

rate at present charged is \$150 per cubic foot per second per annum, which is equivalent to \$1 per acre, provided the purchaser of land demands the full duty of one cubic foot per second for each 150 acres. From the contracts filed in the department I find that in a very great number of instances, the settlers having 150 acres of land susceptible to irrigation only contract for one quarter of a cubic foot which costs annually \$37.50, developing a charge of about 25 cents per acre per annum.

If, later on, when the country is more developed, it were found that the rates charged for water were excessive, section 51 of the North-west Irrigation Act empowers the Minister of the Interior to regulate such rates when the interests of the country require it.

However, the tax of \$1 per acre per year for the full duty is not, from statistics gathered both in the department and the United States, a heavy charge, as water is looked upon as an insurance on producing a certain crop, the quantity of which largely depends upon the skill of the user.

By Mr. Ross (Ontario) :

Q. Do you know anything about the charges for water, say, in California?

A. Yes. In California, for instance, certain parties will form themselves into a municipality. Twenty farmers who have got lands adjoining will get together, or perhaps only sixteen of them, and they will get a surveyor. They submit their plans to the government of the United States, and if their scheme is feasible the government will grant them what they call a water right, conditional on their carrying out these works to a successful issue. Well, if these sixteen farmers take water from that ditch the cost of the works is ascertained and their lands are assessed proportionately at say \$5 per acre, or \$10 per acre, or even more according to the cost of the construction of the works. Beyond this, outside of the cost of the water itself, there is no charge except for the maintaining of the works, repairs and administration. Then, if later on others want to go into the scheme of these people, they go to the parties that amalgamated together and say, 'we want to get some water, what will you charge us?' They say, 'That is all very well, but you have got to get your water right first.' Well, this water right is simply paying their proportion of the cost of construction.

WATER SUPPLY—HOW DISTRIBUTED.

As to the distribution of the water, it is worked in this way: say there are ten farmers served by one ditch, who require an aggregate of 10 cubic feet. The foreman notifies them that on a certain day he will turn on the water for a sufficient number of hours to irrigate the whole ten farms. The first farmer requires only half a cubic foot and, therefore, as soon as the water has run on his farm long enough to give him his ratio, the inlet is closed, and the water is run on to the second farm. Now, the second farmer's requirements may be $1\frac{1}{2}$ cubic feet, and therefore the water is run on to his farm until he has secured his ratio; and so on till the whole ten farms have got their aggregate of ten cubic feet. This process is gone through as often as once a month during a season, if required.

By Mr. Stephens :

Q. Can a farmer get that water in the dry season?

A. Yes, that is exactly what he secures the right for.

Q. Do they have to take it in the wet season?

A. Not necessarily, for they do not require it then, although they have the right to take it in any season, wet or dry, but to take water in the wet season when the farm does not require it would be manifestly detrimental to the crop and a waste which is, moreover, provided against by the Act.

In the North-west Territories, that is, in Southern Alberta, instead of using the water for irrigation purposes in the wet season, this is generally the time when provision is made for storing by dams and in reservoirs constructed for that purpose all the water in excess of the low water stage, as licenses to irrigate land in many in-