

OREGON CITY ENTERPRISE.

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OREGON CITY, OREGON, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1905.

ESTABLISHED 1866

Gladstone Residence and Acre Tracts

On O. W. P. and Railway Line

It has been determined to put one-hundred acres at Gladstone on the market in acre tracts.

It will be sold in quantities as desired and on very easy terms to purchasers.

These tracts are immediately on the line of the O. W. P. and Ry. line and are many of them in good cultivation. Much of the soil is the finest garden land and rich enough to raise onions.

These tracts can be so divided as to present an ideal building site on one of the best streets in Gladstone and extend back to include the finest garden land and all in cultivation. Purchasers willing to take unimproved or partly improved tracts can do so at very reasonable figures.

Prices of tracts fronting on the motor line will be \$300.00 per acre, and from that on down to \$50.00 per acre.

Understand we propose to sell a tract of level rich garden land on the main line of the railway for \$300.00, or we will sell you six acres on the main county road to Portland for the same price.

On these cheaper tracts the timber will more than pay for half the purchase price.

Remember we will and intend for sixty days, and no longer, to sell a large number of acre tracts in Gladstone for \$50.00 per acre, and every one of these tracts will have a frontage on the main county road to Portland.

The terms in all cases will be made fair and to suit the convenience of customers.

Oregon City is rapidly growing northward, and any property fairly situated lying between this city and Portland is better than money in the bank.

We mean business. Come and make your selections.

An abstract with each purchase, showing a complete title free of all incumbrance.

HARVEY E. CROSS

OREGON CITY, OREGON.

REVISE LAND LAWS

ONE OF GREAT MEASURES ROOSEVELT WILL PRESS.

Conditions on Pacific Coast—Stumpage Value Only Just Basis of Sale.

WASHINGTON, Sept. 20.—President Roosevelt in his forthcoming message to Congress will urge the remodeling of the public land laws, and among other things will specially recommend the repeal of the timber and stone act, the law which has been responsible for more fraud and which has caused the Government greater actual loss of money than any other public land statute. The President will base his recommendations upon the report of the Public Lands Commission, consisting of Commissioner Richards, of the General Land Office; F. H. Newell, head of the Reclamation Service, and Gifford Pinchot, Chief Forester.

This commission submitted to Congress at its last session a second report on its investigation, and, among other things, said:

Instances of the beneficial operation of the timber and stone act may be cited, but when it is considered from the point of view of the general interest of the public, it becomes obvious that this law should be repealed.

Since the foregoing report was published, the commission has submitted to the Public Printer a great appendix, containing data and facts upon which its conclusions were based. This appendix has not yet been made public, but an advance copy throws some light on the facts at hand bearing on the operation of the timber and stone act.

Timber Land Not Good to Farm.

The Public Lands Commission, it seems, appointed a committee consisting of Special Agents Edward W. Dixon, S. J. Colter and F. M. Goodwin, to examine into the workings of the timber and stone act in the Pacific Northwest. This committee reached some conclusions which will be of importance, though they are not of a startling character. They tend to show the faults of the timber and stone act, and indicate, wherein that act may be improved. The committee says: "It is a well known fact that the great majority of lands entered under the timber and stone act pass sooner or later out of the hands of the original purchaser from the Government, the remainder being utilized by those who have purchased the lands as an adjunct to the logging and milling business, and in such cases the individual either sells his logs in open market or manufactures the same and sells the finished product.

"It is the opinion of Special Agent Dixon, after several years' experience and close observation, that comparatively none of the land taken up under the timber and stone act is utilized for farming or agricultural purposes. This would appear to be due to two essential causes: First—The act makes provision for the taking up of only such lands as are unfit for farming. Second—Where lands are covered with an excessively heavy growth of timber, farming is precluded by reason of the great cost attending the putting of such lands in a state of cultivation.

How Far is Selling Illegal?

The committee then deals with a very vital feature on which hinges the validity of many timber sales that have been made by persons acquiring timber lands from the Government. It says:

It appears to this committee that a report with reference to the good faith of purchasers under the timber and stone act must largely depend upon the construction placed upon the language used in said act. It is a fact beyond question that there is not a single purchaser of land under the timber and stone act who does not understand the law to give him the right to dispose of that land and reap the benefit thereof; that he is not required as a purchaser under said act to make any specific use of either the land or the timber thereon. If such be a correct interpretation of the act, it would seem that all sales thereunder, while speculative, are not in violation thereof where collusion does not exist. It is a fact within the knowledge of your committee that in many instances parties who have purchased lands under this act have utilized the proceeds of the sale thereof in acquiring homes, either in farm or town property. We desire, however, to disclaim any intention of making these statements as an argument in behalf of the timber and stone act, and simply submit the foregoing as a part of the results of our operations.

