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TO THE PUBLIC

On Monday, March 1st, the railroad lines of the Southern Pacific Company were returned to their owners for operation. As a war measure they have been in charge of the government during the last two years and two months. The stockholders in that period had nothing to do with the management.

In taking over the management of this property, the policy of the owners will be to give as satisfactory service as lies in their power in return for the patronage given us; to seek the co-operation of shippers and passengers and of the whole people in having our service reasonably responsive to the public needs.

We have to ask the patient forbearance of the public during the readjustment period of the next six months. It is true during these six months the Government continues the standard return allowed the lines while under its control, based on the pre-war earnings. But this return is subject to certain legislative directions by Congress that will affect operations during this period which ends August 31st next. We expect, however, within this six months to mature plans for the future. These plans had to be held in abeyance thus far because of uncertainty as to the legislative conditions to accompany the return of the roads to their owners for operation, and these conditions have been determined by Congress only within the last few days. We now have to study what is before us in law and in fact and get our bearings anew.

The Operating organization as it existed under Southern Pacific management has been to some extent disarranged during the period of Federal control and operating practices have been changed, but the benefit of any new practices that may have proved efficient in the public service during the government control period, will, of course, be retained.

We could not purchase equipment after we entered the war because the government took control and war financing occupied the field, while during the rest of the time the question of adequate credit had to wait for answer in congressional action. On the other hand, the locomotives and cars in service have been subjected to the most active use and new rolling stock has not been renewed throughout the country in normal numbers for the increase of normal traffic. The burden of extraordinary war movements fell heavily upon all kinds of rolling stock, making it impossible to shop the equipment at the proper time, and repair work was further delayed by shortage during the larger part of the war period in both men and materials.

The problem before us at once, therefore, is how to put to the best use the passenger train cars and the freight cars that are in service, and how to put into good condition for service every piece of equipment to be had. This problem is before every railroad. Abreast of this is the larger question whether the earnings under the new law, the "Transportation Act of 1920," will be enough to establish the credit of the railroads at a point where they can provide themselves with the facilities of all kinds that they need to give the public proper service. We have the will if only we can find the ways and means. These are not easy to find, for an assumed earning of even 6 per cent, and no assurance of that, is not attractive to anyone having money to invest when money is worth 7 or 8 per cent in the open market.

Hence, the effect of the new act of Congress upon earnings and upon the credit of the railroads cannot be immediately determined. This act provides for a rate-making structure, under which, during the next two years the railroads will be permitted to earn up to 5 1-2 per cent annually on the value of the railroads as may be determined by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The Commission has power at its discretion to increase these possible earnings to 6 per cent, the added one half of 1 per cent to be used only for improvements to the property.

No guarantee of any kind is given to any railroad, but half of any earnings over 6 per cent are to be taken by the government to make loans to railroads that may need them for improvements or to care for obligations falling due, or to obtain and lease equipment to the carriers that cannot afford to buy it.

Obviously these elements in the situation will have to be considered in making our plans. The Interstate Commerce Commission is the deciding body with respect to value of the properties, as well as the rates which are to yield the 5 1-2 per cent return thereon, and much will depend upon the vision and promptness of action with which that body accepts its great responsibilities.

In the meantime, it is particularly desirable, in view of the shortage of equipment, that every effort be made by shippers and the railway forces to continue heavy car loading and train loading, and to lose no time in loading and unloading cars.

Believing that we will have the full co-operation of the people served by our lines in dealing with the problems presented, it is due them that in thus aiding us they should know what problems we have to meet. You can rest assured we are not idle with respect to them.

WM. SPROULE, President.

Happenings of Harrisburg Clipped from the Bulletin

Three county trucks have been operating from the crusher here this week.

Mrs Sylvester Leach suffered a severe stroke of paralysis last Saturday and her condition is quite critical.

Mrs Jabe Warner, who is stopping at the country home of her mother, Mrs H E Wassom, is ill of smallpox.

The old Spurling homestead of 170 acres was sold yesterday to C C Jackson, the consideration being \$11,500. The deal was made by the Cramer Realty Co.

The Harrisburg Warehouse and Lumber Co. made a sale of one million pounds of hay to one firm the other day. This is approximately 40 cars. Shipment commences at once and the hay will go to Montana.

Mrs. Lee Cartwright fell from the porch at her home Sunday forenoon and sustained a broken arm. The fracture being near the elbow is a serious one and it will be some months before she will be enabled to make much use of the member.

Shedd Items.

Mrs S P Brock has been ill with pneumonia but is reported better.

Mrs H J Farwell's daughter, Mrs Jessie Pugh, has been confined to her bed with inflammatory rheumatism.

The night operator, Jack Dannen, has been ill with the flu. Harold Troutman is slowly recovering from an attack of pneumonia.

Davis-Shedd Co. has been shipping hay as fast as they could get the cars. They have twenty one cars to ship out yet.

The S P are shipping from fifteen to twenty cars of crushed rock every day for ballast on the road at different places.

Jack Cornett has been in the trapping business to some extent this winter. He has caught 21 skunks during the winter. He caught three last week and three the week before.

Mrs May Robnett is reported some better.

Lauretta and Lucille Hutchens are reported slowly recovering from an attack of pneumonia.

Mr and Mrs H J Farwell and son Glen, have returned from their visit in Canada.

J B Cornett & Son will ship a car load of Shorthorn cattle the 18th of the month for the Portland sale.

Geo Coon was an Albany caller Sunday night.

Thompson Bros. Milling Co. tell us that they shipped six cars of hay, two of flour, and one of mixed flour and feed last week.

Clater Sprenger received a broken joint while running a donkey engine near Corvallis.

Chas Thompson's store has been closed on account of flu.

J McConnell has been moved from St Mary's hospital to his brother-in-law's place in Albany and will soon be able to come home.

S P Brock has four hundred little chicks.

Miss Agnes Arnold has returned to her school at String Town.

The Hazelwood Creamery is doing a good business. The cows over the country have picked up on their milk and business is fine.

The school commenced again Monday.

F C Dunlap went to Portland Saturday to visit over Sunday.

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LAUNDRY SENT AWAY on MONDAY

I. O. O. F.

WILDEY LODGE NO. 65.

Regular meeting next Saturday night.