

## The Madras Pioneer

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THURSDAY Jan. 2, 1908

### DENIAL EASY TO BELIEVE

And now comes the denial of the purchase of the Laidlaw townsite by the Mount Hood railroad company. According to the man at the head of their right of way department that company has never made any advances toward securing property east of the Cascades. While this denial may be only a blind to keep the public in the dark regarding the company's plans, to tell the truth the denial is easier of belief than the statement that the railroad people have even been negotiating for the Laidlaw townsite. While Laidlaw is beautifully situated on the Deschutes River and has a rich surrounding territory, its value as a strategic point for a railroad with transcontinental aims is not at all apparent. The townsite is situated on the Deschutes River, hundreds of feet below the level of the great table land on which a railway line would naturally be located. Although the old survey of the Corvallis & Eastern crosses the Deschutes at Laidlaw, that is the end of that survey, and in order to get out of the gorge the grade would be heavy.

The Mount Hood road offers the most hope of any road at present accused of having designs on Central Oregon, for the reason that about 16 miles of roadbed has actually been graded between Portland and the base of Mount Hood, but so far as known the engineering corps have not done any work farther than to a point some 20 miles west of Wapinitia, and it would be guesswork to map out the route now. Any news regarding a railroad into this region is at once made the most of, but for a good many years past these rumors have been about as conclusive as when a maiden plucks the petals from a daisy and says: "He loves me," "He loves me not." That the Mount Hood line will some day build into Central Oregon seems very reasonable, but we are at least safe in this regard, that before trains whistle in at stations in the Deschutes Valley we shall have had ample time to know which route they will take, for the transit man will have to come ahead to blaze the trail.

The story of the purchase of the Laidlaw townsite would be good news if it were true, but there are a great many just as good railroad stories acquiring age among the files of Central Oregon newspapers.

### MAY CHANGE CURRENCY LAWS

While it is too early in the session to forecast accurately what Congress will do in the way of important legislation during the Winter, Senator Fulton expects some degree of corrective currency bills. In an interview at Portland this week he said:

"There will be some financial legislation providing for the increase of the volume of money in time of stress. This will be some kind of emergency currency. Just what will be agreed on is impossible to say at this time. In a general way I am disposed to believe the National banks will be authorized to issue notes, secured by

approved collateral, which will bear interest at a sufficiently high rate to insure their retirement when the emergency shall have passed that called them out.

"Ultimately, I think a radical change will have to be made in our financial system. That is a work to be approached with caution, and will have to be given great consideration. It will take time to work it out. The plan I have suggested will probably be adopted at the present session, and I look upon it as temporary."

### WHERE THE TROUBLE LIES

During the past few years there has not been much else but trouble for the settlers and companies in charge of the Columbia Southern irrigation project on the west side of the Deschutes River. Some have blamed the Carey Act and others have accused the State Land Board of "playing politics" because of its refusal to pass the lands to patent. In an article published in the Capital Journal of Salem State Engineer Lewis very plainly states the cause of the trouble, which is that the promoters are trying to reclaim 27,000 acres with only water enough for 8,000 acres. The state engineer's article says:

The state land board entered into contract with the Three Sisters Irrigation Co. to reclaim 27,000 acres of land by building a canal from Tumalo creek in Crook county. This company changed hands several times and is now known as the "Columbia Southern Irrigation Company." Under this project, water rights were sold for about 18,000 acres, where the low water flow of the creek will not irrigate 8000 acres, and upon adjudication in the courts about half of the low water flow of the stream will doubtless be found to have been appropriated before the state began its project. \* \* \* Even if all the water in the stream could be used on the state project, it is physically impossible, without storage, to reclaim more than half the land already sold. The state recently brought suit against the company to cancel its contract, as it would not agree to build the necessary reservoirs to impound the winter stream flow necessary to furnishing an adequate water supply. No plans have as yet been determined upon for straightening out this tangle. Some of the first lands sold were through advertising literature of the company, showing the project was backed by the state of Oregon and that residence was not required, the latter statement being a misrepresentation. The prospective settlers who have purchased water rights under this project are scattered through many states, some of whom are living on the land. Others have visited the project, expecting to reside, but found those settlers on the ground consuming nearly all the water supply. Many have paid in full and are demanding deeds from the state."

The general readjustment of prices which always follows a financial stringency is already in evidence. Work has commenced on a \$3,500,000 hotel in Chicago, and it is announced that the cost will be \$500,000 less than it would have been six months ago, this saving being effected through cheaper labor and cheaper building materials. What this means on a permanent investment is easily determined by figuring on a six per cent basis, there being a saving of \$30,000 per year, or \$2500 per month more than would have been possible had the building been erected six months earlier. When the forces now working toward the general readjustment of economic conditions settle at the new level there will be a revival on a big scale of railroad work and other industrial enterprises that are now at a standstill.—Oregonian.

Construction of the Umatilla irrigation project is nearing completion and water will be supplied for the first unit of 7000 acres in the Spring of this year. Under this project, which is regarded as one of the most attractive undertaken by the Reclamation Service by

reason of the great fertility of the soil and favorable climate, farm units as fixed by the Secretary of the Interior range from 10 to 40 acres each, except for land in private ownership, where areas may be as large as 160 acres. Homestead entries accompanied by applications for water right may be made under provisions of the reclamation act for farm units. The charge for water right is \$60 per acre and the annual maintenance average is \$1 per acre.

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For further information see C. A. Waterhouse, local deputy, at Madras, Oregon. n21f

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