It was not long after the Reclamation Service had begun to supply water to the earlier developed projects that criticism was heard concerning the quality of lands that had been chosen for irrigation; and the same criticism is still expressed more or less fervently throughout the west. In very many instances the critics are simply settlers whose viewpoint extends but little, if any, outside the immediate district in which they live, while in other cases the criticism comes from individuals who have a wide acquaintance with conditions on irrigated lands throughout the west. In some cases there has been every reason to believe that the individual opinions have been promulgated with the idea of embarrassing the Service as much as possible.

That errors have been made in the selections of lands to be irrigated is only too true, but such errors do not altogether account for the large amount of trouble that has been caused by seepage waters and alkali salts. In the majority of cases, the critics have missed the fundamental facts that have brought about such conditions. A discussion of those facts is not strictly in accord with the title of this article, but inasmuch as they are closely connected with the development of irrigation in the West, and are of a direct interest in that they have led to a very firm conviction on the part of engineers, that the soil is of primary importance, it may be worth while to review them briefly.

The facts, which may be grouped roughly under three heads, are: The early personnel and policy of the Reclamation Service; the water supply for the land, and the general policy of the Water User's Associations toward the distribution of water to the land.

The United States Geological Survey was created by an Act of Congress in 1879, and the investigation of the water resources of the Arid States was made a part of its duties. That branch of the Government Service continued such investigations until the organization of the Reclamation Service in 1902. Since that date, the Geological Survey has confined its water studies largely to the work of stream guaging, leaving the investigation and construction of irrigation and water storage projects to the newer branch of the Service. Consequently, when the Reclamation Service came into existence there was already at hand a vast fund of information regarding water conditions in the Western States, and the Service was able to function as a constructive agency almost from the very first.

The early personnel of the Service was recruited very largely from the engineers of the Geological Survey, as they were about the only men in the country who had any knowledge of the water conditions in the Arid States. In addition to this fact was the pressing demand that the Government construct