

TAKE FIRST STEP

Land Office Officials Show Their Hand.

FRAUDS ARE DISCOVERED

Three Commissioners In Oregon Removed.

ANOTHER FORCED TO RESIGN

Special Agents of Department of Interior Have Reported Results of Their Investigations—Prosecutions of Guilty Will Follow.

Special agents of the United States Land Office and the Interior Department have discovered evidence of extensive frauds in the disposition of public lands in this state, and steps have been taken toward prosecuting the offenders. Several United States Commissioners were removed from office as a result of a four-month investigation by special officers.

The first step in the prosecutions was taken yesterday by Judge Bellinger, who removed Commissioner H. W. Reed, of Blaine, Clatsop County; J. W. Hamaker, of Bly, Klamath County; and J. O. Hamaker, of Bonanza, Klamath County. A few days ago Miss Marie Ware, Commissioner at Eugene, was also removed from office. Direct intimation was conveyed to her that a vacancy in her office would be most acceptable to the officials of the Interior Department. The three other Commissioners were summarily removed by Judge Bellinger at the request of the special officers of the land department who have been investigating the land frauds in Oregon. These removals are to be followed by others in different parts of the state. The special officers who have been investigating the frauds in Oregon have evidence of the gross negligence and fraudulent practices of a number of United States Commissioners, and all of those against whom irregularities are charged will be deprived of their offices. No intimation has yet been conveyed of the number who are to be prosecuted. The first steps in this direction will be taken by the United States Attorney General, who has received from Washington. The reports from the special agents of the Interior Department have been made direct to the Washington officials in charge of the administration of public land matters, and not to the local court officials. At Washington it is expected the Department of Justice will be put into possession of the evidence accumulated, and prosecutions will then be ordered.

Fraud is Charged.

Gross negligence, collusion, fraud in the taking of acknowledgments and various other irregularities are charged against certain Commissioners in this state. They are accused of having used their offices for private gain, and of having formed a partnership with land croppers or land locators.

In some instances it is charged the Commissioners have been parties to fictitious entries on public lands. In other cases the Commissioners have entered into agreements with aspiring landowners to facilitate the work of taking up public lands, and the land laws have been openly violated.

A special agent of the department was sent on a short time ago to investigate the conduct of a certain Commissioner's office. He had received information to the effect that 12 persons would be present upon a certain date to make final proof of settlement. Under ordinary circumstances, where an applicant and complete investigation was made by the Commissioner as the law directs, this would occupy an entire day's time. Each applicant would be put through a rigid examination, and his witnesses would have to answer a series of questions to demonstrate that the applicant had been faithful in all his obligations.

The special investigating officer, not desiring to make his presence known too soon, stopped overnight about three miles distant from the office which he was to investigate. About 7 o'clock the next morning he visited the office, believing he had arrived in plenty of time to watch the work of the Commissioner. On his way to the office he met seven applicants, accompanied by their witnesses, returning to their homes. This aroused his suspicions, and he investigated.

It was discovered at this office that the Commissioner had filled out all the blanks in the application upon a typewriter. In some instances he had filled in his answers in duplicate by use of carbon paper, so as to save time. The typewriter arrangement was that the applicant and his witnesses, when they appeared, were handed the blanks, already filled out, and asked to sign them. The ceremony ended at this point.

Gross Irregularity Found.

Another instance of gross irregularity discovered by the land office was that of a Commissioner who came to Portland to take the acknowledgment of certain landowners. Under the law, all those who have taken up public lands are compelled to appear in person before the Commissioner or officers of the Land Office and show their right to the property sought. In this instance not only did the applicants fail to visit the office, but they even paid the Commissioner to take their acknowledgments in Portland. It is suspected by the officials of the Interior Department that at least one of the applicants was no nearer the office of the Commissioner than Chicago. In some mysterious manner he succeeded in satisfying the Commissioner.

It has been discovered by the special agents that certain of the Commissioners were in the habit of going outside their districts into neighboring counties to take acknowledgments. This work is along the same line as that of the Commissioner who came to Portland.

Open partnership with land locators is charged against some of the Commissioners. In these instances the Commissioners and the land locators entered into an agreement either to locate genuine seekers for public lands or to find fictitious names for land locators and take up property which was deemed to be valuable.

The use of fictitious names was general among the crooked Land Commissioners. This practice gave the Commissioners and their confederates control of valuable Government property, the market value of which provided for their remuneration.

