



PLANNING NEWS

Vol. 1. No. 8

Elm Lodge, Ames, Iowa

October 1936

THE PLACE OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN A STATE PLANNING PROGRAM

ALTHOUGH THE INVENTORY of public health resources and programs in Iowa now being taken by the Iowa State Planning Board's survey of public health resources is still far from complete, there is a great deal of interesting information concerning the evolution of public health and the present administrative organization which is of vital interest in planning an improved public health program for the future.

Ever since Adam caught cold one damp and frosty night in a damp nook in the garden of Eden, people have realized that good health is essential to a happy existence. And ever since Eve caught Adam's cold in a warm dry cave some days later, men have realized that sickness and health are not individual problems, but issues which challenge the united action of the entire community.

This elemental knowledge, however, proved of negligible value for many, many centuries, and plague and disease swept in wave after devastating wave over the known world, decimating populations and leaving terror and demoralization in their wakes.

In their ignorance and terror men cast about for some explanation for these awful visitations, and at length decided that avenging gods and supernatural beings sent these epidemics as a punishment for populations who had angered them. This theory passed through various stages, early Christians, Jews,

and witches being at various times held responsible and suffering terrible deaths for their evil works. Others held that plagues were the result of certain phenomena observed in the heavens, and by strange coincidence some outbreaks of plague followed predictions made upon such foundations.

Thinking men, however, were not satisfied with these explanations, and gradually the theory that parasitic bodies were responsible for disease became foremost in the minds of medical men. The spread of syphilis in the 15th century made it impossible to ignore the influence of individual contact any longer. Finally in the 18th century the Dutchman, Leeuwenhoek saw bacteria through a microscope of his own invention. Jenner, Budd and others developed the theory further, but it remained for the great Pasteur to demonstrate conclusively the spread of contagion through micro-organisms and to perfect the vaccination technique.

With this last great advance the governments of all nations could at last work against tangible objects definitely known to spread disease, and they were not slow in getting started in the fight. It was not long before the turn of the last century that this program started, and today we have progressed far beyond the fondest dreams of these early public health workers in combating contagious diseases. But after the first great advances people relaxed

their stern fight with the result that our public health appropriations have been insufficient to put into effect the progressive preventive measures discovered by researchers in this dangerous field. Nevertheless, extensive public health administrative organizations have been set up and are now busily engaged in protecting the health of each and every citizen. A short look at the organization in Iowa will give a picture rather typical of public health programs in many of our primarily rural states.

The authority for ministering to the public health has its legal foundation in the police power, which is the base for so many activities of the government, including actual police work, fire prevention, building and zoning, and even planning. However, the nature of public health work prevents the law from laying down specifically the entire range of work to be done. Consequently the powers and duties granted to public health work are quite sweeping and in some cases are rather summary in their effects.

At the head of Iowa health administration stands the Commissioner of Health, Dr. W. L. Bierring, M. D., appointed by the governor for a term of four years. The commissioner in his turn appoints the remainder of the staff for the State Department of Health, all qualified in their respective duties by long technical training in medicine, public hygiene, or sanitary engineering. The work of the department is divided roughly into five divisions.

The first is engaged in safeguarding the health of mothers and children, in providing pre-natal care and education, and in health education.

The second division is engaged in the control and prevention of communicable diseases, promoting preventive programs, locating sources of infection, isolating the sick, and similar activities.

Third we have the division of sanitary engineering and environmental sanitation, presided over by a sanitary

engineer, and engaged in approving and promoting safe water supplies and adequate sewage disposal systems, and investigating sanitation in swimming pools, state parks and industrial establishments. Here is work of a most fundamental preventive nature.

The next division is engaged in collecting and recording vital statistics of all sorts, computing death rates, and birth rates, morbidity and mortality rates for different diseases and other information valuable to the understanding of the magnitude and incidence of various health problems.

The last division is that of performing laboratory services. These services include the testing of city water supplies and sewage; inspection of milk, blood tests of various sorts and other types of examinations are made free or at a very low cost by the laboratories of the health department.

These various activities reach out to all the county and local health units, which are organized on a different plan.

Each town and each township in Iowa is required by law to have a board of health which must meet at least twice a year. This board must have as one of its members a health physician who is vested with considerable authority relating to quarantine, sanitation and similar matters, and who must also make reports to the state department of all cases of certain diseases occurring in his community. The pay of this officer is determined by the governing body of the community, and in the vast majority of cases this physician gets very little remuneration if any for his services.

