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ABEL ADY

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THE EVENING HERALD

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KLAMATH FALLS, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 23, 1909.

DIRECTOR NEWELL REVEALS EARLY HISTORY OF PROJECT

(Continued From Page One.)

ant facts, while other facts stand out clearly. The carefully kept records of the work of the engineers of the Reclamation Service become particularly valuable at such times, showing what tricks memory can play, especially when personal interest is concerned.

Early History.
The early history of the Klamath project is very similar to that of all the others of our two dozen or more undertakings. Engineers were sent throughout the arid West to obtain facts upon which to compare merits of various propositions. Public meetings were held by citizens interested and a flood of letters and petitions were sent to the president, to the secretary of the interior, and to the director of the geological survey, under whom the work was started. These letters and petitions were all answered and carefully preserved.

At that time, namely, from 1902 to 1907, I was chief engineer of the Reclamation Service, taking instructions from Hon. Chas. D. Walcott, director of the geological survey, who in turn reported to the secretary of the interior, this office being in effect the trustee for the reclamation fund.

As far as practicable, I visited the various projects, traveling month after month to remote parts of the arid West, meeting citizens at their homes, and in their fields, at times addressing public gatherings. Stenographic reports and memoranda of these speeches were preserved. They nearly all followed practically the same line of thought.

In these addresses I began by pointing out the object of the reclamation act and discussed a few elementary facts concerning the methods of governmental work. I showed—
First—That congress had made an appropriation, putting into the hands of the secretary of the interior certain funds to be expended for certain purposes.

Second—I stated that in the expenditure of these funds, the secretary of the interior was guided by the opinion of the attorney general, and that, so far as we were concerned, these opinions on the law were practically final.

Third—I showed that the character of expenditures and their correctness were determined by the officers of the treasury department.

Fourth—I pointed out that most of the questions which related to lands under the reclamation act were matters of which the land office had im-

mediate control; many of them were new and had never been settled.

Finally, I emphasized again and again the fact that the engineers of the Reclamation Service were acting as engineers and upon delegated authority, carefully defined and issued from month to month, or quarterly, and that they had no powers or functions outside of this authority, this being delegated in writing from the secretary of the interior to the director of the geological survey, and then to the chief engineer and through him to his assistants.

This was the foundation upon which all further statements rested. If you will search your memory and inquire into that of your neighbors, you will find that this part of my talk was listened to without question. Every one accepted the fact that an engineer, whether working for the government or for a corporation, had no authority beyond that usually enjoyed by an engineer employed in this capacity.

Statements of Cost.

The point which usually aroused more or less discussion and questions was that as to the probable cost. In my statements and replies to questions, I invariably made a carefully guarded reply. I referred to what I said about the limited authority of each and all of us engineers, and called attention to the fact that the matter of cost could only be determined by the secretary of the interior. When pressed as to my personal opinion, I always replied in guarded language to the effect that, if the conditions were as we then knew, it was my personal belief that the cost would be within certain limits. I would state without fear of contradiction that I always added that the cost to be charged was a matter of which the engineers could exercise no control.

If you will stop a minute to consider the probabilities of the case, you will see that these support this statement. The engineers of the Reclamation Service had no more desire to build a project at Klamath than they had at any other point, in Oregon or California. They were acting under orders, and had no personal interest, other than the proper desire to see the work expeditiously and concluded in a creditable manner. There was no more reason nor authority for these engineers to attempt to make a promise regarding future costs than there would be for the engineer building a railroad to attempt to dictate the freight rates when the road was completed. Every well-informed citizen knows that it is not within the power



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or function of the engineer to attempt to set these future payments.

As to the statement in affidavits of persons who say that they were promised or told certain things, it will be possible on cross-examining these persons to develop the fact that each and every man was given the same statement, namely, that the engineers could give them no definite assurance of future cost, as this lay wholly outside their duties.

This condition was fully known at the time. The pamphlet issued by the Water Users' association stated very clearly that the irrigators would be charged the actual cost of the works, and though it stated that these were expected to cost about \$20 per acre, no assurance was given that this would not be exceeded. As a matter of fact, the price of labor and materials all over the Northwest had advanced from 50 per cent to 60 per cent since this pamphlet was issued, a fact well known to all persons.

The engineers of the Northern Pacific railroad system state that works executed since 1905 have on the average cost 60 per cent more than the same class of works built previous to that date. The large canals recently completed in Canada cost over twice the amount estimated, as did almost all of the private enterprises entered into in 1904-5 in the United States. The cost of the Panama canal was estimated in 1905 by some of the ablest engineers living after exhaustive investigations and studies. The actual construction has more than doubled these estimates, and though part of this is due to enlargement not then contemplated, it is found that the unit prices of given work are approximately 40 per cent greater than was estimated on experience previous to 1905. The experience of engineers and contractors is in line with the testimony of all persons engaged in construction work.

