

# Water Power and the People

William L. Chenery, in his "Guide Post" department of the Chicago Herald, writes concerning the water power policy of the present administration, as follows:

Should the government allow its dam and reservoir sites and other lands valuable for power development to pass from its hands forever?

The question was put by Franklin K. Lane, secretary of the interior. It must be answered by the senate for the nation. Secretary Lane believes that permission to use water rights should be given, but that the public lands belonging to the people should not be sold or given away. The secretary has worked out a method by which the natural resources of the nation can be used profitably and that without the prodigal surrender of properties the control of which may at some future time be essential to the welfare of the nation.

### THE FIGHT FOR CONTROL

This method is incorporated in the administration's water power bill, which was passed by the house on August 24, and which is now pending in the senate. "The power trust is fighting the bill," says Secretary Lane "although as amended by the senate committee it is especially liberal and fair and will bring millions into the west for the development of the water power. It is easy to understand why men who already have great power plants on public lands should be opposing such a bill as our power bill, and equally easy to understand why the coal monopolists should be fighting all opportunity for any competitor to get into the field. The power bill is vitally right in one thing; that the rights revert at the end of fifty years to the government, if the government wishes to take them over."

### THE RICHNESS OF THE PRIZE

"With possibly few exceptions the valuable power sites on lands not owned by the federal government have passed into private ownership in perpetuity. They can not be recovered except at a prohibitive expense, nor can control be exercised thereover in any manner, except it be by regulation of transmission and delivery as a public utility.

"Out of 7,000,000 horse power developed in the United States in 1913 twenty companies or groups of interests controlled 2,710,886 developed horse power and 3,556,500 undeveloped horse power, or a total of 6,267,386 horse power.

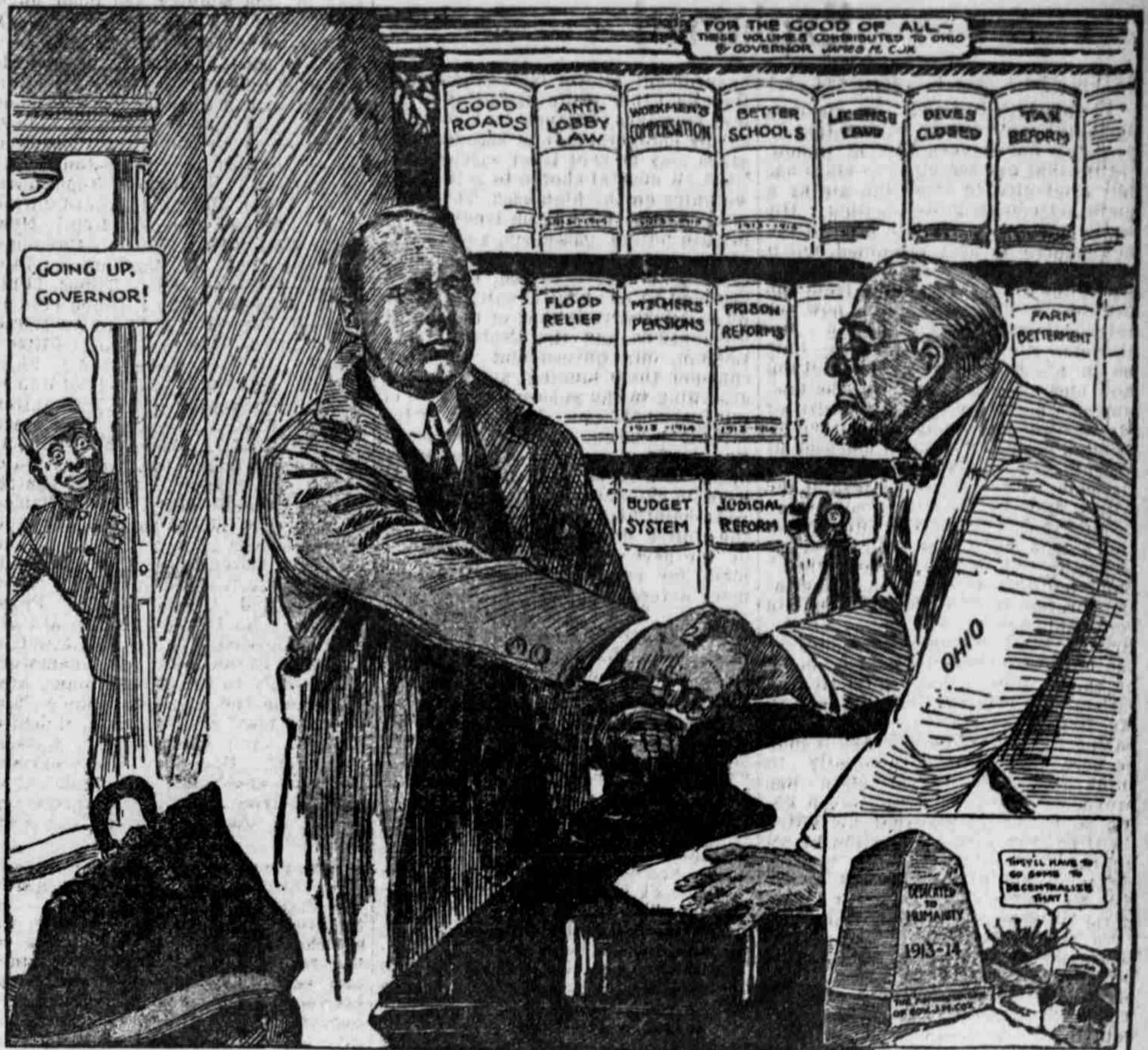
"A conservative estimate places the total available horse power at 35,000,000, of which not exceeding 7,000,000 have been developed. Of the total undeveloped horse power 28,000,000, about 74 per cent, is in what are known as the public land estates, and 42 per cent of the total is within government forest preserves. It is thus apparent that the extent and value of this undeveloped resource is large enough to require most careful consideration and disposition.

