

FLISHER'S REFORM PROGRAMME BIG

Secretary Promises That Settlers' Rights Will Be Respected in Future.

MANY OBSTACLES IN WAY

Bad Department Precedents Remain to Be Overcome—Predecessor Handicapped in Sincere Effort to Right Wrongs.

OREGONIAN NEWS BUREAU, Washington, Sept. 30.—Mr. Walter L. Fisher, Secretary of the Interior, is able to carry out the promises he made to the people of the West in the course of several public speeches, he will show himself a greater friend to the public land states than any of his recent predecessors.

This statement is not intended as a reflection upon the Secretary, for beyond all doubt his promises were made in the utmost good faith and with the intention that they should be kept. But the evils which the Secretary has promised to correct are of long standing, largely the outgrowth of undisturbed bureaucracy, and are traceable to officials in the Interior Department who have fallen into a rut, and are loath to change their methods.

Home-Making to Be Encouraged.

In brief, the Secretary declared himself "for the man on the land." He declared in favor of encouraging honest settlement on the public domain; in favor of aiding and encouraging the homesteader, and in decided opposition to long delays in adjudicating cases where the question of irregularity or fraud has been introduced. He declared that he would receive it—and expeditiously—and the man who is not entitled to patent should be disposed of. That is all the West has asked, but that is just what the West has not been able to get from the Interior Department in many years.

Back in the old days, the Interior Department was an easy-going machine, ponderous, slow and inefficient. The administration under Secretary Bliss, at the opening of the McKinley administration, was efficient. Such was the condition of affairs when Ethan Allen Hitchcock became Secretary. He was a business man, and quickly realized that something was wrong. But when he set about righting the wrong, he overdid the thing, and to the reforms initiated by Secretary Hitchcock may be attributed many of the abuses of which the West complains today.

Burden Placed on Entrymen.

Secretary Hitchcock started on the assumption that every public land entryman was dishonest, and imposed upon him the burden of establishing his honesty and his good faith. The public land laws, instead of instruments to aid homesteaders in acquiring lands, were construed into statutes designed to retard settlement, and every means at the Secretary's command was used to prevent the issuance of patents. Special agents of the Land Office were called into the Secretary's office and instructed that vigilance was the price of their jobs, and agents who were unable to discover fraud were soon aware that their services were no longer required.

This built up a system that brought about most of the trouble that exists to this day. Under Secretary Hitchcock the special agents went broadcast over the West, and when they found no specific instances of fraud, reported a "suspicion" that fraud was being committed in this locality or that. This suspicion was enough for Secretary Hitchcock. He immediately suspended entrymen and issued blanket suspensions against all entries in a locality where "suspicion" of fraud had been reported. This is the matter of record, as is the further fact that many entries suspended by Secretary Hitchcock have not yet passed to patent, notwithstanding the fact that the Interior Department contains not one iota of evidence against the entrymen.

Spirit of Suspicion Grows.

The same spirit that pervaded the special agents crept into other bureaus of the Land Office and into the Department. Law clerks became inquisitorial, they too, wanted to hold their jobs, and when cases were appealed from the local offices, they were scrutinized and passed upon by law clerks who had never practiced law and had never seen an acre of public land; the output from Washington law colleges in many instances, and naturally such clerks interpreted the law not as Congress intended, but as they thought Secretary Hitchcock would like. The settlers never got the benefit of the doubt; they always felt the full effect of any technical objection to their record.

Under this system thousands of entries were suspended and many others canceled when the evidence before any just official would have justified the issuance of patent. To make matters worse, a great array of regulations, some of them amounting to law in effect, were promulgated by the Secretary, and these extended even onto the lands of Government irrigation projects. Thus the settlers, who had been trying to establish themselves, found all manner of obstacles in their path. And that is just the reason many an American farmer has crossed into Canada, where the government is his friend and not his enemy.

Garfield No Better.

When James H. Garfield became Secretary of the Interior he announced that he was the friend of the settler and that the special agents of his department were to help and not hinder the man making an honest effort to get title to public land. But the record fails to show that this promise was kept. Rather, the practices of the Hitchcock regime were continued, and Mr. Garfield, after conferences with his friend, Pinchot, issued a new set of regulations, withdrew from entries of land that Hitchcock had overlooked, and without waiting for the sanction of Congress, set about "conserving" all that was left of the public domain.

The West finally got a man in the Interior Department, at the opening of the Taft administration, and one who had been allowed to carry out reforms he had in mind, would have given the West a square deal. But Secretary Ballinger had no sooner entered the cabinet than Pinchot picked a quarrel with him. This quarrel grew to large proportions and became the Pinchot-Ballinger imbroglio, and for a year he was compelled to divert his attention from his department and spend his time defending himself. He did make a start; he revoked the blanket orders of suspension issued by Secretary Hitchcock as fast as he could find them, and he started in to revise

the departmental regulations. But he was handicapped in the way indicated, and, moreover, public sentiment resulting from the Pinchot-Ballinger affair was largely hostile to reasonable reforms, and Mr. Ballinger left the Cabinet with the better part of his task unfinished.

Fisher's Eyes Are Opened.

