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SENSATIONAL INSURANCE SWINDLE ARRESTS MADE IN COQUILLE

J. C. La France, Alias A. J. Ferger, and Wife, Held for Gigantic Fraud

SUBSTITUTED BODY FOR HIM AT PORTLAND

Collected \$15,500 Life Insurance From Three Companies Last Year.

(Special to the Times) COQUILLE, Ore., April 28.—J. C. La France, alias A. J. Ferger, and wife, were arrested here late Saturday evening by Sheriff Gage, Deputy Clyde Gage, Detective W. D. Morris and other officers on the charge of having pulled off one of the biggest insurance swindles ever perpetrated in the Pacific Northwest. He is charged with having substituted the body of another man for himself in the Clackamas River at Portland last June, dressed the corpse in his clothing which had his letters and pocketbook, and then dropped out of sight while his wife collected \$15,500 life insurance. La France has remained stoical since his arrest, absolutely refusing to discuss the case. His wife, however, takes it hard and when the officers came into the house broke into tears and has cried much of the time since. They have four little children, the oldest eleven years old. The three oldest children are step-children of La France. The arrest was the culmination of a search covering several months during which from one to four detectives were constantly on the case. It included the shadowing of Mrs. La France from Portland to Lake Charles, Louisiana, thence to Texas, thence to San Francisco and thence to Bandon and finally to Coquille. Once, about a month ago, the detectives had La France in their trap almost, but he eluded them, then he dropped out of sight and just returned to Coquille when Sheriff Gage and Deputy Clyde Gage, who had been keeping close watch for him, landed him. La France, or Ferger, as he was known here, was arranging to go to the sawmill business on the Coquille. He had purchased the Reichert Brothers' little mill near Bandon and had invested about \$100 in that property. J. C. Wofford, a brother of Mrs. La France, was interested with him in the mill. Wofford was at the mill Saturday when the arrest was made, but returned to Coquille Sunday. He has not been placed under arrest as there is no evidence to show that he was involved in the alleged swindle.

Story of Case.

The story of the swindle is extraordinary. La France moved to Portland from Eastern Oregon a few years ago. He became identified with the Modern Woodmen of America and the United Artisans of Portland and became clerk of the latter's Portland lodge. Early last summer he took out a \$1000 insurance policy in the Mutual Life. He also carried \$3000 insurance in the Modern Woodmen of America and \$2500 in the United States. Early in June he went on a hunting trip in the Clackamas River and never returned. It was given out that he must have met with some accident. A few weeks later, a party of fishermen in the Clackamas River were attracted to a swampy inlet on the river by the cries of someone calling them to come there, as they had found a drowned man. They waded, but when they reached the scene, they only found the body of a man who called to them having disappeared. The body was taken from the inlet and was badly decomposed but the clothing was all intact. The man was the suit worn by La France, and when he went on his "fatal" trip, he had in his pockets were books and letters belonging to him. This was accepted as positive identification and the "floater" was buried at Coquille. A few days afterwards Mrs. La France received the insurance. No one suspected anything until at a meeting of the Modern Woodmen, when payment of the death claim was made, one of the members arose and said there must be something wrong as he had seen La France on the street after the time of the alleged death. Even then it was thought the member was wrong. However, in a few days, a butcher reported that he saw La France, and the latter had come into the store and bought some meat and strangely when he noticed the butcher recognized him, he was now smooth.

(Continued on Page Two.)

CHILDREN CALL FERGER PAPA

Identity of A. J. Ferger as La France Established by Them.

(Special to the Times) COQUILLE, Ore., April 28.—Sheriff W. W. Gage and Detective Morris expect to take J. C. La France and wife to Marshfield on this evening's train and leave there in the morning via Drain with the alleged swindlers. Whether Wofford will be taken with them has not been announced. COQUILLE, Ore., April 28.—Conclusive proof that A. J. Ferger is J. C. La France, the noted insurance swindler, was given when the little children, the oldest eleven, gathered around him and called "Papa, papa" during the excitement of the thrilling arrest Saturday night.

When Sheriff Gage broke in the door, Ferger dived underneath the bed, Gage had his revolver drawn and soon forced him to come out.

The precautions were not unwarranted as was shown afterwards when an automatic revolver belonging to Ferger was found in a clothes basket, some clothes piled on top of it prevented him getting it when the officers swooped down on him. Another automatic was found among Mrs. La France's effects.

Waited for Stork.