Legislation in the conduct of their offices is a general charge that is made against certain Commissioners. Against such it is not alleged they were corrupt, though this charge might be true, but they

certainly not paid the proper attention to details. If not an actual party to frauds they have permitted others to impose upon the Government from the fact that they did not scrutinize applications closely enough. Such Commissioners are guilty of recklessness and may not be prosecuted.

Criminal Charges Will Be Filed.

It is the intention of the Federal officials to file criminal charges against those Commissioners who have been up to date to frauds, or who, in their "obliging way," have gone outside their district either to drum up trade or to assist some land locator in making final proof. The charges against such officials will be prosecuted vigorously. The first step will probably be taken by the United States District Attorney when complaints are lodged in the office of the United States Court Commissioner. The guilty officials will then be bound over to await the action of the Federal grand jury.

In the meantime it is expected further orders removing land Commissioners accused by the department's special agents will be issued. The evidence of four months' investigation is in the hands of the officials of the Interior Department, and action may be ordered at any time.

The department has been represented directly in the investigations by A. R. Green, a special inspector. The General Land Office has had E. B. Linsen, one of its special agents, in the field. The reports of both of these officers have been forwarded to Washington, and their full names have not been published in Portland.

The investigations of the special agents will be pursued elsewhere, and it is expected frauds similar to those practiced in Oregon will be discovered in other states.

It is claimed as a result of these investigations that it has been demonstrated that the land office is a very vicious measure. It has given an opportunity for the practicing of frauds that, under the old system, could not have been attempted.

Under the law of 1902 the Federal judges are authorized to appoint Land Commissioners. The theory of the law was that it would enable persons to make final proof without going to the Land Office, which might be located some distance from their home. A local Commissioner would conduct the proof as well.

The practical working of the law has been that designing persons have been able by the circulation of a petition to the Federal Judge to secure their own appointment as Land Commissioners. The Judge could not, of course, know all the applicants, but would recognize many good names on the petition. Once in possession of a Commissioner's office, the crooked official would be ready for business. This is the plan followed in this state which the Interior Department has just exposed.

MISS WARE RESIGNS.

United States Commissioner at Eugene Retires From Office.

EUGENE, Or., April 6.—(Special.)—Miss Marie Ware, United States Commissioner, has tendered her resignation, which at this time, it has given rise to a report that the resignation was by request. This, however, is not true, and it is certain her resignation was voluntary. She had been in the office for some time, and recent investigations that have been conducted may have had something to do with her decision to retire from office, but no pressure was brought to bear on her.

It has been learned that there is soon to be an exposition of misconduct in office by several officials of the Land Department. The names of the officials are not known, but it is a smoking out such as has never been seen for a long time, and a complete exposure of public land frauds through the Federal Courts.

In the case of Miss Ware, it is quite generally known that charges were made against her some time ago, but just what the charges were is not known. Judge Bellinger has indicated her consent to look into the charges, but he failed to find any evidence to make out a case. Within the past month, however, there has been a special agent of the department here from Washington, who worked quietly for some time investigating matters in connection with public land entries. This agent did not make himself known officially, and took extraordinary precautions against leaking out information.

None of those who would be likely to know what is going on will talk on the subject, but it is learned that evidence has been accumulated here and elsewhere which will furnish the public with sensational information when the proper time arrives, and there will be an exposure of the work of the Land Department that will be quite conclusive. The time for the investigation is said to be the latter part of this month, when the Federal grand jury meets in Portland, and the officers and attorneys who may know will not talk until the grand jury has had an opportunity to take action.

An effort has been made to learn if the ex-Commissioner of the General Land Office, Blinger Hermann, was in any way connected with the investigation. He is now in the courts, and it is safe to say that the exposures promised will not in any way reflect upon Mr. Hermann or be used against him in any way. It is known that those who will come in for investigation and the misconduct in office that will be charged are not in any way likely to reflect upon the administration of the General Land Office.

The proceedings before the grand jury will be watched with a great deal of interest by many in Lane County, who are, in one way or another, possessors of land, the title for which is still to come from the Government.

PERSONAL MENTION.

Dr. R. E. Darnell and wife, of Kalamazoo, Wash., are at the St. Charles.

Scott Bosworth, of Salem, manager of the Pacific Homestead, was in the city yesterday.

J. W. Scriber, a prominent banker and politician of La Grande, is registered at the Imperial.

Watson C. Squire, an old and well-known resident of Seattle, is a guest of the Portland.

C. M. Saylor, of Pocatonga, Ia., accompanied by his wife, is making a tour of the Northwest. They are now at the St. Charles.

J. G. Lucas, who was formerly receiver of the land office in the District, is registered at the Imperial. His wife accompanies him.