When Mr. Fisher became Secretary the work of "conserving the West" had been pretty thoroughly accomplished. Every known resource had been withdrawn from entry; the area of enterable public land had been reduced to a minimum, and he had ample opportunity to look over what his predecessors had accomplished, and see where improvements were needed. He was not a Western man; he had little knowledge of conditions in the public land states; knew little of the workings of the public land laws and departmental regulations, and so he made a trip through the West to inform himself. Before going, however, he studied the laws, and his astonishment at the way some of them are being enforced

OREGON STUDENT SUPPORTS HIMSELF AT EXPENSE OF \$4.50 MONTHLY.



L. Leon Ray.

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON, Eugene, Sept. 30.—Special: L. Leon Ray, a student of the University of Oregon, is L. Leon Ray, president of the associated student body. Ray has also been prominent in debate, oratory and publication work. When Ray entered college he invested his \$100 savings in a suburban lot convenient to the campus. Since then, through his own efforts, he has paid off the indebted lot of \$125 and has erected a rough bungalow whereof his freshman year. Although in ill health when he entered college, Ray managed to keep his household expenses down to \$4.50 a month, as the records for his first year show.

can be gained by some of his Western speeches.

The late adjournment of Congress limited the Secretary's time in the West, and he did not have opportunity to make a thorough investigation of all the problems with which he will be confronted. He learned enough, however, to convince him that the honest homesteader is not getting that aid and encouragement which he should have from the Government; he learned that many regulations are onerous and unnecessary; that some of the laws are inadequate or antiquated, and that the average settler who gets title from the Government earns a great deal more than he receives.

All this he has promised to correct, but he will find he has a herculean task before him. He will be obliged to overturn old precedents, to abandon old practices, to force old clerks to adopt new methods, and to bring from Congress sensible legislation which has been unwilling heretofore to enact. It is a big undertaking, but Secretary Fisher has shown that he is not afraid to tackle his problems, and he is a man of intense determination, he may be able to make good all his promises. If he fulfills half of them he will make the West his everlasting friend.

BORDEN PICKS CABINET

FOSTER, OF TORONTO, TO BE MINISTER OF FINANCE.

Tentative Slate Made Up by Future Premier of Canada—West Is Well Represented.

OTTAWA, Ont., Sept. 30.—R. L. Borden, the future Premier, has been busy for a week framing his Cabinet and it is understood that a tentative slate has been made up.

It is understood that George E. Foster, of Toronto, will be Minister of Finance. Frank Cochrane, of Ontario, Minister of Marine, will be a member of the Minister of Public Works; Andrew Broderick, of Dundas, Ont., Minister of Agriculture; Sam Sharp, of North Ontario, Minister of Militia; and C. R. Rogers, of West Elgin, Ont., and D. Kemp, Toronto, will get portfolios.

British Columbia will be represented by A. S. Giesbrecht, Alberta by Senator Lougheed, Manitoba by Robert Rogers, who will have the Interior portfolio; Quebec, by George C. Cosgrain, of Argenteuil; C. J. Deberry, of St. Ann's; T. O. Cochrane, of Moncton; and I. D. Pelletier, New Brunswick, by O. S. Crockett; Nova Scotia, by John Stansfeld, and Mr. Borden, the new Premier.

FLYER CROSSES ROCKIES

Cromwell Dixon Soars Over Main Range, 7000 Feet High.

HELENA, Mont., Sept. 30.—Cromwell Dixon, the aviator, was successful in his attempt to cross the main range of the Rocky Mountains this afternoon.

Flying in a Curtiss biplane he left the State Fair grounds at 2 o'clock and, rising to an altitude of 7000 feet, started straight west for Blossburg, 45 miles away, where he arrived at 2:34. He carried a message from Governor Norris to the citizens of Blossburg.

SOO SHORT LINE

Fast Service.

This train is the train for the passenger who is in a hurry, and wants the best of everything. A solid through train from Portland to St. Paul and Minneapolis. Ticket office, 141 Third street.

It is estimated that since 1890 seals valued at over \$2,000,000 have been found in the State of New South Wales.

TAFT IS BOY AGAIN AT MISSOURI FAIR

Trick Mule Cuts Capers for President and Aeronaut Drops in Parachute.

FARMERS ARE HIS HOSTS

After Speech Explaining Tariff Votes, Executive Sees Horse Races and Then Beats Governor Hadley in Game of Golf.

SEDALIA, Mo., Sept. 30.—President Taft passed today with the Missouri farmers at their state fair. The feature of the day was a mule parade in honor of the President and the hundreds of sleek animals hitched to all sorts of conveyances brought plaudits from the Chief Executive, who was in a flag-draped box in the grandstand with Governor Hadley.

Then there was a trick mule, owned and ridden by 17-year-old Henry Harbaugh, that did all sorts of "stunts" for the President. Henry made the mule bow to the President, stand on his hind legs, sit down and drink water out of a dipper, play dead, kiss him and finally "do what the mule seemed to like best"—kick.

Governor Defeated at Golf.

The President watched Hugh Robinson make several flights in an airplane, saw a balloonist make a parachute leap, watched trotting and pacing races, and then played golf with Governor Hadley and "Archie" Butt and Rev. Dr. Paul Tal