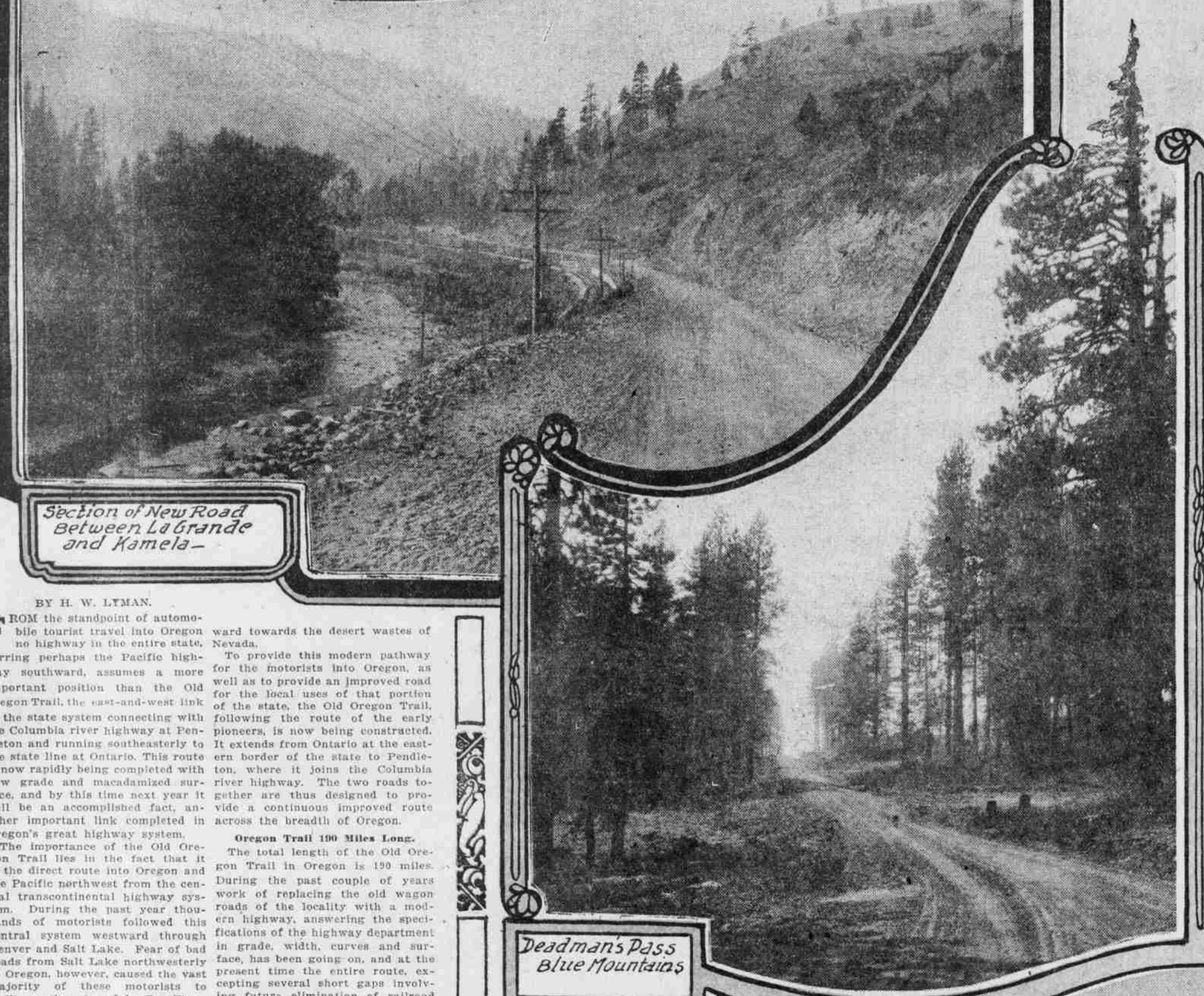


Typical Scene in Blue Mountain Grazing Section



Section of New Road Between La Grande and Kamela

# Old Oregon Trail Rapidly Becoming Modern Motor Road

PHOTOS BY PRENTISS

BY H. W. LYMAN.

