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BRIDGING COOS BAY.

The following logical exposition on the bridging of Coos Bay was written several months ago by E. L. Wheeler, Marshfield, when the matter of placing a bridge across Coos Bay was first broached. The article was published in the Coos Bay Times:

"Editor Coos Bay Times:—I desire a place in your columns, not because of the value of this article in itself, but because of the importance of the subject matter in the future development of Coos Bay, and the object of the writer is to call attention to a few points to be considered in the matter of allowing the Southern Pacific Railway to build a bridge across the middle of the Bay between the town of North Bend and the entrance to the harbor, and to arouse a general discussion of the question to the end that we may all obtain a better understanding of the entire matter:

"For convenience I will speak of the 'Lower Bay' as that part between the entrance and North Bend and the 'Upper Bay' as that part between North Bend and the Isthmus Inlet or the Southern Pacific depot.

"Before going further I desire to say that I have met some parties who favored the granting of a bridge permit across the Lower Bay for the reason that it was favored and practically asked by Mr. L. J. Simpson, they stating that he has been more energetic in the development of the Bay than any other man, and if he wishes it he should have it. To these parties I wish to say that I, being in the real estate business, am fully able to appreciate Mr. Simpson's efforts in behalf of Coos Bay, but that with me I try not to let sentiment overrule my business judgment, and that if Mr. Simpson or any one else asked something that I thought would or might in the future work an injury to Marshfield I would oppose the granting of the favor. I am in business in Marshfield, and Marshfield comes before any other district on the Bay.

"In discussing the matter I have also met some who do not desire to take any stand against the Southern Pacific for fear that if antagonized the road will not be built. To them I would suggest the thought that at the time Mr. Harriman decided to build the road down this coast the towns of Marshfield and North Bend were not the drawing cards. I think this so strongly that I am of the opinion that the united efforts of the two towns could not prevent Mr. Harriman from building down this coast if he so intends, and if he intends to go down the coast he can not get away from this section; he can not go inland; then the thing for us to do is not to lose sleep for fear the railway will not get what it needs but we should see that the road goes where it will be to the most advantage to us and the Bay, and where it will work the least harm.

"We need not worry if the road has to build one bridge or three bridges. We must remember that the experience of other places is that the people generally had to fight to keep the railway from taking the earth. We can feel fairly confident that if we hold up our end of the fight with the Southern Pacific in the future that we will do well, exceedingly well. By that you must not understand that I am opposed to the railway, but it is coming through here for purely business reasons and we must govern our acts accordingly.

"I desire to call attention to the following points in as short and concise a manner as possible, and still cover the ground I wish, believing that each should be given attention before any final step is taken by the people of Marshfield and the Bay. First,

"On this point I am frank to admit I am not able to pass an intelligent opinion, yet I believe that I am as capable as a number are whom I have heard say that the effect would be so and so and so and so. Why do

we not frankly admit that we are not engineers, that we don't know, and that we have not one fact on which to base the opinion we may have formed. Then if we are honest with ourselves, let us get together and try to obtain facts on which to form an opinion. Snap judgment on a question as vital as I believe this to be is not only dangerous, but criminal; Second,

"Every one admits that a bridge that has to be opened to permit the passing of vessels is an obstruction. The question is just how much of an obstruction this bridge in this particular place, and under the conditions existing here, will work to the shipping interests of this Bay. At present one hundred per cent, in other words all of the shipping of this harbor is handled in the Upper Bay. We expect this shipping to grow to many times its present size, so that in the future we will have a hundred vessels plying from this harbor to where we now have one. Then as this line of the Southern Pacific is supposed to be intended for the main line from the north to the south, handling a business that is making gigantic strides each year, and that will grow in volume much faster in the coming years than it has in the past few years, we may count, say from thirty to forty trains every twenty-four hours. We will say these will be the figures in ten years from today, then let us sit down and try to figure what the delay will be to the vessels entering here and which desire to come up into the Upper Bay.

"Where do you believe will be the future development on the Bay? If you believe it will be in the Lower Bay and believe that the Upper Bay is of lesser consequence and is not to be given consideration, then a bridge across the Bay will not conflict with your ideas, but if you favor applying to both the State and United States for aid in dredging and improving the Upper Bay, then be very careful that you do nothing to jeopardize those plans as the bridging of the Bay would possibly do.

"The people of Marshfield have more than that to look at. The Southern Pacific, through its agent on the ground, Mr. Nier, of the right-of-way department, states that the Upper Bay can be made a harbor, that the shipping of this Bay will be done from the Lower Bay, and that it is very possible that if a bridge is built across the Bay the Southern Pacific will lay tracks along the water front to below Empire and will build the shipping interest there instead of in the Upper Bay as at present.

"Marshfield now handles nearly all of the shipping that comes in or goes out of the Bay. Would it not be in danger of losing not only the future business, but the shipping that you now are handling? What will Marshfield amount to in the future if the shipping is taken below? Far, for in the future, we would grow in size and prosperity, but it would be so far in the future that the most of us would not live to see it.

"The idea that whatever helps the Bay helps Marshfield, is rather a far-fetched idea. It does if it is right close at hand, but if off at a distance the benefit needs a microscope to find it.