Iowa law authorizes counties to organize as health units, building county hospitals, hiring physicians and nurses and performing all of the other duties and obligations of the local board on a county-wide basis. Very few counties in Iowa have availed themselves of this type of organization, which would probably allow a greatly improved public health service at little cost.

One further body should be mentioned in speaking of health administration.

This is the State Board of Health. It is composed of the governor's executive council, five appointed members and the commissioner of health. Its powers are purely advisory, but it serves a considerable function in such a capacity.

At first glance this seems to be quite a complete organization which should be capable of taking care of the needs of the population, and indeed it might be if each community did its part in fulfilling this program. However, with small appropriations for the state department, no appropriations from most localities, and general ignorance concerning the public health needs of the state the program is far from adequate. That it is as complete as is the case is due in a large part to the efforts of non-governmental organizations such as the Red Cross, Parent-Teachers Association, American Legion and many other organizations which have carried on programs of immunization, education, and prevention in many parts of the state.

So strong were indications that the program was inadequate that the department of health requested the planning board to make a survey of public health resources throughout the state, with the view in mind of establishing an enlarged and improved program for public health which will reach with greatest economy every citizen of the state with an adequate preventive program.

The exact form which this program will take is not as yet clear, and will not be until the results of the surveys are known. Several possibilities have been under consideration and some new moves have been launched. A discussion of these possibilities will be made in next month's Planning News.

PLANNING BOARDS PUBLISH NEWS LETTERS

DURING SEPTEMBER THE State Planning Boards of Florida and Tennessee inaugurated monthly news letters. Both the Florida Planning Digest and the Tennessee Plan Topics are interesting additions to the list of periodicals giving

accounts of planning activities in various sections.

Missouri's Planning Digest has appeared with its fifth number, while the Iowa Planning News attains, with this issue, the ripe old age of number eight.

During the comparatively short period of its existence the Planning News has been very well received. Requests for earlier issues continue to come in. Copies of the May and June numbers are no longer available.

Prof. C. Woody Thompson's feature story on "Future of the Small Town in Iowa," attracted wide notice in Iowa. More than 40 daily and weekly newspapers reprinted it in full. New York, Boston and St. Louis papers reprinted the article and commented upon it in their editorial columns.

CENTERVILLE COMMERCE GROUP SPONSORS COUNTY PLANNING

A REPORT FROM THE CENTERVILLE Association of Commerce indicates that progress has been made toward the formation of a County Planning Board in Appanoose County.

George Duckworth, Association Secretary, writes as follows: "Our Association of Commerce has appointed a committee of four -- Matt R. Sawyers, C. A. Farrington, M. G. Hall, and J. M. Beck, -- as nominating committee. These men will meet shortly and nominate representatives from various organizations throughout the county to compose a planning board for this county.

"We have in mind several things that we contemplate doing."

Last spring the Iowa State Planning Board published a detailed study, "An Approach to County Planning---Appanoose County" which contains considerable material that should be of use to any group such as that which is at present being organized.

