

LEGAL PROCEEDINGS TO FORM AN IRRIGATION DISTRICT

- FIRST** Election of directors.
- SECOND** a Directors investigate supply of water, cost, and all details. Directors cannot spend more than \$1.00 per acre under any circumstances, and for this investigation should not expend more than 10c per acre.
b Directors formulate plan of general irrigation system and submit same to State Engineer for his approval.
- THIRD** State Engineer makes investigation and advises directors on supply of water, cost and construction.
- FOURTH** Directors prepare itemized statement of plan to secure irrigation, cost, and all details, submit same to land owners.
- FIFTH** FINAL ELECTION--land owners vote to accept or reject.

THE GIST OF THE WHOLE MATTER

Without irrigation, the growing of fruit as an industry on any large scale is impossible in the Rogue River valley. It is not contended, but that apples and pears, and good ones, can be grown here without irrigation, but not in quantities, nor at a cost to make the business, year in and year out, a profitable one. Other fruit growing sections with irrigation produce on the average more than twice as many apples and pears per acre as we with less labor of cultivation, and consequently produce them very much more cheaply. The fruit producer without water here, is in exactly the same position as the manufacturer who, without adopting improved machinery and methods of production, attempts to compete with other manufacturers who do.

Without irrigation, intensive cultivation of the soil is impossible in the Rogue River valley. It is not contended that sugar beets, for instance, cannot be grown in this valley without irrigation, but not in sufficient quantities, not with sufficient certainty, nor at a low enough cost on the average to make the industry a profitable one.

Without irrigation, the growing of clover is impossible. Only a small portion of our land will successfully grow alfalfa, and the production of alfalfa even on such lands as will grow it, is increased fifty to one hundred per cent by irrigation.

The only farming that can be carried on successfully in this valley without irrigation is grain growing and stock raising. For this type of farming the prices of our unirrigated land here are still on an average twice as high as they will yield returns on. The City of Medford is at least twice as large a city as can be permanently supported by its surrounding farming territory devoted to this kind of farming.

These are plain, unvarnished facts. Irrigation is absolutely essential to the prosperity of this valley. Without irrigation, a very large percentage of the people now here must seek a living elsewhere.

The irrigation of this valley and especially the irrigation of the section covered by the proposed irrigation district is impossible on any other plan than the district plan. This is true, because the cost of getting water to it is so heavy that the burden, if placed upon only a small portion of the land, is too great to be borne.

It will cost substantially the same to construct an irrigation system to irrigate 10,000 acres of land scattered through the district as it will to construct a system to irrigate all the lands in the district. It is a physical impossibility to build an irrigation system for 10,000 acres of land scattered through the proposed irrigation district at a cost of less than \$75.00 per acre and it would be absolutely impossible on the contract plan to secure contracts covering 10,000 acres at this price.

For the district affected, it is either the district plan or no irrigation. The district plan of irrigation is the only just and equitable plan. An irrigation system built along the lines of the proposed High-Line System would constitute a direct and positive advantage to every acre of land in the district

whether the water was used upon it or not. The very fact that irrigation was available would directly and substantially increase its selling value. Moreover, the irrigating of 10,000 acres of land within the proposed district would so raise the water table and so increase the sub-irrigation as to affect in a marked degree the producing power of every acre of land in the district, whether it directly used the water or not. It has been the experience of numerous ranchers in this valley that fields and especially orchards, located adjacent to lands which are irrigated derive a great deal of additional moisture from such adjacent irrigation. If as much as 10,000 acres of the land in the section covered by the proposed irrigation district were irrigated, this effect in a few years would probably be so marked as to make irrigation on the remaining lands unnecessary for many kinds of farming. The result would be to give the whole district a greatly needed advantage and to throw the whole burden upon a small portion of the land. This is unjust and unfair, and in the present situation is impossible.

The district irrigation plan is the only plan which places it in the power of the land owners to safeguard their interests and to be sure that they are getting the value of the money they spend.

If the irrigation district carries at the coming election, a board of directors, composed of landholders in the district, will be elected, who will have the power to employ the necessary engineers and experts to investigate the water supply, to prepare the necessary plans and specifications for a permanent and adequate irrigation system and to determine what such a system should cost and what a fair price for it would be. These are matters which could never be properly looked after by land owners, buying their irrigation on the contract plan. The result of attempts to irrigate on a large scale by private corporations on the contract plan in the Pacific Northwest has always been either that the corporation failed or that the land owners were defrauded. The men behind the Rogue River Valley Canal Company do not propose to have either of these things happen in the present instance.

If the men who have been nominated for the Directorships in the proposed irrigation district are not the best men who could be chosen, the land owners have it in their power to nominate other men for the positions by filing a petition signed by ten land owners of the Division. It was necessary that the land owners behind the movement to organize the District should nominate someone, because the law expressly directs that the notice of election shall contain the names of men to be voted on for the various offices and until someone was nominated there would be no one for the County Court to designate in its notice of election.

As stated above, the powers of the Board of Directors are merely to procure the experts necessary for a complete and thorough investigation and to report their findings first to the state engineer for his approval and then to the land owners of the District. They are authorized to incur the expense necessary for this purpose, which, at most, should be but a few cents per acre. They

have no right to incur any other obligation whatever. Before any contract can be let or any bonds of the District issued, they must submit the results of all their investigations to the land owners, and put the matter up for another election.

There is only one possible justification for any opposition to the proposed irrigation district, and that is that no irrigation system for this section is wanted. The method proposed is the right way; it is the just way and it is the only way.

The issue to be decided is the most important one that has been placed before the people of this community in years. An irrigation district means the increased production in this section, which will insure the coming of railroads, the bringing into the community of the money necessary to meet our obligations and to make Medford and the surrounding country prosperous. The defeat of the District means more years of depression, hard times, mortgage foreclosures, falling prices of land, and dwindling population.

The question before the people at this time is simply this: Is the community controlled by unprogressive reactionaries, who are satisfied to have the country farmed as it was when Medford as a town of 2,500 people was large enough to supply the demands of the surrounding country, or is the country controlled by progressive, forward-looking men, who want to make this region, the fruitful wealth-producing section that it can be made with irrigation.

In order that there can be no possible question as to the safety of the land owners in entering upon this project the Rogue River Valley Canal Company hereby offers, in case the district is organized, to enter into a contract guaranteeing to furnish thirty thousand acre feet of water to the District to cover its twenty thousand acres of land, and offers to give the District a good and sufficient guaranty properly secured that it will reduce its price pro rata in case it is not able to furnish the full amount of water. The Company also courts the most searching investigation as to the reasonableness of the price it is offering and as to its ability to carry out its contract.

It also offers to take the bonds of the District at par, although it is a notorious fact that securities of this kind almost always sell in the market at a considerable discount.

The proposition is so fair, the interests of the community are so perfectly protected that there is no possible reason for rejecting it, except the one reason that the land owners in the District do not want irrigation.

Mr. Welch, who is financing this company, would long ago have abandoned this enterprise had it not been that he has never been associated with any enterprise which proved a failure, and is unwilling to be put in that position now if it can possibly be avoided. This community has apparently not yet awoken to its good fortune in having available a man of the ability of Mr. Welch to help it get the one thing which it imperatively needs to insure its prosperity.