

# THE FRONTIER

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## CONGRESS

As Seen by a Nebraskan

The proposal to relieve unemployment in rural districts and at the same time construct gravel highways where material is available to the back farms is being put up directly to the President and the Powers-that-be in a very interesting manner. The sub-committee of the prairie farmer organization is taking some of these ideas directly to the various departments. We have proposed to President Roosevelt and Harry L. Hopkins, Federal Relief Administrator, a plan to use six hundred millions for this purpose. This would mean an average of about two hundred thousand dollars to every county in the United States. This would employ about three million men for four months and by their working part time would employ them for six months on this work. The work would be started within thirty days from the time the appropriation is made and without and extra overhead cost.

NRA employees and others in federal service whose jobs are endangered are beginning to register for new government jobs. One NRA employee told us today that if they let out all of the NRA employees here it is likely to affect more than 5,000 workers and that Washington will experience its first real depression.

There are an even twenty Nebraska Midshipmen at the Naval Academy at Annapolis, and only three of them will be in the graduation class this year. They are Hubert B. Harden, of Verdon, Nebr.; Emory D. Stanley, Jr., of Omaha, and Dale E. Cochran, of Genoa, and they are three very happy boys.

This town is different from any town in our land. Here and there you can find some industry, mostly bottling spring water or fizzy water for the increased demand for drink mixing, but generally everybody works for Uncle Sam. They are paid by the taxpayers. Most of them have money so far as money comparisons with our towns in Nebraska is concerned. And they spend that money. The business men make it easy for them to spend.

While a lot of the congressmen went fishing and sight seeing over the holiday most of the farm states congressmen stayed on the job. The farm states representatives held a meeting Saturday to see what can be done about getting the Frazier-Lemke refinance bill passed at this session. With 178 names on the petition to discharge the committee and get the measure up before the house for action, farm states representatives feel that they have a chance at success. They have promises of a number of more names. In the meantime congressmen are flooded with letters from farmers who are threatened with losing their homes. Many have taken advantage of the Frazier-Lemke moratorium. Now they don't know what to do. Their condition is deplorable. These letters are spurring the farm states congressmen in their meeting to volunteer to personally see 48 other congressmen and ask for their signatures.

It costs money to spend money and give relief. Out of the relief fund the other day six million dollars was taken and handed over to the general accounting office and that office says it will add fifteen hundred new employees to take care of the increased auditing work under the five billion dollar work-relief act. That office now employs about 2,700 persons.

Memorial Day in Washington was pretty much like it is at home. There were many speeches, Thous-

and went out and decorated graves. Along Sixteenth street where Gold Star mothers and others had planted memorial trees a little stone marker near each tree had its little flag and a little bouquet of flowers. It was an impressive sight and interest is added here in that men and women who were decorating the grave of a soldier of the north never passed the grave of a soldier of the south without leaving a flower at both graves.

The end of the month and open season on bill collectors here just the same as at home. These Washington bill collectors are about the same as those at home in Nebraska except that nearly everything here costs 15 to 25 per cent more than in Nebraska and these bill collectors are repeaters. You can't stall them off. They just hang around until they get their money. They know how to do it because the spirit among these collectors is the spirit of the Almighty Dollar.

The director of Uncle Sam's national parks service in the interior department, is a Nebraska man. His name is Arno Cammerer and he was born in Arapahoe, Nebr. His father was a German Lutheran minister and the national park director likes to talk about Nebraska and early childhood days and likes to meet Nebraska people when they come to Washington.

We couldn't find any place on the capitol grounds any tree planted to the memory of the late J. Sterling Morton, father of Arbor Day. So we took it up with Dave Lynn, the architect of the capitol and asked him to let us plant a nice white oak in the capitol grounds in memory of the great tree planter of Nebraska. Mr. Lynn is favorable to the idea and we are assured that this will be done.

Clarence VanNess of Stanton, Nebr., has one of the real chances for writing history here. Old Fort Foote, about ten miles up the Potomac river, has been abandoned for a long time. During the civil war this old fort was used by soldiers who had cannon there to keep enemy ships from coming up the river and the fort protected the city of Washington. The old gun emplacements, part of the old barracks and other historical relics are decaying and mouldering with time. Today the man in charge of that old fort is Clarence VanNess of Stanton. He's employed in the park department but on Saturdays and Sundays his job is that of caretaker of Fort Foote.

KARL STEFAN.

### FREE ITEMS!

Here are only a few of the FREE ITEMS in Gamble's \$150,000 June Gift Sale. Garden Hose, Seat Covers, Flashlights, Enamelware, Electric Mangle, Electric Fans, Burma Shave, Kerosene Can, Step Ladders and Paint Brushes.—Adv.

### THE NEBRASKA SCENE

(Political and Otherwise)

by James R. Lowell

The heart-rending flood conditions of the Republican river valley, following as they do the record-breaking drouth of a year ago, point to the necessity of a far-sighted, well formulated program of water conservation in Nebraska. Altho any expenditure no matter how great would be justified to forestall a repetition of the recent tragedy with its upwards of 125 lives lost, not to mention property damage of approximately \$12,000,000, the fact remains that flood control must be secondary to irrigation in a sound conservation program.

