

ECONOMIC FLOOD CONTROL IS THE NATION'S PROBLEM

For 4,000 years, or more, mankind has wrestled almost incessantly with the flood problem. To prevent rivers from bursting their banks, inundating the land, ruining crops, destroying cities, and claiming human lives is one of civilization's oldest endeavors. And yet, during February, 1916, the South experienced another of its devastating deluges.

The floods of the lower Mississippi Valley are as old as the waterway itself, and becoming more costly year after year as this rich delta region is developed. So commonplace has the inundation of the valley become that it no longer possesses especial news value and therefore receives little more than passing attention by the press of the East, North and West except on those occasions when conditions are extraordinary and affect the whole country.

The flood zone of the alluvial region is as great as the combined areas of Vermont, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and Connecticut. During the spring of 1912, when the levees broke, more than 12,000 square miles of land, an area as great as that of Switzerland, was converted into a veritable sea. Much has been said about the relation between forests and floods. There is an impression that the cutting of our timbered areas has been directly responsible for the serious deluges of recent years. It is reasoned that under normal conditions the humus formed by decayed leaves absorbs large quantities of water during heavy downpours and thus prevents excessive drainage into the rivers, while the heavy blanket of snow in the North melts gradually when protected by trees, but produces floods when unshielded from the direct rays of the sun. For these reasons reforestation is strongly advocated by many as one of the most feasible ways of obtaining flood control.

The argument on its face appears fairly reasonable, but there is another side to it. In the first place our history does not bear out the contention that forests prevent floods. At the time of the Rebellion we had vast timbered areas, but regardless of this some of the worst floods the valley has ever known occurred between 1858 and 1867, according to government records. Furthermore, we have authentic data describing heavy floods as far back as 1718.

On the other hand there is a plan for the construction of impounding reservoirs, to hold back the flood waters and enable their use for irrigation and power purposes and the improvement of the rivers during their periods of low water. It is argued that floods should be handled from the sources of the various tributaries, rather than by building levees along the lower Mississippi. This method has nearly as many adherents as that of reforestation, and if feasible from an engineering and economic standpoint would appear rather attractive. Opponents of

the plan point out several of its serious phases, however.

It seems quite reasonable that the construction of an additional outlet or two would materially assist the river in carrying off its surplus volume of water and thus enable it to remain within its banks during crucial periods. The plan is one which has long been advocated, but like all of the schemes so far advanced, it has its opponents. Such a plan if carried out would probably reduce levee heights and lessen river depths. The latter might prove very undesirable because of its possible influence upon navigation. One of the major difficulties, however, would come in controlling such an outlet and preventing the main stream from being diverted into it. This misfortune might occur if, the velocity of the flow were greater in the outlet than in the river itself.

We come to the so-called, comprehensive plan for flood protection which amounts to a proposal that the question be handled in a broad, thorough manner and settled once and forever. The Mississippi River and all of its tributaries, according to this scheme, would be taken as a unit, removed from politics and placed under the control of a Federal commission, as was done in the case of the Panama Canal. This could be accomplished by congress, which at the same time would set up a well-defined policy and establish a continuing fund to insure it being carried out and maintained.

All of the rivers would be handled from their sources to their mouths in whatever manner best fitted the general method of control. The present levee system would be completed, and standardized from one end to the other, and henceforth intelligently maintained. To guard it and the river, the banks would be protected with revetments. This would prevent them from caving and compel the stream to maintain its present course. Furthermore source stream control—which amounts to the establishment of reservoirs along the upper reaches of the various rivers—would be worked out so as to conserve some of the surplus water. In the regions where it can be done safely and economically, for power and irrigation purposes and to somewhat lower the crest of the floods.—Searle Hendee, in August Popular Mechanics Magazine.

Ex-Gov. Martin F. Ansel of Greenville, has accepted an invitation from the national executive committee to make speeches for Wilson in the doubtful states. This will be his third speaking tour in the national campaigns, having spoken for Bryan in 1908 and for Wilson in 1912.

On Thursday afternoon the twelve year old son of Mr. Sam Williams, who lives about five miles from Neeses, was struck by lightning while walking in his father's yard, and instantly killed.

YOUNG LADY KILLED.

Party of Five Young People Fell With Bridge.

A long distance telephone message from Ware Shoals Monday to the Greenville Daily News stated that Miss Neva Dallas, aged twenty-one is dead, Miss Lola Cobb slightly injured and Hoy Jackson hurt about the head, as a result of the collapse of a bridge Monday evening at about half past six o'clock. The three persons named with Miss Evelyn Dallas and C. R. Oliver were out walking, and went out upon a rock bridge, supposedly weakened by the recent high waters of Saluda river, to look at the stream. The structure collapsed, and the entire party fell about 25 feet. Miss Evelyn Dallas and Mr. Oliver escaped injury. Miss Neva Dallas died at half past nine o'clock.

Miss Neva Dallas graduated in June from the Woman's College of Due West. She and her sister had planned to leave soon for a house party in Georgia. The five young people, all of Ware Shoals, were out for a Sunday afternoon stroll when the tragedy occurred. The community was overcast with grief by the accident. All parties concerned are well known in Ware Shoals. Miss Cobb is a daughter of the superintendent of the mill here. Messrs. Jackson and Oliver are employees in the office of the mill here.

Mr. Dallas, father of two of the young ladies, is a merchant at Ware Shoals, Laurens county. The accident occurred about one quarter of a mile from the town. The bridge was an old structure, and the ground was very soft. The pedestrians, gave way almost immediately after the party walked out upon it.