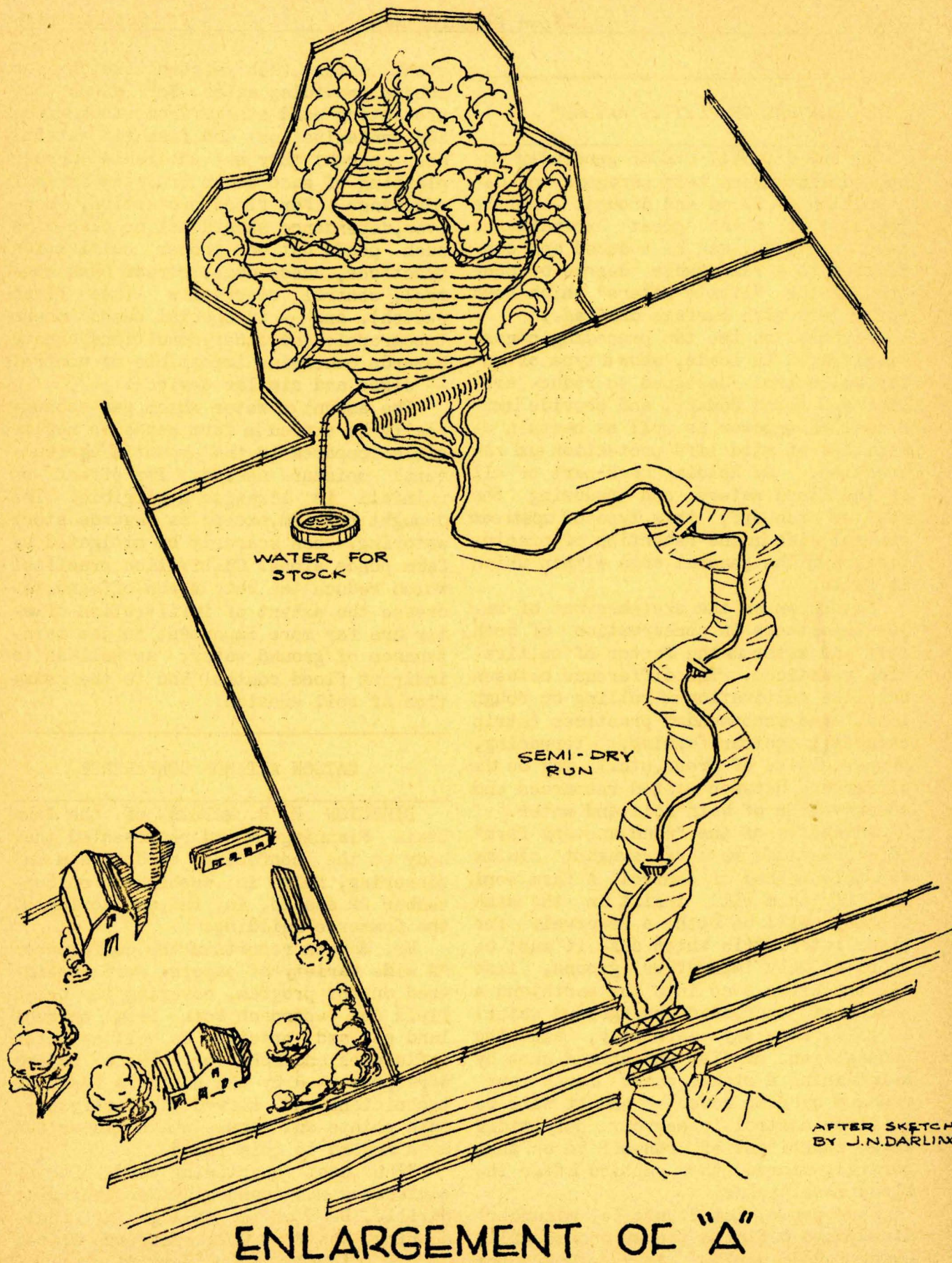
Prof. P. H. Elwood, National Resources Committee Consultant to the Iowa State Planning Board, recently addressed the Centerville Association of Commerce on the Purpose, Methods and Benefits of Planning.



- A UP STREAM FARM PONDS 1-20 ACRES
CHECK DAMS AND EROSION CONTROL PONDS
- B CONTROL RESERVOIR AND POWER UNIT
- C STREAM CONDITIONING AND COVER PLANTING
- D LARGER RIVER

AFTER SKETCH
BY J.N. DARLING

CONTROL OF "LITTLE WATERS"



WATER FOR STOCK

SEMI-DRY RUN

AFTER SKETCH BY J.N.DARLING

ENLARGEMENT OF "A"

CONTROL OF "LITTLE WATERS"

IT HAS RECENTLY BECOME generally accepted that those twin paragons of destruction -- flood and drought -- in the conquest of which great expenditures have been made, can be reduced and controlled to a remarkable degree by control of the "little waters" which feed our rivers with surface drainage.

Sketches on the two preceding pages, exaggerated in scale, show a type of upstream control designed to reduce erosion and flood damage, and provide incidental waterpower as well as certain amenities of wild life protection and recreation. By holding back part or all of the flood waters and reducing the rate of run-off, this type of upstream control aids in the retention of precipitation in the general area within which it falls.

Not shown on the sketches but of major importance in conservation of both soil and water is the factor of cultivation practices. The difference between careless cultivation of rolling or rough land, and recommended practices (strip cropping, contour farming, terracing, proper choice of crops, etc.), may be the difference between wasted resources and conservation of both soil and water.

