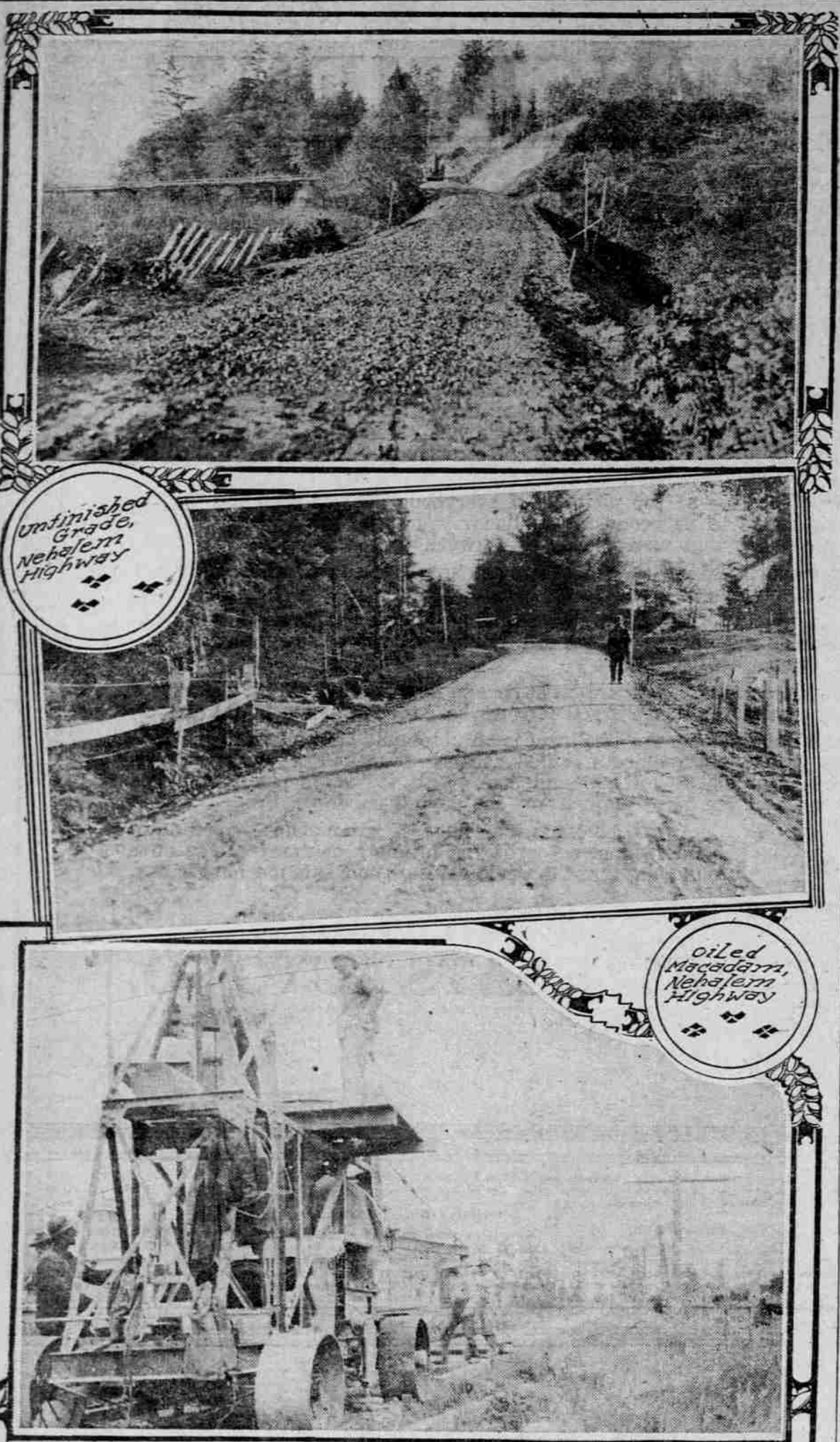


LATE VIEWS SHOWING KIND OF WORK WHICH OREGON COAST COUNTIES ARE DOING IN THE INTEREST OF BETTER ROADS



**Unfinished Grade, Nehalem Highway**

**oiled Macadam, Nehalem Highway**

**Concrete Road Maker, Clatsop Co**

**HE** report of the first year's work of the State Highway Commission and the State Highway Engineer has just been issued by H. L. Bowly, State Highway Engineer. Many savings to the state and to the individual counties are set forth in this report.