A pathetic side of the story is the infant child, only three or four months old, which Mrs. La France had in her arms when the officers broke in. This little babe is said to have been the cause of the couple remaining in Portland and resulting in his being seen there. Mrs. La France collected the last of the \$15,500 life insurance October 24, 1912. Owing to the coming visit of the stork, who arrived in January, they could not very well travel so they moved from Lower Albina to another suburb of Portland. It was during this stay, that La France was seen on the street.

All of the \$15,500 life insurance was taken out last May and June, just prior to his disappearance.

Much Cash Found.

Sheriff Gage and the officers in searching the La France house yesterday discovered \$1760 in bills secreted in a dresser drawer.

It has been found that he invested about \$6,000 or possibly \$7,500 in the Reichert mill and timber land a few miles below Bandon.

Today, the Modern Woodmen of America, through their attorney, C. R. Peck, attached this land and the cash to cover the claim of \$2,000.

The Modern Woodmen have borne the cost of the search alone and it will cost them a great sum. The other insurance companies would not join them in it and it is to that organization and Mr. Simmons that the uncovering of the fraud is due. It has been found that La France was in Roseburg April 21 but where all he went after discovering that detectives were on his trail at Bandon has not been learned.

\$500 FOR BODY.

It has been practically shown that \$500 was paid for the corpse which La France substituted for his own.

It is presumed that this was paid to a medical student who got the cadaver from an undertaker presumably to dissect and then fixed it like La France wanted it.

When the body was found, it was near the bank and in shallow water. It was arranged to make it appear that he had started across a log and fallen head first breaking his neck. The neck of the corpse was broken, showing that someone with medical skill helped.

The fishing reel and tackle were near it. Owing to the body being so badly decomposed and the stench from it, no careful examination was made, the letters being taken as absolute proof of the identity.

WILSON TALKS PANAMA TOLLS

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) WASHINGTON, April 28.—President Wilson told callers today that he considered the controversy with Great Britain over the exemption of American coastwise shipping from paying tolls through the Panama Canal a very debatable one. President Wilson gave no intimation of what his previous view had been, but Democratic Senators who talked with him had the idea that he opposed the exemption and favored the Root amendment to repeal it.

RAILROAD OFFICIALS VISIT HERE ON INSPECTION TRIP

Chief Engineer Hoey and Assistant Engineer Fontaine Come With Contractor Porter and Others—Plan for Work.

Chief Engineer H. P. Hoey, Assistant W. R. Fontaine, Johnson Porter and R. D. Houser of Porter Brothers, Thomas Dixon of the MacArthur, Perks company and H. Crosby of San Francisco, who has charge of the bridge test work along the line and who may have charge of the putting in the piers for Porter Brothers, arrived here Saturday night from Eugene. They made the trip down the line from Eugene over the route of the Southern Pacific line to Coos Bay.

All were more or less reticent about affairs. They did not seem that anything of importance was attached to their visit here at this time. "We are simply out on a general tour of inspection. The construction is being done as expeditiously as it can be economically done and there is nothing new to give out about it was the general answer to inquiries about their trip. They could not understand just why the people of Coos Bay wanted to know so much about them, their visit or the plans for building the road. As to the plans, they did not like to give them out in advance because it is sometimes necessary to change them. These changes are often a surprise to the men on the ground, generally being arranged by Chief Engineer Hood. When the changes come from the announced plans, there is a kick by the public and sometimes someone is called on the "carpet" for giving out advance information.

Messrs. Hoey and Fontaine plan to start back tonight or tomorrow. Mr. Dixon may also return soon.

Between the Umpqua and the Siuslaw, there are four tunnels, aggregating 5,000 feet in length. One is about 2,000 feet long, another about 1,800 feet long, another about 455 feet and the last about 1,000 feet in length.

Johnson Porter may remain a little longer to get the work going better on this end. The Tillamook is expected in soon with a steam shovel for the work in North Bend. R. D. Houser, who came with them, will probably have charge of the North Bend work. His father is one of the members of Smith and Housers and both the Senior Housers and Grant Smith are understood to be members of the firm of Porter Brothers, which consists of eight men, four of whom are Porters.

Work on Bridge.

Porter Brothers, contractors for the construction of the Southern Pacific line from the Noti tunnel, to

Coos Bay, will construct the piers and approaches for the big bridge across Coos Bay. The Southern Pacific merely retains the contract for the steel work alone, putting in the ten big steel spans in addition to the draw.

Porter Brothers will have all the steam shovel work across the Bay and work up North Inlet from Sand Point. There is a question yet about doing the work immediately north of the Bay but it is practically certain that the line from the south end of the big Ten Mile tunnel to the Ten Mile Inlets will be put in this fall and possibly the other small tunnels near Ten Mile will be started this fall so that they can be driven during the winter months.