Advocates of the "pond on every farm" idea sometimes make extravagant claims for this method of control. A farm pond, some of them will insist in the same breath, will be both a reservoir for stock watering (in which case it must be on relatively impervious ground, lest all the water seep into the earth) and a source of increased underground water. It will, some say earnestly, aid the propagation of fish and upland game by maintaining a stable water level surrounded by game cover -- and it will be a flood control reservoir permitting large quantities of run-off to be temporarily stored, then emptied after the flood peak passes.

Farm ponds, let it not be misunderstood, have definite though occasionally exaggerated merit. As reservoirs for

stock water (see second sketch for scheme providing water for stock but protecting pond itself from stock access and contamination) and fish (if water is deep enough) they are admirable. Border planting of game cover creates a further advantage. For flood protection, however, dependence should not be placed on such ponds but on proper cultivation practices, check dams, stream bank control, control reservoirs (see first sketch), and -- in special cases where topographic and other conditions create hazards otherwise impossible of control -- dikes and similar devices.

The amount of water which can economically be stored in farm ponds is negligible compared to the amount of agricultural moisture needed. Its effect on rainfall is likewise negligible. The drought problem, except as regards stock watering, can scarcely be mitigated by farm ponds alone. Cultivation practices which reduce the rate of run-off and increase the extent of infiltration of water are far more important to the maintenance of ground water, as well as to indirect flood control and to the reduction of soil erosion.

MATSON ATTENDS CONFERENCE

DIRECTOR R. H. MATSON of the Iowa State Planning Board represented that body at the conference on Upstream Engineering, held in Washington on September 22 and 23, in the auditorium of the Commerce Building.

Mr. Matson reports of the conference: "A wide variety of papers were considered on the program, covering the broad field by approach both from correct land use and practice as well as water influences and behavior. These papers were presented by the nation's foremost technicians and served to clarify certain points and issues which had arisen with regard to this field.

"The most heartening word of the conference was sounded by Mr. Thorndike Saville, Dean of the College of Engineering, New York University, who stated
(continued on page 8)

 CONTRIBUTIONS OF PLANNING

THE PROCESS OF PLANNING is neither fool-proof nor sacred; properly employed, however, it makes three distinct contributions to a society such as ours. It provides opportunity for a fuller measure of democracy, for coordination of a multiplicity of special programs and plans, and for continuity beyond the uncertain tenure of elective and politically appointive public servants.

Democracy implies personal liberty, but in contrast to anarchy it also implies governmental organization to maintain that liberty. Planning is a tool useful to any form of government and essential to democracy. Through planning, which calls upon the best available technical advice in all fields relating to public enterprise, it is possible to reduce the economic waste of log-rolling, pork-barrel politics and the social waste resulting from misplaced emphasis.

Coordination of public programs is an undeniable government responsibility, yet, without planning, it is unclaimed and unassigned. Entirely legitimate and logical when properly subordinated to the whole of society's needs, special programs are often extended until they claim too large a share of attention and expenditure. Planning is a meeting place for numerous departmental functions which otherwise might trespass or conflict. It makes government more efficient by reducing duplication and contravention of effort.

Continuity in the preparation, adjustment and application of plans for public programs is a necessity. Society as a whole, in contrast to the individual public servants who come and go, is a continuous phenomenon. Its problems are continuously developing, and being revealed. To improve upon the inefficient, spasmodic progress which results when public planning is liable to

change with every election, the functions of public planning should be protected from arbitrary change.

In regard to the continuity of public planning it should be stressed that planning is dynamic, changing, adjusting -- not static, fixed and rigid. As the world changes, so must planning for the needs of its people. Continuity is desired in order that changes may be judicious rather than capricious, tempered by the opinions of experts in many fields rather than by partisan or "pressure group" philosophies.

 LAWRENCE W. MURRAY LEAVES
 IOWA STATE PLANNING BOARD

WHILE ANOTHER IMPORTANT field of public service has gained, the field of planning engineering in Iowa has lost a valued worker in the departure this month of Lawrence W. Murray, project director of the Urban Zoning and Planning Projects of the Iowa State Planning Board.

Mr. Murray, hereafter to be known as First Lieutenant Murray, has entered active service in the United States Army and is to be assigned to duty with the Civilian Conservation Corps in the Pacific Coast region. He left Ames for Little Rock, Ark., October 12, where he was to be commissioned and assigned to duty. Mrs. Murray accompanied him.

