

PRICE EXORBITANT BUT CEMETERY NECESSARY SAYS ST. JOHNS HEAD

Land of Doubtful Value, Assessed at \$33.33 Per Acre, Held at \$1600 Per Acre.

CHANGE IN LAW NEEDED

Legislator - Eldest Declares Owners Should Be Made to Reduce Price or Pay Increased Assessments.

"We are paying many times over too much for the land. It is a holdup, but what can we do about it? Everybody who owns land in the vicinity is demanding just such prices, and the city needs a cemetery."

Thus did Mayor W. Vincent of St. Johns today comment upon the city's purchase of approximately five acres of the William Gatton donation land claims about three quarters of a mile north of St. Johns. The tract includes 13.55 acres and is assessed at \$450, or about \$33.33 per acre. Yet when the city of St. Johns wanted to buy it for a cemetery the price is \$1600 per acre.

The land is of such doubtful value that it has been assessed at \$33.33 per acre for years, while valuations of adjacent properties have been increased. Thus appears one more in the lengthening list of instances where land of intrinsic value is assessed at a price which is many times what it is worth for public use.

Price of Land Vanitas. The city of St. Johns has been without a cemetery. It needs one. Its officials cast about for a location not too far from the city to be accessible and not too near to be obnoxious. Two sites offered themselves—the O. E. Learned tract of 25 acres, which was priced to the city at \$2000 per acre, and the William Gatton tract of 13.55 acres, for which \$1600 per acre was asked.

The Learned offer was rejected. The Gatton proposition was accepted, the city to take approximately five acres and pay for it on a long term contract basis as the cemetery lots were sold. When the matter was voted upon at a recent meeting of the council, Councilman W. A. Davis moved that the Gatton tract be purchased. The motion was carried in spite of the opposition of Councilmen Charles P. Chadwick and George W. Munson.

Land Designated "Overflow." The reason the Gatton land has remained at an assessed valuation of \$450, or \$33.33 per acre, for many years is because Deputy Assessor Tom McEgan had designated it "overflow" land in his field reports. The land borders on Columbia slough, but is not a piece on the west side of the intersecting road—is elevated. The soil consists of a hard red clay and sand. Those who have seen it say its value for farm or garden purposes is negligible.

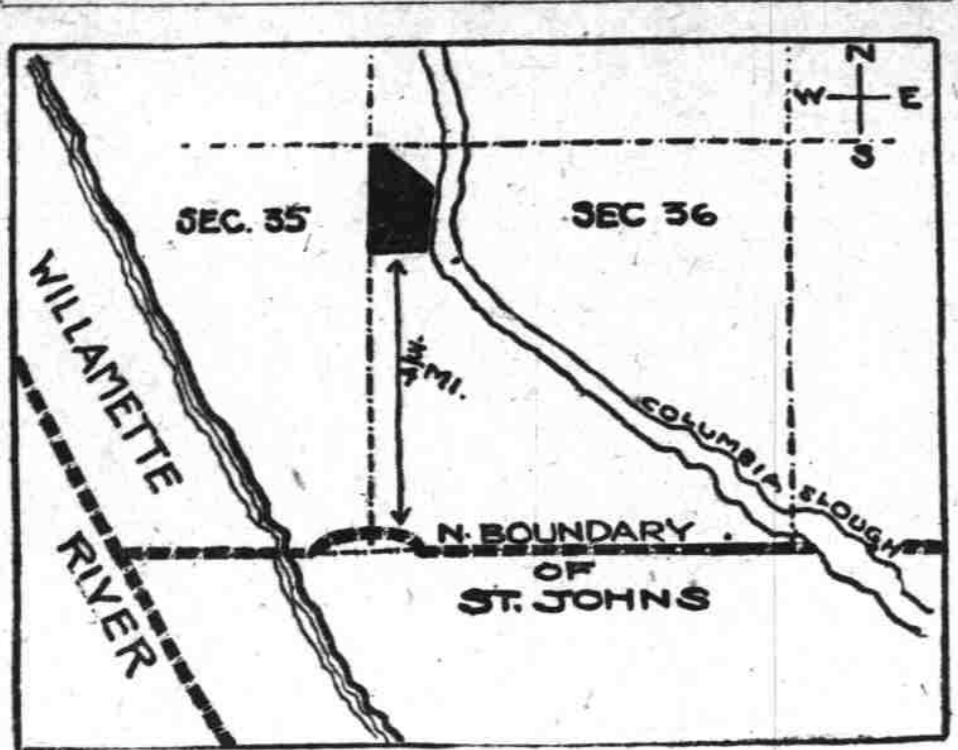
The tract is three-quarters of a mile north of the St. Johns city limits. The land adjoining it on the east, owned by Charles E. Ladd and the F. H. Strong heirs, comprises 348 acres and is assessed at \$70,100, or \$201 per acre. Land adjoining it on the west, 423.55 acres, part of the Gatton grant, is assessed at \$5,900, or about \$12 per acre. The latter tract adjoins the sloughs and marshes of the vicinity also.

