of planting, feterita will not require irrigation for four or five weeks, but it should have one and, if the ground be very dry from excessive sunheat, two irrigations between the time of seeding and maturity. The soil should be fairmly warm when the seed are planted. That time should be after the usual cold rains have ceased.

Feterita may be either drilled in rows 24 inches apart, for cultivation, or broadcasted; the former is preferable. It does not require deep cultivation. Mulching to prevent evaporation and destroy the weed growth will be sufficient. Four pounds of seed should be planted to an acre. An unquestionably reputable seed house is the only one to deal with in the purchase of any seed.

As Early Sorghum

Feterita matures a month earlier than kaffir corn. For that reason it is peculiarly adapted to this climate. It ought to mature in this valley in 90 days under favorable conditions; but it must be kept in continuous growth. That can be done here only by irrigation, unless it be planted in sub-irrigated soil.

It is an excellent feed for stock of all kinds, fodder and all. Poultry of all kinds relish it. Too much of it, however, will over-fatten laying hens. Its seed may be mixed with other feed to good advantage. In California it is mixed with alfalfa meal, both for hogs and poultry. There it is considered much better than kaffir corn, both in quality and yield. Its content of protein is large.

It is as free from injury by pests above the ground as other sorghums. Moles and ghopers, however, find it easy to construct their tunnels under the roots. In this way excessive ventilation consumes the moisture and destroys the plants.

Feterita ought to be a valuable crop on the farms in this valley where pigs and chickens are kept; and they ought to be kept on every farm in the valley.

Women who prefer dogs to children are a greater help to the race than they realize.—Salina, Kansas, Journal.

ELSIE JANNIS AND OWEN MOORE (MARY PICKFORD'S HUSBAND) IN "NEARLY A LADY" AT STAR TONIGHT ONLY

News From Our Neighbors

SAMS VALLEY

It seems from reports from surrounding precincts that we have received more snow and rain than many other localities. We believe we will have sufficient moisture for this year.

The many friends of Mrs. Chisolm were deeply sorrowed to hear of her death and extend their sympathy to the bereaved family.

Among business visitors to Gold Hill this week were M. A. Schoultz, H. A. Tresham, John Fredenburg, O. T. Wilson and W. C. Kenney and wife.

John Hall and wife left Tuesday for Medford where they will reside for some time.

A surprise party was given at the home of M. A. Schoultz which indeed was a complete surprise to all. Though the rain pattered lively on the window panes, comfort and pleasure were enjoyed inside till the small hours of morning.

Eli Teples of Gold Hill was visiting among friends this week.

H. A. Tresham is moving his household goods into the Enseley house.

Our cold weather had not broken with the heavy rains as every one had thought, but instead a colder snap than ever with three inches of snow is now on the frozen ground.

ALONG ROGUE RIVER

Steve Smith was in Eagle Point Tuesday. John Foster returned with him to visit a couple of weeks.

Prof. and Mrs. Deardorff are the proud parents of a son, who arrived January 25. Tiny Frank tipped the scales at 5 3-4 lbs.

Dick Johnson has built a neat cottage and will give a house warming Saturday evening.

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Miller of Central Point are the guests of the T. G. Ranney home.

Dr. Kirchgressner made a business trip to Medford a few days ago.

The rain the last of last week and the first of this raised the river so the E. P. and Persist stage went on the west side of river Monday morning. The rain changed the creeks into raging torrents.

Mrs. Daw spent Friday night with Mrs. Jasper Hannah. She was en route for her home on Trail.

The snow of Thursday and Friday fell about three inches deep. It was very welcome and pleasant as the snow of two weeks ago.

JANUARY SNOWFALL 30.6 IN., PORTLAND

PORTLAND, Ore., Jan. 31.—The snowfall in Portland for the month of January amounted to 30.6 inches, according to an official measurement taken early today. This is within four and seven tenths inches of the record made in January, 1890. As the storm at noon showed no sign of abatement, it was predicted that a close approach to the record would be made by midnight.

The snowfall continues to be general over Oregon. The appearance of more ice in the Columbia river is hindering navigation today between here and Astoria.

WEDDING BELLS

Axel Benson and Bernhardina Ekstrom were united in marriage by Rev. W. F. Shields at the Presbyterian manse at 3:30 p. m. on Saturday, January 26th.

Mr. and Mrs. Benson have both resided in Medford for some time, and are well known. Mr. Benson owns a ranch on the Central Point road, where he takes his bride for their future home. Their many friends, and host of well-wishers extend congratulations. They expect to make their permanent home in the Rogue river valley.