His new position comes as the direct result of his service in the Officers Reserve Corps and his participation in the annual summer encampments of the corps.

The work Mr. Murray has directed for the Iowa State Planning Board during the past several months has included a group of urban studies in 13 Iowa cities. These include both traffic and land use surveys in Burlington, Cedar Rapids, Clinton, Council Bluffs, Davenport, Dubuque, Fort Dodge, Keokuk, Marshalltown, Muscatine, Ottumwa, Sioux City and Webster City.

Previous to this work, he directed

the surveys for the Planning Board's study of Appanoose County, being an "Approach to Planning" in the county planning field.

Mr. Murray also was the co-author of the highly interesting "Compilation of Traffic Regulations in Thirteen Iowa Cities," a recent publication of the Iowa State Planning Board.

Mr. and Mrs. Murray came to Ames from Humboldt County. Mr. Murray received his engineering education in the civil and general engineering sections at Iowa State College.

UNDERSTANDING THE TAX SURVEY

BECAUSE A CERTAIN AMOUNT of misunderstanding has arisen with respect to the state-wide Tax Survey now being completed by the Iowa State Planning Board, occasion is hereby taken to clarify an important feature of the survey. Research in the field of real property taxation, with statistical tabulation according to various types of occupancy and various property valuations, so as to permit accurate approximations of the effect of homestead tax exemption (or homestead tax reduction, or homestead tax relief), is being conducted without regard for any one special type of legislative enactment.

In other words, the study is not based on the homestead tax relief bill passed and vetoed during the last session of the Iowa General Assembly, nor is it based on any other particular bill. It is based on homestead tax exemption (or reduction, or relief) in general, and its results will be applicable no matter what special form of bill comes up for consideration (and it seems likely that the matter of homestead tax legislation is not a closed issue) at the next legislative session.

The Tax Survey, therefore, is being conducted without prejudice for or against homestead tax exemption, either in general or in any particular form, and without the limitations that would be imposed were the survey based on one special legislative measure.

The cause of misunderstanding was the use of the phrase "revenue loss" without the further explanation that the phrase "revenue to be replaced" or "amount of tax to be credited (or refunded)" might be used in case certain specific tax measures were considered.

The occasion for misunderstanding the Tax Survey is regretted by the Iowa State Planning Board and every effort will be made in the future to use more complete explanations.

The Tax Survey, which was undertaken largely at the request of the State Board of Assessment and Review, should be an important aid to that body as well as to the Iowa Legislature (which in all probability will again consider homestead tax revision). The survey illustrates one of the main functions of state planning -- research in the broad field of governmental organization, taxation and finance.

At this time it should be reemphasized that the Tax Survey is not confined solely to an analysis of the homestead tax problem. Other reports to be prepared from the basic data will show the distribution of the tax burden by types of property and tax delinquencies by types of property.

(continued from page 6)

that while many things might be controversial, emphasis should be placed on the fact that differers on any certain view were not hostile critics, but were friends interested in and hoping for the same objective. The conference was well attended and should stand as a definite contribution to the fields of soil conservation, stream improvement, and erosion control."

"It is the function of a state planning board to aid in formulating the objective methods of the state government with a broader perspective than that of any one department, and for a longer period of time than that considered by relatively short-lived administrations and legislatures." ----- H. W. Toll

I O W A S T A T E P L A N N I N G B O A R D W. P. A. P R O J E C T S
Progress Report as of October 1, 1936

Tax Survey

State-wide tax survey to determine effects of proposed homestead exemptions on tax revenue of the state.

Field work completed in 85 counties; in progress in 6 counties; temporarily stopped in 3 counties.

Tabulating offices located in 9 counties.

W.P.A. Project No. 65-72-2928.

Urban Land Use and Traffic Studies

City traffic and land use surveys in 9 cities.

Field work now 88 per cent complete. Tabulations 60 per cent complete. Traffic survey reports for Ft. Dodge and Keokuk and a Land Use Report for Burlington ready on October 15.

W.P.A. Projects No. 65-72-5033-66.

Base Map Survey

A state-wide survey to revise and check township base maps showing roads, farmstead locations, electric lines, farms having electric and telephone services, etc.

Field work is approximately 28.7 per cent complete on a state-wide basis. The combined survey and checking field work is approximately 39.7 per cent finished.

