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Children Cry for Pitcher's Castoria.

The McCook Tribune.
 IRRIGATION IN NEBRASKA.

The way to the success of the irrigation movement in Nebraska lies through the statute book. There must be a revision of such scanty laws as we have, and the addition of a comprehensive scheme of legislation as broad and deep as the problem with which it will deal.

Thus far these articles have dealt with the need, the benefits and the history of irrigation, and very much yet remains to be said of the agricultural and commercial aspects of it, but it is imperatively necessary at this point to urge upon the friends of the movement and the statesmen at Lincoln the need of legislation that shall lay the groundwork for success on a grand scale.

One-third of the legislative session is gone. The remaining forty days are none too long for the friends of irrigation to consider and determine what they will ask and to press it upon the legislature.

The writer has received many evidences, in letters and newspapers, of the deep interest already awakened. This interest is by no means confined to the western part of the state, nor to those who are to be most directly benefited by irrigation. Besides many encouraging words from settlers in the arid regions, letters have been received from individuals and companies who are ready to invest large amounts of capital in these enterprises if it can be shown to be stable and profitable. It is to be hoped that those who have followed the subject thus far will give the same earnest attention and support to this question of legislative requirements, which really lies at the root of the whole matter. I.—THE PRESENT NEBRASKA LAWS.

Until two years ago Nebraska had no laws bearing on the subject of irrigation. Up to that time it was regarded as a crime to justly claim that any portion of this state needed to resort to artificial means to supplement the rainfall. Even then such an intimation was thought to be a reprehensible vice, and only since the heavy hours of calamity has been laid upon a dozen or more of our western counties has the intimation been seen in the light of a virtue.

The laws enacted in 1889 deal only with water rights and the right-of-way for ditches. The most that can be said of them is that they represent a step in the right direction. Under their provisions the water in natural streams can be appropriated and conducted to lands conveniently situated. On these points the law is quite full and is intended to secure fair treatment to all. It is defective in some respects, however, and as a whole inadequate to the demands of the subject if a systematic effort shall ever be made to develop the vast region lying between the 100th meridian and the Wyoming boundary. One of the defects of the law is the adoption of the square inch as the unit of measurement instead of the cubic foot, and another is the definition of the rights of riparian proprietors.

Space need not, however, be given to a discussion of the defects of our present laws, since they will doubtless be repealed, and much more extensive and comprehensive laws enacted in their stead, when Nebraska decides to take hold of irrigation in earnest.

II.—A SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION.

If Nebraska is to begin now to follow in the steps of Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, California and other states and territories, making the most of her natural water supply and turning her arid acres into fertile gardens, farms and orchards, she must first provide a system of administration. She must ascertain how much water is available and how far it can be made to go. When comprehensive laws have been provided, she must have competent men to enforce them, as she does in other departments of her government.

Fortunately, Colorado is our next door neighbor—Colorado with her soil and climate of similar character, with prosperous irrigation enterprises in operation, and with progressive and well-seasoned ideas which we may pattern after.

The governor of Colorado recently appointed Messrs. E. L. Wells, T. C. Henry and J. S. Greene as a commission to make a report on the revision of the irrigation laws. Their report, which has just been presented, is probably the best guide for Nebraska which could be compiled even if we were to appoint a commission to study the subject independently. Colorado already had extensive laws, but when the bill reported by the commissioners has been enacted it will probably have the best legal basis for its development in irrigation to be found in the statutes of any state.

About two-thirds of Colorado, or 65,000 square miles, is open to irrigation, the rest being mountain land, while the field of operation in Nebraska at first would probably be about thirty-eight thousand square miles. The first essential for successfully grappling with the problem in this state would be the appointment of a state engineer. Under his direction, here, as in Colorado, the semi-arid regions would have to be divided into water districts or basins. In Colorado there are six of these grand districts, and sixty-seven smaller districts. They are naturally divided by the water-sheds, and no great scheme of irrigation can be planned until they are scientifically determined. This matter will be amplified a little, further on.

In Colorado the state engineer is appointed by the governor and receives a salary of \$4,000 a year. He may appoint one or more assistants, who receive \$10 a day when actually employed. In Colorado, also, they have superintendents of irrigation and water commissioners in each of the districts to see that the laws are rigidly complied with. But there the work is much further advanced that a much larger administrative force is required than will be necessary in Nebraska for a long time to come. It is probable that a good live state engineer, who knew his business and was thoroughly imbued with enthusiasm for his state, would be able to attend to this branch of the subject in Nebraska with little assistance. He must, however, be a man thoroughly expert and thoroughly experienced in this line of work, and the salary provided should be sufficient to command the highest order of ability.

It would be the duty of the state engineer to first determine the natural water districts and the extent and nature of the supply. He would then supervise the construction of all canals and ditches and see that the work was done in compliance with the statutes as well as the laws of engineering. This matter is of the highest importance. Some very peculiar ditches have been constructed in Nebraska by men whose enthusiasm exceeded their knowledge of engineering, as well as by rascally contractors. By this means a great deal of money has been wasted and water ruthlessly run off without regard to the needs of the territory to be covered, or the limits of the precious supply.

