

LOOKS DARK FOR OREGON

CONGRESSMAN WILLIAMSON TALKS ON IRRIGATION.

Represents to Discuss the Land Frauds but Tells of Oregon's Needs--Service Doing all it can for State.

Representative Williamson, of Prineville, reached Portland yesterday morning and is at the Imperial for a short visit in the city. Mr. Williamson arrived at the Dalles on Tuesday night, having come direct from Washington at the conclusion of the last term of Congress, says the Oregonian.

Yesterday afternoon the Congressman followed out the same policy which has characterized him in the past in relation to the land fraud indictments, and refused to say anything one way or the other in regard to his case. He does not consider discussion of the question to be material at this time or of any good and desires to await the time when his case shall come before the court before he makes any statement or enters into any discussion of the merits of the case.

"Remember," he said, at the close of the interview, "of the land frauds I have said nothing. It may be that in the future I will be willing to say something but now I have no wish to discuss the question."

On other subjects Mr. Williamson talked most entertainingly. He ranged from the different irrigation projects and of the chances of each for consummation, to the river and harbor improvements, to the Burton theory of state appropriations for such work, then turned aside to talk of the Celilo Canal, and last touched on the bill introduced by him for the creation of an Eastern Federal District, which bill was defeated in the Senate.

"Now," said Mr. Williamson, as he settled back in his chair, and looked at a bundle of papers as though he would rather read them than talk, "now then, what is it that I can tell you at this time?"

Then, without waiting for an answer, he began anew. "I do not want to say anything about the land fraud cases; I have not done so up to this time, and I do not want to say anything until my case is before the court."

"This is a new role to me," continued Mr. Williamson, "and I think the most becoming thing to do is to say nothing."

When asked of the things done for Oregon during the last session of Congress, Mr. Williamson smiled a little.

"I think nearly everything has been said that can be," he said. "However, I will say that the irrigation question, in the main looks pretty dark for Oregon just at this time, although the reclamation service is doing all in its power to give the state favorable consideration. The service realizes that Oregon has put up more money for irrigation than any other state; that the people wish to have the help of the government, and that the assistance would be deserved, but there are many obstacles which are being encountered that promise to hold the work back."

"The Klamath project," continued Mr. Williamson, is not in as bad a condition as it might be. Congress has authorized the reclamation service to proceed as it may see best in that district, and I am reasonably sure that the controversy between the private irrigation companies and the adherents to Government irrigation will be able to be adjusted. Congress has authorized the engineers to lower the waters of the Klamath lakes and as soon as the little things are out of the way the work can be carried to completion.

"The Malheur project is in a very bad and much-entangled condition," continued Mr. Williamson. "At first there was trouble with the already established irrigationists, but the Water Users' Association was formed to do away with this phase of the trouble, and was successful. Then it was discovered that the Corvallis & Eastern Railway had a right of way down the canyon picked out as the reservoir site, but this was adjusted. Then the Willamette Valley & Cascade Mountain Wagon Road Company came in to the field and has not been moved out yet. This company owns 33,000 acres of the land to be benefited by the reclamation plan, nearly one-third of the whole area, and it will not agree to join

with the rest in allowing the government to construct the works. Its land is essential and the company has stated positively that it will have nothing to do with the plan. Therefore the prospects for the Malheur project look very bad. "The abandoned Umatilla project may become feasible in a way," continued the speaker. "I have asked nearly every associate engineer in the service whether or not there is anything in the irrigation laws to prevent the diversion of water from the Upper Umatilla, and in every case the answer has been that in the opinion of the engineer there would be no obstacle to the action. If that is the case thousands of acres along the Upper Umatilla could be irrigated until as late as June, which would insure bountiful crops where nothing now is raised. I intended to take this matter up later and see what can be done towards its accomplishment."

HOW NEW TAX LAW WORKS.

There is a good deal of misunderstanding on the part of many Grant county residents as to the effects and operation of the new law taxing outside sheep coming into the country. In a negative way, it may be stated that Attorney-General Crawford is of the opinion that there is not a single license, right, immunity or favor, extended the owners of this class of stock, which they do now enjoy. Could a law in harmony with the constitution be enacted keeping this outside stock off these ranges, it would have been the measure worked for instead of the Dobbins law. Such a law was passed by the California legislature but as soon as it was attacked, it went down before the courts.

But the Dobbins law is not without its merits, although falling far short of the wishes of most of the settlers in this county. Its operation ought to do no harm, as the stock will eat no more grass and destroy no more range than it did under the old law. And on the other hand, it will add between \$4000 and \$5000 annually to the treasury of the county, unless fewer sheep are brought into the county, when the gain will be still greater.

Another effect of the law will be to delay the entrance of the outside sheep into county. Owners of these bands usually winter the sheep in the warmer valleys of the Columbia and shear two or three months ahead of the usual shearing time here. They then rush the stock, grass hungry and poor, across the line into Grant, more than a month in advance of the open range season for home sheep. But under the new law, these owners will have to wait until they have had their stock assessed, the tax paid, and a receipt given them. Without this receipt, they cannot cross the border into another county.

But all is not smooth sailing, even then. The owners of the sheep seeking entrance into the new county must send word to the inspector of that county, and hold their sheep back until he arrives, and makes an inspection. If the animals are in a healthy condition, the owner then makes a statement of the number of sheep in his herd, and the length of time he expects to remain in the new county. He must then pay to the inspector the proportionate share of the tax. Armed with these three instruments—the original tax receipt, the inspectors certificate of sound animals, and the inspector's receipt for the home county share of the tax, the owner is permitted to go on his way. But should he remain in the county longer than he had said, he must go through something of the former process in order to gain the necessary permission from the stock inspector.

On returning to his home county, the owner receives from the assessor or the sums he had paid in taxes in the other county.—Grant County News.

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