

DISAPPOINTED BY TALK AT BANQUET

Business Men Not Elated by
Speeches of Harriman
and His Attorneys.

CRITICAL TONE DISPLEAS

Death of Announcements of Rail-
road Construction and Unfavor-
able Tone of Spokesmen
Not Encouraging.

Where men congregated in Portland yesterday the chief topic of discussion among business men of the city was the Harriman banquet of Tuesday night, and disappointment was generally felt that instead of some more definite announcement as to future policy, the people of Oregon were practically told that they must build railroads themselves. It may seem incredible to the pleasure of the big system. No fault was expressed concerning the statements of Mr. Harriman personally, other than regret that he had not been more positive in defining the intentions in regard to new projects for transportation facilities in sections not included in any of the present plans. The construction planned for the immediate future. It was recalled that two years ago the immediate construction of the Columbia Southern was promised by Mr. Harriman on condition that the state promptly met by Portland people, but the road has not yet been built.

But much criticism is heard of the attitude in which the people of Oregon were made to appear by the attorneys for corporations included in the system, and while it was felt that benefit may accrue from a better understanding of the temper of the people on the part of Mr. Harriman, the banquet, judging from expressions heard, did not serve to bring closer together the interests of the public and transportation lines. While it is a source of satisfaction to know that the mileage already projected will materially benefit the country, tributary to Portland, and likewise the city by reason of enlarged trade territory, business men have an idea that they might be entitled to form some opinions themselves as to the ends of other regions not supplied with transportation facilities, and at least should be accorded the right to conduct their own business without dictation of counsel from the railroads.

William D. Wheelwright, president of the Chamber of Commerce, who was one of the speakers at the banquet, said in commenting upon the subject:

Mr. Wheelwright's Comment.

"The dinner was a very pleasant one, and everybody seemed to enjoy Mr. Harriman's hospitality. It may seem invidious for a guest to find fault with anything that is done or said on such an occasion, but as Mr. Harriman and his representatives are here to make arrangements with regard to the relations between the transportation company and the state of Oregon, it is, perhaps, not improper for me to say that the statements were very disappointing. When it was announced that Mr. Cotton had decided to retain his position with the O. R. & N. Co. I concluded that it was the result of a conviction on his part that he could serve the people of the state to better advantage in that position than in any other, and that he was, therefore, to be congratulated. It was at least understood that he would pay special attention to the requirements of this community in the way of railroad development, and that any recommendation of his with regard to new construction would be treated with respect, to say the least. On the contrary, Mr. Harriman contented himself with a reference to two or three small pieces of railroad building that are already accomplished facts, and failed to give any assurance of increasing activity on the part of the railroad company. It was, therefore, to be expected that in the past, and with assurances that they would give just as much regard to the interests of the state in the future as they had done hitherto. It really seemed very strange to me that they should indulge in such a line of argument, as they must be aware that there is great and widespread discontent throughout the state with the attitude of the present attitude of the company; and they must also be aware that any amount of argument going to show that the railroad is right and the people are wrong will have no effect whatever. Right or wrong, the community will maintain its present opinion, and I was exceedingly disappointed that neither Mr. Harriman, Mr. Cotton or Mr. Fenton thought it advisable to say anything that would allay this discontent and tend to restore cordial relations between the railroad company and the people. Mr. Fenton remarked that in a particular case the railroad would be at a certain point before the settlers (and his remark was received with faint applause), and, being, apparently, that in that case at least, the railroad was ahead of the times, whereas, to my thinking the basic idea of modern railroad building is to anticipate settlers and give them the facilities to enter upon new territory. There was a time when railroads did not project themselves into unsettled regions because the settled territory was without great facilities, and it was naturally proper that they should be served first. But nowadays settled communities are so well accommodated that railroads must necessarily press forward into regions where there is but a sparse population, and it is not to be expected that they will at once jump into a prosperous business, although in these days of increasing immigration they won't have to wait very long for good trade returns, if they will only give immigrants an opportunity to settle the country.

"Of course, I speak without personal feeling, and with great respect for Mr. Harriman, Mr. Cotton and Mr. Fenton, the last two of whom I count among my personal friends. I appreciate that it is a matter of business, and not one of friendship or sentiment, and I am extremely sorry that their views of the business situation did not allow them to give some such assurances as we should like to have with regard to new construction. And I must object to the tone adopted by all of these gentlemen, that it is for us to ask for what we want and for them to give as much or as little as they like, as if they had no responsibility to the communities through which they pass, and from which they derive their income, whereas they ought to look upon themselves as trustees for the people of this region, and faithfully represent and serve the interests of those people, as well as their own."

Promises Not Kept.

"In my opinion, there will be more railroads built in Oregon within five years than have already been projected, whether

Mr. Harriman builds them or not," said J. Frank Watson, president of the Merchants National Bank. "The people of Oregon are tired of promises not fulfilled, and it comes with poor grace from representatives of the system to charge Portland with failure to do its part in view of the fact that Mr. Harriman on a previous visit two years ago submitted a distinct proposition that he would extend the Columbia Southern as once into Central Oregon providing good faith was shown by Portland to the extent of subscribing \$500,000 to the stock. That subscription was promptly raised, but the road is not yet built, and we have not yet had any explanation why Mr. Harriman failed to carry out the agreement. We are now told that the Columbia Southern will be extended, but not given any very definite information as to the extent of what is to be done and will be inclined to wait actual construction before putting any great amount of faith in such promises.

"Whether or not with intention to mislead the public and representatives of the community present, the information vouchsafed concerning the projected section of the Deschutes was incorrect. More than \$500,000 has been expended on the Deschutes Irrigation & Power Company project alone, and combined in the different enterprises there will be in excess of \$500,000 acres brought under irrigation. Eighty-five thousand acres is made water. When it is considered that Yakima has only 45,000 acres under irrigation and furnishes a greater tonnage to the North Pacific than any other point between St. Paul and the Coast, persons not familiar with the situation can form some idea of what traffic will be created for

the Municipal Court yesterday.

Circumstances alter cases with members of the detective staff, the same as other people, as was aptly illustrated in the Municipal Court yesterday.

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