

## MANY DETOURS NOW ON PACIFIC HIGHWAY

But Whole Route Is Open and  
Good in Dry Weather.

### COW CREEK CANYON NOT BAD

Automobile Editor Makes Run South  
in Willys-Knight Car to Obtain  
Information for Travelers.

BY L. H. GREGORY.  
This is an account of a run over the Pacific highway in a Willys-Knight car from Portland to the California line, to log conditions on this main line route for the information of the many motorists desiring to travel in particular, to obtain and impart first-hand facts as to the Cow creek canyon section, of which so much has been said, chiefly derogatory, first and last.

Let it be plainly stated that the Pacific highway now presents no great difficulties to the experienced motorist in dry weather. But mark the qualification—in dry weather.

Better to stay at home if the weather is wet. If you must go, take chains, say a prayer and drive intelligently, and you will get through, but it will not be a pleasant experience.

A few drops of rain make an enormous difference in considerable portions of the highway—particularly in Pass creek and Cow creek canyons, but also at points much nearer home. This is due to the vast amount of new road construction all along the highway route.

**Clay, Rain, Slide, Bang!**  
New construction means detours. Detours generally mean dirt roads. And when the dirt is clay it takes very little water to make it slippery.

The Pacific highway right now is one succession of detours and new work. You can find about anything in the way of road construction along the 112 miles from Portland to the California border.

Read casually in the paper that 23 contracts or thereabouts, covering 174 miles and aggregating \$1,620,258, in money, have been awarded for work on this highway, and it doesn't mean a great deal. You can't realize what an enormous amount of work is involved until you actually take a trip over the highway, and then—Great Scott! You begin to comprehend what it means to rebuild a 112-mile gravel and dirt road so that by the end of December it is to be an all-year highway, and by the end of 1920 an all-weather highway.

This is the programme of the state highway commission. In addition to the contracts and sums already noted, some 15 more contracts, covering in round figures 57 more miles and involving an additional \$1,220,826, have been awarded for work on the West Side highway, which is part of the Pacific highway system, between Portland and Junction City.

**Work Going Ahead Fast.**  
With this mighty construction programme in mind, no fair-minded person will complain at having to make many detours between Portland and California. The essential fact and subject for wonderment after having made this run, is that the route is open, and will be kept open. The detours are in surprisingly good condition in dry weather. In wet weather some are good, but many are bad. But the season is here and there should be little rain between now and October.

Construction is proceeding so fast, and new work will be under way in many new places shortly, that what is said of condition in any locality may not apply very long. But, roughly, here is a summary of the detours along the route at this writing:

Between Hubbard and Gervais, the main highway has been closed for paving operations and cars are sent by right over a seven-mile detour, four miles of which is absolute gumbo mud in wet weather. Because of this detour, motorists do well to take the west side route to Salem.

Between Salem and Albany the main highway route via Turner is torn up for reconstruction, so travelers who inquire at Salem are routed to Albany via the west side route through Independence. This is a good gravel road except up a hill at one point, where the clay and rocks cause cars in wet weather.

**Jog, Jog, Over Hill Road.**  
Between Monroe and Junction City, the main highway route is closed. Cars are detoured but not far away from the "hill road," which jogs up and down small hills. It is gravelled in part, but much of it is clay only.

In Pass creek canyon there is a short stretch of new construction 10 miles beyond Cottage Grove that is pure mud in wet weather, but good in dry. Between Drain and Yoncalla the road is very slippery after a little rain, but in dry weather is hard and firm. No detours here.

Just beyond Yoncalla the main highway to Oakland is closed for new construction and cars are routed over the Goodrich route. This is all right in dry weather, but has a few miles of clay up a hill and down on the other side that are slippery in wet weather. The detour extends almost to Oakland, about 11 miles.

From there all the way to Cow creek canyon the road is excellent, except for Roberts mountain, eight or nine miles beyond Roseburg. Roberts mountain requires careful driving in any weather, but especially in wet. A stretch of new highway to eliminate the Roberts mountain grade entirely is under construction, but no detour is necessary because cars use the old road.

