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RECLAMATION PROJECTS UNDER WAY

According to the Five-Year Plan, 400,000 hectares of land are to be fully reclaimed by the end of 1951. This means that irrigation and drainage systems will be built and that the present water system will be expanded by the construction of new water-pumping stations consuming 30,000 kilowatts. Tens of thousands of hectares of farm land will be reclaimed for cultivation through the reclamation of the Lonja Polje (Basin), the various polje in Bosnia, Posavina, and the Pelagonija; by the draining of Lake Skadar; and by the reclamation of the Ulsinaj Polje, the Bjelopavlici Plain, Ljesko Polje, and other areas.

Polje in Slavonia

The Jelas Polje, in Slavonia, until recently had been subject to frequent flooding by the Sava on the south and west, by numerous torrents from Mount Dilj on the north, and by the Orljava River on the east. The central part of the polje, along the Mrsunja Canal, where rain water collects, is not cultivated.

Two years after the liberation, a lateral canal to divert streams from Mount Dilj into the Glogovica Canal had been finished, a new concrete dam had been built at the intersection of the Mrsunja and the Sava, and work had been started on the Kobas-Duhovac Canal to drain standing water from the southern part of the polje. At present, the levee along the Sava is being repaired and the Mrsunja Canal is being extended, cleaned, and deepened. The reclamation project is nearing completion.

Early in October 1948, engineers, technicians, and surveyors from Zagreb began to investigate the possibilities of the area for growing rice. By the end of December they had reported that all the necessary conditions could be provided by building irrigation and drainage canals. Water can be obtained from the Orljava River and drained off by the Mrsunja Canal. Brigades of volunteer laborers began work early in January.

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The irrigation canal begins at Luzani and connects with the Orlijava River. The total length of the canal will be 16 kilometers. Whereas 37,500 cubic meters of earth will have to be excavated for the canal, a total of 72,580 cubic meters will be required for the levee. About 35 percent of the work on the canal has been completed.

The rice-growing area consists of about 600 hectares on either side of the Stupnik-Kuti road. A considerable part of the area has already been plowed.

Of the 3,400 hectares comprising the entire district, rice will be grown this year on 600 hectares, hemp on 775 hectares, late cabbage on 200 hectares, kale on 65 hectares, and fodder plants and vegetables on 83 hectares. Various private buildings, including 8 barns for 800 cows, 4 barns for 240 horses, 2 farrowing pens, 5 large pigsties for little pigs, a dairy, 4 storehouses, 2 toolsheds, 2 machine sheds, 50 houses for 100 families, barracks for seasonal workers, messes, baths, silos, 20 kilometers of main and secondary roads and highways, and 20 kilometers of farm railroads will also be built in the district.

The plan provides for the production of 210 carloads of rice, 80 carloads of cabbage, 550 carloads of hemp, and quarters for 1,300 breeding sows this year.

Projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Since the liberation, major reclamation projects have been in progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in the north near the Sava and in the karst polje of Herzegovina. The most important projects in the north are the Lijevo Polje, Ivanicko Polje near Bosanski Brod, the vicinity of Novi Grad, the Central Posavina, and the Semberija projects.

A 24,000-hectare area in the Lijevo Polje is now being transformed into a rich grain-growing district through reclamation. Last year work was done on levees and other reclamation projects in this polje; the levees were extended in the Ivanicko Polje; 241,000 cubic meters of levees were built in the Novi Grad district to protect 5,000 hectares of farm land from floods; and levees and a 2,700-meter-long drainage canal were built in the 17,200-hectare district of Central Posavina. The cutting of a second canal, 5,000 meters long, will reclaim 500 hectares of land which has not been under cultivation previously. Reclamation works in the Semberija last year proceeded slowly because of a labor shortage, but volunteers from the People's Front fulfilled their pledge to build 20,000 cubic meters of levee.

Smaller reclamation projects were carried on in the Podraznica Polje near Bihać, 40 hectares of land were forested in the Pokoj Polje near Bihać, and part of the Vrbas River was regulated.

In Herzegovina, reclamation will permit new areas to be planted in industrial and subtropical crops. In the Mostar Swamp the main drainage canal will be finished this year. It leads from a tunnel to the lowest part of the polje, which has always been swampy. The main irrigation canal from the source of the Listica River toward the Mostar Polje will be continued this year, and a siphon will be built in this canal. A canal to irrigate the Markopolje also will be finished this year.

Canals to irrigate the entire polje will be built during 1949 in the Trebinjsko Polje, thus assuring sufficient water for 1,206 hectares. The boring of the Trusina tunnel in the Debarcko Polje and the clearing of the polje, which will be finished this year, will recover 2,480 hectares for cultivation. The reclamation of the Stolac Polje is almost finished. The irrigation canal will be finished this year. The chief reclamation project in Herzegovina this year will take place in the Bijelo Polje and in the Bisco Polje, north and south of Mostar. About 11,000 hectares of land will be properly watered as a result of great irrigation projects there. The irrigation also will help to cool the Mostar district, where the summer heat has usually been unbearable.

- 2 -

RESTRICTED

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Reclamation of a Macedonian District

The largest reclamation project in Macedonia under the Five-Year Plan will take place in Pelagonija, where 50,000 hectares of land will be reclaimed. Work began in 1948. By the end of 1949, 60 percent of the work should be finished.

Some 35,000 hectares of the district are subject to more or less regular flooding from the Crna River and its tributaries, while torrents flood another 10,000 hectares. In the absence of floods, Pelagonija could produce crops worth 1,220,000 dinars. After the reclamation projects have been completed, the annual income per family in the district will increase by an average of 70,583 dinars.

Reclamation also will improve public health. Child mortality in the district is high, and about 13 percent of the inhabitants are ill for an average of 15-30 days per year from malaria, anthrax, and other diseases that flourish in swampy country.

