

Crook County Journal.

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THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1903.

REGARDING THE POOL OF TIMBER CLAIMS.

The visit of Dr. N. E. Winnard of Albany to this city last week for the purpose of gaining the cooperation of the Crook county timber holders in Lake and Klamath counties with the Albany claimants holding timber in the same belt, may be regarded as a step toward securing an honest price for the property which is soon to be put onto the market. Since last February the only ones who have interested themselves in this immense belt of yellow pine have been those who have used every measure possible to depress the price, or at least to persuade the owners of claims in that district that their timber was valueless, and that there would be no other market price offered for them beside their own. Those prices ranged from \$800 to \$1200, according to the territory they were working in and the ease with which they could dupe their prospective seller.

For instance; when operating among the claimants in the Willamette Valley they offered \$1000 or \$1200 for a quarter section in this district, using the suggestion that they were buying from the "suckers" in and around Prineville for \$800. This increase in price was held out to the Albany people as a great inducement for them to sell, but the trick got mixed up in its own trap and only a dozen or so of the claimants in that city saw fit to dispose of their holdings. The remainder of them went into pool and elected the above named gentlemen with two others, who have no other recommendation aside from a strict sense of honesty, to handle the deal, get the remainder of the Crook county timber owners into the pool and then put the entire tract onto the market at a price which any honest lumber company is willing to pay for such property which is recognized as being superior in quality, location and compactness.

Those persons in Crook county owning timber claims in the district referred to can do no better than join the pool which has been organized solely for the mutual benefits which will accrue from a successful termination of the work which it is designed to carry out. It means much, not only to the individual, but to the whole community as well. The price which the pool has agreed upon for each claim is \$3000. Suppose for a moment that only \$2500 will be realized, and the 165 claimants in

Crook county sell. It is a simple matter to figure out that this county will be benefited in the sum of \$412,500 and every business man and every merchant will feel the result.

It is highly probable that as soon as the pool situation presents itself to these scalping buyers, an increase in price will be offered, possibly as high as \$1500. There is no telling to what extreme the play will be carried to break up this mutual benefit pool association, but the members of it should stand their ground, until honest prices are paid. Forsooth, it would not be consistent for a company, which two months ago was paying \$800 for timber claims, to advance that price now to \$1500 when conditions are the same, and the timber as valueless (?) as it was then, but a man in a pinch is likely to jump sideways at any moment. In the meantime let every timber holder in Crook county join the pool and inconsistency sooner or later may decide that \$3000 is a fair, honest and reasonable price for such property. If not then there are plenty of other timber companies in the United States which will take the correct view of the situation.

THE UNDER SIDE OF AN E. O. G.

E. O. G. is the abbreviation for Eastern Oregon Granta. Eastern Oregon Granta in turn is a pseudonym applied to anything of the shadowy order which gets under cover in a miraculous and speedy manner. According to recent reports the society of E. O. G's has a large membership in its land department. There are other departments in this renowned society, but the latter division at present is receiving a major portion of attention.

Now for the subject matter. The Journal has been asked during the past two weeks why it published an article recently setting forth the facts, or purported facts, that the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road company would in the near future dispose of some of its lands in Crook county. In answer the Journal wishes to state that its news came from a reliable source, which it is not necessary to disclose to the public, and the article was based upon the facts given this paper for publication. Whether the Road company intends to sell its property in Crook county is a matter of conjecture, but the following figures are given as a working basis upon which the public may judge for itself.

The Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Road company own 353, 678 acres in this county, or in other words 550 sections. How they came into the possession of this immense tract of land, which is almost contiguous and embraces the most fertile region of the county, is a matter of history recorded in the Dark Ages, and the facts need not be chronicled at this time. Nevertheless, the company is in full and undisputed ownership of this vast body of rich and productive agricultural territory. The valuation of this land,

according to the county assessor's books, is placed at \$430,763 and is assessed for two and one quarter mills, which brings the yearly taxes to a sum approximating \$10,000. Practically all of this land is leased to individuals, who cultivate it and raise crops, or else fence it and use it for pasture for their stock. In this way the land is constantly growing in value and productiveness. In the leases which the company gives to its lessees there is a stipulation providing that an annual rent shall be paid of a certain figure, according to the location of the tract and its productive qualities, and also all of the taxes. These 550 sections average about \$35 per year in rents. The Road company itself pays the county possibly \$600 for taxes on land which is not rented.

Now deducting from the above figures for results and we find this: the Road company receives annual rentals amounting to \$19,250; it pays to the county \$600 in taxes, the other \$9000 is paid by residents of the county; the annual income, therefore, derived from this leasing system amounts to \$18,650.

Do you wonder, gentle reader, that the Road company is backward about selling its wares? Do you wonder that it feels rather partial to Crook county and its generosity? Do you wonder that its standing in the society of E. O. G's has reached the thirty-third degree and that it is likely to take on a few more before the county is many years older? Aye, verily, even a blind man sometimes sees stars.