FROM the standpoint of automobile tourist travel into Oregon no highway in the entire state, barring perhaps the Pacific highway southward, assumes a more important position than the Old Oregon Trail, the east-and-west link of the state system connecting with the Columbia river highway at Pendleton and running southeasterly to the state line at Ontario. This route is now rapidly being completed with new grade and macadamized surface, and by this time next year it will be an accomplished fact, another important link completed in Oregon's great highway system.

The importance of the Old Oregon Trail lies in the fact that it is the direct route into Oregon and the Pacific northwest from the central transcontinental highway system. During the past year thousands of motorists followed this central system westward through Denver and Salt Lake. Fear of bad roads from Salt Lake northwesterly to Oregon, however, caused the vast majority of these motorists to strike southwestward for San Francisco. With the improvement of the Utah and Idaho roads and the completion of the Old Oregon Trail in Oregon, the route to the Pacific coast in Oregon will be shorter and easier than the route to San Francisco, and Oregon may look for a veritable flood of motorists from this direction.

ward towards the desert wastes of Nevada. To provide this modern pathway for the motorists into Oregon, as well as to provide an improved road for the local uses of that portion of the state, the Old Oregon Trail, following the route of the early pioneers, is now being constructed. It extends from Ontario at the eastern border of the state to Pendleton, where it joins the Columbia river highway. The two roads together are thus designed to provide a continuous improved route across the breadth of Oregon.

**Oregon Trail 190 Miles Long.**  
The total length of the Old Oregon Trail in Oregon is 190 miles. During the past couple of years work of replacing the old wagon roads of the locality with a modern highway, answering the specifications of the highway department in grade, width, curves and surface, has been going on, and at the present time the entire route, excepting several short gaps involving future elimination of railroad grade crossings, is either completed or under contract for improvement. The status of the road is described as follows: 8.7 miles of pavement, 141.3 miles of new grade with gravel surface, 45 miles of new grade under contract for surfacing, five miles of unimproved road which is under contract for both grading and surfacing.

