

Highway Barrier Removed By Oregon Convicts Proved Honor Theory Of Gov. West

By RALPH WATSON

(Public Relations Consultant—Oregon Highway Dept.) Roman slaves built the Appian way across the practically impassable marshes to Rome a couple of centuries or so B. C. and helped Rome to rest solidly on her seven hills.

Oregon convicts built the first stretch of the Columbia highway across what had been considered the impassable toe of Shell Rock mountain and proved that the vast pile of rubble would keep quiet and not kick the highway down hill to cover up the O. W. R. & N. railroad tracks below.

The old Roman built his road with tithes and taxes levied on conquered people. Oswald West financed his construction with \$10,000 contributed by Simon Benson without any duress other than his vision of the future and the public welfare.

Samuel Lancaster relates part of the story in his chapter in the first report of the first state highway engineer. Oswald West chuckled about his part in the highway epic in a reminiscent vein.

Lancaster in his report tells that "It had been urged that Shell Rock mountain, in Hood River county, was an impassable barrier"; that if man started tickling its toe the whole mountain would go into convulsions and come writhing down.

West, bred a Democrat, believed that William Jennings Bryan was a man of truth and wisdom, and Bryan had told him the engineers building the Panama canal had told him that the walls of the Culebra cut would stop sliding when they had reached the "angle of repose."

That was an angle entirely foreign to the disposition of the then governor, but it had a soothing sound; Simon Benson had the 10,000 bucks which he was willing for West to gamble with, and the penitentiary had a lot of convicts with idle hands and no way to use them in constructive endeavor.

So, West took the 10,000 iron men donated by Mr. Benson, picked out



THE WIZARD—Sam Roper, imperial wizard of the Association of Georgia Klans, poses in Atlanta for his first picture in the imperial haberdashery. Roper succeeded the late Grand Dragon Samuel Green.

a foreman who had been handling "working gangs" at the pen, selected convicts who were eager for an outdoor vacation and sent them up to Shell mountain to set up an "honor camp" and prove Bryan's stuff about the angle of repose. When they had set up the camp, West sent up another 25 men and they went to work building a rock wall out of the toe of the mountain to keep its foot set where it ought to keep on setting.

West confides that, as a great lover of "hosses" he recruited his honor camp from among the "hoss thieves" who had been unfortunate in getting caught with the goods. "The way I figured," he says, "any guy who loves a hoss enough to steal it and go to jail has got enough good in him to keep a promise when he makes it." To demonstrate his faith in his theory he loaned the camp a .22 rifle and a box of shells to shoot jack-rabbits, or other game, with which to bolster up their larder and help stretch the \$10,000 over a longer period.

"And," West boasts, "we nailed down the mountain without disturbing its angle of repose, and never lost a man." And, that is the way the highway commission got started around the "impassable barrier" of Shell Rock mountain when, in the fall of 1912, as Lancaster records, "All work had ceased, for seemingly the Columbia highway had no backers except a few 'road enthusiasts' until interest was revived 'through the splendid generosity' of Mr. Benson—the convicts having licked the angle of repose."

In July 1914 Hood River county voted \$75,000 in bonds, which were bought, incidentally, by Benson, and final construction was started on the 4.5 miles between Wyeth and Viento hill, between which two points the "impassable barrier" of Shell Rock mountain no longer stood.

Apprenticeship Committee Has Meeting Here

Principal business at a meeting of the Roseburg area apprenticeship committee here Tuesday night was a report by Myron D. Johnston, Medford, of the federal bureau of apprenticeship, on the state apprenticeship council meeting held in Klamath Falls Monday.

The main business of the Klamath Falls session was planning for the western conference on apprenticeship scheduled for Seaside May 22 to 25, inclusive. The conference will be attended by representatives from the 11 western states, Hawaii and Alaska.

Its purpose will be to develop apprentices on the West coast in view of the expected expansion of western industries. The panel will be on all branches of industry. Governor Douglas McKay has been invited as a guest speaker.