Considers Price Exorbitant. City Engineer J. O. Burson of St. Johns is surveying the tract today to determine its exact area. Mayor Vincent declared today that he considered the purchase price exacted of the city exorbitant and unreasonable and so far in excess of the assessed valuation that it amounted almost to a scandal.

"I had no part in the decision on the purchase because I have no vote in the council," he said. "But I realized, as I think did every member of the council, that the price was away out of reason."

"The question, however, resolved itself into this: We had to have a cemetery and we could not buy any land anywhere within proper distance for anything less. It was a holdup

PROXIMITY OF GATTON TRACT TO ST. JOHNS SHOWN



Tract marked in black is parcel which is valued at \$33.33 for assessment purposes, but which jumps almost fifty times in value when town desires it for cemetery.

and I believe there should be an agitation to prevent any further exploiting of the public by holders of lands who list them in assessment books at insignificant figures and hold them at enormous prices when anyone wants to buy."

Striking Example of Evil. D. C. Lewis, representative-elect from Multnomah county, declared today that the cemetery tract offers a striking example of the evils of the present taxation system.

"People should inspect the assessment books before closing deals for the purchase of real estate," declared Mr. Lewis. "If the assessed valuation

BATUM ON BLACK SEA GREAT NAPHTHA PORT OF CZAR'S KINGDOM

Singular Mixture of Old and New Has Come Into Existence on Ancient Site.

Washington, Dec. 28.—The National Geographic society gives descriptions of the great Russian oil port of Batum, which the Turks recently bombarded, and of the Vistula river region, which has been the scene of the great eastern campaign between Russian and Austro-German forces.

"Squatting on a marshy plain, with a small port of petroleum, a wonderful harbor, and a strong naval fortress, Batum, recently bombarded by Turkish warships, is the great naphtha port of Russia, a sea outlet for the oil fields of Baku, and the foremost city upon the eastern shore of the Black sea. It is a place of 40,000 inhabitants, alive with the snap of western business and filled with the color of eastern peoples. It has just three things to please the fancy; Alexander park, on Lake Nurik, at its eastern boundary; a cathedral completed in 1906, and a straight, palm-fringed boulevard along the sea.

Close to Turkish Frontier. "Batum is about eight miles from the Turkish frontier in Asia Minor. Russia conquered it from Turkey, and the congress of Berlin, in 1878, confirmed the conquest. In awarding Batum to Russia, it was stipulated that the port should not be made into a free port, but that it was to be a strongly fortified station. In 1911, following the collapse of the ancient quay, extensive harbor works were undertaken, with the result that Batum has been made one of the best equipped harbors on the Black sea. "The city is very ancient in location and very recent in importance. It

SHEPHERD TELLS OF HIS ARRIVAL ON THE HUNGARIAN FRONTIER

Is Bundled Off to Little Polish Home Where Room Is Given Him by Officers.

60 NEWSPAPERMEN THERE

They Gather in Big Hall Used as Press Headquarters Where Censors Meet and Give Out Military News.

By William G. Shepherd. (United Press Staff Correspondent.) On the Hungarian Frontier, Nov. 19 (By Mail to New York).—Our little newspaper party, numbered with the cold, climbed out of the train, and were led by a sentinel through a great double door into the muddy passageway of a building. A side door opened and we entered a huge, long room, warm and well lighted with oil lamps. Three long tables ran the length of the room. There were the remnants of a giant dinner on them, which soldiers were clearing away. A piano was banging merrily. Men sat about the tables in small groups, drinking beer and listening. It was my introduction to the Austro-Hungarian press headquarters.

In this little town 60 newspapermen are lodged. It requires a small army of officers and clerks to care for them. The town is set aside entirely for the press, and every soldier to be seen, every horse, every one of the scores of supply wagons, every article of the outfit—all have as their duty or purpose the convenience of the correspondents, who are mostly Austrians and Hungarians. In addition to the comforts which the writing men have, there are two auto buses at their disposal, which make regular trips between this little town and headquarters. And on the road away from a train of four or five small wagons carrying beer, which will be consumed in large part by the newspaper men. The correspondents pay for their beer, but their food is furnished them free. In this great room, where I ate my hot, belated supper, the correspondents do a great deal of their writing, and here the censors, who are appointed to deal in various languages, talk over the copy of the journalists, read out news at meal time and give instructions as to postal and telegraph arrangements.