As to the work between the Umpqua and Siuslaw, no orders have yet been given for starting it. Most of this is comparative light construction and can be put through in one summer. It is the Southern Pacific plan to do the heavy work on each end and then connect up the light work.

It is now planned to have trains running between Eugene and Acme this fall. However, much depends on the weather. If it is rainy, the progress may be delayed somewhat.

However, the work in North Bend will be done to conform with the franchise there. When the bridge will be started will depend on Chief Engineer Hood's decision about the construction, basing his decision on the recent tests. The bridge will probably be hurried by working on the foundation for several piers at one time.

The work in North Bend will be hastened as rapidly as possible. In addition to the main line work in that city, for which Porter Brothers have the contract, the Southern Pacific is planning to go ahead with some other work and will submit this. It was reported that John Eddy, who has been here for some time as the representative of W. J. Wiley, but who has arranged to go into the general contracting business, will have considerable of the latter work for the Southern Pacific as soon as Chief Engineer Hood approves the grades and plans of Bradford Wheeler and Mr. Hindmarsh, the two Southern Pacific engineers in charge here.

As soon as they complete the steam shovel work in Simpson Park cut,

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SENSATIONAL "WAR SPEECH" IS DELIVERED IN HOUSE TODAY

BRYAN IS IN SACRAMENTO

Secretary of State Talks Privately With Governor Johnson Today.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) SACRAMENTO, Cal., April 28.—William J. Bryan arrived in Sacramento early today to confer with Governor Johnson and the California Legislature on the proposed anti-alien holding laws to which President Wilson and the State Department at Washington have taken exception on the ground that the National treaty rights of the Japanese may be threatened. Governor Johnson met the visitor at the train, where also a considerable group of Democratic Legislators had gathered.

Although it was stated earlier that Bryan had requested a private conference from which the newspaper and public generally should be excluded, this responsibility was disclaimed by the Secretary of State immediately after the meeting convened. "It is not fair to say that outsiders were excluded at my request, or any one," said Bryan. "It was simply the consensus of opinion that the session should be executive. It was expected that the conference would extend far into the afternoon.

At Bryan's request, Governor Johnson called a joint meeting of the two houses to hear Bryan's message.

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Representative Sisson of Mississippi Delivers Strong Argument Against Japs.

FEARS ALLOWING THEM TO OWN LAND HERE

Declares California's Right to Enact Anti-Alien Law Should be Upheld.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) WASHINGTON, April 28.—A war speech in support of the proposed California anti-alien land law was delivered today in the House by Representative Sisson, of Mississippi. "If we must have war or submit to this indignity, I am for war," cried Sisson. "I am with the people of California in their efforts to prevent these aliens from acquiring lands."

"I believe," said Sisson, "that no non-resident alien should be allowed to hold a single foot of land in the territory of the United States. "What would Washington say in answer to the question, was or submission?"

"What would Jackson say?" "What would Cleveland say?" "What would McKinley say?" "I resent the efforts of Japan to force us to submit to her demands."

Sisson took the position that the Japanese government in protesting against the alien land legislation was endeavoring to exempt its citizens from the operations of the laws of the states.

"The president and secretary of state," said Sisson, "should only assure an alien government that the people of an alien nation would be dealt with fairly in accordance with the laws of the state, any other position would lead to the federal government taking out from under the laws of the states the citizens of another nation. But all citizens or aliens resident of a state must be held subject to the laws and to exempt an alien would give him privileges over and above those accorded to American citizens."

Representative Mann, the Republican leader, suggested that the United States had a constitutional right to treat with foreign powers to secure for American citizens property rights abroad and that Sisson was contending that foreign governments did not have a similar right.

Sisson retorted that the people of California had the right to enact laws regarding alien holding land as their judgment seemed best when such laws did not infringe upon the federal constitution.

"If Japan now threatens us with war, what would she do when millions of her citizens have acquired land in our country? I lay down the proposition that an alien population holding land within our borders would be a fixed and constant menace. We must preserve to the American farmer the right to own the soil of our country without competition which would drag down his standard of living. I would not surrender it unless we had spent the last drop of blood of America's manhood and impoverished our country for a hundred generations."

"I accord to Japan all equal rights with ourselves. I would as quickly resent a demand from our Government upon Japan to permit American citizens to own land in Japan contrary to the laws of Japan, as I do now resent Japan's efforts to compel us to submit to her demands. I think it the duty of every loyal citizen to stand for California and her rights in this fight for her own citizens and their descendants."

About half the membership of the House sat in amazement while Sisson addressed them and paid close attention to his argument and his speech was frequently interrupted with applause.