The next detour is at Cow creek canyon, which is not a detour, but a series of many little detours. Much of the way now the road uses the new grade, a grand piece of road construction, and much of the way follows the old. Until last week there was one detour that required two crossings of the creek and a bad climb up the bank, but this has now been eliminated.

**Good-bye, Wolf Creek.**  
At Wolf creek hill, once the terror of the whole highway route from its 34 per cent grade, the road up the hill from the north side follows the new grade, but then is diverted back on the old road for the descent on the south side. Very steep, rough descent.

Again at Rice hill, three miles from Wolf creek station, the new highway is now in use to the summit from the north side. But on the south cars are detoured for the descent to the old grade, which is very steep, with bad turns, and badly cut up. The new grade on that side is being paved and will shortly be open.

Again, between Grants Pass and Gold Hill, the main highway is under construction and cars are diverted to the so-called "river road," which follows Rogue river to rejoin the main highway at the station of Rogue River, 11 miles from Grants Pass. This is a mixed dirt and gravel road, quite narrow in places, but excellent in dry weather.

And still again, just across the Rogue at Gold Hill, the main highway is closed for construction and cars take the upper road, which is in very fair

ONE DETOUR IN COW CREEK CANYON WHERE THE MOTORIST MUST MIND HIS HELM.



PLENTY OF ROOM FOR CAREFUL DRIVER, BUT NOT HALF ENOUGH FOR JAZZ VARIETY.

This photograph, taken a week ago, shows the Willys-Knight car in which the automobile editor of The Oregonian accompanied Bert Eling, Willys-Overland-Pacific manager, over the Pacific highway to the California line, on a portion of the old road above the new grade in Cow Creek canyon. The new grade has been shaved just as close as possible to the old road, over which cars are routed for the present. It's easy enough in dry weather, but a bit ticklish for a new driver when the clay soil is slick and muddy, as it was when this photograph was snapped. This photo shows one good reason for not attempting Cow Creek canyon after dark.

condition, but dusty, for seven miles almost to Central Point and Medford. Now for a few details of the trip, and of the more important points en route, such as Cow creek canyon. More inquiries are made about the Cow creek canyon section than any other part of the highway.

**Eling Strong for Roads.**  
The writer left Portland on this trip at 3 o'clock Friday afternoon, June 12, with H. H. (Bert) Eling, manager, and Rolfe U. Peterson, sales manager, of the Willys-Overland Pacific branch in Portland, in a Willys-Knight car. Bert Eling is one of the progressive automobile men in Portland, and a great worker for good roads. In fact, it was at his suggestion that the run south was made to obtain exact information about the whole length of the Pacific highway.

Friday, the 13th! It looked the part. Rain pouring on the festival crowds waiting for the floral parade. Fine weather, indeed, to be starting on a run to log road conditions. It was the best of all times for the purpose, for the reason that it was a general rain extending almost to Medford. The Pacific highway just now is a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, according to whether the weather is wet or dry. So this rain made it possible to learn how the highway is in wet weather, and how it is in dry weather, as prevailed a few days later on the return. The difference is as night and day.

About an hour from Portland came the first detour, just beyond Hubbard, into gumbo mud. It was gumbo, unadulterated. Slippery, slimy, sticky. Part way around the seven miles a valley express truck had been cut across the road. Peterson maneuvered the Willys-Knight around it, but worse was to come.

**This Was Near Home.**  
There opened up a stretch of pure goo, in which the car stumbled and slid and skidded, finally ending up by pointing wrong end to it. It took a lot of careful steering and shoving to get out of this mess, but it was done with ten minutes lost.

Another slippery stretch was encountered a few miles out of Independence, where a new grade had been cut down a hill leaving a slick clay surface. This time Eling and Peterson dived for the chains. One of them fitted fine, but the other had apparently been made for a Ford.

However, by wrapping it round and round the tire, it did the work and the car gained the summit. Eugene was reached without further hoodoo at 8 o'clock, five hours from Portland. Forty-five minutes for dinner, and the car was on its way for Roseburg, with Pass creek canyon in between.

At Eugene, Mr. Eling bought a new pair of chains that would fit. That was where a new grade had been cut, the way then from Eugene to Cottage Grove and on to Pass creek canyon, ten miles further.