Given Room With Clocks. An auto was waiting for me and I was whisked to a whitewashed house on the outskirts of the town, where a room had been reserved for me. The family was Polish, there about the walls of the little room were pictures of the Christ and the Virgin Mary. It was the parlor, and three clocks were ticking away merrily. I have been in scores of such houses in America. I remembered that one time in a Massachusetts town, during a strike, I had slept for four nights in just such a Polish home, waiting for the deputy sheriff to come and put the family out into the street, but the sheriff did not come, and I had missed my story. There had been two clocks in my room in that house in America. They seem to run to clocks. I locked two

of the clocks in my valise to ruffle them and went to bed. It looked to me, just as I was dropping off into slumber, as if I had been pocketed by the Austro-Hungarian war department. Here I was, in a small town, a hundred miles from the front, and no way to get there except by army trains, and the Polish woman rapped at my door to tell me it was 7 o'clock in the morning. At breakfast in the big room I found that my status was absolutely military. I received instructions that I was to go to the headquarters town at 9 o'clock. I took the long ride over the hills in a coach in a wintry sunshine. I rode with the chief of military affairs, Colonel von Hoen, who has entire charge of all the field forces of correspondents, and he had a pass ready for me. In German it is known as "legitimation." It bears my photograph and my autograph, and a careful description of my personal appearance. "Tomorrow," Colonel Hoen told me, "you are to go with the front, but first you will be received by General Count von Hertzendorf, the chief of staff."

Received by Chief of Staff. This was far more than an American or any other correspondent could have expected in the way of Austrian courtesy. The Archduke Frederick is the commander-in-chief of the entire Austro-Hungarian army, and General Count von Hertzendorf is in command as chief of staff. The next day Colonel von Hoen escorted several correspondents, including myself, to the field headquarters where we were shown into a room, which was entered shortly by a gray-haired, quiet-appearing gentleman of slender stature, who installed J. C. English, chairman of the committee, says that the relief plan is working out nicely and that applicants for aid seem ready and willing to work for what they get.

Number of Parcels Near Portland Where Needy Men May Work Being Examined; Big Raft Will Arrive. Substantial progress in securing tracts of land where needy men may be put to work during the winter months is expected to be made today by J. A. Madsen, secretary-treasurer of the Pacific coast district of the International Longshoremen's union, who is in charge of the land-clearing department for the Citizen's Employment committee. A number of locations in the vicinity of Portland are being considered. Some of these tracts will be inspected this afternoon. Mr. Madsen's office is in the Ainsworth building, his telephone number is Main 4484. A huge raft containing 400,000 feet of timber will be delivered in Portland today and when the donkey engine has been installed the committee will be able to put on a full force of men at the wood yard. It is the aim of the promoters to make every man earn the

Make Progress in Securing Tracts

of his meals and lodging in the "Troy Hotel," East Water and Taylor streets. Additional bunks are being installed. J. C. English, chairman of the committee, says that the relief plan is working out nicely and that applicants for aid seem ready and willing to work for what they get.

Bullet Removed From Man's Brain

Condition of Walter Askay Is Unchanged But Chances for Recovery Are Better Now.

The condition of Walter Askay, who was shot Christmas night when bullet intended for a negro prisoner was escaping from City Detectives Moloney and Swennes glanced and went through a St. Johns car window at Fifth and Pine streets, is reported to be unchanged today. The bullet, from a .38 caliber revolver, and flattened on one side to the size of a 10 cent piece, was located by X-ray Saturday, and Dr. A. E. Rockey Saturday night performed an operation and removed the slug from the brain. The missile had entered on one side of the head, behind the ear, and passed entirely through the brain, stopping against the skull on the other side. The physicians say

CONFERENCE ON LABOR LAWS

O. P. Hoff, state labor commissioner, and his deputies held a conference this morning at the branch office, 350 1/2 Third street, with T. H. Burchard, president of the State Federation of Labor, and E. J. Stack, secretary of the S. F. of L., relative to the enactment of the eight hour law and legislation necessary thereto. Further conferences will be held from time to time before the meeting of the legislature. Another fact brought out at this conference is that workmen are deprived of wages due them for overtime by reason of the cost necessary to conduct a suit.

Inquest This Afternoon.

An inquest in the case of Charles M. Keigler, manager of the Vulcan Fuel company, 483 Pettygrove street, who died at St. Vincent's hospital last Thursday after being struck by a Carlton hotel bus at Broadway and Couch street, will be held this afternoon at the Dunning & McEntee undertaking chapel.