John Ivey, a watercolor artist from California, is a guest of the Perkins. Mr. Ivey, who is well known in artistic circles, has originated a style of his own, and a number of local painters have formed a club, which is named after him.

A. T. Vandevanter, a prominent horseman, state Senator and politician of the State of Washington, is arriving at the Imperial. Mr. Vandevanter arrived from Seattle to attend a sale of horses which takes place in Portland today, and may possibly sell some of his own stock.

Cornel Dudley Evans, president of the Wells-Fargo Express Company, is at the Portlandian. Colonel Evans owns a considerable quantity of real estate in his city and its suburbs, and it is more his private business than the affairs of the company that has brought him to Portland just now.

Henry Rust, a wealthy resident of Baker City, is a guest of the Imperial. Mr. Rust has recently sold the brewery which he owned there, and has practically retired from business. Baker City is growing faster all the time, said Mr. Rust yesterday. "The mines are all working, and there is a steady tide of immigration into this part of the country," Mr. Rust is well advanced in years, and a friend remarked that he had not changed much in the last few years. "Can't afford to change at my age," said Mr. Rust. "Any change now would be for the worse, so I have concluded not to change at all."

Have your friends coming from the East? If so, send their names to the Denver & Rio Grande office, 124 Third street, Portland, Or.

WANT HER PROPERTY

Erring Wife Finds No Forgiveness in Husband's Heart.

STEPSON URGES DESERTION

J. B. Mobley, With His Son, Demands That Woman Who Worked for Them 23 Years Surrender Her Community Rights.

J. B. Mobley and his son, Orry, came to Portland a few days ago for the purpose of inducing Mrs. Mobley to return to her home, and bringing to punishment R. Ripley, with whom she had eloped.

Their true purpose, as evidenced by the developments of yesterday, was to force the woman to sign away her community rights in the home property. On account of the timely interference of Mrs. Simmons, Judge N. H. Bloomfield has taken up the case of the deserted woman, and says that if there is any way to evoke justice in the case, he will see that she has her just apportionment of the property.

Behind the story of the stepson, who eloped with a man who pleased her fancy, is a pitiful tale of an orphan girl married at the age of 18 years to a man of twice her age, and given the care of six children not her own, after working for 23 years to help support this large family, finds herself an obstacle in the way of the children she helped to raise, and is thrown out that she may reap the benefit of her years of saving.

"My wife's mind is not strong," said the aged husband yesterday at the police station, "and I am sorry for her. If she wants to go back home, I will be glad to take care of her." The stepson, Orry Mobley, was standing by his side, however, and was not content to hear his father talk thus.

"No," replied the stepson, for whom the woman in the cell had labored so many years, that he might as well settle home; "she is a fallen woman, and it would not be right for you to again receive her into our home."

"Yes," replied the old man, submissively, for it was evident that he was controlled body and soul by the young one. "You are right. We cannot take her back."

"I want to go back with them, said the woman, when she was questioned, but there was no pity evinced by the stepson.

"We can't take her, father," he said, and the question was settled.

The two left the place and soon returned and presented a document, which they wished her to sign.

"You have committed a crime," began the heartless stepson, "but we would rather not prosecute you for it. Sign this document, and we will not prosecute the case." Mrs. Simmons heard the words and intervened.

"You have claimed," said she, "that the woman is not of sound mind, and you shall not take advantage of her."

The stepson, who had concealed his wrath and left the scene, returned and said: "We will go, then, and leave her," he said.

When it was intended to turn the prisoners free, it was found that Ripley had \$3.

"Are you not willing to give the woman a part of the money so that she can look to Vancouver and look out for her rights?" Ripley was asked. But he thought more of the money than he did the rights of the woman whom he had brought to sorrow, and refused to part with any portion of the money.

"She shall not receive such treatment," declared Sam Simmons, who soon as he saw the situation, he immediately presented the case to Judge Bloomfield, and the attorney made arrangements to do everything possible to help the woman regain her rights.

"It is evident," said the Judge, when seen last night, "that the woman is somewhat demented. They are talking advantage of her. The old man cannot be trusted, and the son would like to have the property turned over to himself. He wants to get the woman out of the way. Accordingly to the laws of the State of Washington, she is entitled to half of the property. I will communicate at once with Judge A. L. Miller, of her county, and ask him to take charge of the matter, and see that the woman has her rights."

Both Mrs. Mobley and Ripley are still confined in the City Jail, and will be held there on a local charge until the matter can be finally adjusted.

SHOT AT FIREBUG.

Incendiary Attempts to Fire Eastern & Western Lumber Co's Yard.

