

# REPORT

ON A

## PUBLIC IRRIGATION CORPORATION BILL.

VICTORIA, B.C., November 17th, 1913.

*The Hon. William R. Ross, K.C.,  
Minister of Lands, Victoria, B.C.*

SIR.—In compliance with your request, I have redrafted the Public Irrigation Corporation Bill, and herewith hand you a copy of the revised draft, together with a report explaining briefly the purpose to be accomplished by the measure and some of its more important features.

The original Bill was drafted at your request in the latter part of last January by J. F. Armstrong, Chairman of the Board of Investigation, A. P. Luxton, K.C., of Victoria, and myself, and was introduced by you at the last session of the Provincial Parliament in response to an urgent appeal, through resolutions adopted at the Kelowna Irrigation Convention, and otherwise, from many representative farmers and land-owners in the Interior of the Province. However, owing to the fact that it was late in the session before the Bill could be completed, it seemed best to you to let it go over for a year in order that it might receive the more mature consideration and discussion which such an important measure warranted.

The drafting of the original and revised Bills was greatly facilitated by strong letters upon the subject by Dr. Samuel Fortier, Chief of the Irrigation Investigations Branch of the United States Department of Agriculture, and by F. Adams, Irrigation manager in charge of the work of the same Branch in the State of California. Both these letters are printed in conjunction with this report. The letter of Dr. Fortier epitomizes very clearly the main principles involved in an irrigation-district law, and the letter of Mr. Adams lays stress on the necessity for State supervision. Many of the ideas expressed in these letters have been adopted in the proposed Bill. Both the gentlemen named spent several days in Victoria during the past summer, and again went into the principles of the proposed Bill very carefully and gave me the benefit of their further ideas.

My recent trip into the Okanagan Valley and Railway Belt has enabled me to get the views of many men who are vitally interested in this subject, and to become familiar with existing conditions. I have endeavoured to frame the Bill to meet these conditions. I know that it is still far from perfect, and I hope that it will receive close study by interested persons, and that many suggestions for its betterment will be made in such concrete form that they may be of service in perfecting the measure.

The Bill, in brief, makes possible the joint ownership and corporate control of irrigation enterprises by the land-owners of any locality in the Province where the lands can be irrigated advantageously only from a common source or sources of supply and through a common system of works. This is accomplished through the medium of publicly owned corporations known as "public irrigation corporations."

The organization of these corporations resembles very closely that of city and district municipalities. They are in reality municipalities dealing only with matters relating to water, including its supply, its carriage and distribution, and its conservation.

Through their instrumentality, money may be borrowed upon debentures or otherwise and taxes may be imposed which become a first lien upon the lands within