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YE EDITOR'S TRIP EAST

Description of Journey From St. Johns to Iowa
--Interesting Notes by the Wayside.

(Continued from last week.)

Nothing worthy of note occurred after leaving Baker City until we reached Huntington, the second division east of Portland on the O. R. & N., except a "washout on the line;" not a Heppner flood or Galveston horror, but, being Sunday, the yellow boys working for Uncle Ed hung their semi-annual wash out on the line fence. Here the crew seemed to have received a hurry up call, for the train ran like a scared rabbit down the Snake river, through a rich agricultural and stock-raising district. The crops consisted of alfalfa, corn and small grain, the former predominating. Well kept orchards were seen on nearly every ranch, and while some of the trees were heavily loaded with well colored fruit, there were many of them which bore no fruit at all and there will be less than a half crop.

Our first stop out of Huntington, Weiser, is a fine, prosperous, thrifty looking city with many two-storied, brick blocks and handsome residences; the natural result of the splendid country surrounding it. The O. S. L. has a handsome depot built of brick and stone, the finest between Portland and that place. The breath of new mown hay fills the air with sweet perfume and the heart of the husbandmen with happiness and contentment.

Between Weiser and Payette, near the foothills, are some orchards of larger acreage, filled with thrifty-looking trees, indicating more than an ordinary interest in horticulture. The trees stand upright and are very symmetrically pruned, showing careful culture and an absence of high winds, so detrimental to orchards in many sections. Payette is equally as well built as Weiser judging from their fine business blocks and depot building. One thing causes surprise to the visitor to this rich and prosperous section, and that is the superiority of the country residences and the school houses of the rural district east of Payette as compared with those about that city and west of it. In fact, the farther east you go in Idaho the more substantial and elegant are the residences and school buildings in the country. The only explanation we can think of is that perhaps the eastern part of the state has been settled the longest and the ranchers have their homes paid for and therefore have greater means for making these improvements.

The next stop was made at Caldwell where is an even more elegant and commodious depot than those first above mentioned. There is also here a splendid court house, which would compare favorably with that of Portland.

We reached Caldwell just as daylight was saying goodbye. The next stop was made at Nampa, a city of about 4000, or equal to that of St. Johns, but our city is spread over nearly or quite twice the space of that occupied by Nampa. One thing attracted our attention and that was the poor electric light service. The streets were all dark, there being very few and small lights outside the houses. We vainly sought to woo the drowsy god from this point to Pocatello but not a single bit of recognition could we win, and we gave it up in despair as daylight came creeping over the Idaho hills. All day Monday we crawled slowly over the great American desert. We say slowly advisedly, because the greater part of the time was consumed in stopping and starting, and night found us at Bitter Creek, Wyoming, still on the west side of the Rocky Mountains. We retired about midnight and secured two hours of nature's sweet restorer before another day was ushered in without ceremony, and we found ourselves still on Wyoming soil. During Monday we passed the great Wyoming coal mines of Rock Springs and Carbon also some gypsum mines and we were told by an engineer we met en route that Uncle Ed Harriman had bought his winter's supply

THE CITY DADS IN SESSION

Council Meets on Tuesday Evening and Transacts Its Usual Budget of Important Municipal Business

The common council met at the usual hour in the council chamber Tuesday evening, and after the preliminary sparring of roll call and reading of minutes the ball opened with a resolution offered by the Gas Light and Heat Company offering a resolution providing for the deposit of a cash surety in the amount of \$5000 to guarantee their good behavior in the construction of their plant. On motion of Leggett the resolution was adopted unanimously.

On motion of King the gas franchise was taken up and given third reading, and on motion of Walker put on its final passage. When the vote was polled it received the unanimous vote of the council, City Attorney Greene, in a few well chosen remarks, urged the citizens to work together harmoniously now in the consummation of this important enterprise and instead of putting any obstacles in the way of the prosecution of the work to aid it in every way possible, declaring that it was his opinion that the city had granted the best franchise for gas to be found anywhere and his unreserved confidence in the promoters of the plant. Mr. Davidson also thanked the council, not only for the granting of the franchise, but for their extremely rigid scrutiny of the same and for very deliberate and careful study of the situation, guarding the interests of the city and declaring that he did not think any other city had so favorable a franchise for gas, light and heat. He also declared that work would be begun within a few days and that the requirements of the franchise would be complied with in every particular.

The matter of street improvements was then taken up and the improvement of Polk street from Willamette boulevard to Jersey street was considered. An estimate was given for the grading alone, but the council decided that the sidewalks should also be laid and included that in the estimate and on motion of Leggett a resolution authorizing the improvement of this street passed the council. The petition of Bickner Bros. asking for sewer extensions along the center of Jersey street from Tacoma to Burlington street was debated and it was decided that it would not be expedient to place the sewer in the center of the street because of the street car track occupying that position now, and in view of the fact that there is now a sewer along the west side of this street almost that distance, on motion of Leggett the council granted the petitioners permission to put in a sewer along the east side of Jersey street for the distance asked at the petitioners' expense under the direction of the city engineer.

