Some Possible Changes in the Drainage Laws of Indiana

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To start with, let me state that I speak only for myself. The Drainage Commission, of which I am a member, has reached no conclusions in its study of the drainage laws. However, I feel that the majority of the members agree with me on the following points.

The allotment procedure for cleaning and maintaining ditches has never worked. This law must be changed so that it will work, or we must have an entire new procedure. Two plans have been suggested:

First, that a contract be let to reputable contractors for the cleaning of ditches; then that the people affected be notified that if they wish to work out their allotment they must do so by a certain date. If they do not complete their work by the date set, the contractor shall proceed to clean all allotments, those not cleaned as well as those improperly cleaned, and charge the landowner in accordance with his allotment.

Second, that all ditches be cleaned by contract and no person be permitted to work out allotments.

The following changes are being considered:

1. There are so many conflicts in the present law that investment companies refuse to purchase ditch bonds. These conflicts must be eliminated.
2. The law permitting a county to establish a revolving ditch fund should be re-enacted.
3. The 1943 Act that permits the cleaning of private ditches from funds collected on a general-tax levy should be repealed.
4. Equipment such as drag lines and the like should be purchased and placed under the supervision of the Surveyor for cleaning all ditches, and should be maintained and replaced by allotment charges on all ditches cleaned and maintained by it. This, of course, should be done only in counties where there are sufficient miles of court ditches to warrant the purchase of such equipment.