

# Coos Bay Times

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### OREGON RAILROADS.

Mr. James J. Hill recently delivered an address on the railroad situation in the United States, which contains much food for thought. Similar ideas have been expressed before by men of lesser power and wealth, and also by Mr. Hill on other occasions, but the conditions now present render his views, whether right or wrong, opportune. The country has been acting quite vigorously and swiftly for seven years and it is about ready to do a little thinking. Men of Mr. Hill's stamp generally proceed on the theory that the public can do little unless it has a master. That is the industrial theory. In movements which involve energies outside of the purely industrial—leaders are the rule. Hence it is that the advice which the world listens to comes from some private accumulation of wealth, who is intent more on keeping what he has than on solving industrial problems on the side of humanity. Throughout Mr. Hill's story and instructive address, there seems to be one persistent refrain, which, if translated, would mean: "The railroads are not equal to the development of business in America and it will take five and one-half billion dollars to be expended in the next five years to make them so. The attempt to regulate them and criticism of their assumed dishonesty has spoiled their credit and they can not raise money. It may take half a generation to restore their credit so they can go on. In no event can this be done except by conceding to the masters all they ask."

It is not certain that Mr. Hill is not right in his judgment of human nature. He has no confidence in the government doing anything of value. He probably considers that it would be an impertinence on the part of the government to do anything to help out the railroads, unless, perforce, it turned everything over to the railroad companies. No railroad magnate would ever favor the building of a railroad for leasing purposes by a state and if a state should undertake anything of that sort Mr. Harriman and all the gentlemen who have been ready to share in the profits of wrecking a railroad or have shown skill in watering stock, would hold up their hands in horror at the immorality of such a plan. If, as Mr. Hill suggests, the credit of the railroad financiers is so impaired, that it may take half a generation to restore it, why does not the state of Oregon ignore that weakened factor in the state's development, and proceed to issue bonds to construct a railroad through Oregon's center? Why not? Would it be because Oregon could not place the bonds? Would it be because Oregon could not get money on the bonds? Would it be because the steel trust would refuse to sell Oregon rails? Would it be because Oregon hasn't courage enough to try? Or would it be because Oregon's newspaper press is supplied with passes by railroad companies within the state lines?

If, as Mr. Hill says, the credit of the railroads has been injured, possibly we would better not trust them any more. It might not be expected that a state railroad, to be built and leased, not operated by the state, would be unnecessary and experimental in almost any other state in the Union, but Oregon has suffered so long and suffered so acutely without railroads and has such vast resources and produces so abundantly, that she should lead the van and build a state road. This is getting evident from the fact that the railroads have been giving us an object lesson in showing us how we can be whipped whenever we whimper.

### Independence of the West.

(Oregonian.)

The New York Journal of Commerce, an excellent authority on market prices, but somewhat biased in its opinions regarding anything that does not begin and end on Manhattan Island, censures the west for making demands on New York for money which New York owes the west. It seems to think we are very "inconsiderate" because "one United States senator from the distant state of Idaho has called upon the government to coerce the National banks of New York into yielding up reserves to the needy banks of the west." The language in which this statement is made reflects the provincialism of the viewpoint from which New York regards these matters. If New York owes the west money (which it does not deny), the "distance" from Wall Street to Idaho, Oregon or any other western state now in position of a creditor trying to collect from a debtor who has used his money for gambling has nothing to do with the case. The Journal of Commerce chides the west for a lack of independence of Wall Street. It says we took a "blithe and shortsighted view of a serious situation" when asserted that "the west could move its own crops and take care of its own banking facilities if it became necessary."

And yet that is exactly what the west could have done had it not been deceived into believing that New York would pay its just debts without the necessity of "coercion" on part of the government. The western banks have for years kept large balances in New York because they supposed they were safe. We knew that New York contained the greatest gambling joint in the world, and knew that some of its great men of alleged respectability and commercial standing were engaging in this gambling. The west was in ignorance, however, of the fact that the laxity of New York's code of business morals had become such that Wall Street found it impossible to distinguish between legitimate business and gambling.

New York, being the greatest offender in bringing on this stringency, will, of course, suffer accordingly, and pending its recovery from the drastic penalty which it brought down on its own head, it will become New York newspapers to make any reflection on the attitude of the rest of the country toward its most iniquitous and also its most provincial city. The west will always do business with New York, and our banks will always have reserves in that city, but in the future they will be of such moderate proportions that the wheels of trade in "the distant state of Idaho" and other parts of the country will not be blocked simply because a lot of Wall Street gamblers overplayed their hands.

The Pacific Lumber company, owner of an immense redwood timber tract through which the line was to run for seven miles, had a large force of ax-men and loggers at work clearing the timber to a width of 100 feet for the railroad right-of-way, and the railroad had a small gang of men operating a steam shovel and preparing for the commencement of work upon the tunnel which it was planned to dig steadily through the rainy season. Now both the logging gang and the railroad operatives have stopped work. The impression seems to be that the delay will continue perhaps up to the time of the next presidential election.

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