

OFFER TO BUILD IS WITHDRAWN

STRAHORN ROAD WORK IS POSTPONED.

Head of O. C. & E. Withdraws Proposition to Build From Here This Summer—Local Opposition and War the Cause.

(From Monday's Daily.)
Robert E. Strahorn has withdrawn his offer to start construction of the Oregon, California & Eastern out of Bend this summer if the city will vote \$100,000 in aid of the project. Inaction on the part of the city with respect to the offer, changed financial conditions and an unwillingness to stir up a controversy involving local interests are the reasons for the withdrawal. That it is final for this year is indicated in the fact that a request from the directors of the Commercial club that the matter be held open until June 15 has met with a positive refusal.
That construction will be undertaken at a later time is indicated by Mr. Strahorn, whether in 1918 or after depending on financial conditions and a local agreement in favor of the project.
The letter of withdrawal was received some time ago by the directors. Feeling that local objection to the project might be removed Mr. Strahorn was asked to hold the with-

drawal inoperative until June 15, to give time for that purpose. Today, however, his reply has been received indicating that his action is final.
Mr. Strahorn's proposal was made when he was here on March 19. It was to the effect that if Bend would put up \$100,000 he would begin construction of the O. C. & E. out of Bend this summer and guarantee 40 miles of road built toward Burns or toward Fort Rock in this and the next season. A committee from the Commercial club to whom the matter was referred made a non-committal report on the proposition and since then, except for a forenoon of petition circulating to ask the council to have the matter voted on, it has slumbered.
Referring to the possibility of construction in the future, Mr. Strahorn says, in the letter received today: "There is nothing what ever in all this to lead me to modify our original procedure with the railway project on exactly the lines originally laid down. When the important

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interests of Bend get together and times are more propitious, I will be very glad to join you in going right ahead as we have always understood we should do. For this season, however, my resources and activities will be fully absorbed on the project at other points."

This reference is undoubtedly to Klamath Falls, where \$300,000 in aid of the project has been voted, the bonds sold and a contract let for the construction of 40 miles of road this summer. A celebration of the event will be held at Klamath early next month.

The original letter of withdrawal is as follows:

Spokane, Wash., May 18, 1917—
"To the Commercial Club, Bend, Oregon. Gentlemen: During my last visit at Bend, March 19, 1917, in response to requests as to what was needed to assure starting construction on our Central Oregon railway project from Bend this season, I made the following proposition:

"That if Bend would promptly complete the right of way work assigned to it and furnish \$100,000, I would build 20 miles of the system southward from there this year and another 20 miles next year, this involving an expenditure of about \$800,000. Further, that I hoped and believed I would then be in condition to go right along with construction until a line was completed either to Klamath Falls or to Harney Valley.

"I also reminded those present at the meeting that I was consistently following our original understanding as set forth in our railroad convention and banquet at Bend in November, 1915, and on numerous occasions since, that if the communities

and interests who were to chiefly benefit by this great development in Central Oregon would furnish the terminals and rights of way and 25 per cent of the cost of construction and equipment, I would undertake to raise the other 75 per cent of the cash necessary, besides doing the engineering, organization and all other work.

"I suggested at the meeting of last March that \$100,000 was my estimate of Bend's rightful proportion of the 25 per cent subscription needed from Central Oregon interests. Also, that this was not, like the terminals and right of way, to be donated, but that Bend would receive its equivalent in such securities or such pro rata interest in the railway as the city could legally accept, and still leave me free to use all the assets as a basis for the bond issue from which I expected to secure the 75 per cent of cash I would undertake to raise.

"While thus responding to Bend's request for a proposition, I also took special pains to impress those present with the fact that I was not then urging nor would I even advise this course at this time. That it was a question of policy for the city to decide whether it should now complete its part of the financing of the undertaking which it has always been understood it would at a proper time do.

"Two months have expired without action upon the part of Bend, due I understand, to some differences between citizens or local interests as to the wisdom of the move. Being unwilling to have any part in or responsibility for any serious controversy which might provoke strife and possibly imperil the prosperity

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of Bend, I hereby withdraw my proposition. Would suggest publication of this in full, so that all interested may understand my position.

Yours truly,
Signed, ROBT. E. STRAHORN."

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