

SPP (OKE) POSTWAR PLAN SEN. GORDON OFFICE MRPC/3/DOODEN

June 19, 1944

Mr. Clay Cochran, Manager
Salem Chamber of Commerce
147 N. Liberty St.
Salem, Oregon

Dear Clay:

Thanks for yours of June 15 in re Willamette Valley organization. I am very glad you are taking up with the Chamber of Commerce from the Willamette Valley area in the institute meeting June 25 the matter of getting the Valley set up for vigorous, effective work in support of the Willamette Valley project.

I am putting in the hands of Senator Gordon and Congressman Ellsworth a rather complete outline of a Willamette Valley program. I am urging upon these two progressive members from Oregon a continued vigorous effort in behalf of this whole program. I am arguing with them that this should become the greatest single development project to be undertaken in the entire Pacific Coast region. Their energetic follow-up of the work will naturally depend heavily upon the interest of the people affected. For this reason I want the people of the Valley to understand all of the facts fully and to be ready to press for further development step by step as they are in order. The way the State Commission operates now, the people of the Valley have no opportunity of learning the values of the multiple-use program outlined in the original Corps of Engineers' report.

In the original report there are five major uses for water, i.e., flood control, power, navigation, irrigation and drainage. It might be that a program for extended domestic water supply for the Valley should be included in the program, the domestic water supply including industrial uses where not covered in the original report. An engineer named Searing has brought that to my attention lately and we are putting the matter before the Engineer Corps to determine whether they feel it necessary to supplement their original report with a special study on domestic and industrial water supply. As soon as Senator Gordon gets a reply back from the Engineer Corps on this subject, we shall decide whether it should be included in the whole program and, if so, in what manner we should proceed to have it incorporated.

FLOOD CONTROL: Seven dams for flood control work are now authorized. Two of these have been finished and as soon as war necessities are past in respect to materials and labor, work on the others will be taken up. The North Santiam dam which is for flood control and power will probably be the first of this type on which work should be started. The other four have been engineered and I understand will be ready for construction in the immediate post war period. In addition to the \$11,000,000 previously authorized for flood control work in the Valley, \$20,000,000 for similar work is provided in the pending

flood control bill which is before Congress. This should take our flood control program along as rapidly as funds are available to carry out the authorizations already made and those in the pending bill. The Willamette Valley has an average discharge of water ranging from 25,000,000 acre feet to 30,000,000 acre feet. Much of this runs off during the heavy winter rains or during early spring when snows are melting in large volume. If we are to control the flood waters of the Willamette Valley, the total discharge indicates that we shall have to carry this feature of the work on for many years. However, considering that the Colorado River has a flow ranging from 6,000,000 acre feet to 26,900,000 acre feet, with an average of only 16,000,000 acre feet, and with a tremendous variation between wet and dry years, the importance of the Willamette Valley project is emphasized in a tremendous way.

HYDRO-ELECTRIC POWER: Figures have been given me to the effect that at least 1,5000,000 kilowatts of energy is potential in the Willamette basin. Most of this of course is in streams flowing from the Cascade Mountains. Some of it because of dam site conditions may not be immediately available until the demand for power increases beyond any present figure. However, this huge asset should be kept in mind as an ultimate resource for industrial and domestic use in the Valley area. Some of the power sites, like that of the first North Santiam project, I am told will be very economic with resultant low rates. Where these power sites are near the rim of the Valley the transmission distance should be very short. Sites near the North Santiam dam can be had where power delivered there should be barely above generating cost. Other sites further back in the mountains will involve only short transmission lines and should insure very low power rates. We should fight with a most determined purpose to have these power rates based upon actual cost of generation and transmission, and not put on some theoretical common rate plane. Only in this manner can we get the rightful benefit of abundant and low cost energy for the Willamette Valley's industrial future. Whether we should insist on power generating facilities at the dams adapted to this purpose at the time of first construction will depend largely upon the supply of electric energy for the whole region during peace time conditions. If we do not insist upon full generating facilities being installed at time of building the dams, we should at least fight for the installation of penstocks and perhaps in some cases power-houses. It is very important to the Willamette basin to have this power program progress on an economic basis instead of letting our neighbors of Puget Sound, Spokane and Los Angeles force upon us some system which will deprive us of our natural economic advantage.

NAVIGATION: Navigation is a vastly important feature of the Willamette Valley program. One feature of this part of the program is the rebuilding of the Oregon City locks to make them large, modern, and adapted to the handling of tugs and barges in an expeditious manner. Rafting logs from the Willamette basin to tide water mills should not be considered as a permanent arrangement. By carrying navigation up the Valley as far as Eugene and thereby offering low water rates, navigation insures opportunity for heavy industrial operations throughout the Valley. This program should insure location of plants around the Valley, for heavy wood manufacturing, utilization of wood waste by the Scholler process or other more modern methods, building pulp mills where the shortest possible haul of raw materials

is possible and for electro-chemical and electro-metallurgical installations as near power generating plants as may be economical. As this industrial program proceeds other types of industry will naturally be attracted to the Valley and in this manner we could balance an increased population of a million or more people in the Valley by getting sound industrial and agricultural production set-up therein. The present plan is to give 6 ft. of water as far as Salem, 5 ft. of water to Albany and Corvallis and whatever is deemed economically sound in the channel from there to Eugene. I am told by engineers that the stretch between Junction City and Eugene will probably best be treated by digging a straight canal rather than following the tortuous course of the river in that section.

