

San Francisco Strengthens Her Fences Around Oregon's "Lost Provinces" While Portland Marks Time!

In his pamphlet entitled "What Californians Want," Mr. Wallace M. Alexander, President of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, reminds his readers that the offices of the Southern Pacific Company are at San Francisco. Some 76 San Francisco business men proceed by special train to Klamath Falls and are greeted with these lines in The Evening Herald, published at Klamath Falls, October 21, 1922:

"OREGON'S 'LOST PROVINCE' GREETES HER RELATIONS BY MARRIAGE. Klamath County, one of Oregon's 'lost provinces,' bound to Oregon through the misfortune of birth and affiliated to California by marriage, today welcomes the San Francisco chamber of commerce trade excursion."

On October 23, 1922, the same paper has this to say:

"STATE LINE IS ERASED BY BAY CITY VISITORS' 'ANNEXATION' OF KLAMATH TO CALIFORNIA FOLLOWS MEET WITH SAN FRANCISCANS. Bent, broken and finally obliterated, the California-Oregon state line no longer exists in Klamath County. In its stead the 76 members of the San Francisco chamber of commerce trade expansion excursion established bonds of friendship binding Klamath County together with Northern California."

Does anyone think San Francisco is making this effort for the benefit of Oregon or of Portland? They tell you, however, that the Southern Pacific will complete the Natron cut-off and then Portland will have the business. Some weeks ago the Southern Pacific Company filed a petition before the Interstate Commerce Commission, concluding with this prayer:

"WHEREFORE, applicant prays that the Interstate Commerce Commission make an order authorizing the Southern Pacific Company to acquire control of the Central Pacific Railway Company to the following extent and by the following means: (a) by lease until December 31, 1924, subject to termination by order of the Interstate Commerce Commission if and when found by said Commission to interfere with the final plan of consolidation, when promulgated, under Section 5 of the Interstate Commerce Act as amended, and (b) by ownership of all the outstanding capital stock of the Central Pacific Railway Company during the continuance of such lease, and for such further order or orders as the Commission may find to be just and equitable and in the public interest."

The San Francisco people have intervened in this proceeding to assist the Southern Pacific Company in its effort to obtain from the Interstate Commerce Commission the order prayed for. Is San Francisco's effort made for the benefit of Oregon or of Portland? Why isn't Portland's Chamber equally busy in Oregon's interest? Read the following observation from The Eugene Daily Guard, and then express yourself to the Portland Chamber of Commerce:

Proposed Central Pacific Lease

The Southern Pacific Company, after spending enough money to make a good start on construction of the Natron cut-off in propaganda against the supreme court unmerger decree, has at last laid its cards on the table. It desires only to lease the Central Pacific lines until such a time as the Interstate Commerce Commission develops an indefinite plan of grouping all the great railroads of the country into a number of systems, based on efficiency of service and competition, as suggested in Esch-Cummins railroad act might be advisable, although no authority is vested in the commission for enforcing such consolidations.

The Southern Pacific Company will use all the endorsements of its absolute and despotic control of Western Oregon and California by news-

papers, individuals and Chambers of Commerce, it has gathered together regardless of expense, to induce the Commission to disregard the decision of the Supreme Court and allow it to continue to operate the Central Pacific lines under lease. The scheduled hearings on the unmerger we were told would be held in Portland and elsewhere on the coast this fall will not take place—there evidently was no foundation for such statements.

The situation then, if the Commission listens to the plea of the Southern Pacific, backed by the endorsements it has bought and paid for, is that the company will have an excellent reason for not building the Natron cut-off, Springfield shops or anything else, probably for years to come. As lessees only of the Central Pacific lines, it will be argued, it would be the height of folly to spend millions in permanent improvements upon these projects. Meanwhile the Interstate Commerce Commission will proceed, perhaps for years, to investigate and hold hearings upon the feasibility of consolidating the railroads of the country into a few big systems, a scheme that may never materialize.

The only conclusion to be drawn is that the Southern Pacific Company in setting aside the decision of the court, if its campaign to that end succeeds, will have bottled up Western Oregon tighter than in the past, dissipating every hope of railroad development that our people have ever cherished. Can you beat it?

Some weeks ago a committee of the Portland Chamber of Commerce comprised of the following representative men: H. B. Van Duzer, Chairman, Manager Inman-Poulsen Company; C. D. Bruun, President Blake-McFall Company; Emery Olmstead, President Northwestern National Bank; L. A. Lewis, President Allen & Lewis; Nathan Strauss, member of firm of Fleischner, Mayer & Company; George Lawrence Jr., Secretary and Treasurer The George Lawrence Company; Ira F. Powers, President Ira F. Powers Furniture Company, and F. A. Nitchy, Manager of Crane Company, returned a unanimous report recommending

"1. That the influence of the Portland Chamber of Commerce be exerted to maintain the independence of the Central Pacific in the grouping to be made by the Interstate Commerce Commission or the lower court, whichever is to have the jurisdiction, as we believe that such an independent line will be for the best interests of the state of Oregon. We feel that with such an independent and competing line entering the state, traffic arrangements can be had that will insure the completion of the Ontario-Crane line of the Union Pacific as well as connect up the Klamath and Southeastern portions of the state, including an extension south from Bend, in such a manner as to aid materially in their long retarded development. With the northern lines operating the Oregon Electric service to Eugene at the present time, and independent Central Pacific from Ogden to Eugene, there are opened up possibilities of future development and competition in both eastern Oregon and the Willamette Valley.

"2. That the influence of the Chamber of Commerce also be exerted to the end that the main line of the Southern Pacific north and south, i. e., San Francisco to Portland, should be continued as a unit and such disposition of those properties of the Central Pacific in northern California be had as to insure this condition."

Are these recommendations to be carried out in the interest of the state and in disregard of every other consideration?

Why do the directors of our Chamber hesitate to adopt this report and work as strongly for Oregon as the San Francisco Chamber has for California?

C. F. SWIGERT,
A. H. AVERILL,

Ex-Presidents, Portland
Chamber of Commerce.