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This 15 minutes could affect the next 100 years.

I speak in support of my original submission.

There are two major points to my original submission.

1 – Establishing where the catchment of the Lindis River is.

2 – Consideration must be given to the order of priority of the original allocation of Mining Privileges and Deemed Permits. History is very important when planning for the future.

The Lindis River was used as a source of irrigation about 1909 with water being taken from the lower end of the river to irrigate the flats below Bendigo followed by the Long Acre / Timburn race, The Point and a stock water, domestic take in the lower end of Ardgour Valley.

Following the 1910 Subdivision of the "Runs" off Morven Hills Station, about 750 acres in the Ardgour Valley were set aside for subdivision into small farms. These ranged in size from 43 to 96 acres. They were taken up immediately and settled. Properties on the Eastern side of Ardgour Road had no access to water, other than a small race which extracted water from the Lindis River approximately at the mouth of Wainui Creek and delivered water to Ardgour Run for stock and domestic water. All dwellings that were part of the small farms were erected only a few metres from this race, as domestic water was carried in a bucket. The property owners were of the belief that an irrigation scheme from the Lindis would be started immediately by Government, however the outbreak of WW1 caused a delay to the start of this until 1921.

The landholders committed to the Crown to pay for enough water, (to be supplied at the rate of 1 head per 100 acres) to irrigate all of their land. The Runholders at the time did not consider the value of irrigation as the run properties were large enough to be viable without irrigation.

With water able to be delivered to the highest parts of all small holdings by gravity, settlers were able to survive on their land, raise families and contribute to the development of the community.

The need for the development of rural communities was so important to the Nation at this time that the Government saw fit to subsidise the delivery of water and saw the increase in rural production as sufficient return on their investment.

The Crown took out a "Mining Privilege" for the water for the Ardgour Race which was the 3rd Mining Privilege registered from the Lindis River.

Here I see the significance of the priority system when dealing with a limited resource as it has given enough security to property owners to invest in developing irrigation usage to gain greater efficiency and for small farms to remain viable.

Under the Primary Allocation system those with the greatest financial resources could effectively gain, at the expense of small intensive farming systems.

It is interesting to note that while there were other historic takes of water from the Lindis before the Ardgour Scheme, there was never a Mining Privilege applied for and granted to secure a priority for the water to Long Acre / Timburn and the stock water / domestic supply to the lower Ardgour Subdivision. One can surely assume that this was probably because of limited financial resources available at the time. My understanding is that there was not the same financial constraints for those who secured the 1st and 2nd priorities.

The Crown through the MOW operated the irrigation scheme on a subsidised basis until the 1980's when cost recovery was first mooted and then the idea of handing the operation and ownership of the schemes to the users came. Then there was the passing of the RMA where the Mining Privilege's associated to irrigation schemes were to be "reviewed" after 35 years (2021). I emphasize the word reviewed, as it was never considered necessary to seek compensation for the transfer of a licence held in perpetuity to a renewable deemed permit, as it was intended that those using resources such as the Lindis River should be able to continue to, subject to conditions.

Minimum Flows on the river were not one of those conditions and former Mining Privilege holders have a right to be asking questions about compensation if the review of their Deemed Permit is affected by any newly introduced legislation requiring minimum flow.

Today farmers are able to irrigate a lot more efficiently than at the rate of 1 head per 100 acres and I believe it acceptable for those original contracts to be reviewed accordingly. This does not mean that those with a larger land mass who took a small quota originally should be able to apply for an increased amount of water, as could happen with the Primary Allocation system.

The recommendation in my original submission regarding identifying the actual Lindis catchment was actually taken seriously by the ORC and their outcome certainly caused some serious discussion within the community, especially those whose interest in irrigation is based on a lower priority than the Ardgour Irrigation Race.

I also believe it is no longer necessary for water to be taken from the Lindis River to irrigate Bendigo flats. This water could be traded to the benefit of the environmental flow and the beneficiaries of this flow should compensate Bendigo Irrigators.

It has only been possible to survive on a small land holding in the Ardgour Valley with the use of low cost irrigation, that is a gravity fed supply and not over capitalizing on farm infrastructure.

America still has the death penalty.

However the person imposing the death penalty is unlikely to be the same person performing the execution.

The ORC asks a group of ordinary citizens to sit in judgement and then make a decision which could effectively mean a death sentence to a significant section of the community.