INTERIOR OREGON TRAFFIC.

That the immense traffic carried on in Central Oregon, most of which passes in or out of Prineville, is gradually attracting the attention of the outside world, is evidenced by the fact that nearly every newspaper in the state is commenting on the facts and figures as they find their way into print. The following editorial, which is a typical article, is taken from the Pendleton Tribune and is worthy a reproduction. It is based upon the numerous articles appearing recently in The Journal relative to the amount of wool and other products shipped through this city.

"Seventy-five carloads of wool pass through Prineville annually, and yet that city has no railroad. This wool is hauled by freight team from Lake and Harney counties and nearer points to Prineville, and thence to Shaniko to a railroad station for shipment. Long trains of freight teams and wagons travel many miles at heavy expense to deliver this product of interior Oregon to market and the people of that region are longing for the steam whistle. In addition to wool they have other marketable products and they consume many carloads annually of food and clothing hauled into them by the same traces as the wool is hauled out. Their products thus cost them heavily to market and the goods they consume become expensive.

They meet these conditions by living on a lower scale, buying less of the luxuries and cheaper quality of the necessities. They spend little for good house furniture, wear rougher clothing as a rule and eat coarser victuals. They are, however, healthy and ruddy and compose an excellent class of people. Among them are builders of states, but the majority of them cannot afford to enjoy any of the modern conveniences of life. Prineville is a good interior town and it would seem that it should be connected with the outside world by different transportation facilities. Irrigation development will bring about this end and the people of that region should be enthusiasts for the cause. In the course of events the interior of Oregon will see the smoke of the steam engine as it stretches in a long, low line through the heated atmosphere of its plains, but later on it is to be hoped that the air will become heavy laden with moisture from the irrigated lands when the smoke will spread in all directions."

"FOR YOUR OWN EXCLUSIVE USE AND BENEFIT."

The general land office has placed a final construction upon the word "speculation," and the phrase "for your own exclusive use and benefit," as used in making final proof on a timber claim. The information comes in the form of a letter from the acting commissioner to Charles W. Strother, a lawyer of Yerka, Cal.

Strother, before offering proof on his timber claim, wrote to the General Land office to ascertain beyond a doubt whether he could make proof on his claim when he did not intend to live on the land or use the timber on it except as a speculation which would accrue to his own benefit. The acting commissioner replied to him in the following letter which is self-explanatory:

"Mr. Charles W. Strother, Dear sir:—Referring to your letter of the 20th, relative to the suspension of your timber and stone entry, you are advised that if you made a satisfactory showing that your entry was made for your own use and benefit and there is nothing more to impeach your good faith than the mere fact that you made the entry for investment with intent to sell the land at some future indefinite time and in this manner realize a profit on the money invested, this office holds that such an entry is not made in violation of the law and should be passed for patent.

J. H. FIMPLE, Acting Commissioner. Crook county timber claimants who have done as this man proposed to do will breathe easier—the air will seem lighter.

First report: prominent politicians and wealthy business men connected with alleged timber land frauds; grand jury will bring indictments. Second report: many prominent business men will be found guilty when grand jury meets. Third report: prominent men and politicians connected with timber grabbing in Oregon, but only a few prosecutions will be instituted for "examples." Fourth report: one or two former timber land operators will be hauled up

before the grand jury. The fifth report is forthcoming.

Ann is likely to be considerably older than she is at present if the newspapers continue to keep her much longer before the public.

The talk of hard times is taken at present in a very soft way in the West.

Additional Locals.

J. S. McMeen was a business visitor this week from Lamonta.

Dave Barnett was in town Tuesday from Haystack attending to business matters.

It is about time for the turkeys in the neighborhood to have attacks of nervousness.

James Sharp returned Tuesday evening from an extended visit in the Willamette Valley.

J. F. Booge returned to the city yesterday from the Deschutes country where he has been looking up some ranch properties.

William Joslin, of Hay Creek is in town, having come from his ranch to enter several horses in the races.

J. L. Windom was a business visitor from Culver Wednesday. He brought in a load of wheat which he sold to the city flouring mills.

Ben Helfrich and wife were in the city Tuesday evening on their way home to Lamonta from Mitchell where they have been visiting Mrs. Helfrich's relatives the past two weeks.

The uneasy feeling which many of the stockmen have felt over the condition of the winter pasture has been dispelled by the recent rains which have been general throughout the county. The grass in almost all districts is said to be in good condition.

Charles Stansburrough came in from Deschutes Wednesday and left on the noon stage for his home in Portland to visit with his parents. He expects to return about the middle of next month to resume his work as clerk for the Pilot Butte Development company.

Two games of ball are to be played during the Jockey Club's race meet. The first game will be called next Saturday afternoon at 2 o'clock between the Prineville team and the Ochoco's. The winner of this game will play the Haystack nine on Sunday afternoon for a purse of \$50. It is expected that the latter team will arrive in the city sometime Saturday.

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