Despite the anonymous letters received by Chief of Police Hunt, in which a writer, pretending to be the firebug, said that he had left the city, an incendiary attempt was made early yesterday morning in the lumber yards of the Eastern & Western Lumber Company, and the firebug narrowly escaped being killed.

Three shots were fired at him by Night-watcher John W. Bingham, but so far as is known none of the bullets took effect.

The owners of the different mills are becoming more alarmed than ever concerning the matter, and are placing several watchmen at each plant, and arming them with shotguns.

The attempt to fire the Eastern & Western Lumber Company's mills was made at 2:30 Sunday morning. The night watchman was going the rounds, when he was attracted by a noise in the yard. Shipping quietly to the scene, he saw a man skulking from the yard.

"Halt," cried the watchman, but the strange man broke into a run. Two shots were fired at the retreating form, but the light was so bad that it is thought neither of the bullets did any harm.

An investigation in the morning showed evidence that the watchman had really shot at the firebug. Near the place where he had first heard the noise was a sack of hay, which had been dropped as soon as the watchman appeared on the scene.

The news was wired to the police station, and an officer was sent to look into the matter. The fugitive had escaped, however, and no trace of him could be found. It is thought that he escaped by jumping into a boat that had been tied near the lumber yards.

An old wooden structure at 131 Seventh street had been raised from the foundation, and the men were working beneath it removing the dirt. Workheads had been erected to keep the dirt from caving in, but were not sufficiently strong, and as the two men were beneath the bank the dirt fell upon them. One escaped in a few moments, as a wagon was standing near him acted as a shield. Grant was not so fortunate, and was buried for fully ten minutes before enough of the earth could be removed to allow him to escape.

BURIED FOR A TIME.

Laborers Are Caught by Caving Dirt, but Not Injured.

Several tons of dirt caved from a bank near Seventh and Alder streets yesterday afternoon and buried H. H. Grant and William Jensen. The workers quickly removed the earth that covered the victims, and neither was injured by the accident.

..Meier & Frank Company.. ..Meier & Frank Company..

Easter Bibles, Prayer Books and Testaments at special prices. Easter Footwear for women—All the good kinds for walking or dress wear—\$3.00 to \$6.00 per pair. Ready-to-Wear Apparel for Misses and Children—Our assortment the largest and most complete ever shown in the Northwest. Young Men's Easter Clothing—Black Clay Suits in sack styles, well made, stylish and very reasonably priced.

Easter Notes From 'Round the Store

At this important point of time when all thoughts are directed to Easter needs, and they are many, the "Big Store" brings to the attention of all economical buyers that which is essentially necessary for Eastertide. Suggestive and exceptionally seasonable merchandise greets you on every hand in our store. Evidences of the approaching season everywhere from the feathery and furry novelties in the fancy goods department to the elegant cloaks and millinery on the second floor. Ready and willing hands to serve you promptly and satisfactorily.

"Hawes" famous \$3.00 Hats for men. The new Easter styles in Derbys and Fedoras. A \$5.00 hat for \$3.00.

"Kerchiefs" Swiss, Linen and Hand Embroidered "Kerchiefs." An entire new assortment to select from.

Easter Millinery



liners of America as well as Paris, are here in superior variety. For the most artistic expression of creative genius you must come to the "Big Store."

Children's Headwear

We've prepared Easter Headgear for the children—A variety that makes choosing easy for mothers—Prices and styles that are pleasing to the children and parents alike.

"Perrin's" Gloves



Are you familiar with the good points embodied in the "Perrin" Gloves? The best and most carefully selected skins used in their construction—every detail in workmanship receives the close attention of expert glove makers—the colors, finish, fit and stylish appearance makes this glove a success the world over. The Spring style and size assortment is complete—Every new shade to match the Easter gowns—Three qualities for your choosing.

"Charmette"—A superior real French kid Glove pair \$1.50

"La Mure"—Three styles, an unequalled Glove, per pair \$1.75

"Perrin's" First-Quality—The highest art of Kid Glove, per pair \$2.00

"Fanchon" Suedes, blk. and colors, a desirable dress-Glove, \$1.50 pair. Complete line of 16, 20, 24-button Suede Gloves—Two-clasp Silk Gloves; also 18 and 20-button Silk Gloves.

Easter Perfumes

"Hudnut's Yanky" Perfumes—For the rest of the week 75c values 59c oz. Eastman's triple extracts, all odors, 18c bottle.

Armenian Handkerchiefs

Complete showing of the new Armenian Lace-Trimmed Handkerchiefs, dainty and attractive qualities from 50c to \$1.25 each.

