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# Let's Do Something About Our Water

**T**HE cheapest and best water available is that which falls from the sky as rain or snow. Sometimes there may be too much of it but in Oklahoma more often there is too little.

Over the past 30 years repeated demonstrations have shown that rainfall may be enhanced locally by cloud seeding. The Hitch ranch near Guymon has contracted regularly with Dr. Irving P. Krick to maximize rainfall for its extensive fields and pastures.

Wheat and cotton farmers in Cotton and Tillman counties have done likewise, convinced that they get their money's worth in increased and more consistent crop yields. Cloud-seeding projects have been conducted in other counties but so far only the Hitch and Cotton-Tillman projects appear ready to go again in 1983.

Legislators seem to have been confused by disagreements and professional jealousies among meteorologists and have turned down repeated requests to finance cloud seeding from state funds.

Oklahomans have been reminded frequently that millions of acre feet of water run out of the state annually without being put to beneficial uses. We should be aware also that the legislature has done little to change the situation.

In 1981 the Governor's Water Conference adopted a resolution urging the legislature to "Do something!" It responded with a plan to help finance water treatment and distribution systems, using \$25 million in state funds to facilitate local bond issues to pay for them.

Because of questions raised by the former attorney general, the matter was referred to voters. Observers believe that citizens may have been confused or misled by the way the issue was stated on the ballot. Whatever the reason, voters defeated the plan in November.

The Governor's Third Water Conference last month drew a big crowd and able speakers discussed the water situation fluently. Disagreement was not in evidence, but nothing specific was done.

Now the High Plains Study Council, headed by Texas Gov. Bill

Clements, is talking about building pipelines from as far away as Canada to transport water. Clements didn't mention transporting water from eastern Oklahoma but it is no secret that Texans have had their eyes on that surplus water for years. It is a lot closer than Canada.

Oklahomans seem to ignore the probability that if we don't start using that water either within the eastern counties or by transporting it to other areas, it could be allocated to other states.

When a similar issue arose several years ago in the west a federal court held that water not used by the state of origin could be claimed by other states.

Perhaps the only thing that has saved Oklahoma water for our own needs to date is that Texas hasn't come up with a financing plan that big city voters would support. They're still trying.

If and when Texas pipeline or canal promoters succeed in getting the financing we may as well say goodbye to our surplus water.

After all, we aren't doing anything about it ourselves.