Tabulation work which is now in progress in Districts 4 and 5 is approximately 8.3 per cent complete on a state-wide basis.

W.P.A. Project No. 65-72-5048.

Analysis of Farm Statistics

Studies based on available farm statistics involving distribution of farm land in various uses, trends in acreage and yields of major crops and effects of various leasing systems on farm practices and on distribution of income and expense.

Total progress to date amounts to about 57 per cent of completion.

Final tables and graphs for the pre-

liminary reports on the Eastern Livestock area have been completed and work has been started on the write-up of the report.

About three months more should see the project fully completed and a manuscript covering its analysis also should be ready.

W.P.A. Project No. 65-72-5321.

Survey of Public Health Resources

Purpose of project is to ascertain what agencies, governmental and non-governmental, are engaged in programs to promote the public health, how much these agencies are spending, and just what programs are being promoted by this expenditure. The data thus gathered will form a foundation for a plan for the extension of Iowa's public health program. The survey is now operating in 48 counties, in which field work is about 45 per cent finished on the average. Field work has been completed in four counties, and tabulation is in progress in the fourth district, being about 20 per cent completed at the present time. A general report covering the entire project for the state will be prepared eventually.

W.P.A. Project No. 65-72-2953.

Biological Survey

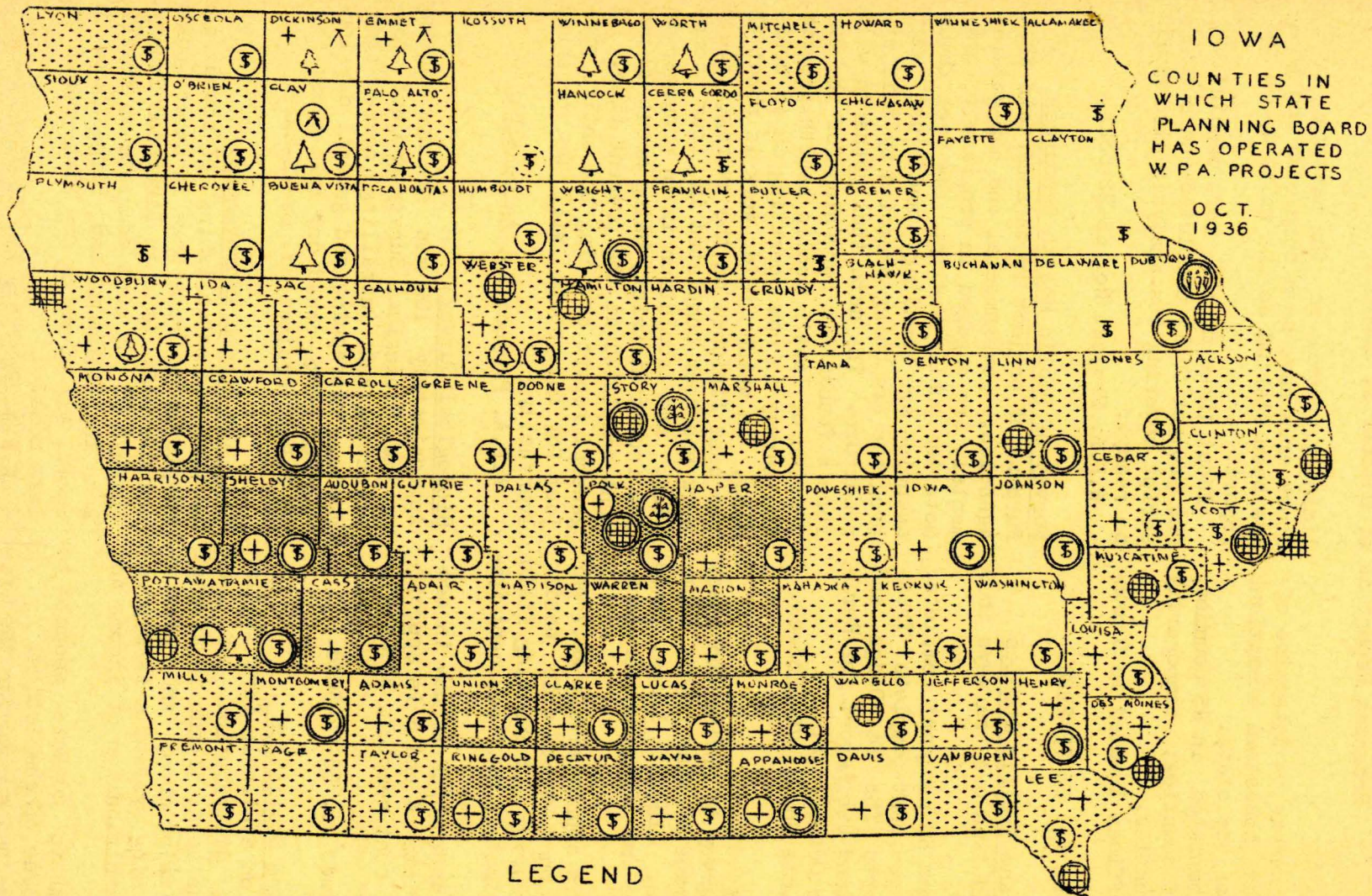
Approximately 100 men are now working on the Biological Survey project constructing and installing corner monuments, riprapping and general development of state-owned dry lake beds.

