

arguments in favour of the Government making public works of irrigation canals and reservoirs than can be advanced for its undertaking many other enterprise which it is frequently contended it should take charge of. In our case the greater portion of the lands in the districts to be benefited by irrigation belong to the Government and they will be very greatly enhanced in value by the construction of irrigation works. Water in a country dependent on irrigation is so precious that it is a duty the Government owes to the community, or, in other words, that the community owes to itself, to prevent its being captured by monopolists and sold to the farmers, who must buy it at any cost, at extortionate prices. For the proper and most economical utilization of the water supply it frequently happens that works must be constructed of too great magnitude for ordinary individual or corporate effort or of such a nature that for a considerable length of time no adequate remuneration will be derived from them, and therefore when left to private enterprise, irrigation must necessarily be conducted on somewhat a "one-horse" scale, which means waste and only partial development, in other words a considerable loss of national wealth.

It would not seem an unreasonable question that the Government should assume the responsibility for what may be called the trunk canals and the most important reservoirs, leaving to local or municipal organization, in the shape of "water districts," the construction of small branches and store basins and the management of the distribution of the supply to individuals in their respective districts.

It is of course possible, and in fact it is very probable, that some individuals or corporations will be found desirous of commencing operations before the Government is prepared to go into the construction of works of this nature, when, indeed, the demand for water for application to land would be so small as not to justify the expense of the building of a comprehensive system of reservoirs and canals. In cases such as this it would be manifestly wrong to discourage private enterprise. The plans for such private works should, however, be carefully examined by the Government Department charged with the control of irrigating matters, to see that they do not involve waste of water, and will not clash with the general plan the Government has formed for the most economical irrigation of the district where they are located, or other districts in that neighbourhood. In Spain, the Irrigation Regulations provide that water privileges granted organizations for the distribution of water to the lands of others are to be the property of the grantees temporally, the concessions being for a limited term, at the expiration of which the works and rights pass to the land-owners using the water from the works, and these land-owners and users of water are entrusted with the management of the works. This system, or a similar one, might be adopted in the North-west until the Government is prepared to go into the question, the works so constructed reverting at the end of the time limited to the Government instead of to the land-owners.