Relief Ship Will Be Selected Soon

Whether the Belgian food ship Washington will carry the cargo of food-stuffs given by Oregon, Washington and Idaho, or whether the ship Cranley will be sent to carry the Oregon contributions exclusively has not been settled, but Samuel Hill, chairman of the Oregon Belgian relief commission, says this morning that cable correspondence with the American commission at London is expected to settle the matter by tomorrow. The food ship is expected to load at the municipal wharf with the contributions from Oregon people about January 15. Among the contributions received today by the relief commission was \$5 from Dorothy Barnett, the 7-year-old daughter of the Wasco, Ore., banker; \$15.80 from Willard congregation and neighborhood at Madley, Ore.; and \$5.40 from the Methodist Sunday school at Hill, Wash. There is also to come from Willard church at Madley eight sacks of food and clothing, the result of a contribution gathered December 29,

Advertisement for Dellar's Shoes. Features: GREAT SACRIFICE On Reliable and Stylish Shoes. Includes list of shoe styles and prices: Ladies' Patent or Gunmetal, cloth tops, with the newest heels, regularly \$3.50, at \$2.85; Ladies' Black, Brown, Gray Suede, regularly \$4.50, at \$2.85; Ladies' Tan, regularly \$4.50, the pair \$2.85; Ladies' \$5 grades reduced \$3.35; Ladies' \$6 and \$7 grades reduced to \$3.85 and \$4.35; Men's Korrek Shape Patent, Gunmetal or Tan, regular \$4.50 and \$5 grades \$3.85; Men's None Equal Gunmetal, half double sole, button or lace, the pair \$3.35; Men's \$5 grades reduced \$4.85; Men's \$6 and \$7 grades reduced to \$3.85 and \$4.85. Address: 291 MORRISON STREET, NEAR FIFTH.

Advertisement for Imperial Hotel Grill. Features: Mirth, Music and a Menu. Befitting the occasion, will be yours for thorough enjoyment if the Imperial Hotel Grill is to be your chosen place of entertainment on New Year's Eve. Special Table d'Hote Supper 10 P. M. to 1 A. M., \$2.50. Cabaret, Balloons and other entertaining features are programmed. New Year's Day Table d'Hote Dinner \$1.50 5:30 to 9 P. M. Music.

Advertisement for Southern Pacific. Features: \$26.70 to San Francisco and Back FOR THE New Year Holidays. TICKETS ON SALE December 29-30-31 and January 1, 1915, to San Francisco and other California points; also to Klamath Falls via Weed. Return limit all points January 4, 1915. Superior Train Service. Observation Cars, Standard and Tourist Sleeping Cars, High-Back Chair Cars and Dinners. Solid vestibuled trains. Holiday Fares in Oregon. Tickets for the New Year Holidays will be on sale between all points in Oregon December 31 and January 1. Tickets will also be between all C. & E., P. R. & N., P. E. & E. and S. F. C. & W. points. Return limit for all stations January 4, 1915. Call at City Ticket Office, 80 Sixth Street, Corner Oak, Union Depot or East Morrison Street Depot for full particulars, fares, reservations, train schedules, etc. THE EXPOSITION LINE 1915 John M. Scott, General Passenger Agent, Portland, Oregon.

Navigable to Cracow. "Just before reaching Cracow, the Vistula leaves the mountains, and from this Galician city seaward it is navigable for smaller boats. Its direction from Cracow is away from its mouth, and it penetrates deep into the plains of Russian Poland before it turns, not far from Warsaw, back to German lands. Its upper reaches of the high Polish plateau in the south and in the neighborhood of Warsaw are high bluffs, often sharp and faced with loosely held earth erosions, and altogether difficult to pass between bank and bank. From Warsaw on, it is navigable for larger river craft. "The plain through which the river passes from Warsaw to the Prussian boundary smooths away into swelling lowlands, the river course becomes tricky and wandering, while the sandy banks are forever sliding into the water. The Vistula enters Prussia 10 miles above Thorn, the strong Prussian frontier fortress. Beyond this point it cuts through the Prussian ridge, enters low country again, where its shifting banks give considerable trouble to navigation. "River Has Heavy Traffic. "The Prussian government has expended large sums of money in the endeavor to win a mastery of the river, and to keep it serviceable as a great trade artery. The Vistula has heavy traffic of lumber, grains and other farm productions. "Before reaching the North sea at Danzig, it divides into two arms, that on the west retaining the name, Vistula. Thick sheet ice binds the river at Warsaw, as a general thing, from about Christmas time to the first of March. It is visited by periodical floods of powerful headway in spring and in mid-summer. The Vistula forms one of the most important commercial avenues in Russian Poland, in addition to its important Prussian traffic. It is connected by canal with the German River Netze, and through it with the Oder. It has a drainage basin 74,000 square miles in area, and receives the rivers of recent war fame, the San, the Bug, the Pilica, Bzura and the Wieprz as tributaries. "Really Broker Kills Himself. "Lodi, Angles, Dec. 28.—Edward Savare, age 55, a real estate dealer, shot and killed himself here early today. The cause of his act was not known. Journal Want Ads bring results.

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