Chief of Fire Department Glover because of his business not permitting him to devote the time necessary for the successful management of the department resigned and on motion of Walker the same was accepted.

The following bills on motion of King were allowed and ordered paid: St. Johns Lumber Co., two loads of blocks for Captain Bredeson's kindergarteners to play with, \$8; Chas. Alderson, road man in establishing street grade, two days, \$5; city engineer to pay for labor in repairing break in sewer, \$7.50; Lauther Transfer Co., a barrel of cement for same job, \$3.60; Calif Bros., contract for window shades as per bid, \$49.25, making a total of \$73.35.

Other matters of minor importance were disposed of and the matter of the obstruction of Bradford street was brought up and discussed. On motion of King the city engineer was instructed to establish the property line along Bradford street over the alleged obstructed portion of the street. It was the sense of the council that in order to protect the interests of all parties abutting upon this street and place all upon the same footing that the street should be cleared and Alderman Jobs promised, according to Alderman King's report, that if his mill extended into the street, to make the necessary "amputation" to remove the obstruction.

The grading of Hartman street proving such a high estimate the council concluded best that the matter be referred back to the street committee to confer with the petitioners and ascertain if they were willing to stand for the amount necessary to do the work. In the matter of Portland boulevard improvement petitioned for, the matter was held up for one week because the north end of the street was closed by a corner of private property and the committee was instructed to ascertain if sufficient land would be donated by the property holder to complete the street. On motion of Jobs the resolution for the improvement of Burlington between Jersey and Kellogg was adopted.

The judgment of the county court in the case of the St. Johns Brick & Tile company, et. al., vs. the City of St. Johns was presented by Attorney Dey of Dey & Hampson in the amount of \$1511.24 including accrued costs. On motion of King the execution was acknowledged and warrant to cover the same ordered drawn. The report of the treasurer and recorder was almost completed and will be presented next week. Mr. Tanch was present, however, and reported that there was in the treasury in the streets and general fund \$6275.77, in the city hall fund, \$3377.42; total, \$9653.20, and he stated that this corresponded with the deposits in the bank October 1, to which date the books had been balanced.

The old question of "what is coming to us from the county?" was up as usual and was just as indefinitely answered. No one seemed to know what was coming or what had been paid by the county so far as any definite time was concerned. The amounts paid were there all right but whether they were this year's tax receipts or dated back to the year 1 no one could tell. This is a matter our city recorder will make it his business to know more about in the future.

It was the sense of the council that under the charter they could not make a contract with the water company, legally, for a longer term than two years and the matter will be taken up this week by the city attorney with the water company's attorney and some definite understanding arrived at before the next meeting if possible.

There was but one bid in for the old city hall, that of C. R. Organ for \$25 which the council rejected on motion of King.

Ordinance No. 157 amending ordinance No. 76 was railroaded through to final passage and became a law with two negatives and five affirmatives, Leggett and Linquist being the minority. This ordinance reduced the age limit of frequenters of bowling alleys, pool rooms, etc., from 18 to 16 years, in the hopes that the boys of the city would remain at home instead of going to Portland, believing they would be in better company here, which is doubtless true.

of coal from Iowa, Illinois and Missouri mines; but thought his streak of economy was proving expensive as he was losing dollars through delays to the movement of trains for every cent he was saving on the price of the coal under that of the Rock Springs, Carbon and Hanna coals formerly used.

The country traversed Monday was barren to a degree we had never seen equalled before. The greater part of it lies too high to be reached by the waters of any stream for irrigation and wells of ordinary depth would not reach water available for that purpose. Near Black Buttes, however, an attempt is being made to sink an artesian well. Should this prove successful there are thousands of acres of this land that would be made fruitful which does not now even grow cacti, fire weed or other desert plants. Upon these great barren plains is presented an opportunity for Uncle Sam to exert his ingenuity. Young cottonwood trees planted in the early spring with the soil deeply mulched for a distance of several feet about them to prevent their drying out, would soon cause them to root so deeply they would grow. Soon as they became large enough to shade the ground well, yellow pine, fir and spruce would grow. When these were well established the cottonwood could be cut out, made into wood or posts, and within 100 years from the planting would have changed this barren waste into a moisture conserving district of incalculable value to the government. Some day this will be done to all this desert land, which has no strata of rock too near the surface, and there are millions of acres of such land within the boundaries of Idaho, Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska.

After leaving Julesburg, Colo., the soil improves in fertility as one

approaches the Missouri river. This is more particularly noticeable after passing North Platte. The fertility of the soil has wonderfully increased since we left Nebraska 11 years ago. At that time much of the land between North Platte and Grand Island, which would not grow yellow beans, now produces fine crops of hay and corn. A part of this transformation has been the result of irrigation but much more from proper cultivation of the soil. There has been no hot winds in this section to destroy the vegetation since 1897, and although from Grand Island west this season the corn crop has been damaged to some extent by exceedingly dry weather, the people there have and are now harvesting the heaviest crop of hay ever grown in that section of Nebraska. As we near Omaha, however, the corn crop is extremely heavy.

