

*A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE NEED
FOR
MORE AND BETTER WATER FOR OUR FARMS*

(Reprinted from Lethbridge Herald, June 22 and 23, 1917.)

MR. MARNOCH'S ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your presence at this conference on More and Better Water for the Farmer is evidence in itself that the subject matter of our discussions today is of far-reaching importance.

We are not going to be able today to arrive at final conclusions as to how more of this water is to be got at; but we are going to have a sort of stock-taking of all the information that is now available, and we are all going to put our heads together to devise ways and means for acquiring further information. I hope we may be enabled also to collect the most of this within the covers of a booklet or bulletin, and so make all the known facts available for the hundreds of farmers and their wives who are eagerly awaiting guidance as to how to get more and better water.

This meeting today is the outcome of enquiries which were started by the Board of Trade of Lethbridge away back in the early days of 1914. Some of you may remember that in that year there was considerable excitement in Alberta over the alleged possibilities of finding oil under the foothills and the fertile plains of our Sunny Alberta. Some of our more enquiring souls, desirous of informing themselves about anticlines and synclines, began to dig into bulletins relating to the oil fields of the United States, and therein discovered that it was a regular part of the business of the U.S. geological survey and of the geological departments of the various states, to devote attention to the finding of underground waters for the use of farms, villages, towns and cities. We took the matter up with the Dominion government, and we found that absolutely no attention had been directed to assisting the farmers of Western Canada to find well waters. As soon, however, as the great need for such assistance was brought to the notice of the permanent officers of the geological survey of Canada, Mr. D. B. Dowling and Mr. S. E. Slip-

per were directed to devote some time to the study of the question. Mr. Dowling was able to report as a result of his investigations during the summer of 1915, that a considerable area in Southern Alberta in the regions south of Lethbridge was underlaid with a sandstone which carried water from the Milk river at the international boundary, and that this sandstone lay at the considerable depth of six to eight hundred feet; but that in many places lying lower than the channel of the Milk river the water rose to the surface when the sandstone was tapped by drilled wells. I need not, however, go into any details in regard to this because Mr. Dowling and Mr. Slipper will tell you all about it. They will also inform you of what steps they have been able to take, with funds which we were able to get the Dominion government to appropriate for the purpose, to add to the available information on the subject by actually drilling further test wells.

But the greater and more general question of how to prove up such sources of water supply as may be more readily accessible at lesser depths is still largely unsolved; and I am hopeful that today some light may be shed on this. To show the necessity for this I will tell you of an incident that happened in the Board of Trade rooms the other day. A farmer's wife came in to ask where she could get a sample of water analysed. We told her the department of health at Edmonton would do that for her. She said that last year they had some spare money for the first time, and they thought they would try for water. They drilled eighty feet and got a small supply of good water; but they thought they would go deeper and try for a bigger flow; they got the bigger flow, but it was so unpalatable that they want to assure themselves that no harm would come to their livestock if they drank it. As she turned to leave she said, "Oh well, it doesn't