That the Highway Commission and its departments have been successful in every endeavor, even though it is the first year of organization, is shown. "There is great satisfaction in making this first report," says Mr. Bowly. "The contrast is so apparent during the first year and so much depends upon the character of the work and the results obtained."

**Opposition to Body Explained.**

"I do not know of another instance, during the first year of its existence, where a State Highway Commission has had placed in its hands voluntarily by county authorities a sum as great as \$1,725,000 to be expended for them. "Naturally, there has been and is opposition to the existence of a state highway department. This opposition is, I believe, felt by two classes—those who are ignorant of its purpose and true function in the road scheme of the state and those who feel they have lost something because of its existence."

"The first financial benefit to be felt by the people of Oregon will be having turned the light of publicity on the customary bridge methods and in having a solution offered that will save many thousands of dollars annually to the taxpayers."

Mr. Bowly, concerning an amendment to the present state highway law, says:

"A provision should be added to this law, making it possible for the state to acquire by condemnation, by gift or purchase the right of way required for a system of state roads."

**Cost of Road Building Detailed.**

The report shows in detail the cost of every foot of road built under the direction of the Commission in its first year. Low cost of engineering and actual construction is brought out as a salient factor.

In regard to the Columbia River Highway in Columbia County, over which several taxpayers of that county and the Highway Commission have raised an issue, L. Griswold, Assistant Highway Engineer, says in part:

"The survey for the connecting link through Columbia County was started October 17, 1913. Goble was reached April 4, 1914. Careful investigation showed that the part between Rainier and Mayer would be absolutely non-productive and of no value to Columbia City, since the territory traversed had no land of agricultural value. It was found also that the route would be much longer and excessively costly in comparison to another that was possible. The latter route leaves the Columbia River at Ingalls.

**Two Routes Found Possible.**

"In the country adjacent to St. Helens at a point near Deer Island we found that two routes were possible. One was to follow the tracks of the Spokane, Portland & Seattle Railway and remain on the south side of the tracks, thus avoiding crossings.

"The other route would have crossed the tracks several times and would have gone through a part of East St.

Helens. A careful inspection convinced me that the first route was better in every way. It was almost 3000 feet shorter than the other, and would have cost at least \$1000 less.

"It is well known that the subject of grade crossings is one of the most formidable problems confronting the railroad and highway officials of the country, as well as the lawmakers and railroad commissions. In view of the attitude of these bodies, it is not wise in creating or maintaining such crossings.

"Before deciding upon either route, I took the matter up with the County Judge, pointing out to him the many advantages of the shorter way. The judge agreed with me, stating that in his opinion the road so located would satisfy the requirement that it pass through a part of St. Helens, since the town of Houlton had been annexed as East St. Helens.

"With this assurance, I proceeded with the survey, directing the engineer to follow the railroad as close as possible."

**Judge Directs Survey.**

"Upon returning a few days later, I found that the located line was on the north side of the railroad. I looked up the engineer J. A. Elliott and found that the County Judge had met him and had directed the survey, stating that the work was being done for Columbia County and that he would be the final authority to decide upon the route.

"Mr. Elliott, being new to the county and not fully informed as to the conditions governing the work, had changed to suit the judge.

"I immediately looked up the judge and asked him why he had interfered with the survey, and he told me that the proposal had been referred to the State Highway Engineer, and the plan of keeping the highway on one side of the railroad had been adopted.

"We explained that an investigation proved that the best interests of the county and the state would be served by having the road on the location selected. The judge again agreed that the state was right and proposed to leave the question open until the surveys had been completed. The survey then was continued.