Information in regard to the sad accident, was obtained from Mr. Oliver, who was unhurt. The two persons injured are not thought to be suffering from serious wounds. Miss Cobb is hurt about the head and in the side.

Remberts News Notes.

Rembert, S. C., July 24.—Close observers of the weather knew last Spring when the unprecedented drought was here that the other extreme would come. Like all other sections we were hard hit by the hurricane which raged here for hours. Crops went down before it and are severely damaged.

People here surely are sorry that Kershaw County had it so hard in the loss of her bridges and fine crops on the river lands, but the energy of her people will soon reopen the ways of travel. These disasters come from time to time and the wise way is to prepare to meet them in a way that they won't damage us so much the next time. If the river was straightened the water could go to sea more rapidly and with dams the fine river lands could be saved. With the aid of citizens the United States government could soon straighten it and then the lands which are minus of wealth could be made very productive.

The cotton crop is going to be light, irrespective of government or other report. Corn is damaged much. These

two crops are the staple ones of the South and when they fail the country feels it. Peas and potatoes bid fair to be alright.

The writer had the pleasure of enjoying one day last week the fine hospitality of Mr. Thomas Smith, of the Beulah section. He is a fine farmer, as his crops show, notwithstanding they were hit hard by the storm. He also saw his good friend, Rev. J. W. Smith.

Misses Kate Moseley and Bell Harper, of Sumter, who have been visiting in the Beulah neighborhood have returned home.

SUMTER SUFFERED LITTLE.

Bridges Over Black River Repaired—Damage Estimated at About \$300.

Supervisor P. M. Pitts stated this morning that Sumter county had been let off light by the recent storm and high water. It had not suffered nearly so much as Clarendon, Florence, Williamsburg, or other adjacent counties, where thousands of dollars would have to be spent in replacing and making repairs on bridges and causeways. Mr. Pitts estimated the total loss to Sumter county at about \$300. All of the damaged bridges and causeways, with the exception of the Hudson bridge over Lynches river and a bridge over Rafting Creek near Hagood, would be repaired by noon Friday and in good condition for crossing.

Mr. Pitts stated that two of the causeways over Black River had already been repaired and the third causeway would be repaired by noon Friday, giving citizens opportunity to cross at the most convenient causeway on the river. The bridges and causeway generally were little damaged and the repairs were made just as soon as the water subsided sufficiently to allow work to be done. A causeway on the new road from McBride's crossing to Trinity and Shiloh was washed out and this would not be repaired for several days.—Sumter Item.

\$50,000 OFFERED ON WILSON.

Hughes Batters Shy and Only Willing to Give Odds of Six to Five.

New York, July 21.—The refusal of the New Jersey Progressives to endorse Hughes, with the presentation of President Wilson's Mexican policy by Secretary Lane in The World Sunday, brought out a large amount of Wilson money in the Wall Street district yesterday.

Edward McQuade, who handles most of the big commissions on the Broad Street curb market, reported that he had received commissions from various parts of the country to wager about \$50,000 on Wilson at odds of 1 to 2. Several New York Stock Exchange firms which have heretofore backed Mr. Hughes have switched about, he said, and are willing to place their money on the President at the odds quoted.

Hughes batters were extremely shy, and the very best odds they would offer were 6 to 5. Even on that basis there was only a small amount of money to be obtained. A week ago the odds quoted on Hughes were 2 to 1, and some betting was done at that figure, particularly by Stock Exchange houses. Their willingness to back Mr. Wilson, so manifest yesterday, was looked upon as an attempt on their part to hedge.

CROP LOSSES ON STATE FARMS.

Supt. Griffith of Penitentiary Tells of Damage by Wind and Water.

Columbia, July 23.—D. J. Griffith, superintendent of the state penitentiary, said yesterday that the recent floods had wrought havoc on the State farms, destroying about 500 acres of corn and about 350 acres of peas. The cotton crop also was affected, about 150 acres being very badly damaged by the wind. The portion of the crop which was completely destroyed was on the low, swampy land, the hill sections not suffering except by winds.

Owing to the interruption of communications, the amount of damage to the dykes on the farm could not be ascertained, but it is certain that the loss in this direction is heavy.

Capt. Griffith said that five of the eight convicts who escaped from the State farm on the night of June 30 had been recaptured.

CANDIDATE MAKES STATEMENT.

(Political Advertisement)
At the meeting in the opera house on last Friday afternoon in regard to the bridge question I expressed myself as being opposed to the passage of any bill in the Legislature which would provide for the issuance of bonds without submitting the question to the voters of the county in an election.

I was away when the first meeting was held on the bridge question, and when I went to the meeting on Friday I did not intend having anything to say at all. I was led to express myself as it is my opinion and strongly my opinion that as a rule voters should express themselves upon the issuance of bonds for their county. I still believe in that principle and always shall.

However a calamity has befallen us and an emergency confronts us. We are now without the bridge that is absolutely necessary to connect the sections of our county, and which vitally affects our connections with the rest of the state by highway. There can hardly be any serious dispute among us but that we must have the bridge replaced, and that we want it done as quickly as possible, and it is beyond question that the county would vote for any bonds for the purpose overwhelmingly. After a closer thought as to the situation I believe it is one in which the county will be best served by that course which will give us relief the quickest in the present distress.

Therefore while I believe there should as a rule be an election on the issuance of bonds by a county, I believe this is an emergency which warrants such course as will give us the bridge the quickest, namely the authorization of the necessary bonds by the Legislature, and I shall advocate such a course.

T. K. Trotter.

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