New men have taken the places of the old ones, in our old Nebraska stamping ground, some of whom are promoted, others serving elsewhere, and some have cashed in their last run and gone where all travel upon passes that read but one way, there being no return.

There is a peculiar feature of the Platte river we cannot pass without a mention; it is, that along the river between North Platte and Kearney in many places the bottom of the river is 10 feet or more higher than the surrounding country 100 feet back on either side of the river. This is caused by the sand blowing up and finding lodgment on either bank of the river, being held there by the grass, weeds and willows along the edge of the stream. Some of course reaches the water filling up and raising the bottom along with the sides keeping the water near the top of the banks. This has rendered thousands of acres subject to irrigation

and we are surprised that some one has not already availed himself of this condition for that purpose.

The towns of Lexington, Cozad, Kearney, Grand Island, Central City, Columbus and Fremont have grown remarkably, building many fine business and other structures from brick and stone since last we saw them. At the last named place night with ebony pinion again brooded o'er the land and we reached Omaha without being able to make further observations too late to catch our train east.

On the train we met many people who are interested in Oregon; some of whom aver they shall return again sometime and among them Mrs. S. T. Holloway of White Cloud, Mich., who says soon as they can sell their property they will move to Oregon. At Omaha we met a son of Mrs. Rickety, who was so bravely rescued from drowning by Miss Hibley last month. He, too, expects to visit Portland and St. Johns soon. Superintendent Taylor, of Grand Island promised us a visit in the not distant future. We sincerely regret that we did not have several thousand leaflets stating in a concise way the leading attractions of St. Johns for the home seeker and investor. It would have been valuable missionary work, for all are anxious to learn of our country.

Tuesday morning we crossed the Rubicon, commonly called the "Muddy" or "Ol' Missouri" and landed in our native state, Iowa, one of the richest states in the union, and reached our home town Albia at noon. Here we had the time of our life for just a week before we started home. We met many of the old timers, some have gone on before us to that other country, many have moved west and located in all the states between Iowa and the big pond. More about this next week.

ST. JOHNS PUBLIC LIBRARY

An Institution That Deserves a Wider Recognition and More Liberal Patronage.

There are not half the people of St. Johns who know what they can get in the city library here. The free city library, for that is what it is. It costs nothing for the use of the books of this library and when we say, this library, we wish it distinctly understood that we mean every book that is issued to the public from the library at Portland, for the patrons of the library can secure any book in that immense library that is issued to the readers of Portland by making application to the librarian here.

There has gone out a wrong impression from some source, whether intentionally or not we do not know, that this branch of the Portland library is a sort of dumping place for refuse books of the big concern. Such is not the case, but any book in their catalogue will be issued as freely to our readers as to the readers of Portland proper. This means a wonderful privilege that very few indeed are aware of and should mean that the library here might have all the patronage the librarian could possibly care for, and we believe this would be the case if every one in the city knew the facts. All one has to do to secure the use of any book on the list is to get a responsible citizen of St. Johns to vouch for his honesty and make application to the librarian here and the book will be given him. If the book is not on the shelves here, it will be ordered from the Portland library and sent out. There is a weekly delivery of books here every Tuesday evening. If there was sufficient warrant for doing so there would be a daily delivery and there would be double the number of the books on the shelves here. This is the cheapest entertainment there is to be obtained in the world and it is the very best; because through this library you may associate yourself with the brightest and best minds of the world, and not only do so, but at the same time receive their very best thoughts clothed in the best language at their command. What better associates can one wish for?

One other thing that is overlooked by our young people especially, and that is that in the reading room connected with the library is free access to a very large number of the leading periodicals and magazines of the day. Any one can go to this free reading room and peruse these magazines and other publications without even the formality of taking out a card. The rooms are open from 3 to 5:30 and from 7 to 9 o'clock p. m. There are two long tables which extend from one end of the room to the other which are provided with some 30 chairs for the use of visitors. These tables are covered with more than two dozen different publications, all free for the trouble of the using. Many of our young people would like to read these papers and magazines if they could afford to subscribe for them. Here they can find them without paying a cent for them. Why not make use of them instead of spending their time unprofitably at some other place of amusement? This is a veritable mine of information to the student of political economy, the student of the arts and sciences; for the books and papers, the magazines and periodicals will keep him in touch with the most advanced thought of the line in which he is engaged.

This is all free, and perhaps this is the worst feature of it. If one had to pay \$2 or \$3 per annum membership fee and \$c a week for the use of the books, perhaps there would be a greater appreciation of the value of the institution. There is not a business man in the city but would feel better and do more work in his chosen line for having spent an hour with the authors here; or better still, take his book home with him and make it two or three hours a day if he can spare the time instead of sleeping nine or ten hours. Some of our people sleep too much, others do not sleep enough. If the man who spends three or four nights a week attending lodge as the writer does sometimes, would visit but one lodge a week and spend the other evenings at home with his family, reading some of these books, listening to the reading of others by different members of his family and participating in the discussions which these readings will always bring up, there would be vastly more happiness in the life of our people, our boys and girls would have a more intelligent view of life and a greater love for their homes than they do now.

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