**Bond Issue Is Proposed.**

"In regard to funds, a bond issue was proposed at a meeting of taxpayers and this was to be apportioned as follows:

Columbia highway	\$250,000
Nehalem highway	50,000
Pittsburg-St. Helens	25,000
Mt. Clatskanie	15,000

"In addition to this a 3/4 mill road tax was to be levied, of which \$95,000 was to go to the Columbia Highway, making a total of \$355,000 available for the work.

"Parts of the road were open at certain times of the year, while others were not. It therefore was decided to do the work where it was most needed, on the portion of the highway between Tide Creek and the Clatsop County line, leaving out a section one and three-quarter miles long at Goble and another two miles long near Rainier.

"The two sections omitted were estimated to cost about \$75,000. The cost of the section between Tide Creek and the county line was fixed at \$221,000,

with an allowance of 15 per cent for contingencies.

"This was agreed upon and the county advertised for bids. The contract was awarded to the Consolidated Contract Company of Portland."

**Counties Overcharged for Steel.**

Then, according to the report, followed another dispute with the county officials over the sum to be used on the work.

The result was that the people around Rainier and Goble became dissatisfied and held a meeting that resulted in the recall of the County Judge.

"That many of the counties have paid several times what they should have for structural steel is stated by H. L. Bowly. This work now is supervised by the highway engineer and immense savings have resulted already to the counties which have placed the work in his care.

Mr. Bowly cites some examples of over-charging:

"The new bridge at Eugene," he says, "cost Lane County \$23,700, that being the sum paid the Coast Bridge Company. The weight of the two spans was 127.2 tons, which gives the unit price, f. o. b. Eugene, \$186.32 a ton.

"The mill price at Pittsburg on that date was \$22 a ton," he continues. "Delivered at Eugene it should have cost \$75 a ton. Allowing the contractor 15 per cent profit and an engineering fee of 5 per cent, the figures indicate that the county paid the Coast Bridge Company \$12,131 too much on a job of less than twice that amount."

On the Newberg bridge, Mr. Bowly claims that the Coast Bridge Company got \$29,729.55 too much.

**Reasons for High Cost Cited.**

The report reads:

"The excessive cost of county highway bridges is due to one, or all, of three reasons: first, the construction of too long a bridge, or too much bridge; second, the buying of an improper design or style of bridge, that is, buying a type of bridge wholly unsuited to the location, or buying a 'stock' bridge; third, the paying of too high a price, which usually is due to what is known as 'pools.'

"It has been found that one bridge company does all the work of one county, and another bridge company gets all the work in another county."

Claims of inaccuracies in "force" accounts also have been made. Where the counties buy the steel from the contractors by the ton and then pay erection costs, at least in one instance, a contractor bought a good many tons too many and threw it away, principally because he was selling the steel to the county for almost \$200 a ton and paying about \$45 for it.

The first statistics ever compiled on Oregon roads show the following:

There are 37,539 miles of public road in Oregon. Marion County has the greatest number of miles, a round 3400. Multnomah has 500. Other counties with big mileage are Baker, with 2380; Lane, with 2360, and Umatilla, with 2000. These figures do not include the paved streets of cities and is only the roadway outside of corporate limits.

Jackson County has more hard-surface highway than any of the counties. This progressive community has laid 15 miles of hard-surface county road.

Clatsop is next with six miles of hard-surface, and Multnomah comes third with three. Only 25 miles of modern highway thus far have been laid in the state.

Between 1903 and 1914, the period of greatest road building, the highways cost the counties \$21,972,128.

Engineer Bowly also reviews the kind of pavements and the modern styles of road building. The state is urged to adopt the policy of hard-surfacing all roads that are traveled heavily.

Getting Along at College.

Judge.

Mabel—How are you getting on at college. Percy? Percy—Oh, all right. I'm trying awfully hard to get ahead, you know. Mabel—Well, heaven knows you need one!

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