Just at the entrance to the canyon the road was ploughed up for several hundred feet. It was dark and looked impassable without chains. But with the chains the car got through this stretch, and others like it, for the next two or three miles, without much difficulty.

Then to Drain the road was pretty fair, but just beyond that town, slippery again. Various travelers from the south have told of a deep mud-hole just the other side of Drain, partly bridged with plank.

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a car owner. Just two or three planks laid lengthwise for the wheels, and if the wheels slip off, you are out of luck in the mud. This particular stretch, however, is not over 100 yards or so long, though the road is slick in wet weather, and chains should be used over the six miles to Yoncalla.

Here the Goodrich route is taken to Oakland, and from that town there is a fine, 30-mile-an-hour gravelled road to Roseburg. The Willys-Knight reached that town, 220 miles from Portland, at 12:40, only 9 hours and 40 minutes from Portland, and the worst part of the way by night.

Pass Creek canyon, even in wet weather, is by no means the terror of a year ago. Much of the new grade has been gravelled and the remainder of it will be by this fall. There is still some grading to be done before the road is completed.

The event of the second day of the run, which ended at the California line, was, of course, the trip through Cow Creek canyon. From Roseburg to Canyonville, the old town at the head of the canyon, about 40 miles, the road is first class all the way with the single exception of Roberts mountain. New construction begins right at Canyonville.

Be it said here that this is not the Cow Creek canyon of history and fable, scene of railroad wrecks and holdups, haunt of bandit gangs. That is the railroad Cow Creek canyon. The highway Cow Creek canyon parallels the other, but its Cow Creek is a mere trickle compared to the stream that flows through the real Cow Creek canyon.

**Not Bad After All.**  
And now for another surprise. The through Cow Creek canyon is not the terror it has been painted. That is to say, not now. Without question, everything said of it earlier this year has been true, for there are plenty of evidences of hard going in the past. But new construction has now progressed to a point where driving through it is no particular feat.

It had rained in Cow Creek canyon the day before and there was some mud, but not a great deal. For three miles south of Canyonville the road follows in part the steep ploughed, narrow old grade, and in part the fine, gravel highway being built through it.

The main ordeal in going through Cow Creek canyon has been the detour at this point, three to four miles south of Canyonville, where cars had to leave the new grade, descend to the stream bed, ford it, climb out again, and repeat 100 yards further on. It is a small stream with a gravel bottom, and if the car kept going and the driver didn't get excited, he was in no danger of stalling. But climbing the banks was more of a feat, and one requiring chains, for they were slippery.

This detour was occasioned by work on the new grade, where a steam shovel was, and is, scooping out rock. The Willys-Knight, with Peterson driving, reached this point about 11 o'clock Friday morning. Half a dozen cars were lined up for the plunge. One car coming north had stalled on the bank and was being towed up by a team of the contractor's horses.

Another small car stalled a few minutes later in crossing the other way, right in the creek. But a line of motorists hauled on a rope and quickly pulled it out.

Peterson slipped the Willys-Knight into intermediate, chains first having been applied to the rear wheel, and the car walked through the stream at the two crossings and up the bank without the least trouble. All but the one car mentioned of the several preceding the Willys-Knight.

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Willys-Knight likewise crossed without difficulty.

But the important thing about this creek-crossing detour is that it doesn't have to be made now. The state highway commission visited Cow Creek canyon a day before the Willys-Knight passed through it. As a result of a conference between the commissioners and John Hampshire, the contractor, when Mr. Eling and Mr. Peterson drove back through the canyon on Tuesday, all things considered.

**When Engine Pounds.**  
If a pounding in the engine is regular and continues it is likely to be from lost motion in the bearings. It is irregular and occasional it is more likely to be due to preignition caused by incandescent carbon or from imperfect electrical connections. If the pounding is accompanied by occasional missing, especially if the missing is more frequent when the car is running than when the engine is idling, it is more apt to be due to imperfect electrical connections.

**The Scissors Test** Take sample piece of tube 1/4 in. by 3 in. Stretch to 9 in. or three times its original length. Cut on the edge with the scissors. The cut should not be more than 1/8 in. across the sample. If the strip tears apart the rubber is inferior.



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