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outlook between the officials of the Sutherland project and those of Tri-County may be found in the nature of their respective enterprises. Sutherland has no large reservoir, which means that it will presumably not be able to operate at full capacity in dry seasons. Estimates of the amount of "firm" or steady power which can be produced vary widely, but it cannot be more than 90,000,000 kilowatt hours annually, and without the Keystone Dam the project may have no firm power whatsoever. This prevents Sutherland from selling its output to the municipal plants and farmers of the area unless it is linked with another producer. Lacking such a link, it has little choice but to sell its energy to the private power companies at "dump-power" rates. It would, of course, be possible for Sutherland to "firm up" its power by connecting with the Tri-County and Columbus projects, but this is precisely what the private power companies are seeking to prevent. A contract exists between Columbus and Tri-County, but the Sutherland officials have refused to be affiliated in a three-cornered deal. And they have insisted that the construction of the Tri-County power plants would make it more difficult for them to dispose of their power. The Tri-County authorities deny that the new project will create a surplus of electrical energy. They point out that the private companies have fixed their rates so high that they have scarcely touched the rich agricultural market for electricity. Nebraska ranks twenty-ninth among the states in the Union in the percentage of farms which are supplied with electric current.

Considerable opposition to the Tri-County project is also to be found in the region around Grand Island, thirty miles northeast of Hastings. A Platte River Water Protective Association has been formed which has as its battle slogan "Platte River for the Platte Valley." While this organization may have utility backing, it is nourished by a real fear that the Tri-County project may rob the area north of the Platte River of its present water resources. There are two issues involved, both somewhat bewildering to an Easterner. One is the contention by farmers along the Platte that the building of the Keystone Dam would deprive them of their riparian rights—which they interpret to mean the privilege of watching the river flow by filled to the banks. While Nebraska laws furnish some basis for this contention, the United States Supreme Court has definitely rejected this conception of riparian rights. Consequently, Nebraskans may wake up some day and find that the surplus water of the Platte has been granted to Wyoming or Colorado on the ground that Nebraska was not making full use of it.

The second claim appears at first sight to be a little more substantial. Residents of the north bank of the Platte claim that a diversion of the river's waters would rob the region of at least a portion of its precious store of underground water. A careful study of this subterranean water supply has been made by A. L. Lugin of the Nebraska Conservation and Survey Division and L. K. Wenzel of the United States Geological Survey. They concluded that the recent depletion of these resources was not permanent and was due primarily to dry weather.

Very little of this underground water comes from the Platte River; the bulk of it flows down from the sand hills of northern Nebraska, and the remainder is mostly obtained from rainfall.

Despite the opposition of these groups, the Nebraska Supreme Court is expected to hand down shortly a decision granting the Tri-County authorities the necessary water rights. This will permit work to be begun on the Keystone Dam and such irrigation ditches as have not already been constructed. There will still remain the problem of finding some way to irrigate the 300,000 acres that happen to be outside the Platte River watershed. This means that the obstructing law of 1895 will have to be repealed. Once these two battles have been won, the fight should narrow down to a clear-cut struggle between the utilities and the people of Nebraska over the question of public power production. With the issue thus clearly drawn it is doubtful whether even the Supreme Court can prevent Nebraska from obtaining the irrigation and cheap power it so desperately needs.

A Hundred White Horses

BY AGNES SMEDLEY

HORSES are valuable beasts, thought the long, brown old peasant. He was a man as brown as the earth on which he sat, and he was as motionless as a stone. The only clothing he wore was a pair of gray cotton trousers, and they also blended with the color of the earth. Valuable beasts, the old peasant kept thinking. His thoughts were not idle day dreams, either, for his eyes were following a slowly moving herd of horses across the River Sing. What a shame that those horses belonged to the Fifth White Army—what a shame! The Red Army could use a good horse like one of those over there. His son, a Red Army soldier, had once captured two horses almost from under the Whites, and had taken them to the red military headquarters. His son was a hero—no doubt about that.

The old man sat on Soviet territory north of the River Sing and looked across at the herd of horses on the southern bank, where the Whites occupied and ruled the countryside. From over there they kept sending raiding parties into Soviet territory. The river was the boundary line. The people over there all helped the Soviets when they could, but the Whites were cruel if they caught a man. Now, right there before his eyes was a whole herd of horses, no less than a hundred grazing peacefully, and no one in sight. Suppose he crossed over and picked out a horse. He squatted motionless as a stone as he thought and watched. No, not a soul in sight. So he might as well swim over, look about, and if he saw no one, see what the horses would do.