An experienced engineer in state employ who prefers not to be named points out that a flood control program considered for itself alone is very apt to run counter to the best interests of everyone concerned.

For example he cites the case of the drainage district at Lincoln where upwards of \$100,000 has been spent straightening and enlarging the Salt Creek channel. This work has made it very unlikely that flood waters will ever roll into the city of Lincoln as they have in years gone by, but it is definitely detrimental from a conservation viewpoint. It would have been better to build a reservoir or two on the creek above the city and spent less on the channel.

The seriousness of the water conservation problem is indicated by the declining water table levels in Nebraska and adjoining states. A questionnaire answered by 1,482 well drillers in the middlewest shows that the decline in Nebraska ranges from 10 to 20 feet over a 10-year period. The situation is as bad or worse in South Dakota, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas.

Engineers agree that our water conservation program must be centered upon the headwaters of our rivers and streams. Reservoirs strategically located will not only conserve waste and flood waters for the inevitable dry periods, but will hold back the rushing torrents which dealt so much havoc in the Republican valley. The creation of electrical power also will be a major phase of this program.

Residents of the upper Republican valley have renewed hopes now that projects planned in that vicinity under the PWA last year may gain a more sympathetic ear in Washington as a result of the flood.

Those plans involve construction of four reservoirs on both north and south forks of the Republican for storage of approximately 100,000 acre feet of water. The Benkeman-Higler-Arickaree project, at an estimated cost of \$2,326,000, has once been rejected. The Imperial Valley project, to cost around \$455,000, is still being considered. It calls for construction of a power dam across the Frenchman river in Chase county.

Projects for which hopes are still held by other communities include the huge Tri-county power and irrigation plan, and on the north and middle Loups and Blue creek. It is the dream of Senator Norris to see all these plans consummated and co-ordinated under a Missouri Valley Authority similar to the much cussed and discussed TVA.

Senator Burke has recommended to the federal reclamation service at Washington that a huge dam be built across the North Platte above Keystone, Nebr., to compromise conflicting Nebraska power and irrigation proposals. This dam, built with reclamation funds, would hold back all waters of the river for the use of the \$7,500,000 Platte Valley PWA project now under construction, and for irrigation in the Tri-county.

Fear was expressed that the North and Middle Loup projects would have to start as irrigation projects alone, if funds were obtained at all, in view of the reluctance on the part of PWA officials to approve additional hydroelectric power projects in Nebraska until they see what comes out of the North Platte and Columbus set-ups.

A summarization of the conservation potentialities in the state will show that approximately three-quarters of a million acres out of the 50 million acres in the state are now under irrigation; about an equal area will be brought under irrigation by projects now underway or approved; and it would be feasible to bring another half million acres under such service. In addition, thousands of acres are being irrigated by means of pumps and this acreage could be greatly increased at a probable profit to the owners.

An appallingly large amount of water that could be stored gets away from Nebraska during the highwater periods. In the North Platte valley enough water to cover two million acres a foot deep is lost each year, as shown by the 30-year average. An almost equal amount gets away in the North and Middle Loup valleys.

Reclamation of arid and unproductive lands of the west was first brought into prominence under the regime of Theodore Roosevelt. Such projects have been subjected to vigorous criticism in recent years, however.

The experience of many of the government-subsidized projects has been far from satisfactory. Costs have been far in excess of estimates and expense of maintenance has also been much higher than those who put the water on their land had been led to expect. Scores of farmers who thought their worries were over when irrigation projects were completed, have found their troubles only started.

Under the PWA plan, however, it is hoped that the Nebraska projects will prove economically sound. Not only has 25 per cent of the cost been granted outright by the federal government, but the sale of electrical power is to be considered.

Meanwhile, the work of rehabilitation is underway in the devastated Republican valley, with Rowland Haynes, state PWA administrator, as co-ordinator. It is declared that no family will be left without a home in which to live, and some livestock and implements will be furnished in order to aid the unfortunates in making a living.

The first county to report its gross assessment of personal property in 1935 is Cuming where a considerable shrinkage in valuations is shown, according to State Tax Commissioner Smith.

In fact, because of the great decrease in number of livestock and the quantities of grain held on

farms, as result of the drouth last year, and due to the Republican river flood, it appears that the assessed valuation of the state will shrink this year despite the natural tendency to increase since 1933. This means a hike in the state tax levy.

The total personal valuation of Cuming county, not including railroad nor corporation franchise assessments, is \$3,717,155 or \$543,535 under a year ago. Decrease in number of cattle and amount of grain on hand was responsible for this, despite the increase in market prices for both.

Smith said that assessors will be able to make allowances for loss due to flood in making their valuations in the Republican river counties. Twelve counties will benefit by revised valuations on real estate where the owners have sustained severe losses by flood.

The law apparently does not provide any way, however, whereby personal property assessed as of April 1, including livestock, household goods and merchandise, can be taken off the tax rolls, even though the owners may have lost such possessions in the recent flood.

County treasurers are objecting to H. R. 78, passed by the recent legislature as an emergency measure allowing delinquent taxes to be paid in annual installments over a 10-year period.

