## Che Eumimy Herali



## FEDERAL LOSS ON RECLAMATION

When the secretary of the interior reports that $\$ 26$,000,000 out of $\$ 200,000,000$ spent by the government in reclamation is lost, that is no cause to condemn reclamation as a federal policy, nor to hold the states responsible for the loss nor to visit sweeping condemnation on the settlers. That the govermment itself is mainly responsible for the loss is implied by the board of survey, which found that more than $\$ 27,000,000$ was lost by settlers, "due to lack of fertility, inadequate water supply and other physical causes." It was the duty of the government to ascertain that soil was fertile before putting water on it and to put adequate water on fertile land. If sound business methods had been applied to the reclamation of arid land by investment of their own capital, the government would first have ascertained that the land was fertile, omitting any parts of the area that tion and possible production of the soil compared the ion and possible production of the soll, compared the two to determine whether the scheme was financially reasible, if the conclusion was ravorable, would have taken care to place settlers on the land who could and rould make it produce crops sufficient to pay cost of maintenance and operation of the plant, interest on investment and to repay capital. Ace government did rot postimates barren as well as fertile land was included in its division of charges and was sold settlers were not in its division of charges and was sold, settlers were not entire projects.
After having neglected these requisites to suecess, the government practically admits that $\$ 173,000,000$ out of its $\$ 200,000,000$ has proved a good investment. In view of its blunders it had no right to expect such a measure
of success. When so much reliance has been placed on of success. When so much reiance has been placed on "bull luck and awkwardness" with such results that only of reclamation must be intrinsically sound and sure to of reclamation must be intrinsically sound and sure to repay its cost with good interest, provided it is handled
with good business judgment.
Most of the blunders that caused loss were the re-
sult of the inherent incapacity of loss were the result of the inherent incapacity of governments to do impose on the state govermments the completion of the impose on the state governments the completion of the
work after the nation has begun it would be an additional blunder. State goveraments do business no better than does the federal covernment for the same mental deficiencies exist in both cases, Political motives lead their officials to do foolish things and to waste money either to hold their jobs or because their jobs are safe either to hold their jobs or because their jobs are safe of irrigation works by the federal government is unof irrigation works by the feder the conditions, but government is unfederal or state, should go no farther. Securing, selection and financing of settlers, by which final success of a project is to be assured, should be left to private enterprise operating under the state law and under contract with the reclamation bureau.-The Oregonian.



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