

Stream Pollution Remedy

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WILLAMETTE valley projects involve so many phases of flood control, drainage, navigation, irrigation, road building, and similar undertakings, that the report of the engineers, which is expected to be released about June 7, is awaited with eagerness by thousands in the valley and by groups which have been organized to take care of the multiple phases of the work proposed.

Stream pollution is included as one of the problems to be treated. State Treasurer Holman is an ardent advocate of action to clear up the water-courses and has been in touch with various official bodies where the watersheds include several counties and no single county court can effectively operate to purify the streams.

Rufus Holman has been a leader in Oregon for many years. His concern, as a member of the state board of control, is with all forms of land improvement, county advancement, and civic betterment. Incidentally, it may be noted that Mr. Holman announces a greater sum on deposit in the state treasury now than ever recorded in the financial annals of the state.

Mr. Holman's interest in the sanitary river problem in Oregon, and the manner in which it shall be adjusted, prompts him to send a communication from David Donaldson, engineer, designed to bring an early remedy for the unsanitary condition due to dumping of sewage into the Willamette and its tributaries.

In discussing this vital subject, Mr. Donaldson writes as follows:

"In the primary consideration of a purification campaign for better public sanitation, the first inquiry must relate to laws

available and their sufficiency. Oregon has all the necessary laws for such a purpose, but falls short of the machinery for the efficient functioning of these laws. This same condition has existed in many communities showing similar faults, and the simple cure is the re-alignment of existing governing bodies, or of delegates from these for the express purpose of dealing with the unsanitary conditions.

"Area covered is one of the essential factors and since purification of streams must have watershed limitations, it seldom follows that boundaries of a watershed agree with the political boundaries of municipality, county or state.

"Some organization therefore must be set up to cover the area effectively; this need not necessarily be new, but compounded from the already elected representative governing bodies found within that area, such as municipal councils or commissions and county courts.

"If the watershed district includes several counties having within them various cities, the controlling body can readily be formed by the chairmen of the county courts and the mayors of the included cities. If the latter number appears likely to result in a too numerous board, the mayor of the capital city only might be seated, and matters relative to the other cities could be presented by the mayor of the city in question. Provision should be made for substitute delegates from these bodies with the view of obtaining from each body the officer most capable and interested in better sanitary service.

"California has a set-up such as this, which has functioned for over 12 years in active control of sanitary services, the condition there being not so much that of stream pollution as of extended sanitary services to communities, corporate or incorporate, but combining for the object of better sanitary service at less cost.

"Each district is controlled by the member of the county board of supervisors sitting for that area and by the mayors of the incorporated cities lying within its boundaries. Technical services are provided by a chief engineer and a staff of engineers and other experts in sewer design and sewage disposal, with legal assistance. All work proposed or constructed having the approval of the state board of health as the public authority whose recommendation for the right or disapproval of the wrong, provides the necessary material for such corrective action as the attorney-general may legally cause to be taken. The title of such bodies could be sanitation and purification districts and the division of Oregon into an effective grouping of counties and cities for this purpose should present no serious difficulty, having in mind the basic fact of watershed limitations, so that as far as possible certain streams shall lie completely within the selected district boundaries.

"Consideration would need to be given to the population included with the view of limiting the number of districts, so that an excessive subdivision may not exist with a needless multiplicity of boards. Such a simple realignment of the existing elected authorities would replace the present ineffective machinery, with an authority directly and specifically charged by the public with the responsibility for immediate activity, towards better public sanitary service for the citizens of Oregon. The urgent need for such activity is everywhere acknowledged, the facts of unsanitary conditions are established, the laws to remedy such are sufficient, so that all that remains to be done is to apply remodeled existing machinery of representative government, in such a form as will secure a prompt application of these laws, towards an early solution."

Commanco Portland Wealth of Nature Lauded at Forum

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Oregon's recreational resources cover a multitude of joys in life, sight and financial returns as viewed last Monday at the meeting of the Members' Forum of the Chamber when John Yeon, Will R. Lewis, William L. Finley, C. P. Keyser and Frank Branch Riley were the five speakers of the day in an interesting program at which Alfred P. Kelley, chairman of the Chamber's Recreational Resources committee, presided.

The speakers covered the great improvements and advantages and beauties of highways, mountaineering and wilderness areas, fishing, wild life, rivers and parks and "Oregon the Beautiful."

The program not only was inspirational but full of interesting, worthwhile information, not too well known by the 200 members of the Forum who gathered to hear the educational talks.

Chester Moores, chairman of the Forum, in closing the program wished everybody a Happy New Year and urged everyone to hear E. B. MacNaughton, president of the First National bank, speaker at next Monday's meeting in an intensely interesting talk on business from a banker's viewpoint.