He moved down to the river, waded out, and began to swim. But would a horse obey him and swim the river on the way back? He wondered about many things, and above the water his eyes scanned the bank and the hill before him. He felt earth, stood upright, stood dead

still near a small tree for a time as he looked about, then crept up the hillside. The leading horse did not take fright when he went near, but continued grazing peacefully. The old man took a last look around, then went up and patted the horse gently on the nose and rubbed its glossy neck. The horse nosed against him gratefully. They liked each other from the start.

The old man threw his arm over the animal's neck, gently patting and prodding it. It began obediently to move down toward the river. The whole herd of horses stopped grazing, looked up, and then began moving slowly behind them. The old man's heart was in his throat. Silly beasts, he thought. Anyone watching would know something was wrong. He leaped on his chosen animal and, guiding and prodding, rode him to the river, out into the water. And then he felt the animal begin to swim.

From behind he heard splashing that became ever louder, and he looked back anxiously. All the horses were going into the stream. Many hesitated, then began to swim obediently. The old man's heart beat so hard against his ribs that he could hear it. The whole drove of horses was swimming swiftly. The old man clung to his animal desperately, exulting but fearful. One rifle shot from behind and he would be finished.

He felt his horse touch Soviet soil and begin to scramble up the bank. Then the others began to clamber after. The old peasant grasped the mane of his animal tighter, kicked him in the ribs, and tried to force him into a trot or a gallop. Now all the horses were free of the stream, following up the path and over the hill. They were trotting with a thunderous noise. They crossed the hill and made straight for the narrow pass through a stony mountain. The horses whinnied, and Red Guards stood in amazement as the wet old man and a hundred wet horses trotted through the pass. The old man seemed drunk and kept yelling at the guards that he had "confiscated" a drove of White horses.

Inside the pass they turned off to the right toward a village. Crowds of women and children and a few men ran out and watched in amazement. The old man brought his horse to a stop right at the door of the local Soviet. All the women and a few men inside had run out and stood on the threshold, gaping in astonishment. A small unit of red soldiers at drill on a nearby square had halted and run up. The old man guided his horse to the square and looked back to see that all the others followed. He had lived long, but never had such a moment as this come to the life of any man; for there was a herd of horses obeying his will, and there were hundreds of people—with red soldiers among them—standing back and watching. The old man was dizzy, yet clear-headed enough to slide off his animal, pat it, and talk to it.

Turning to the villagers crowding nearer, he said: "They are White horses. I swam over to get me a horse, and then the whole drove followed. I was sitting and thinking—" He could speak no more. His own excitement halted him. And the people began to laugh; so that some of them fell down and sat there shrieking.

Somewhere the red soldiers had found a rope and

were stringing it around the square to keep the horses from escaping. The children were pulling up grass and feeding it to the animals. Some of the animals threw up their heads and frisked away, but others ate the grass. The villagers were delighted and they all began pulling up grass, offering it, and calling the horses that took it all kinds of sweet names. "You beautiful darling—oh you nice old thing—lovely horsey." Such extravagance was enough to make a man laugh until he split.

The old peasant at last found his tongue and began telling the whole story. When he finished, the people laughed themselves half to death. The men slapped the old fellow on the back until it was sore. But he was so excited and so proud that they could have slapped him into pulp and he would not have felt it. So he told the story again, and that night he told it again to a still bigger crowd that came from other villages. They made him repeat it many times and they laughed until their jaws ached. Some of them knew the story by heart so that when the old man left out any detail they corrected him and put it in.

"The beasts are Soviet sympathizers—that's why they followed you," some wit remarked to a roar of laughter.

The old man slept hardly a wink that night. But sleep was unimportant at such a time as this. The next morning he and four others would take the beasts over the hills to the north, to Red Army headquarters. He, of course, would ride in front on his beautiful animal. What a horse it was, to be sure! The old man sighed at the thought of parting with it. The whole village was up by daybreak to see the procession start. A rough halter looped over the nose of his animal served as bridle, and a piece of thick wadded cloth served as a saddle for the old man. The other men rode in similar fashion, but they rode in the far rear, driving the horses before them. A crowd of admirers followed them for a *li* beyond the village.

Other villages had already heard of this great victory and were waiting. They saw the old man come in sight, then behind him the grand procession of horses, brought up by four men. It was as good as a demonstration, and people applauded and waved and yelled. When the procession stopped at noon, the old man told his story, anew to strange villagers, who fed the men and the horses.

In this way they finally reached Red Army headquarters. Commanders and fighting men were accustomed to many unusual things, but this was a joy they would not forget. The lean old man told them his story and then they fell in each other's arms or sat down and laughed, and a number of them embraced the old man and insisted that he sit down and have something to eat and drink.

He stayed at headquarters for two days, making himself acquainted with affairs of the world, an honored guest. His son returned from the front on the second day and stood grinning at his father.

"You see, my son, you captured two horses, but I, an old man, captured a hundred."

The son grinned from ear to ear. And everybody laughed.