Persons wishing information on the conference or reservations may contact Ray Hayden, secretary of the local apprenticeship council, 1247 West Second St.; John Nelson at Denn Gerretsen in Roseburg, or Norman Nilsen, secretary of the Western Conference on Apprenticeship, 408 N. E. Tompson, Portland 12, the state headquarters. The conference is under joint sponsorship of labor-management and the Oregon Apprenticeship Council and Federal Bureau of Apprenticeship.

A meeting was also held here Monday night by the plumbing trade committee. Three new plumbing apprentices were approved. In addition to Johnston, James M. Estep of Eugene, field representative of the state apprenticeship council, was present for the Monday and Tuesday sessions.

Rep. Mack Urges Britain To Reveal Russian Exports

WASHINGTON, March 23.—(P)—Rep. Mack (R-Wash.) has asked two government agencies to find out what Great Britain traded to Russia for 80,000 cases of canned crab meat.

Mack said recently that 44,000 cases of crab meat landed at Boston in a shipment from Great Britain was canned by Russians and had been obtained by the British in a barter deal.

Mack made his requests in letters to the State department and the Economic Cooperation Administration, which he made public. "I would like the ECA to obtain for me a statement from the British showing what goods the British gave the Russians for these 80,000 cases of Russian crab meat," Mack wrote Administrator Paul G. Hoffman. "I believe that Congress and the country, because of our heavy American contributions to Britain through ECA programs, have a right to know what goods the British are supplying Russia."

In his letter to Secretary of State Acheson, Mack said: "The people of the United States are now engaged in a cold war with the Russian leaders."

"In this cold war, the Soviet dictators are doing everything they can to weaken American influences abroad and undermine America's domestic economy. This Soviet harassment already has cost American taxpayers billions of dollars in extra taxes."

"In light of these facts, it seems unthinkable that we should permit Russian goods, produced with slave labor, to enter the United States to compete with the products of American labor. This, it seems to me, is particularly true of such an item as canned crab."

Mack asked Acheson to find out from the British whether what they traded to the Russians "was anything that would add to the economic strength or war potential of the Communists."

MANAGER PLAN EYED

ASHLAND, March 23.—(P)—A city manager for Ashland was proposed here Tuesday. The suggestion came from an interim budget committee appointed to draw up long-range plans for the city.

SCHOOL ELECTION SET

PENDLETON, March 23.—(P)—A \$300,000 school improvement bond election was set here for April 10 by the Pendleton school board.

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TO PAKISTAN—Avra M. Warren (above), former Minister to Finland, has been named Ambassador to Pakistan by President Truman. John M. Cabot succeeds him at Helsinki.

War Widow Under Arrest In 'Lonely Hearts' Deal

EVANSVILLE, Ind., March 23.—(P)—The complaint of a Vancouver, Wash., city employee led to the arrest of a war widow accused of swindling \$400 in a lonely hearts deal.

The woman, Mrs. Mariel Shelton, was charged in a federal grand jury indictment with using the mails to defraud.

Deputy U.S. Marshal William E. Lloyd said the indictment followed a complaint to Vancouver postal authorities by Thomas J. Smith, 55. Smith said he had sent the woman a total of \$400 during a four-month correspondence that started with an advertisement Mrs. Shelton ran in a lonely hearts magazine.

The money was to be used by Mrs. Shelton to come to Vancouver where Smith is employed by the city, Lloyd said he was told.

Coal is mined in French Indochina.

Replanting In Old Burn Area Has Been Resumed

SALEM, March 23.—(P)—Replanting in the Tillamook burn has been resumed after being stopped by winter weather, State Forester George Spaur said.

Spaur called for bids on removing snags. One project is for removal of 1,890 snags, and the other for 1,638 snags.

Bids will be opened April 7. The snags are removed to reduce the fire hazard for the trees now being planted.

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