

# Klamath Basin Water Users Join To Secure Full Use Of Potential

By FRANK Z. HOWARD

Threat of confiscation of water from the upper Klamath basin by the dry and populous areas of central and southern California, and the recent acquisition of The California Power Company for an estimated release of 2500 second acre feet of water down the Klamath for power purposes, has within the last two years, to the organization and incorporation of the Klamath Basin Water Users Protective Association.

The great publicity given the water diversion and the application of the power company, emphasized the fact to the valley water users were not represented, they could not express their views, they could not be heard, they fear into the irrigation of Modoc and Siskiyou counties in California and in Klamath County in Oregon that possible water rights of the lands in the upper Klamath drainage are not just as good as they seem to be, and that an immense amount of water that has been given to this area might be used for other purposes than irrigation in this region. Hence the need of an organization of water users that can forcefully represent the whole upper Klamath basin.

The purpose of the organization expressed in the word "Protection" in its name which means protection of the water rights lands in the upper Klamath basin, the protection of the rights of the lands already irrigated and for vast areas that are irrigated which might be put if the future is not taken care of. The purpose of the organization is to prevent the diversion of any of the upper Klamath water for other purposes than irrigation in this area, until all of the area that can be irrigated are fully developed, even takes a long time for such development. The association has the future agricultural development of the Klamath area in mind.

The association has been advised by attorneys that certain phrases in the matter of water rights in the Klamath Basin will probably be settled in court. This is a long drawn out legal action, probably through both state and federal courts up to the Supreme Court of the United States. It seems to be the only definite view through which the rights of the lands in the Klamath Basin can be firmly established before all other uses. The tremendous costs of such litigation can be borne only by a large and strong organization as is the Klamath Basin Water Users Protective Association to become.

The Klamath Basin Water Users Protective Association is made up of organized water user groups such as irrigation districts, drainage districts, etc., representing approximately 154,000 acres. These groups consist of the Klamath, Langell Valley, Shasta View, Sunnyside, Willow Valley, Mallin and Pine Grove irrigation districts, the Meadows and Klamath drainage districts and the Pot Valley Improvement district, all in Oregon, and the Tulake irrigation district in California. Each group appoints a representative who becomes a member of the water users association and these members act as a board of directors in carrying on the business of the organization.

The association is not satisfied with the present extent of its membership. It wishes to expand until it becomes fully representative of all of the irrigated and irrigable lands in the upper Klamath Basin. To do this it is inviting other lands that should be interested to join, such as:

1. Other existing irrigation and drainage districts.
2. Areas that exist under individual pumping units that acquire water by purchase from the government under the Warren Act. There are about 120 of these units.
3. Areas that have acquired water rights along streams and in marshes, by adjudication or by direct grant from the state, such as the Sprague River area near Bly, the Big Klamath Marsh, Port Klamath, the area on the Klamath Indian Reservation around the mouth of Williamson River, and others.
4. Potential areas that do not now have water, but which can be irrigated from the upper Klamath waters, such as Swan Lake, Butte Valley, and other smaller areas.
5. Areas such as Yonna Valley and parts of Swan Lake, Sprague River and Butte Valley that are irrigated by pumping from wells. This matter of well water is important. The underground water might be confiscated just as it was in Owens Valley in California. These areas need the same protection as those using surface water.

The inclusion of these areas in the association will bring the total acreage up to about 300,000. They are being invited to become members either as legally organized groups or as individuals.

It has already been mentioned that if it became necessary to carry the Klamath water cases into court the costs would be high. The plan of the association is to carry all costs of the organization by voluntary contributions of the member group and of individuals that have joined. These are computed on an acreage basis. Initiation fees or fees for becoming a member are set at one cent per acre. Other assessments will be requested as the funds are needed. All fees or assessments must be kept paid up in order to retain active membership.

Recently it became necessary to send an attorney to Washington, D. C. to represent the water users at a hearing before the federal power commission on December 1, 1953, when the California Oregon Power Company was entering objections to former findings of the commission. The association asked for an amount equalling an assessment of five cents per acre on all lands already within the organization, to bear the costs of the lawyer and other future expenses incidental. The member groups agreed to this assessment. The money was raised and A. W. Schaupp was delegated to attend the hearing.

Having a lawyer in Washington was a good experience for the water users association. It was the first time in the history of Klamath irrigation that the water users have been represented and have been allowed, with some dignity, to present their case. This hearing before the federal power commission definitely fixed the association as a future power in matters of water in the Klamath Basin.

The officers of the Klamath Basin Water Users Protective Association are J. E. Craven, president, Langell Valley; Ivan Rose, vice-president, Tulake, who together with E. G. Hammond, Merrill, W. P. Hooper, Tulake, and B. H. Pickett, Mallin, form the executive committee. John L. Stewart, Jr., has been appointed secretary and treasurer. The business of the association is carried on in the third floor of the Klamath County Court House.

The officers are all requesting that all land owners in the Klamath Basin water, who want further information about the association, to please contact the secretary at the Court House.

## Growers Name Buckingham

TULELAKE—At a meeting held in the Tulake Growers office Monday afternoon, Stan Buckingham, president of the Tulake Growers was selected to represent the Tulake clover seed growers at a tariff hearing in Washington D.C.

The meeting will be held on February 16, in the hearing room of the U.S. Tariff Commission, at 8th and E. Sts., N.W., Washington.

To be discussed at the hearing is the recommendation of local clover growers that imports from Canada be curtailed in order to move the surplus clover seed stockpile that was built up in the United States the past two years.

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