The fact that the works on the Klamath project have not cost 60 per cent more than the engineers originally estimated proves that the estimate made at that time was unusually accurate in the light of previous experience, because if there had been no change in economic conditions this estimate would have covered the actual cost.

The people of the Klamath country went into this matter after full discussion, exactly as every other community did, and as other communities are now trying to do. There are many localities petitioning and urging that the reclamation fund be expended in the construction of works in their vicinity. They now care little what the ultimate cost will be, but every energy is concentrated on getting the Reclamation Service to begin the cause it means to them, as it did to the Klamath country, not merely the building of a permanent irrigation works, but assurance of a water supply, but a rapid increase in land values, and the construction of one or more railroads. They would be glad to pay \$40 per acre, or even more. They have little sympathy with a community which is now complaining because they are getting water at a rate so much less than the average. "Kicking" at the Cost of Water.

You ask me the question, whether I think that after the work has been done and the final estimate for certain areas has been announced, I would consider this as satisfactory or fair treatment, and "would you not kick like a steer?" In reply, and in perfect accord with the spirit of your question, I state most emphatically that I would not kick; in fact, if I were considering my own best interests and those of my neighbors, I would do all in my power to stop such kicking. It will do no good—is a waste of energy—and can only result in delay in accomplishing the best good to the community.

The world in general has no sympathy for the man who "kicks like a steer," and irrigators throughout the country who care to look into the matter find that you are getting a good water supply at a very moderate cost and at actual cost. The people in the vicinity of Klamath Falls have derived great advantages from the investment of the funds of the government, and will derive larger advantages when they appreciate their advantages and pull together to make full use of them.

These purchases to which you refer, or even that some graft was involved (which cannot be shown) what would be the result?

This would not relieve you of one dollar of expense. Whether the money has been properly or improperly expended, you must pay it back. This point was brought out again and again in speeches of the members of the irrigation committee. Apparently each senator became more and more firmly convinced in his own mind that such charges were inspired largely by the hopes of repudiating just dues. I am in no way authorized to speak for the senators, but simply state the result of listening to many speeches and public conversations.

You state further that I am the head of the department "vested with the responsibility and power of imposing this added cost to the poor homesteader." This quotation illustrates how little effect was produced by my talk, by the talk of practically every officer of the service, and by letters and other information sent out. I am not the head of the department, but an executive officer, under the secretary of the interior, acting by direct instructions and under authority usually given each year on the 1st day of January, April, July and October. No man is "vested with the responsibility and power of imposing this added cost." This is a condition which is governed by law, as interpreted by the attorney general, or by the courts. It is a matter not of discretion of any one man, but of following the terms of the law.

Your further question whether I regarded my life work as a success is answered in the affirmative. I have devoted over twenty-one years to a study of the water resources of the West, and opportunities of reclamation. I consider myself as being very fortunate in being among the men engaged in the planning and building of some of the largest and best irrigation systems in existence. I may live to see all of them completed. During my lifetime I do not expect that the works will reach their full utility to the people of the United States, but no man can truthfully say that the works laid out at Klamath Falls are not a success.

Payments for Property.
You state that it is pointed out by "men of superior intelligence and strength of character among us that far too much was paid" for certain properties. These men "of superior intelligence and strength of character" you do not name, but it is evident that these men have not taken the trouble to ascertain the facts.

Every other citizen of the country well knew the terms of purchase of these various properties before the contracts were made. These were discussed publicly through many months and were published in the newspapers, appearing, for example, in the Klamath Falls Express of June 15, 1905. They were reprinted in a pamphlet widely distributed by the Water Users' association. During all this time, when these terms were under discussion publicly, no man objected to them, although many letters were written in regard to the subject. There was not a single unfavorable comment upon the prices or terms. On the contrary, almost every individual in the community devoted his energies to urging us to close up the matter and get to work as soon as possible.

Abel Ady, alone, after the matter was practically completed, made a vague charge, which he retracted on March 4, 1906, and stated he had not intended

"to charge directly or indirectly, or to intimate in any way that there were irregularities, fraud or graft or collusion on the part of the service or of the Water Users' association, in connection with any purchases or proposed purchases of any canal or other property to be used for the Klamath project; nor did he now believe that there was anything of the kind in any way connected therewith, and that he would have been willing to have agreed to pay double the amount agreed upon for the canals to save a year's delay in the construction of the project."

This is a matter of public record, and it will be a pleasure at any time to me and to others to have all of these matters discussed in the most complete manner.

The assertion that Abel Ady had an option on the Carr ranch at \$35,000 is so palpably absurd that it is not worthy of discussion. In regard to the adjustment of the Upper Unit, the letter of September 25th from Mr. Morris Bion discusses this point. He brings out, as I have

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D. V. KUYKENDALL
Attorney at Law
Klamath Falls, Oregon

Dr. Amos C. Graves
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