### WHAT SHOULD THE NEW LAW BE?

"The ideal law is one which will give to the developer and investor an assured tenure for a period long enough to justify his investment and reward his efforts. It must be under conditions known to him in advance, so that his plans may be laid accordingly. It must encourage development without losing sight of the needs of the consumer and the rights of the people."

As Secretary Lane points out, it is unwise to sell the water rights and impractical to exact high rental. The rental would be paid by the people in higher rates. Accordingly he pro-

## WELL DONE, GOVERNOR COX



From the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch

The following editorial appeared in the Columbus (Ohio) Dispatch, an independent newspaper, under date of January 10, 1915:

"This is the last full day of the regime of Governor Cox. Tomorrow opposing forces pledged to undo much of the progressive legislation of the past two years will be in control of the state. What measure of

success may come to the new administration the future will determine. All wish it may be in full measure, but as to the character of the closing one there is no question.

"Every mandate laid on Governor Cox by the people is an accomplished fact; every promise has been kept; every faculty of his being has been strained in single-minded service. A

constructive genius, he has left an imprint on the morale of the state that time will not erase.

"As he retires to a well-earned rest from public duties, The Dispatch believes that away down deep in even the most partisan heart there is a feeling that might be translated into 'Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'"

poses rather a system of leasing, which is "rather a permission to use, a contract or agreement for the development and use of sites." A period of fifty years for the lease was agreed upon as doing the largest justice to all concerned.

Private owners exact a charge of about 5 per cent of the value of the lands used for power purposes, but this rate would, it is held, be prohibitive for the government. Accordingly this Ferris bill indorsed by Secretary Lane exacts nothing at first while the plant is building and finding a market, except a small charge sufficient to pay the expense of administering the law.

The rate, however, would be increased moderately year by year, but a premium would be put on low rates to the consumer.

The smaller the cost to the consumer the smaller would be the rate exacted by the government.

### THE SATISFACTORY FERRIS BILL

The revenue derived from the water power sites should be used for the reclamation of arid lands after the expenses of administration are paid. Then one-half would go to the states and one-half to the national government.

The Ferris bill, in the words of

Secretary Lane, "seems to meet the present situation as nearly as present knowledge and conditions will permit. It secures development by a certain and fixed tenure; by a reasonable charge for the privilege given; upon conditions known in advance.

"It protects public interests by encouraging low rates to the consumer; by reasonable regulative charge; by contribution to the development of other resources, and by ultimate contributions to the state treasuries.

"It looks to the future by providing that at the end of fifty-year periods these sites, with their now unknown possibilities and values, may be taken over by the government to be disposed of to the states, municipalities or individuals are held under such conditions as the future shall disclose to be wisest and best."

It guards against the evils of monopoly, high rates to the consumer and the inability to secure restoration of the public lands to public use. And, finally, it marks a great advance in national thinking and in the capacity for self-government.

The worst feature about a skeleton in the closet is that it is so apt to come to live.—Philadelphia Record

### THE REPUBLICAN POSITION

All the speeches at the Republican Kansas Day club in Topeka last night boiled into one:

"Fellow Republicans of the Stars and Stripes and the Red, White and Blue: We are here, much to our surprise, because we are here, but we don't know why. And we intend to stay. Sure Mike.

"The party of Grant and Logan and Garfield and 'Mat' Quay and Penrose never had brighter prospects, thanks to the European war which threatens a deficit in the national treasury. It is a dreadful war, and it happened just at the right time to help us politically.

"The land of the free and the home of the brave must endure, and we stand for the old flag and the old ways of doing things and people. So, down with the primary law.

"We are for progress. It was our glorious party that gave Kansas such a push forward; the primary and the 2-cent fare and other laws that we've got that we are proud of, and we ought to repeal them as soon as we can.

"My Fellow Republicans: As long as Old Glory waves, let us stand still and fight. There must be no forward movement."—Kansas City Star.