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CLAIM SCARCITY OF BEEF

IN A FEW YEARS ONLY WEALTHY
CAN BUY IT THEY SAY.

Alarming Situation Due to the Overcrowding
of the Ranges—Congress Will be
Asked to Investigate.

A dispatch from Chicago says: According to information received at the headquarters of the National Livestock Association in this city, congress will have the Western public land situation brought to its attention this winter in a new and startling manner. A number of prominent cattlemen of the West, who have been quietly investigating, are prepared to show that during the past five years there has been an enormous decrease in the number of cattle in this country, a decrease which seriously threatens the beef food supply, and that, unless speedy action be taken by congress, in the course of a very few years beef will be selling at such fabulous prices that only the wealthy can afford to indulge in the luxury of a beef steak.

The cause of this rapid decline in the number of beef cattle is said to be due solely to the contraction of the western public grazing lands and the increase in the consumptive demand. The rapid settlement of the West has caused the ranges left to become crowded, and this crowded condition has prevented the reseeded of grasses, and consequently millions of acres of once good pasture has been turned into absolute desert. Most of the large herds have been dispersed and slaughtered, and the bulk of the cattle supply is now being supplied by the small stockmen, but the evolution from the large herds on the open range to the small herds in the pastures is too slow, owing to unfavorable land conditions, and where a few days ago the markets were supplied with cattle four, five and six years old, even yearlings are being slaughtered to make up the supply of beef.

The stockmen assert that the unfavorable methods of administering the public lands of the west are back of the threatened shortage, and at the coming National convention in Chicago next month an effort will be made to throw the whole matter into congress and ask that a commission be appointed with expert assistance to investigate and devise plans for relieving the situation. The stockmen in the National Association have been striving for years to devise some plan for amending the land laws that would remedy existing evils, but have been unable to agree. One faction is in favor of leasing the lands by the government; another wants the lands ceded to the states, and another wants the laws left as they are and irrigation work continued to be done.

As a compromise for all, it is now proposed to have congress take charge of the whole matter through a commission, and, after investigation, take such action as will tend to stop the waste and destruction now going on, and encourage the establishment of small stock farms. The plan will also recommend government aid in building storage reservoirs on the ranges near headwaters of streams.

The big packers admit that there has been a decrease in the visible supply of cattle during the past five years, and they are looking forward to higher prices in the near future. They say the people will be forced to eat mutton instead of beef, though even mutton will probably become scarce later, as the same conditions that are diminishing the beef supply will also affect the sheep supply.

Prosperity on Eastern Border.

The large commercial district centering at Huntington is more prosperous than usual this year, according to Colonel John H. Aitkin, who was registered at the Perkins yesterday, says the Telegram. "The price for cattle is fair," said Colonel Aitkin, "there is a

healthy demand for horses, crops good, the mining interests have forged ahead, there is an oil excitement in Malheur county, and last but not least, a two seasons wool clip was handled this year at satisfactory prices. There is also good prospects of the northwestern railroad being built in the near future, which will give Huntington an increased trade territory.

"There is no boom in our part of the country, but there is a good healthy growth along all industrial lines. A number of settlers are adding to the population of Harney county. The big irrigation ditch which Portland people are building will, I understand, reclaim a big section in Harney County. "Most outside people do not thoroughly appreciate the volume of business transacted by the merchants of Huntington. The best indications of this is the long string of freighters coming and going all the time for all parts of Eastern Oregon and Idaho not tapped by railroads. In the corrals inside the city may be seen at any time an army of freighters, horses, wagons and men. Last year our warehouses handled 500 carloads of produce, 200 of which were consigned to interior parts. At two different times we have shipped an entire train load of groceries alone from Portland to Huntington to supply the trade."

When asked about the oil prospects, Colonel Aitkin said that he could not say from his own personal knowledge how good they are. He said he had been given to understand that the prospects are brilliant.

Lands are Withdrawn.

Washington, Nov. 9.—Commissioner Hermann, of the General Land Office, has withdrawn from agricultural entry for a period of one year a tract of 111 sections in the northeast corner of Malheur county, Oregon, and north of Vale, the county seat, on the ground that the lands contain valuable petroleum deposits. He must proceed under the new land laws. This action on applications filed by Hirsch and J. N. Taylor and others. Expectations are high, stating that the petroleum are such as to justify heavy investments. Fifty or more mineral associations have already made mineral localities upon these lands. Seepages of oil are declared to have been found, with evidences of gypsum, sulphur, solidified bitumen exists in the sandstone and conglomerate outcroppings, the appearances being similar to those of localities where oil has been found in large quantities in the Kern River basin, in California.

