

Big Strides in Railroad Work Made in State

Era of Intensive Development of Oregon Starts in 1907 With Beginning of Railway Construction on Large Scale by Two Systems.

By Clyde B. Atkinson, Commissioner, Public Service Commission of Oregon.
THE intensive development of the transportation system of Oregon commenced after the Lewis and Clark Exposition of 1905. Probably the most gratifying surprises during the exposition were the announcements of extensions and improvements which had been decided upon, made by responsible railroad heads. Following the exposition came Oregon's most rapid development. The state's resources became widely known and brought large increases in population and great sums of outside capital for investment. Had the transportation system not been greatly extended and strengthened during this critical time, the benefits of this expansion could have been realized only in part.

Progress Made Before 1907.
For a long time there had been little change in the transportation system of Oregon. But little new line had been constructed, and the facilities provided on existing lines had not been increased to keep up with the growth of population and traffic carried. The annual reports of the Interstate Commerce Commission showed that the Oregon rail system had increased from 2128.57 to 2337.32 miles from July 1, 1894 to June 30, 1906—an average of but 21 miles a year.

It was the general complaint that the existing lines were taxed beyond their capacity and that the whole rail system was inadequate for the present and prospective development of the state. The business offered during the exposition made the demonstration complete.

The small map shows the rail lines at the beginning of the year 1907, roughly forming the outline of a letter "n." The upright stem was comprised of the lines operated by the Southern Pacific Company; the upper portion of the letter "n" formed by the lines of the U. S. & N. Co. and Oregon Shortline—both subsidiaries of the Union Pacific System; while the horizontal top stem to the left represented the Northern Pacific and its connection, Astoria & Columbia River Railroad Company.

Large Area Was Tied Up.
As the Southern Pacific and Union Pacific lines were operated under a close community of interest until their merger was later dissolved by order of the United States Supreme Court, the vast interior of Oregon, together with considerable adjacent portions of Idaho, Nevada and California, was completely surrounded by the lines of this so-called Harriman System.

In 1907 there was an area larger than the entire State of Illinois, embraced within the boundaries of Oregon, more than 25 miles distant from any railroad; and Illinois then had more rail mileage than any other state. Nine out of the ten 12 counties were not touched by a railroad. Nothing could profitably be produced in an area larger than any one of the original 12 states, except what could walk out on its own legs.

The transcontinental rail business of the state was effectively in the possession of the Harriman System, although a measure of competition was afforded at Portland by the railroad of the Northern Pacific from Puget Sound, crossing the Columbia by a cut ferry, which was at a disadvantage by reason of its longer route and inability to reach other Oregon points by its own rails.

Railroad History Made in 1907.
Since the beginning of 1907, however, much of this undeveloped territory has been reached by rail lines; the Harriman system has been reached back to its constituent elements, the Union and Southern Pacific; and the Hill lines dispute the field with both.

The announced intention of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific to build a line jointly down the north bank of the Columbia River, paralleling the Union Pacific system on the south bank, and the taking over by those lines of a projected independent rail line from the mouth of the Deschutes up that river into Central Oregon, was the real harbinger of the development which followed the exposition.

A fierce race between the Hill and Harriman systems followed for the possession of the north bank of the Columbia and for the strategic points in the Deschutes Canyon. This is now history—it ended with the splendidly constructed North Bank road line built from Paine into Portland, crossing the

NINE YEARS' RECORD OF RAILROAD CONSTRUCTION BIG.

The aggregate cost of the railroad transportation system within Oregon is approximately \$220,000,000. Of this, \$100,000,000 has been expended in the past nine years. The total increase in mileage of railroads in Oregon has been 1424.35, an average of 158 miles a year, as contrasted with the average annual construction of 21 miles for the period prior to 1907. As shown by the annual report of the Public Service Commission, on June 29 last, there were in operation 2727.72 miles of railroad, on a single-track basis, without account being taken of the Coos Bay line of Southern Pacific, 143 miles; the Columbia & Nehalem line of 19 miles; and Portland & Oregon City Railway, 11.1 miles. These added would bring the total to 2991.82 miles.

Columbia and Willamette on great steel bridges, reaching adequate terminals on tidal waters, and with both systems operating up the Deschutes as far as Bend.

Hill Operations Big.

The Hill lines took over an electric railway line which had been constructed independently from Portland to Seaside, known as the Oregon Electric Railway, with a branch from Garden Home to Forest Grove; and then extended the line to Corvallis and Eugene. Similarly it took over the switching system in Portland and electric interurban lines of the United Railway Company, extended them into Washington County and made a connection with the Oregon Electric which now is used as a belt line around Portland. The project of the Hill line contemplated an extension from Bend southward to connect with the line of Pacific & Eastern Railway running from Medford, but this plan was

RAILROAD SHOWING DIFFERENCES

Total Investment by Railroad Jan. 1st 1916, \$220,000,000.29
Mileage of roads built totals 3200 of 1400 miles were completed since 1907

Scale of Miles