JAPS ARE WAITING.

No Change in Negotiations Until Bryan Makes Report.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) WASHINGTON, April 28.—It was stated at the Japanese embassy that there was no change in the status of negotiations regarding the California alien land bill since Secretary of State Bryan departed for Sacramento. The Japanese government is awaiting the outcome of the secretary's mission.

Detective Is Here. Detective Mitchell, of Portland, is in Marshfield in-law, M. H. Mulloy and father-in-law, M. H. Mulloy and family. Whether Mr. Mitchell has some other business here is not stated, but it is suspected that he may be assisting in getting evidence in the moral crusade.

NOTICE.

The Doremus Coos Bay Employment Agency furnishes all kinds of skilled or unskilled labor on short notice. A trial will convince you. Phones 2691 and 324 R.

FEAR MEXICO FACES STRIFE

Diaz and Huerta Clash and Government Officials are Divided Into Factions.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) WASHINGTON, April 28.—That the rapidly-growing seriousness of the situation in Mexico City is fraught with friction between Huerta and the Diaz factions in the provisional government is reported in confidential advices. The reports are augmented by agents of the Carranza constitutionalists arriving here. The reports confirm the early advices of the tenacity of the relations of Diaz and Huerta. Between the two officials practically all government forces in the federal district have been divided into armed camps.

President Huerta Busy.

WASHINGTON, April 28.—News has been received here today that President Huerta has added to the infantry at the National Palace and Felix Diaz has encamped much of the artillery on his estate, 30 miles away. Senor Mondrago, Minister of War, is virtually in possession of the citadel where the other artillery is quartered.

Frost Last Night.—There was quite a heavy frost last night. Just how much damage was done is not certain, but it is feared that much fruit and garden truck suffered. The cool weather and rain today may keep the loss to a minimum.

REBELS SLAY TOWN OFFICERS

Report That Insurgents Killed All Federal Commanders at Santa Rosalia.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) EL PASO, April 28.—Eight hundred men, women and children were driven from their homes last week when the constitutionalists captured Santa Rosalia, a walking to Chihuahua city, 100 miles distant. The refugees arriving here from Santa Rosalia report that after taking the town the insurgents executed all the officers of the federal garrison from Colonel Manuel Puebla to the first corporals.

SEED BARLEY—A. T. HAINES.

BARTON HELD ON INDICTMENT

State Representatives Gives \$2500 Bond at Coquille—Maintains Innocence.

(Special to the Times) COQUILLE, Ore., April 28.—State Representative J. S. Barton was placed under arrest by Sheriff Gage on an indictment charging attempted assault on Miss Madge Yoakam, an employee in his office. The indictment was returned Saturday afternoon by the grand jury just before adjourning. Barton was immediately released upon \$2500 bonds.

Mr. Barton declares that the whole thing is an outrage and that he will prove his innocence.

Miss Yoakam and her friends are just as firm. About 170 people signed their names to a petition to the grand jury and District Attorney Brown, asking that action be taken.

So far as can be learned from the grand jury's report, there were no witnesses to the alleged assault. It being Miss Yoakam's word against Mr. Barton's. However, people who saw her in the street after she had rushed from the office following her alleged escape from the vault, will probably be called in to testify.

The entire community is greatly wrought up over the affair. Miss Yoakam is the daughter of John Yoakam, who resides near here. Her father and mother were divorced, her mother subsequently marrying Mr. Macahado, a well-known Myrtle Point merchant. Recently the Macahado family troubles were aired in the divorce court here.

The case may come to trial this week in Circuit Court.

Common sense is a good thing in its place, but its place isn't a love letter if you would make it interesting.

NO RECOGNITION OF CHINA NOW

United States Defers Action on New Republic Owing to Complications There.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) WASHINGTON, April 28.—Political developments in China have made it improbable that the United States will recognize the new republic immediately as originally intended, and officials here believe that there is, therefore, no danger of further complicating the delicate situation at Peking, as a result of the conclusion of the five-power loan friction between Yuan Shi Kai and the cabinet on one side and the powerful radical party in the assemblage on the other.

MILLIONAIRE HAS RETURNED

George H. Bixby back at Los Angeles to Face "White Slavery Charges There.

(By Associated Press to Coos Bay Times.) LOS ANGELES, April 28.—Geo. H. Bixby, the Long Beach millionaire who disappeared when the white slavery investigation was started, at last reappeared today and went before the grand jury.

A. J. MENDEL will return tomorrow from an extended business trip to San Francisco, where he went to purchase goods for the Hub stores. He will return via Myrtle Point and will visit the branch store there.