Your committee is further justified in making the statement that the greater portion of that class of lands properly coming under the provisions of the timber and stone act, and especially as applied to the Pacific Coast states, will not become available for farming purposes. Such being the case, it would appear that some provision might be made for the disposal of such lands and the timber thereon to a better advantage by either an amendment of the act so as to increase the price per acre or its repeal and the passage of another law providing for the disposal of the timber at its market value. It must be borne in mind, however, that legislation on the lines last suggested would accrue to the benefit only of persons or corporations of large means.

While your committee is not called upon to make any recommendations, it would appear to be proper to state that, in its judgment, if the timber and stone act were amended so as to increase the price per acre to \$5, such a provision would be no injustice to the public and would give a fair return to the Government for lands of that class.

How Should Land Be Sold?

It is to be noted that the Public Lands Commission did not entirely endorse the findings of this special committee. The commission did not look with favor upon a proposition to double the price of timber lands, as the committee suggested, and no such scheme will be adopted by Congress. It is admitted that the present price of \$2.50 an acre is unfair; it is too low. In some instances the Government is selling for this nominal price lands that are worth to the purchaser anywhere from \$50 to \$1000 an acre; sometimes more. In other instances the

present price is approximately all the timber land is worth.

This fact has been established and is recognized by the commission and by Congress: It is impracticable to adopt a fixed price for Government timber land. The best lands of Oregon, of Washington, or of Northern Idaho, are worth 10, 20 or 30 times as much as the timber lands of Colorado and Wyoming. It is manifestly unfair that the very best timber lands in the United States should be sold for the same price as the unattractive, almost worthless timber lands of some of the Rocky Mountain States. That would never be the rule if the timber lands were owned by a big corporation; sales would be based on the value of the timber, and if the timber and stone act is repealed, Congress will in all probability pass some substitute law based on this business principle. A flat price of \$5 an acre would be almost as objectionable as the present price of \$2.50. It would come nearer the real value of most of the public timber land, but it would be unjust, the same as the prevailing price.

Will Seek Repeal of Law.

The efforts of the Administration will be bent in the direction of securing the outright repeal of the timber and stone act, but it will be impracticable to stop there. The timber and stone act is at present the chief source from which the money in the reclamation fund is derived. With that law repealed, the reclamation fund must practically stand still, unless some other source of supply is provided. It will therefore be urged that, in lieu of rough and very low estimate, were enacted authorizing the sale of public timber at its stumpage value, the proceeds of such sales to go into the reclamation fund. In the event that such a law is enacted, the reclamation fund will probably grow twice as rapidly as it is growing at this time, for the disposal of timber for its actual value will bring a greater return than its disposal at a flat price of \$2.50 an acre.

Two years ago the Government sold timber lands belonging to the Chippewa Indians in Minnesota on a stumpage basis, and the sales netted the Indians \$15.00 per acre. Had those lands been sold under the timber and stone act, the price brought would have been but \$2.50. Yet the Chippewa timber lands, which readily brought \$15.00 an acre, in open competition and after due appraisal, would be termed "scrub" lands in the Pacific Northwest—lands too poor to be logged. How much, then, would be realized for the cream of Washington, Oregon and Idaho forests, if the timber should be sold as proposed by the Commission?

There is this to be said: The great majority of the purchases of timber lands under the timber and stone act have been made in the interest of big logging and lumbering concerns and corporations. These concerns are the principal users of timber and by careful management have cornered vast areas of the best timber in the Northwest. If the timber and stone act is repealed, these interests will not be immediately affected; they have all the lumber they can handle for years to come. Because of this fact, there would probably be light sales of timber for the next few years; there would be little demand and speculators would hesitate some time before buying up public timber at stumpage values, in the hope of selling it in the distant future at what they hope might be a profit. The adoption of the stumpage system as a substitute for the timber and stone act would practically put an end to fraud in public timber land transactions, and would materially swell the public receipts.

Vast Sums Thrown Away.