The validity of this law has been attacked in Douglas county where officials have decided to ask permission of the state supreme court for filing an original suit to test its constitutionality. The county treasurers in general believe it would be hard to administer such a law without getting into legal difficulties. They also say it would greatly increase the work of their offices and slow down tax collections materially.

Advocates of power alcohol as a means of utilizing surplus agricultural products have asked federal work relief officials for \$5,000,000 to build six processing plants in Nebraska and California. Phil A. Tomek, of David City, president, and J. J. Bogan, of Lincoln, secretary of the Agricultural Power Alcohol association, have been working on the proposal with federal agencies.

Three of the plants would be in Nebraska, and Tomek says they would make possible a start on a nationwide power alcohol industry which would provide a stabilized, profitable outlet for all raw materials that farmers can produce.

John Latenser, Omaha, state public works administration engineer, has received word from Washington to prepare to make grants up to 45 per cent of the value of projects under the new PWA program. Previously grants have been held to 25 per cent.

A move to have a forest experiment station established in Nebraska to facilitate midwest farm reforestation efforts and aid in the development of the federal shelter belt has been begun in congress. Arbor lodge at Nebraska City is suggested as a likely site for the proposed experiment station.

Preliminary returns from the federal farm census in Nebraska show a three per cent increase in the number of farms in the last five years. Thomas county in the sandhills with an increase of 45 farms had the largest percentage

increase with 25 per cent. Numerically the biggest gain was in Jefferson county where 232 more farms were counted.

D. F. Felton, Ogallala, until recently director of the state department of agriculture and inspection, has been appointed state works progress administrator for Nebraska. Felton turned down the job as chairman of the state liquor commission. Rowland Haynes apparently will continue in charge of direct relief in the state.

### BRIEFLY STATED

Pete Todsen was in Norfolk Tuesday attending a meeting of the J. C. Penney store manager for this territory, returning Tuesday night.

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Johnson and son, Charles, of Plainview, spent last Sunday visiting here at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Tom Edwards.

Fred H. Swingley, Atkinson's hustling and energetic banker, was in the city last Monday visiting friends and looking after business matters.

Miss Helen Reardon has accepted a position as clerk in the national re-employment office and entered upon her new duties Wednesday morning.

Miss Mary Joan Finley, who has been attending Duschene College in Omaha for the past year, came home last Thursday night for the summer vacation.

Mrs. H. J. Birmingham, Mrs. C. E. Stout, Mrs. Edward Campbell and Mrs. W. J. Froelich drove to Sioux City last Monday, returning home that evening.

William Hammond, jr., who has been attending the Nebraska University for the past year, came home the latter part of last week and will spend the summer vacation in the "old home town."

William Carson, for many years a resident of Steel Creek precinct, but now a resident of Lincoln, came up last Thursday night for a few days visit with relatives and to look after business matters.

The Catholic Daughters gave a farewell party at the home of Mr. and Mrs. C. D. Mullen last Tuesday evening, in honor of Mrs. Joe McNamara, who leaves soon for their new home at Valentine.

John Madden, who has had the WNAX bulk station here for the past year, moved his family down from Clark, S. D., last week and they are now comfortably located in the Mrs. E. D. Henry home.

Mr. and Mrs. Pete Todson and children went down to Grand Island last Sunday taking home Mrs. Todsen's mother, Mrs. W. J. Blaine, who had been visiting at the Todsen home for the past ten days.

Sunday Morris (Mike) Johnson, Mrs. Johnson and their grand daughter, Lurlean Kirkpatrick, returned from Lyons, Nebr., bringing with them Mrs. Fred Hoyer and her son, Gene. Mrs. Hoyer, sister to Mrs. Johnson, will visit here and may go to California to reside.

Mrs. Chet Perkins and daughter, Lain, and son, Floyd, and her father-in-law, J. K. Perkins, of Lake Preston, S. D., came down Sunday to spend a week visiting at the home of Ernest Perkins at Page. J. K. Perkins is 91 years old and one of the few remaining Civil War veterans.

Mrs. Earl Burtis left last Monday for Chadron, where she will spend several days visiting at the home of her parents. Miss Reta Reardon accompanied her as far as Valentine where she will visit friends until the end of the week, when she will return home with Mrs. Burtis.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bellin, who have lived the last two months at Denison, Ia., have moved back to O'Neill where they intend to make their future home. Mr. and Mrs. Bellin plan to construct a residence south of and adjoining the residence of the late Fred Bellen and northeast of the Northwestern stockyards.

Mrs. E. B. Hedgecock, of Genoa, arrived in the city last Sunday morning for a short visit at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Larry Snell. She came up with some friends from Genoa who visited friends at Lynch during the day.

She left for home Sunday evening and was accompanied by Mrs. Snell who will visit there until the latter part of the week.

The Junior members of the Country Club take this opportunity of inviting the Senior members to a Father's day flag tournament on Sunday, the 16th, at 1 o'clock. Everyone will receive a fair handicap. There will be prizes for blind bag, low score, low handicap score, as well as for birdies on the fourth and seventh holes.

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