Successful irrigation on a large scale is impossible without the service of a competent state engineer. To attempt to go further with the work without such assistance is like putting out an stormy sea without a compass. III.—LET'S HAVE A DRAINAGE MAP.

If every man who reads this article had a copy of Part II. of the report of the state engineer of Colorado for 1888, with its carefully drawn and handsomely illustrated diagrams, he would say with me, "Let's have a drainage map."

Accompanying the report is a large colored map, showing the six grand divisions or basins formed by the natural watersheds, the principal streams and their direction, and the general features of the country with which irrigation must deal. A similar map of the half of Nebraska lying west of the 100th meridian would give our people and legislators their first real view of the opportunities for irrigation in this state. Such a map, as has been said, is in fact indispensable to the subject.

Besides the large map mentioned, the Colorado report contains a large number of maps and diagrams of various water districts, or portions of districts. These furnish the best testimony to the immense development already secured in Colorado. They show not only the small and large streams and local water-sheds, but also the various canals and ditches in operation. It is inspiring to look at them, and to see to what a degree of perfection the administration of Colorado's irrigation interests has been brought.

Another very valuable feature of the report is the graphical presentation of the daily mean discharge, in cubic feet per second, of the principal streams in the state from March to November of the last four or five years. When it is possible to write to Lincoln and obtain a state report showing every water basin, every water shed, and the capacity of every stream in the semi-arid regions, we shall have the means of making irrigation in Nebraska a success.

The bill reported by the Colorado commission, besides the features already mentioned, makes provision for the following:

The appropriation, distribution and use of water.
 The construction and maintenance of irrigation works and storage reservoirs.
 The condemnation of lands for the site and way of such works.
 Regulating the appropriation of subterranean waters and the management of artesian wells.

Adjudicating rights and priorities of those diverting or storing water for irrigation.
 Defining the domestic uses of water.

Prescribing the duties and liabilities of the carriers of water and the rights of consumers.
 Fixing the maximum rate to be charged consumers.

Authorizing owners and patrons of ditches to agree for the rotation of water among themselves.
 Prohibiting unlawful interference or malicious injury to irrigation works.
 Providing penalties for the violation of the laws and means for their enforcement.

IV.—HOW CHANGES IN THE LAW CAN BE OBTAINED.

How are the comprehensive laws essential to Nebraska's irrigation development to be obtained? This is the live question that must first be solved before any of the benefits of the movement can be realized.

If the present legislature does not enact the necessary laws there can be no substantial progress for the next two years. On the other hand, if the present legislature gives the state the benefits of the new laws of Colorado, irrigation will be far advanced before the next senate and house assemble at Lincoln in 1893.

It is necessary for the friends of the movement to take steps at once to prepare and present a draft of such a bill as they will push before the present legislature. The report of the Colorado commission should be the basis of such a bill. S. W. Nebraska was well represented at Wednesday's convention at McCook. Another convention to get the sentiment of the big western counties, might well be convened at Sidney within a fortnight. If these two conventions will appoint committees to consider the report of the Colorado commission and draft a bill for the presentation to the legislature, there is every reason to believe that within the next sixty days Nebraska can have upon her statute books the most progressive legislation for the encouragement of irrigation possessed by any American state. And when that has been accomplished the battle has been half won.

Verily likely it will be thought necessary to fortify the report of such committee with petitions from the western half of the state urging the enactment of the bill. If so, no time is to be lost in preparing and circulating these petitions.

These considerations are of the utmost importance to the friends of irrigation and should receive immediate thought and action. If the arid lands could be irrigated with mere talk they would doubtless bring forth abundantly at the next harvest time. But unfortunately talk is only valuable to the purpose when transformed into laws, into capital and finally into the translucent water that makes the desert smile. Therefore, let us get laws, money and water, and lay the foundation for prosperity.
 Wm. E. SMYTHE.

A Scrap of Paper Saves Her Life.

It was just an ordinary scrap of wrapping paper, but it saved her life. She was in the last stages of consumption, told by physicians that she was incurable and could live only a short time; she weighed less than seventy pounds. On a piece of wrapping paper she read of Dr. King's New Discovery, and got a sample bottle; it helped her, she bought a large bottle, it helped her more, bought another and grew better fast, continued its use and is now strong, healthy, rosy, plump, weighing 140 pounds. For fuller particulars send stamp to W. H. Cole, druggist, Fort Smith. Trial bottles of this wonderful discovery free at A. McMullan's drug store. 34.

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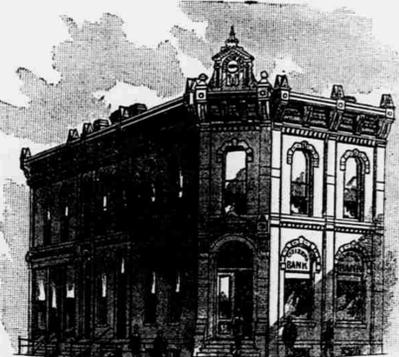
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