"No, we should do more than that, we should fight, and fight desperately, and to the last ditch before we should allow anything to be done that will place in the least danger of losing any part of our shipping interest. The very reason for our existence as a town is the fact that this is the outlet for the agricultural land tributary to the Bay, that this is the outlet for the timber and for the coal lands. Therefore, any step that places our shipping interests in danger is a step toward financial death for everything here. In time, when the lower end of the Bay becomes overcrowded, we would start again, but we would only get the crumbs until that time.

"The natural place for the shipping to grow is at the point of contact between the railway and the deep water, that can be reached by vessels with the least hindrance. If the bridge is built, that point would be below the bridge; third,

"If the shipping is done from the lower end of the Bay, the water front values for years to come will be centered there, and if our water front is not developed, every lot or acre of land is effected so far as values are concerned.

"If the bridge is not built across the middle of the Bay and the railway has to pass around the Bay the principal point of contact of the railway and deep water is in the Upper Bay and the shipping of the future will be centered in the Upper Bay, as it is at present, and the Upper Bay water front will increase in value owing to the increased demand for shipping facilities, and the increased business transacted on the water front will increase the inland property values.

"Again, is it to the best interests of the Bay that the entire deep water channel of the Upper Bay be turned over to one railway system, whether

for side-tracks or main line? Do we expect any other, or hope for any other railway system at any time in the future to either touch the Bay or to make a terminal here? If so, can we afford to turn over this entire channel frontage to the Southern Pacific?

"Again, as to the value of the water frontage apart from that mentioned above, in case the main line of the Southern Pacific passes along our water front, all of our shipping business will have to be transacted back and forth across that main line of track, on which there will be a large number of heavy and long through freight and passenger trains passing, to say nothing of the switching going on day and night, and our water front business. In other words, our shipping business will have to be carried on at a great risk of both life and property, and ten years from now if that track is allowed to go they will be willing to pay thousands of dollars to have such a nuisance and menace to life removed.

"No one on the outside will take a greater interest in Coos Bay than we do ourselves, and if we place ourselves in the position of retarding the growth of the Upper Bay we certainly cannot expect either the State's or United States administration to develop our harbor in spite of ourselves. We must be jealous in guarding our acts from anything that could be construed to our disadvantage, and the building of such a bridge might most certainly be so construed.

"It is to the interest of the entire Coos Bay that no obstruction ever be allowed to be placed across the Bay. We have been planning to dredge out a great basin in the Upper Bay for the accommodation of the future shipping of this Bay. What has happened to change our plans? We most certainly dare not attempt to do both. If so, we had better get the dredging done first.

"We all profess great pride in our Bay, and we are certainly justified. We profess to be sanguine of a great future for this harbor; then we must not allow the sale of property located here, there or yonder on the Bay, to govern our action in this matter. All property on the Bay is good. It is valuable, no matter where located, and will be sold by the present owners and by the succeeding owners for years to come at an increased price. Then what excuse can we offer for urging the granting of a permit for the erection of a bridge across the Bay, which so far as I can see does not offer one redeeming feature, but on the contrary does show a number of possible dangers which appear not only possible, but very probable?

"Above all things we should move slowly in this matter, and find out before we act whether we are working an injury to the Bay or not; and if, after investigation, we find there is the least danger, in the cause of self preservation, we should oppose the erection of such a bridge.

"Whether right or wrong, the people of the Bay should not stand for any proposition concerning their welfare being railroaded through any Coos Bay organization. Before the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce should take this matter up for action, I would suggest that the matter should be gone into thoroughly.
EDGAR L. WHEELER.

PACIFIC COAST TIMBER FIRES.

Fire has always been the worst enemy of the forest. In many cases the risk of fire is so great often lumbering that land owners have not tried any system of conservative logging, but have instead cut the forest clean in the belief that young timber would be burned, if left, before it could attain sufficient growth for a second crop. This is almost the rule in the heavy forests of the Pacific coast, where fires have been so prevalent that they have come to be regarded as a necessary evil. A single

fire among young trees may not always kill them, but it will check their growth and weaken them so that they will be very susceptible to insect attacks and fungous diseases. Recurring fires, however, at last destroy the whole forest stand, and then chaparral takes possession. On cut-over lands there is usually a great accumulation of debris, and this encourages fire, so that one of the first steps in fire protection is some provision for the removal of debris.

In 1904 the Forest Service in cooperation with the state of California made a thorough study of forest conditions and their relation to fire on the tract of the McCloud River Lumber Company, in Siskiyou County, Cal.

The chief object of this study was to devise some practical system of forest protection. The results, which are now published in Circular 79 of the Forest Service, show that (1) by proper care and the execution of certain measures it is possible to decrease, or even to eliminate, the danger from forest fires; (2) that such protective measures may be carried out at a reasonable cost; and (3) that the results in most cases will fully justify the necessary expenditures.

The plan adopted, which aims to prevent fires from starting by means of patrol along carefully laid-out routes, was executed so successfully that it has since been extended to all the holdings of the company. Telephone and tool stations have been est-

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ablished, and broad fire lines on which the slash was burned have been run through the cut-over land. The cost of all this was about 2 cents per acre per annum.

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