

FUTURE OF FEDERAL RAILROADS IN DOUBT

Oregon Interests Await Return of Spruce Commander.

MUCH MONEY IS INVESTED

Abrupt Completion of War Activities Results in Speculation as to Disposition of Improvements.

With the abrupt completion of aircraft spruce activities, Oregon and Washington have within their boundaries a dozen or more short-line railroads, built for the aircraft production division's logging operations, and in various stages of construction. Public interest centers about the disposal or continuance of these lines, which are Federally owned, and which, in some instances, would be of permanent value as public utilities.

Interest in Oregon centers especially on the Lincoln County lines, of which there are two, constructed for the Government by the Warren Spruce Company, of Portland, with a combined trackage of more than 40 miles of main line. Thrusting north and south from Yaquina the logging roads penetrate an undeveloped territory, which is comparable to the Tillamook dairying country in its raw state.

New Lines Are Standard.
"Not only are these lines standard in every way," said K. B. Kumppe, general manager of the Warren Spruce Company, "but their standard is higher than that of the Corvallis & Eastern, the Southern Pacific line to Yaquina."

"No grades exceed 3 per cent, no steel is under 60 pounds, and all bridges and structures are of common railroad standards. They are worth every dollar they cost the Government, and that cost has nowhere approximated the general advance in ordinary railroad construction—a fact that is largely due to the loyalty and spirit with which the soldier railroaders tackled the game, new to all of them."

"Both north and south lines are located and constructed along the logical routes for any extension of the Southern Pacific line. There is no question about their future value to Lincoln County, for the wild territory that they invade is almost identical with the dairying lands of Tillamook."

Lincoln County Prospers.
"They are a permanent asset to that entire country, and through their medium Lincoln County in the past six months has gone forward at least 25 years."

"Orders for the construction of the south line were received on April 6. It is finished. This line runs from Yaquina Bay to the Blodgett tract, south of Alsea Bay, a distance of approximately 20 miles."
"The north line was ordered on June 15, from Yaquina to Otter Rock, north of Newport, a distance of 15 miles. At present 12 miles have been completed."

"Spur lines have been laid out and graded, 90 miles of steel rail have been delivered, with donkey engines and other equipment. We had approximately 15,000,000 feet of spruce ready to move from the woods when the order to cease operations was received."

Railroads Tap Wilderness.
"We were within 30 days of being able to give the spruce corporation at least 20,000,000 feet a month, and had just built the biggest logging machine that the industry has known working under high pressure, without a letdown for eight months."
"Five thousand feet a day, of choice spruce, was to have been the opening schedule of the Warren Spruce Company on December 1, with a steady climb that would have brought production to the 50,000,000 feet per month by January 1. One of the largest sawmills in the West had been constructed at Toledo, where the terminal at Yaquina had handled as high as 80 cars per day of incoming freight. At times 5000 men have been employed in the company's construction operations, 80 per cent of whom were soldiers. In February there did not exist a survey of any kind, and the country through which the roads were to run was a trackless wilderness."

Spruce Head Is Awaited.
The Lewis & Clark line, in Clatsop County, constructed by the Grant Smith-Porter logging interests, and running to the Lewis & Clark River, is another road which is said to be admirably located for public utility and community development. A similar line has been constructed out of Raymond, Wash., while a third, 15 miles in length, was built at Hoquiam.
The return of Brigadier-General Disque, commanding the Spruce Production Division, who has been in conferences at Washington, is awaited with interest, not only for the light that he may be enabled to shed upon the spruce industry in general but upon the future disposition of the Federally owned logging roads, which might be converted into public utilities.

Woman on School Board First Time.
CATHLAMET, Wash., Nov. 20.—(Special.)—For the first time in its history Cathlamet has a woman member of the School Board. Upon the resignation of Charles Below the County Superintendent appointed Mrs. Esther Flagg to serve until the annual election in March. Mrs. Flagg is a former teacher and a graduate of Washington State College. She will act also as clerk of the board.



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