\$2.50 Laces \$1.39 Yard

Of course you would like a handsome Allover Lace Waist—The sale of a manufacturer's stock that we heralded yesterday brought an enthusiastic throng of buyers. The opportunity offered to purchase a beautiful lace at about half the regular price was inducement enough to bring many of the best customers we have. Quantity enough remains for all who come today and tomorrow. The facts are: A manufacturer's stock of beautiful white and cream Venise Lace Allover, eight handsome patterns, all clean, desirable goods, 3 1/2 yards necessary for waist pattern, \$2.50 value, your choice at \$1.39 yard



\$5.00 Umbrellas \$2.57

The best Umbrella value we have ever offered. The quality of silk, the styles of handles, the plain and changeable effects with or without borders in navy, brown, black and red makes an umbrella offering not to be overlooked by prudent buyers. Handles of pearl, sterling trimmed; sterling handles with French gray medallions; handles of horn and natural wood and a large variety of styles. Not an umbrella in the lot worth less than \$4.50, the great majority \$5 values. Do your choosing now, at \$2.57



This Is "Housekeeper's Week"

The merchandise and the values cannot fail to interest every woman who is in the least economically inclined. Just the things necessary to brighten up the home and table for Easter are offered here at a saving you are bound to appreciate. Look through this list carefully and note the many marvelous values.

Linen Department	Basement Department	Pure Food Department	Curtain Department
70-inch half bleached Table Damask, best patterns, good quality, special value at, yard..... 67c	Rattan Carpet Beaters large size, 10c and..... 16c	2 1/2-lb. can table Strawberries for..... 15c	100 pairs of imported ruffled Muslin Curtains, hemstitched and colored border, regular \$2.50 value, pair \$1.67
72-inch grass bleached Table Damask, quality worth \$1.25, for this sale, yard..... 90c	"Cricketer" Wringer, \$1.75 value for..... \$1.29	2 1/2-lb. can table Raspberries, 2 for..... 25c	100 silkline covered Comforters—Filled with lanated cotton, best patterns, regular \$1.85 value \$1.47
Silver bleached Damask Napkins, 22x22 in. fine patterns only, doz..... \$2.19	"Neverburn" Roasters, 9 1/2 14, 9 1/2x15, 39c and..... 48c	2 1/2-lb. can table Pears, 2 cans..... 25c	200 fringed Wilton Rugs, 27x60 inch, very best designs and color combinations \$1.42
Grass bleached Damask Napkins, per dozen..... \$1.98	"1847" Rogers Bros. A1 Silver-plated Ware Teaspoons, fancy patterns, per set..... 98c	2 1/2-lb. can table Blackberries 2 cans..... 25c	5000 yards of Japanese Martings, plain and figured, great many styles to choose from, 25c value, yard..... 19c
500 dozen bleached Cotton Huck Towels, large size, extra value at, each..... 9c	Dessert Spoons, fancy patterns, per set..... \$1.79	4-Gallon of Tea Garden Drips for..... 40c	200 fringed Wilton Rugs, 27x60 inch, very best designs and color combinations \$1.42
Hemmed Pillow Cases, 45x36 inches, special value 10c at, each..... 10c	Meat Forks, neat patterns, each..... 48c	1 Dozen assorted Van Camps Soups..... \$1.00	500 goose-feather mixed Pillows, fancy ticking covered, size 21x27 inches, great value..... \$1.09
18-in. All-linen Bleached Crash, yard..... 9c	Jelly Knives, neat patterns, each..... 69c	2 Cans of Hickmott's Asparagus..... 45c	
All-linen Huck Towels, large size..... 18c	Wrought-iron Candelsticks, each..... 12c	3 1/2-lb. cans of sliced Pineapples for..... 50c	
Special lot of "Webb's" all-linen grass bleached hemstitched Huck Towels, best value ever offered at..... 26c	Cordova Wax Candles, ass'td colors, each..... 2c	1-lb can of Baker's Cocoa for..... 45c	
	Tall Celery Glasses, special, each..... 16c	Curtee Bros. Blue Label Catsup, bottle..... 20c	
	500 Japanese Creamers, 7c	3 1/2-lb. cans of Pie Peaches for..... 25c	
	New arrivals in English Dinner Sets, beautiful patterns.	1-lb. cans of Minced Clams, 2 for..... 25c	
		2 pks. Malta Vita, Carro Fruits or Force..... 25c	
		1-lb. Baker's Powdered Chocolate..... 30c	
		Largest bottle Lea & Perrins' Sauce..... 80c	