Deadman's Pass Blue Mountains

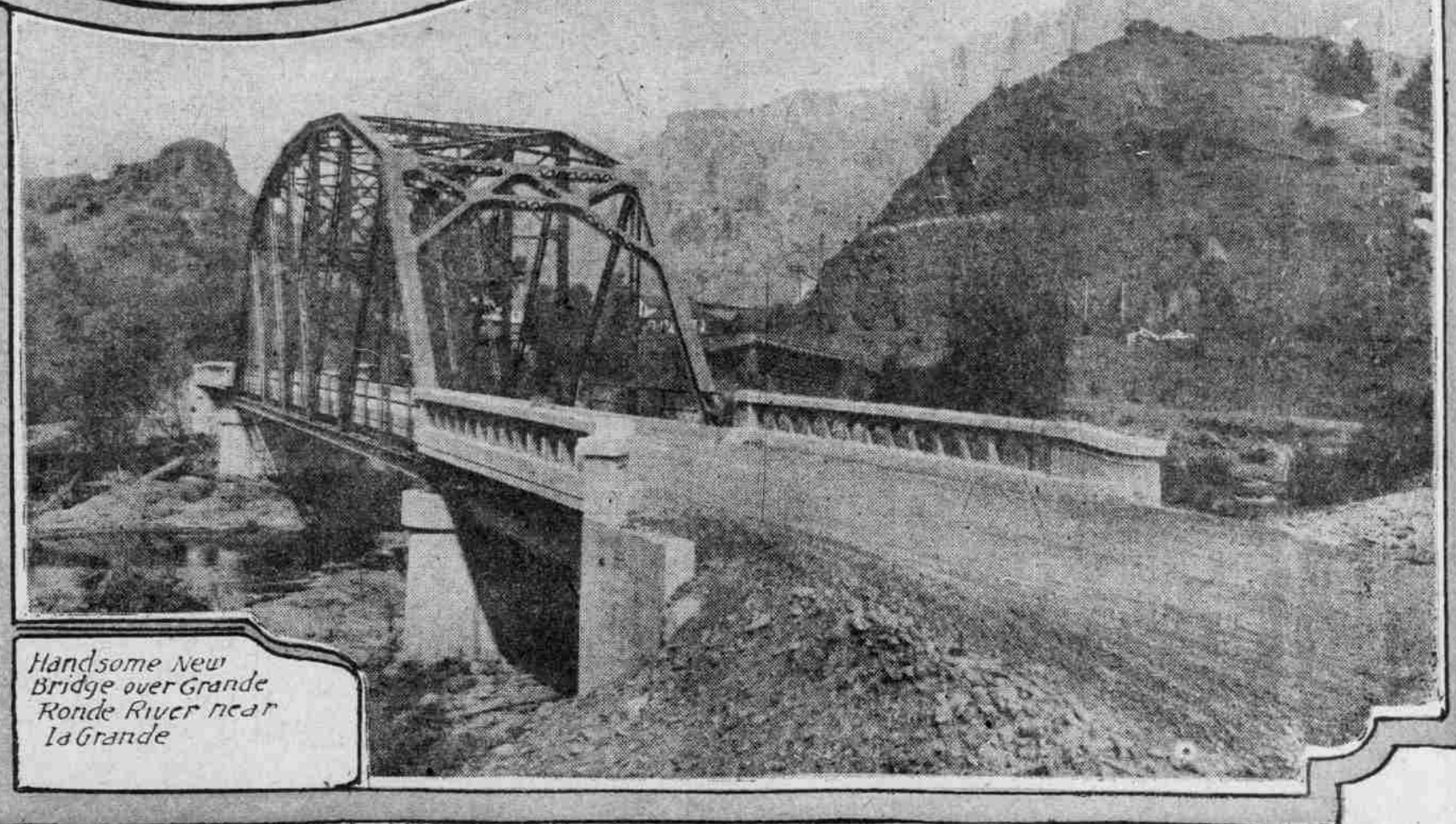
between Pendleton and the far eastern Oregon cities. By another winter, however, the road will be entirely completed and then the demands of traffic will have to be met by keeping the road open the year around. It is believed. This will be a difficult undertaking as the snowfall in the Blue mountains is heavy, but it is believed that it can be accomplished, just as the highway department has undertaken and accomplished the work of keeping the mountainous sections of the Pacific highway in southern Oregon open. The highest point of elevation on the Old Oregon Trail is in this Blue mountain section, where it reaches 4355 feet above sea level. In order to keep the route from being blocked with snow it will be necessary to operate snow plows more or less continuously during the winter months.

The Old Oregon Trail, completed, will have cost approximately \$3,260,000, of which amount the state will have contributed \$1,700,000, the federal government \$830,000, and the counties through which the highway passes the remainder, or \$1,120,000. The expenditures to date have aggregated \$2,700,000, and it is estimated that it will take \$500,000 more to complete the road.

**Present Status Described.**  
A summary of the present status of the improvement, as furnished by the state highway department, is as follows:  
Pendleton to Deadman's Pass—20 miles, graded and surfaced with broken stone or gravel.  
Deadman's Pass to Kamela—13.5 miles,  
(Concluded on Page 2.)

**Three Transcontinental Routes.**  
There are three main routes across the continent which motorists, coming westward in increasing numbers as the roads improve and the motoring fever becomes more virulent, will follow. They are the northern route, similar in a general way to the route followed by the northern railroads, the central route which follows approximately the line of the Union Pacific, and the southern route across the desert stretches of New Mexico and Arizona.

**Winter Travel to Be Cared For.**  
With the exception of the stretch just noted the trail will be open and in good traveling condition throughout the coming winter, according to the state highway commission. It is expected, says a report from the commission at Salem, that enough progress can be made in the surfacing of the Deadman's Pass-Kamela section so that it may be at least passable during this winter. But it cannot be positively stated that this will be the case. If the Blue mountain section can be kept open it will be a wonderful step forward in road development for eastern Oregon, as heretofore that portion of the road has been closed each year for about half the year, and has served as a barrier against motor communication be-



Handsome New Bridge over Grande Ronde River near La Grande