

**PLAN TO SUBMERGE  
PROSPEROUS AREA  
INVITES PROTEST**

*New Era Sweet Home*  
984 June 22, 1939  
After making two trips up the south fork of the Santiam river, talking with farmers and business men, visiting the salmon hatchery above Foster, and several of the lumber plants at Sweet Home, William L. Finley, well known naturalist, agrees with the many residents of Sweet Home valley that this area should not be destroyed by building a high dam on the river just below the town of Sweet Home.

"I am not opposed to some of the proposed plans of the Willamette basin project," said Mr. Finley. "On the other hand, the proposed high dams on both forks of the Santiam, the McKenzie and the Upper Willamette will drown out some of the most beautiful and valuable areas in the state of Oregon. The plan to submerge these areas is advanced for the purpose of flood control to benefit certain residents on the lower stretches of the rivers. This is considered flood destruction by many who will have their property and homes destroyed in the upper valleys.

"Some engineers feel that the flooding of farm land in the Willamette valley can be controlled by revetment and bank protection works. Some of the farmers along the Willamette lose soil by floods. Others prefer to see a yearly overflow of their lands, which kills rodents and insects and deposits a rich silt fertilizer for the summer crops.

"Since the rivers of the states and the nation are public property, and can be used in a variety of ways, this has opened up the channel for vast spending of the taxpayers' money during the last few years. While we have pressure groups in every part of the nation, who are working for local projects and private gain, we have lacked local and national investigation and study so as to know who is benefited and who is injured. In many places, when one individual may gain a thousand dollars, another may be robbed of two thousand. Where one town may profit, another may be completely destroyed."

The New Era reprints the above article from the Oregon Sunday Journal.

The New Era has been silent on the dam question for several months. When the question of building the Sweet Home dam first came up many residents and business men favored it, now since they have had time to study the question they see the significance of such an act and many who

favored the dam have joined the ranks of those who assert they will fight the building of the dam to the bitter end.

A survey, conducted by those interested in saving the Sweet Home valley, reveals that approximately \$2,000,000.00 worth of property will be destroyed. Too the proposal to rebuild Sweet Home on another site has practically been abandoned since there is no suitable site available.

Timber interests, mill men, utility interest, including the railroad and farmers, in and around the area, proposed to be flooded, have voiced their protest against the destruction of their community center. Many citizens of Lebanon and Albany stand ready to aid in the protest against what seems needless destruction of valuable property.

One thing is now sure, a strong protest will be forth coming if an attempt is made to destroy Sweet Home and Sweet Home valley.

**Conservationist  
Stops in Ontario**

*June 22, 1939*  
William L. Finley, noted Oregon conservationist, stopped in Ontario Friday on his way to the National Wild Life Conference being held in Wyoming. "What do the people of this region think about the building of high dams as being proposed along the Columbia and its tributaries which will destroy most of the fish life in these rivers", he wanted to know. What he thinks of these proposals is being given in a series of articles running in both The Oregonian and Portland Journal.

Mr. Finley is vice president both of the National Wild Life Federation and the Issac Walton League of America. He was here last fall with Wm. Smith, president of the Oregon Wild Life Federation and will return again the first of July to meet with the sportsmen to discuss action for a constructive conservation program.

*Ontario Ore. Argus*

*Oregonian*  
*June 25, 1939*  
**Drowning Sweet Home**

To the Editor: Along the south fork of the Santiam river is one of the most picturesque spots in the state of Oregon. Situated in a beautiful valley on the upper stretch of the river is Sweet Home. Three miles above is the little town of Foster.

Tam McArthur, in "Oregon Geographic Names," writes that it is approaching a period of a century ago when Lowell Ames Sr. settled in this region. When he picked out the site of his land claim he is said to have sung "Home, Sweet Home." Sweet Home postoffice was established March 13, 1874. These early pioneers liked to select attractive spots where they could live and dedicate their homes to their children.

The Willamette valley project committee was allotted \$18,000 by the last session of the Oregon legislature to get \$62,000,000 from congress. One of the proposed projects they are planning to put through is the building of a high dam on the South Santiam that will drown out the town of Sweet Home.

In last Sunday's Oregonian is the announcement of a banquet to be held in Eugene next Friday by the Willamette valley project committee to launch the beginning of these dams. While some of the proposed plans for flood control in the Willamette valley will be of future benefit to the state, the question arises as to whether others should be carried out or not.

All angles of this problem should have been studied and the facts presented to the public. Who has compared the yearly damage of flood waters in the Willamette valley with the permanent destruction of profitable business firms, public schools, churches, theaters, hospitals, lumber mills, utilities, water plants, railroads and picturesque highways, as well as the hundreds of homes and farms of contended people?

Since floods in the Willamette valley can be corrected in other ways besides high dams on the headwaters, is it not fair to consider these matters from a business standpoint? Cannot flood control in the Willamette valley be handled for less cash and not destroy natural resources and private property?

The original report of the army engineers stated that if the government constructed these dams, the cost to the taxpayers would be \$43,430,000. The cost to local interests for land, easements, rights of way and damages was estimated at \$18,645,000.

This immediately started a political campaign to force the government to also pay for damages. Although there is a federal policy which states "if projects deserve federal contributions, they certainly also deserve local contributions," yet the residents of the Willamette valley refuse to pay the damage bill.

A short time ago, on May 13 (unlucky date?) a water system costing \$72,000 was dedicated for the future use of Sweet Home residents. A union high school, a gymnasium and campus have been completed, also a new grade school, with miles of concrete sidewalks and highways. A large portion of federal funds has been spent on these projects.

Should the Willamette valley project committee work to get additional federal funds to destroy federal funds?

From the Atlantic to the Pacific, nearly every region and every state in the union has a pressure group that is fighting to lift more money from the taxpayer's pocket in the hope that certain individuals in such regions can increase their private incomes.

With the vast expenditure of federal funds for the past six years, this has developed the biggest war the taxpayers have ever had to meet. In every region it is considered shrewd politics where the people of one locality can grab more federal funds than in some adjoining region. It is a war to run the country into the red and prevent the balancing of any budget.

It is hoped that our nation will work more on a business and not purely on a political basis.

WILLIAM L. FINLEY.