

THE ASTORIAN, in referring to the bill introduced by Mr. George to declare forfeited the land grant between Forest Grove and Astoria, and providing that all moneys received for the sale of those lands within the next ten years shall be paid to any person or company first building a standard gauge railroad between those two points, says: "As to the bill that he introduced, it would, if passed, constitute a richer grant than the one which congress proposes to forfeit, and will."

It may be a richer grant, and therefore something of an inducement to a company to build the road. It will not be in the shape of franchise to some particular company or to any company to hold so as to prevent the company that may first build.

It is not desirable to have any government aid, or, if no road is wanted, then we are content to have the land grant forfeited unconditionally. If the products of the valley cannot be taken down the Columbia river to the sea, they can be sent by Puget Sound or via Yaquina. We should be quite unwilling to force a road to Astoria, if it is not wanted by our friends down by the sounding sea.—Salem Statesman, 7.

It is desirable to have government aid; the road is wanted; the products of the valley can be taken down the Columbia river to the sea, and no Astorian will manifest any unwillingness to accept aid in the matter of a railroad from any quarter—however unexpected. Probably the best rebuttal to the remarks of our capital contemporary would be to cite the vote in the house on the 21st of January as an exemplification of just how much Mr. George is in favor of land grant forfeiture.

It is amusing to notice that there are several of our friends just now very much interested in Astoria's welfare that never were before. They are the most numerous around the railroad company's office in Portland, however. These friends of ours are shouting as of one accord, "What fools those Astoria people are that they should want the land grant forfeited. They will never get a railroad if the grant is taken away. If we can not build a railroad nobody can," etc.

It may be that our friend of the Statesman has been listening to some of this. The people that have been holding the Astoria grant do not want to build any railroad to Astoria. They are opposed to it because the development of the coal fields along the line would, they think, interfere with their Seattle coal trade. They are opposed to it because the road would, they think, greatly reduce their profits in towing and lightering between Astoria and Portland. They are opposed to it because of their interests in from 10,000 to 15,000 acres of real estate adjoining and in New Tacoma and Portland. If they had been half inclined to build the road they could have done so long ago on the proceeds of the mortgage bonds or on the land grant itself.

These people are now holding the grant for the sole purpose of keeping others from building the road. They publicly abandoned the building of the road last fall. When ex-Senator Mitchell appeared before the public lands committee in opposition to the forfeiture he was forced to admit that he did not know that the railroad would ever be built if the grant was not forfeited.

The people of Astoria and Clatsop county have therefore petitioned congress for the forfeiture of the land grant. Petitions numerously signed have gone forward. The chamber of commerce of Astoria also forwarded a memorial to congress asking for the forfeiture. The same body also drew up a bill providing for the forfeiture, which was adopted after being read at a meeting of the chamber. This proposed bill was drawn up by Hon. C. W. Fulton and Hon. F. J. Taylor. A copy was sent to Hon. M. C. George and Hon. Jas. H. Slater and Hon. J. N. Dolph. These gentlemen were asked to introduce the same in congress. Mr. George did not introduce the bill as sent to him. This we think was an act of discourtesy, no matter what his own opinion might be as to what legislation was needed.

But the amendments added by Mr. George were objectionable, inasmuch as they would have certainly killed the bill if he had succeeded in getting them adopted by the committee. The people of Astoria know perfectly well that it has been useless to try to get any continuation of the subsidy or change of subsidy, and any such amendments mean defeat. This amendment business is a favorite plan of the railroad combinations to defeat any legislation in the interests of the people. The amendments proposed always have ear-marks, however, by which ownership is easily ascertained.

A good many will watch closely the fate of the forfeiture bill in the senate as well as in the house, and note what amendments are added and who proposed them, and what was said for and against us, and by whom, and, doubtless, all action, whether favorable or adverse, will be accompanied by subsequent and elaborate explanations.

In Villard's collapse the Union sees possible benefit for Walla Walla.

OUR MAIL SERVICE. The Oregonian copies and endorses our remarks concerning the present inefficiency of the river mail service. It seems to us that the only adequate remedy is to make proper representation to the postal authorities at Washington. We shall lay the matter before the chamber of commerce at its next meeting, and expect to get the Portland board of trade to indorse the move. The annoyance is too great to be longer borne. The malicious insinuation of a party who has temporary access to type, that what we have said on this subject was in the interest of the O. R. & N. Co., needs but passing allusion to illustrate how characteristic it is of the case of arrested development which utters the snarl. Ignorance is excusable, but ignorance combined with impudence is insufferable.