The reclamation project calls for cutting a new bed, 9,400 meters long and an average of 3 meters deep, for the Crna River from the village of Skociver to the village of Bac. Tributaries will be regulated and several canals cut. A total of 155,270 meters of river bed will be regulated and 70,400 meters of canal will be built. The lower reaches of seven tributaries will be regulated. Fifty bridges ranging from 10-50 meters will be built. Some 400 tons of iron, 4,500 tons of cement, 10,000 meters of reinforced concrete, and 20,000 cubic meters of plaster and pavement will be required.

Work will begin soon on cutting a new bed for the Crna River from the village of Skociver to the mouth of the Elaska River, on regulating torrents, and on building water gates at the mouth of the Elaska River to collect water from Bitolj Swamp. These are the most important projects for 1949.

A 15-hectare collective farm which will be formed in the district will assure good and cheap food for the reclamation workers.

Large Projects in Montenegro

The Five-Year Plan calls for an increase of 50 percent in the cultivable area of Montenegro by the end of 1951, as a result of reclamation works.

In addition to the project of draining Lake Skadar, large-scale reclamation works were started this year in the Bjelopavlici Plain, Ljeskopolje, the Ljeskopolje Lug (Forest), the Momisici Polje, the Stoj district near Ulcinj, and in Sutorina. These projects will promote the reconstruction of agriculture, the intensive culture of industrial crops and southern fruits, the development of the textile and food-processing industries in the Titograd district, and the development of agricultural cooperatives. Hitherto useless land will be transformed into fertile and productive fields of cotton, tobacco, southern fruits, and vegetables.

As a result of drought and other unfavorable weather conditions, harvests have been very poor in this district. Often, not even enough seed for the next planting has been harvested. Reclamation will permit the planting of wheat and corn in rotation as well as of southern crops and industrial plants.

A total of 22,000 hectares will be reclaimed for cultivation by the end of the Five-Year Plan, or 12,500 hectares, not counting the basin of Lake Skadar. By the end of the Five-Year Plan a total of 34,000 hectares of land, or half the present cultivable area of Montenegro, will have been reclaimed since the beginning of reclamation.

- 3 -

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An investment of 190 million dinars for republic and 500 million for national (i.e., the Lake Skadar project) reclamation projects has been set aside for 1949. A 42-kilometer-long irrigation net in Ljeskopolje and the main reclamation projects in the Bjelopavlici Plain have already been started. During 1949, 4,000 hectares of the Ulcinj Polje, 1,000 hectares of Ljeskopolje, 2,650 hectares of the Bjelopavlici Plain, and 200 hectares of Sutorina in Hercegovni Srez will be reclaimed, and work will begin on draining 700 hectares of the Ljeskopolje Lug and 1,200 hectares of the Mornisici Polje. In Ljeskopolje, which has an area of 2,553 hectares, a main canal was cut last year. Now the main dam is being built on the Tresanjica River and the irrigation net is under construction. The main canal will connect with the aqueduct above Moraca to permit the irrigation of 200 more hectares in the Bar Polje, 180 hectares in Farmaci, and 2,500 hectares around the villages of Duhne, Dajbabe, Estuna, and Zete as far as Golubovac. The 17-kilometer Cijevna Canal will connect with the Ljeskopolje Canal to permit the electrification of the villages and the irrigation of the northern district of the Skadar Basin.

Reclamation works in the Bjelopavlica Plain and the regulation of the lower course of the Sutorina River will begin in March. The lower course of the river, which was regulated last year, will be forested during 1949. Dates have been set for deliveries of excavator bulldozers, rotary cutters, and compressors. A narrow-gauge track will be laid to transport materials to the building grounds.

Smaller Projects in Serbia

The only major reclamation project in Serbia scheduled for 1949 is the Danube-Tisa-Danube canal system. Unfinished projects will be continued, water-pumping stations and levees built, canals cut, and repairs made on objects damaged or destroyed during the war.

Northern Moava has already been protected from floods from the Sava by means of levees, but 40,000 hectares that are protected by levees hold standing water after rains. A pumping station built before the war can take care of only 10,000 hectares. The remainder, and particularly a complex of 10,000 hectares where the land is lowest, is flooded at every season of the year and nothing can be grown there. During 1949 a pumping station capable of diverting 5 cubic meters of water per second into the Sava will be built on the site of the old dam on the Kocin Canal. This will make it possible to plant grain and other crops on 14,000 hectares of land which previously were the most subject to floods. The repair of the pumping station at Drenovac also will recover 1,600 hectares of flooded land for cultivation.

A section of the levee along the Sava in Moava, between Drenovac and Mitrovica, will be banked an additional 1.2 meters with earth.

In the Donjomoravsko (Lower Morava) district a pumping station to drain 12,000 hectares of land will be built. Heretofore, one third of this area has been left fallow every year because of the great quantity of standing water on it. Another pumping station to drain 1,500 hectares will be built at Jezava.

A net of drainage canals will be built this year over an area of 600 hectares of the Gradiste Rit. This canals will lead the water to a pumping station which will divert it through the levee into the Danube. A pumping station and drainage canals to be built in the Negotin Rit will restore 1,000 hectares for cultivation, and 1,700 hectares in the Pancevo Rit also will be reclaimed. A pumping station to be built at Ivanovo in the Banat will drain 3,000 hectares, and 13,700 hectares near Zrenjanin will be drained by pumping stations and drainage canals. Drainage canals for 1,500 hectares will be cut in the territory of the Tamiš-Begej Water Administration.

- 4 -

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In the Kosmet, irrigation canals which served 3,000 hectares of land before they were destroyed during the war will be repaired this year.

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- 5 -

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