

IMPORTANCE OF WATER SUPPLY

(Editorial in the Farmers' Advocate.)

"We are not giving away any secrets when we say that through the southern and middle section of Saskatchewan and Alberta the lack of satisfactory water supplies for the house and for live stock is a very serious drawback, not only affecting the profitability of the farm, but making the farm life less pleasant and attractive.

"We know farms established for thirty years that draw water for house and stock at times as far as twelve miles. It also seems a peculiar coincidence that it is over much of the best land where it is impossible to secure wells that will yield water at all or water of a quality fit for use in the home.

"For years large sums of money have been spent by farmers in an indiscriminate manner in sinking holes in the ground in these areas to no avail. They still draw the water in tanks for use for house and sometimes for stock.

"In some districts this water scarcity has been overcome by digging out reservoirs and by damming ravines, but there has been up to the present no concrete or unified action to meet this condition.

"The water convention, held recently in Lethbridge, and brought together through the work of G. R. Marnoch, president of the Lethbridge Board of Trade, is the first effort towards systematizing research work in respect to securing water supplies in these waterless districts and gathering together what data is already known. Through the efforts of Mr. Marnoch there already has been a partial government geological survey of Southern Alberta to determine where water is likely to be secured and at what depths. Such a survey should be extended through the whole of Western Canada covering those areas where water is scarce. Such a survey

would save farmers huge sums that are spent in boring dry holes down hundreds of feet.

"Where it is impossible to secure well water of a satisfactory quality, what is to be done? In such districts there should be a systematic work carried on toward conserving and storing up surface water in reservoirs made by dams in ravines or through excavating. This will give water for stock and, by suitable filtration, for the home also. Tanks should also be built to conserve rain water from buildings. The quantity of water that can be stored up in this manner from the rain falling on house and barn is no small item and must be taken into consideration.

"Chief of all the factors, though, to be considered in water supply for the farm house is its purity. We know somewhat of the sickness that is caused by drinking impure water, particularly in relation to typhoid fever. This means that where surface water is used it must be purified. Filtration is the usual method. Filtration is effective with a proper filtering plant, but it may easily get out of order. The surest method of purifying the water is by distillation. While there are, as far as we know, no distillation plants on the market for farm home use, the construction of such a plant is very simple and, following the facts brought out at the convention at Lethbridge, there will likely be greater interest in this manner of purifying water for the home, and manufacture of water stills will follow.

"To satisfactorily meet the situation there is required co-operative work between government, federal, provincial, and municipal, and also with and among farmers in these dry areas. Then we can begin to look for a measure of solution. In the meantime credit is due to the Lethbridge Board of Trade and its president for getting propaganda work under way."