IRRIGATION: This is one of the most important features of the Willamette Valley project. I know that probably 250,000 acres of the deep, rich silt soil in the center of the Valley will not need much, if any irrigation. On the other hand, there are three or four million acres of land in the Valley which must have for practically every year, the facilities for irrigation if these lands are to be used in a modern, highly productive and prosperous way. July and August as a rule are without moisture from the air and this is a vital period for most good cash crops. Unless we make irrigation available to all parts of the Valley needing the same, farm operations may continue on large individual holdings. If we are to get a heavy agricultural population in the Valley, we will have to cut the lands up into relative small tracts which may be handled largely by each individual owner and where intensive agricultural production can be carried on by one man. The crops which can be made highly profitable for individual farmers operating in the Valley where irrigation during any dry period is available are those specialties for which the Valley in a soil and a climatic way is perfectly adapted. The Valley could easily be made to produce from \$100,000,000 to \$200,000,000 of dairy products if we could irrigate pasture and feed lands during the dry months. This continuous supply of green feeds for practically the year through also offers the perfect opportunity for developing one of the best pure-blood livestock industries of the world. In addition to dairying and pure-bred livestock, the production of all kinds of vegetables, berries, flax, cherries, seed and many other products would be easily within reach. Without trying to produce sub-tropical types of crops, we have enough specialties perfectly adapted to the Valley to make our farm operations enormously profitable and capable of sustaining at least another million people, together with a proper balance of industrial workers. Canning, dehydrating, ordinary freezing, quick freezing and all other methods of utilizing our agricultural products in the Valley should be fostered and encouraged on every hand. Taken as a whole the Willamette Valley project can be made the greatest development project of all the west. Irrigation undoubtedly will ultimately take the form of gravity distribution of water for certain areas and pumping from pools, streams and underground sources in other areas. An exhaustive study should be made as to the best form on an economical basis that could be carried out in the Valley.

DRAINAGE: I have been told by the College that at least 1,250,000 acres of land in the Valley should be drained in order to make the same available for perfect agriculture. Of this total 250,000 acres should be surface drained and approximately 1,000,000 acres tile drained. As this work progresses and the soured land of the Valley is revitalized we should have an enormous productive possibility where at present the

the production is nil or negligible. Much of that so-called white soured land in the Valley is merely the surface of deep soil deposits. When this surface has been properly drained and the land is made enormously productive by the aid of limited irrigation, a great present waste in the Willamette Valley can be converted into an agricultural paradise. In carrying out the drainage program undoubtedly districts will have to be formed the same as in irrigation work.

Two irrigation projects for the Valley have been surveyed by the U. S. Reclamation Bureau. One is at Camby and the other is known as the Long Tom. Surveys are about completed for a large project known as Yamhill. Field work has been done on the Tualatin Valley project. The Reclamation Bureau says that in view of the fact that the farmers in the Long Tom and Camby districts have refused to go ahead that they will make no further surveys other than the Yamhill and Tualatin Valley until the people show a disposition to use same. My opinion is that the Bureau operating under the existing law is trying to put upon the lands higher costs than are warranted by the short-time use of water needed in the Valley. In other words, the Bureau is undertaking to saddle on to the farmers a higher percentage of the flood control work than is economically sound for Valley operations. If this deduction is correct, it will be our duty to get the Reclamation laws amended so that the burden will not be unduly heavy upon our people.

If we get the laws properly amended, than it will be necessary to place before the farmers of the Valley clear concise statements of fact. Only in this manner can we undertake the sponsorship of properly set-up projects. Such educational work will need a thorough analysis of all the facts including the higher production possibilities of the soil and corresponding higher returns to the farmers through irrigation. I see no way of doing this effectively except we can organize the Valley, hold a multitude of meetings and have someone directing the work who is in close relationship with the State Engineer and can develop needed facts and get them before the people. Ultimately such work will need a full time capable man. It may be that the State would appropriate funds to employ such a man if a volunteer association of the Valley would direct the whole program.

Under the present set-up, the State Commission is directing its efforts to flood control work. The Valley needs no one here for that purpose. When we get the plan properly outlined, our Senators and Congressmen will take care of the flood control efforts.

Spokane spent something like \$360,000 to get the Grand Coulee project authorized, a portion of this of course being spent on the original Columbia Basin Irrigation program which planned gravity flow of water. Los Angeles spent something like \$600,000 to get the Boulder Canyon project and the All American Canal project approved by Congress. Neither the Willamette Valley, State of Oregon nor the city of Portland spent more than a few dollars when we got over the Willamette Valley project survey which has resulted in the beginning of this mighty program. In view of the no cost feature involved in getting the original survey which started the project it does seem that it would not be unfair to have a small annual sum put into the consummation of the work.

especially when it promises such vast profits. I do not see how we can do this except we get the Valley thoroughly organized. I would appreciate the reactions from your meeting with the other members of the Chambers of Commerce executives in the institute at Eugene June 26.

Sincerely,

W. D. B. Dodson

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