For instance, during the past two years the Government has disposed of some 2,000,000 acres of land under the timber and stone act. Its receipts were approximately \$7,500,000. These lands, at a the timber and stone act, some law be actually worth at least \$15 an acre, on the average, so the Government was positively cheated out of \$12,500,000, almost the immense total of \$37,500,000, almost as much money as has been converted into the reclamation fund in four years. Had the stumpage rule prevailed, the Government would today have upwards of \$100,000,000 with which to build irrigation works, instead of a little more than \$40,000,000.

These facts may not appeal to all Senators and Representatives; they do appeal to President Roosevelt, and that is why the President is going to make a strenuous effort to bring about the repeal of the timber and stone act at the coming session. He wants not only to put an end to the fraud, but to see that the Government derives a just return for the timber with which it parts.

VOTE ON FRANCHISE

PEOPLE TO MAKE EXPRESSION ON IMPORTANT QUESTION.

By Terms of Proposed Contract City Will Receive \$59,500 in Aggregate in 35 Years.

An agreement has been reached between a committee, representing the Oregon City Council, and the officials of the Oregon Water Power & Railway Company, respecting the freight and passenger franchise that has been asked by the street railway corporation and which has been under consideration by the council for some time. Briefly stated, the city agrees to give a 35 years' franchise for which annual license, aggregating \$59,500 are to be paid by the street railway company.

These terms have been agreed to after a number of conferences between members of the Council and the officers of the O. W. P. & Ry. Co. The final conference was held last Friday night, the city being represented by Mayor Sommer, City Attorney Griffith, Councilmen Wm. Sheahan, Rudolph Koerner and H. E. Straigt.

The city will receive \$59,000 for a 35-year franchise, to be divided into five-year periods. During the first five years \$390 is to be paid annually, and the amount is to be increased \$390 for each succeeding five years. The company obligates itself to lay down a single track railway in the middle of main Street, and also agree to put down the same kind of track on other parts of Main Street whenever such parts are improved. Grooved rails must be laid in cement. The company must maintain the roadway and bridge from the roadway to Station A, the end of the city limits, and must maintain the street between the main track and switches. The present switch on Main Street is to be torn up and a new switch put in from Fourth to Second streets, and all switches, as well as the main track are to be laid in cement and Belgian blocks, between the rails and a foot on each side.

The speed of all cars must not be more than six miles per hour, and cars shall not be left standing on the street.

A slight change was made in the hours that freight trains may be operated. The company shall have the right to transport two trains of four freight cars and a motor car through the city between 7 a. m. and 12 noon and the same number between 12 noon and 7 p. m. Between the hours of 9 p. m. and 6:30 a. m., the freight privileges are unrestricted.

Special Election Called.

At an adjourned meeting Monday evening, the ordinance was read for the first time and ordered published. At the suggestion of Koerner, supported by Sheahan, it was ordered that the matter of granting the franchise be submitted to a vote of the people of the city. Saturday, September 30, was selected as the day for holding the election. It was also ordered that 500 copies of the ordinance be printed in dodger form for distribution before the time of election.

GENERAL SUMMARY.

The long dry spell was broken on the 12th by good rains which fell generally in the western and northern portions of the state. These rains were supplemented by showers in scattered places on the 13th, 14th and 15th. Some fall plowing and seeding has been done, but the soil is not soft enough for this work to become general. Light frosts occurred in exposed places on several days, but they did no harm.

Hop picking is nearly completed and the crop is turning out better than expected. The rains did not injure the hops but they were detrimental to prunes the picking and drying of which are well advanced. Reports indicate that the prune crop will be larger than last year, but much less than a full crop. Late apples are ripening and indicate from fair to good yields.

Corn is nearly ripe and it is a good crop. Potatoes are generally free from blight and the prospects for a good yield of potatoes is much better than it was before the rains set in.

The big horse and cattle show at the Lewis and Clark Exposition is now in progress, opening September 19. It will run for ten days. Some of the noted horses of the country are on exhibition, and in the cattle, sheep and hog sections the entries are highly interesting. Cattlemen and horsemen from all quarters of the United States are in attendance.

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Your Clackamas County abstracts of Title should be prepared by the Clackamas Title Company, Incorporated, Chamber of Commerce Building, Portland. This company is the builder and owner of the best and most complete plant of Clackamas county titles. Abstracts from its offices are compiled by experts of long experience, competent attorneys and draughtsmen, and are of guaranteed accuracy.

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