The withdrawal includes only such lands as are vacant, and unappropriated. The sections are: One-half of 21 to 14, inclusive, 23 to 26 and 35, township 15 south, range 43 east; seven-eighths of 17 to 22, 27 to 35, township 15 south, range 44 east; 15, 16, 21 to 27 and 35, township 16 south, range 44 east; all sections in the west half of township 16 south, range 45 east, except section 15; east half of township 17 south, range 44 east; west half of township 17 south, range 45 east, except section 16; sections 30 to 33, of township 17 south, range 43 east; sections 3, 4, and 5, and one-half of 6 to 8 in township 18 south, range 43 east.

Two Places are Held up.

A Washington dispatch to the Sunday Oregonian says: Two Oregon appointments are held up, and probably will not be made until the delegation is here. Ivey's successor, as Collector of Customs in Alaska, will be an Oregon man, and the Burns Land office vacancy is still open.

The President will appoint nobody that he is not sure is a good man for any position, but the impression prevails that Mitchell's recommendation will receive more consideration than that of any other member of the delegation. Simon claims a promise from McKinley of the Alaska Collectors, and this claim is backed by officials of the Treasury Department. Pre-

PUSHING NORTH TO OREGON

RAILROAD FROM THE SOUTH COMING
INTO LAKE COUNTY.

Appearances Indicate That Southeastern Oregon's Trade Will be Taken to San Francisco.

The following appeared in a recent issue of the Oregonian: President Charles M. Sain, of the Oregon Potash Company, writes from San Francisco a personal letter to a Portland stockholder in the corporation, saying that he has made a deal with the Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad Company for the extension of its line from Terno, Cal. to Summer lake Oregon. "They take an interest in our Summer and Aber Lake properties," says the letter, "and will extend their line northward to the lakes. I have the contract for the railroad in writing and I have every reason to believe it will go ahead. They expect to reach the property next year, or at least as far as Lakeview. This, of course, means a great deal for the development of Southern Oregon. It may also lead to the Dalles. I tried to interest the Columbia Southern, but they were slow. They might have had the same layout the N. C. O. has and it would have been a good thing for Portland. It would still be a good thing for Portland to have the Northern line build."

The Nevada-California-Oregon Railroad starts from Reno Junction on the Central Pacific railway in Nevada, 306 miles from San Francisco, and runs northward, crossing into California and terminating at Terno, which is 130 miles from Reno. Eighteen miles of new line are under construction, between Terno and Madeline, and it is said trains will run on this extension before the end of this year. From there the distance to Aber Lake is about 120 miles, and to Summer Lake it is 30 miles farther. About half way between Madeline and Aber, on the direct line, is the town of Lakeview Or. which has a large trade from the upper Goose Lake Valley and an extensive agricultural, grazing and mineral region in Southern Oregon.

This road is of narrow gauge and that the traffic going over it to the wide market must be transferred to standard-gauge cars at Reno Junction. This adds to the cost of transportation. For many miles from Reno it passes through a country that yields almost no local business. It gets into a productive range into California, and the country improves toward Oregon. Hitherto that region has been known almost exclusively as a stock country. Lack of transportation facilities prevented the development of general farming, there being only the local market to supply. Horses and cattle and sheep could carry themselves to market, and the grazing interests thrive. It is a famous horse country. The region produces such uncommon minerals as borax and carbonate of soda in abundance. It is estimated that there are 30,000,000 tons of salts at Summer and Aber lakes. Since carbonate of soda is worth \$26 per ton in San Francisco and and potash \$150 per ton, it is evident that these commodities alone would make profitable business for a railroad penetrating that country. Not only is the available quantity large but the price makes a high-class freight, the kind that enables a railroad to pay dividends.

ident Roosevelt might be disposed to grant some concession to Simon, as the latter says he has not been fairly treated in the matter of Oregon patronage.

Herman will remain in the General Land Office for some time to come, as there seems to be a truce between Secretary Hitchcock and the commissioner for the present. The Secretary has had some trouble with the officers of his bureau, and the President has ascertained that the bureau officers have been right, which has decreased the power of Hitchcock with the Administration. If the Oregon delegation fails to agree on an appointment, some good Gold Democrats may pull down the plum, as the President is disposed to recognize first-class democrats of this character.

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