ANY one knows that \$16,000 is none too much to carry a mail six times a week between here and Portland and make decent time between the two cities. We are in hopes that when U. B. Scott gets his new boat finished he can be of some assistance in solving this problem. Talking with him one day last July about the feasibility of a fast mail service between here and Portland he said that unless increased pay could be secured the thing was impossible.

"Way," said Scott in his earnest way, "a boat that carries freight and makes landings can't make good mail time. It isn't in the nature of things. Something has got to be neglected. I couldn't carry the mail at the price the O. R. & N. steamers carry it and make anything. I'd be out of pocket every month I had the contract." And he was right.

The fact is that the Washington officials have a very erroneous impression concerning the needs of this country. We are growing faster than they realize. When Postmaster Chance sent to headquarters last summer for what he wanted, they sent him just half of what he ordered—and a lecture on the irregularity of ordering more than his office required. The result was that Astorians were out of postage stamps and stamped envelopes for several weeks in the busiest season of the year. That clerk knows better now, and has found out that the Astoria postmaster knows a little more about what the Astoria postoffice needs than he does. A little more light would do considerable good. Proper representation will result, we hope, in giving us better mail service. If the clause in the next mail contract for carrying the mail between here and Portland can be made to read that the time shall be, say eight hours, it will cost Uncle Sam a good many dollars more, but it is our right and we should have it.

A MAN OF DETAILS. The complaint that Villard was too big a man to understand the details of railroad management and that he really never knew anything of Oregon and Transcontinental, outside of making mortgages, brings to mind the case of an Ohio road, says the Wall Street News. It had president after president, and each one cocked his foot on the office desk and let her rip. She had "ripped" until the directors finally got together and decided that the right man must be found pretty soon or the road must go to the wall. They were consulting in a room looking out into the passenger depot. A train came in eighteen minutes behind time, and the train dispatcher booted the conductor out of one door, fired the engineer out of another, and ran the fireman under a freight train. He then backed the train out and was coming back from the yards when the directors met him, and one of them asked: "Mr. Thomas, can you accept the presidency of this road?" "Wait a minute," was the reply, and the man shunted three cars, cuffed the watchman, drove two loafers out of the yard, and returned and said: "Why, yes, I suppose so—and the first thing I shall do is to fire you all out o' here! Don't let me see you around here again for six months."

In a year this road was paying a dividend. The astounding fact is telegraphed from Victoria that at the recent Sullivan exhibition a judge was present. What of it? When Sullivan slugged in Astoria there were two judges and a minister of the gospel present, but they seemed to enjoy it, and had as good a right there as anyone else. Don't bar the judges from having a little fun.

DEAR JALOCKEY, of Conshohocken, is under arrest for trying to burn the place down. Well! he is not wholly culpable. If your name was Jalockey and you lived in a place called Conshohocken you'd burn the place down, or try to.

On Saturday afternoon the Portland board of trade passed a resolution asking M. C. George to oppose the forfeiture of the Northern Pacific railroad grant. He'd do it anyhow.

The San Francisco board of trade recently refused to adopt a protest against the forfeiture of the lapsed Oregon and California railroad grant.

NEW TO-DAY Special Auction Sale THURSDAY, FEB. 21, at 2 P. M. Instructed by MR. THOS. H. WOODFIELD, I will sell at Public Auction, on the premises, at the Point Adams Packing Co. in Upper Astoria, Two 25 ft. Fishing Boats, 7 ft. 2 in. beam, with complete outfit of Masts, Sails, Anchors, Oars, Launch Buckets, etc. Two Nets, 400 fathoms, 45 mesh deep, in use last season only for even weeks. One 4-roomed Frame Building, 16x36 ft. Also—A lot of Household Furniture, consisting in part of One Bedroom Suit complete, Chairs, Tables, Carpets, Parlor and Cooking stoves, etc., etc. One Wood Sewing Machine in good running order and nearly new. E. C. HOLDEN, Auctioneer.

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