W.P.A. Project No. 65-72-2927.

Lake and Stream Improvement.

Surveys and establishing of boundaries completed on Grass Lake in Emmet County and Pleasant Lake in Dickinson County. Surveys 90 per cent complete on Prairie Lake in Dickinson, and Birge Lake in Emmet, all of which are state-owned dry lake beds.

W.P.A. Projects No. 65-72-5009-13.



LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| § | TAX SURVEY | ⚓ | LAKE AND STREAM
IMPROVEMENT | ⊙ | FIELD WORK COMPLETED |
| ⊙ | POPULATION AND
SOCIAL TRENDS | ⊙ | URBAN LAND USE
TRAFFIC STUDIES | ⊙ | FIELD WORK INTERRUPTED
TO BE CONTINUED |
| ⚓ | ANALYSIS OF
FARM STATISTICS | ⊙ | BASE MAP SURVEY | ⊙ | TABULATING OFFICE |
| ⚓ | BIOLOGICAL SURVEY | ⊙ | BASE MAP COMPLETED | + | PUBLIC HEALTH |

I O W A S T A T E P L A N N I N G B O A R D

H. H. Kildee, Chairman Dean of Agriculture, Iowa State College
T. R. Agg Dean of Engineering, Iowa State College
Walter L. Bierring State Health Commissioner
J. N. Darling President, General Wildlife Federation
Mrs. Henry Frankel Iowa State Conservation Commission
P. F. Hopkins Director, Iowa Public Works Administration
George Keller Administrative Adviser, W. P. A.
Chester A. Phillips Dean of Commerce, State University of Iowa
Agnes Samuelson State Superintendent of Public Instruction
A. C. Trowbridge State Geologist
Fred White Chief Engineer, Iowa Highway Commission

* * * * *

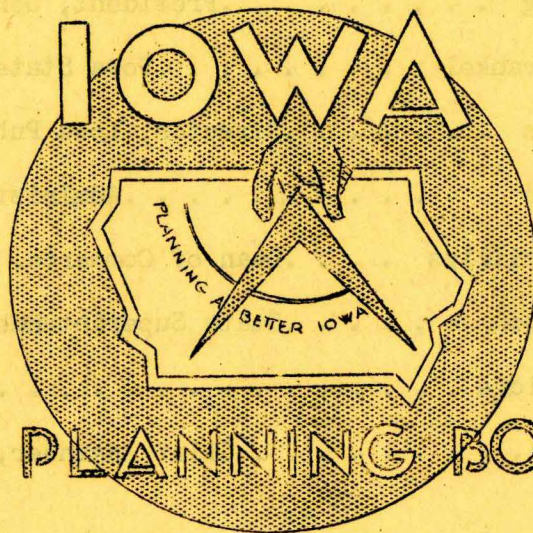
R. H. Matson. Director
A . H. Wieters. Secretary

* * * * *

C. M. Moderwell, District Chairman National Resources Committee
P. H. Elwood, Jr., Consultant National Resources Committee

Material in the "Iowa Planning News" is assembled, edited and published, without review by the members of the Iowa State Planning Board itself. Additional items, corrections or new addresses for our mailing list will be welcome.

The "Iowa Planning News" is published by the Iowa State Planning Board under Federal Project No. 3 of the Works Progress Administration.



STATE PLANNING BOARD