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BRITISH COLUMBIA IRRIGATION BILL.

Irrigation in Western Canada is becoming more
scientific annually. The work done by the Western Irri-
gation Association is bringing results. The addresses
have been instructive. The Association has encouraged
united action, and one of the direct results of this edu-
cational campaign has been the introduction of the Irri-
gation Bill recently presented to the Legislative As-
sembly of British Columbia.

The bill is founded on the Water Clauses Consoli-
dated Act of British Columbia, and is shaped largely on
the legislation governing irrigation matters in Colorado,
whose Water Rights Act is the most complete and work-
able in America.

The bill would divide the Province into districts, with
a chief water commissioner for the whole Province and
commissioners for each district having control over local
matters. These water commissioners would have the
direction, control, management and charge of the dis-
tribution of water.

A Board of Investigation is to be appointed to en-
quire into existing rights. It will also be part of their
duty to examine all claims presented, to determine their
priorities; and, in the case of irrigation, to determine
the quantity of water which each may be entitled to, and
to establish the character of his works.

Having obtained a license under the new system, the
licensee is expected to promptly proceed to put himself
in a position to commence the necessary works to utilize
the water. Having made, as required, a certain exami-
nation and survey, if the quantity intended to be used is
small, that is to say, it does not exceed four cubic feet
per second, he will apply to the Water Commissioner for
the purpose of obtaining his approval of the proposed
works, and it will be the duty of the Water Commissioner
to see that the proposed works are of a character which
will safeguard the public interest, and do as little injury
as possible to persons whose lands may be adjacent to or
crossed by the proposed works.

In the case of licensees using water in any larger
quantities than four cubic feet per second, they will have
to obtain the approval of the Lieutenant-Governor-in-
Council, and supply all the information that is necessary
to enable the Executive Council to decide whether the
plans as submitted to them are of a character fit for the
work intended to be carried out, and also to enable them
to adjudicate properly upon the question submitted.

Special care has been taken to protect municipalities
desiring to use water for domestic purposes. The Rivers
and Streams Act and amendments have been incorporated
under the head of clearing streams for driving logs. A
great deal of the legislation upon this subject has been
recast, as is the case with nearly all the matter contained
in the bill, but the powers of the County Court judge
have been retained.

Provision is made for the storing of water and the
expropriation of land.

In British Columbia there are so many vested rights,
and landowners have built irrigation ditches without
much governmental inspection, that it may take years to
eliminate water waste and adjust existing conditions.

Alberta and Saskatchewan must follow with similar
measures.