

Ferdie J. Deering

Good Reasons for Supporting SQ 581

AUG 23 1984

WATER may be the nearest thing we have to a non-partisan political issue. In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said God sends "rain on the just and the unjust." That might be construed to include all political parties. Water is a universal need.

The conservation and distribution of water ranks high as a public responsibility. When our country was sparsely settled and clear streams of unpolluted water were accessible many families could maintain their own water supplies. A few still do.

With the majority of our citizens living in cities and towns it is not feasible for each family to have its own well. Even where water is abundant, publicly owned distribution systems are needed. That is true in numerous Oklahoma towns and rural areas.

Election officials had quite a time writing a ballot title for State Question 581 which Oklahomans will vote on Aug. 28. It provides for state assistance to local water systems. State law requires ballot titles to be written so typical eighth graders

can understand them.

Eighth graders can't vote but anyone with an eighth grade education should be able to understand the essentiality of good water, adequate distribution, and public responsibility for both.

Voters are being asked by political spokesmen, numerous civic and farm organizations, and by water users to help Oklahoma communities improve their water systems without increasing taxes.

The legislature appropriated \$25 million for these purposes from surplus funds, back when the state had a surplus. It was ruled that the lawmakers could not create state obligations without a vote of the people, so the money was not used.

If voters approve SQ 581 this money and state bonds would secure water improvement loans to be repaid by various communities. If citizens reject SQ 581 the legislature may spend the last relic of our state surplus and our water systems will remain inadequate.

Here are other reasons why I favor SQ 581:

I drink lots of water, and water is my drink;

Most Oklahomans are church members and churches need ample water for baptismal rites;

It takes water to grow grass and feed to produce meat, and it would be tough not to have plenty of steaks and roasts;

Bread is the staff of life, and it takes water to grow wheat, as well as all other foods except cactus;

Homeowners need abundant water to grow trees, nice lawns, and pretty flowers to make beautiful places to live;

The beauty and value of Oklahoma's many lakes and streams are tremendous, but many of them could be made more useful;

Most industries and all cities and towns need plentiful water to keep business going to provide jobs that lead to prosperity.

I can not think of any good reasons or political reasons to vote against SQ 581 on Aug. 28.

Blackwell, Oklahoma
February 20, 1984

Mr. Ferdie Deering
Editor, Farmer Stockman
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73125

Dear Ferdie:

Congratulations on your series of articles on Soil Conservation in Oklahoma. They are well composed and a quite historical background of soil conservation in the state.

You are to be congratulated on your recognition by the establishment of the President's distinguished scholarship at Oklahoma State University. I know of no one more qualified and experienced in this field.

Mrs. Hollopeter and I have enjoyed reviewing some of the early day experiences of the soil conservation work. This has been an extremely interesting and rewarding experience. Having started here in Oklahoma in 1933, we cannot claim credit for all the progress, because it was team work from the beginning.

We had no more than received our orders for ten demonstrational projects, when we were given the responsibility of locating and staffing the 26 CCC camps.

As we followed the progress into the Regional office in Salina, Kansas, and later in the Forth Worth office, my work and travel requirements were extremely difficult, as you well know.

Thank you for a remarkable series of our efforts, and I am sure history will recall your accounting.

Yours truly,


Charles A. Hollopeter

Elmore City, Okla.
Jan 12, 1984

Dear Mr. Deering.

I have read your articles about
"The Soil & Water Conservation
Movement that had its beginning
in Oklahoma 50 years ago."

I don't know of any conservation
that you have not mentioned.
But I would like to tell my first
experience about soil erosion.

In 1923 I was 9 years old, Daddy
had some corn planted on some
rolling upland in McClain Co.
near Purcell, Okla. we got a
big rain, part of our corn was
almost washed away, all the loose
dirt was washed away down to
the ~~so~~ hard pan. Daddy called
on every member of the family
which was 5. we went to that field
with our ~~hoses~~ hoes we pick
that corn up by the blade &
filled dirt up around it, & Daddy
plowed it with the cultivator, we
did this before the ground dried out

The corn was hanging by the roots. I don't know just how much was in this condition, but to 9 yr. old boy it looked real big.

I guess the real reason I wanted to write to you is to pay tribute to my Father who was a tenant farmer.

In 1928 we lived on a farm that was suffering from soil erosion. Daddy ask the Land lord to build some terrace, but he would not, not even help Daddy, so Daddy Built some him self. He hired a man to survey the lines.

He borrow a V-shape tool from a neighbor who was building some terrace. this tool was made from 2 - 2x12 - the up side was fasten with hinges with a stiff arm that you could make it wider. we would plow around, then hook to this tool with 4 mules & make that dirt up hill. & so forth till we built the terrace. we made the fill with team & slip.

I drove the team my older brother handle the ship.

I guess what I am trying to say is that Daddy saw what was happening to the land & did something about it before there was any organize conservation, we made fine cotton crops on this land, yes you have guessed what happen the landlord moved us he wanted ^{it} all for him self. but he was not the farmer that Daddy was, he never made near as much as Daddy, one of his sons confessed that they never made any more than ^{the} rent that Daddy paid them "Third & Fourth".

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely

H. E. Cabell