

FARMERS IN CONVENTION

An Enthusiastic Session at The Wasco Opera House Last Saturday.

Open River, Cheaper Sacks and Reasonable Transportation Rates The Immediate Aim

PENITENTIARY JUTE MILL AND MAXIMUM RATE BILL FAVORED.

"Pull Together" The Watchword.

NEXT MEETING AT MORO NEXT SATURDAY

Meeting was called to order by Geo. N. Crosfield. Nominations opened for temporary chairman. Geo. N. Crosfield and N. W. Thompson nominated but Mr. Thompson declined. Geo. N. Crosfield unanimously elected Chairman.

Nominations opened for secretary. V. H. Smith and Irwin Pike nominated but Mr. Pike declined to serve. V. H. Smith unanimously elected.

Mr. Crosfield then stated that the primary object of the meeting was to affect an organization of the Farmers of Sherman county, to:

1st. Investigate the sack question in reference to the high price of same and devise ways and means to procure cheap sacks.

2nd. To so work that a cheaper rate on both outgoing and incoming freight might be obtained.

The Chairman then introduced Mr. Devers of Portland who spoke in reference to the "Open River" and the benefits to be derived from the same.

He said in part:—

Many years ago the first step was taken in opening the Columbia River by commencing the building of the Locks and Canal at the Cascades of the Columbia. This task seemed to be almost interminable, precisely the same influences delaying its completion as are today seeking to delay, if not prevent, the completion of the work at Celilo. Finally, in desperation, the State at a considerable cost, built a portage railway at the Cascades. The benefits to result from the improvement were then demonstrated so certainly that it was not long before canal and locks were completed.

It is interesting to note the changes in the tariff between Portland and The Dalles during the last thirty years.

In 1877, the Oregon Steam Navigation Company operated a fine line of steamers on the river. J. C. Ainsworth was the president, S. G. Reed vice-president, and Theodore Wygant secretary. Freight and passengers were transferred by rail around the Cascades on the Washington side, thus necessitating four extra handlings. On down freight the rate was \$5.00 per ton on wheat, \$10.00 per ton on pressed and baled wool, and other articles in proportion. On up freight it was \$10.00 per ton, measurement or weight, according to the character of freight. In those days they did not have a complicated classification tariff that puzzles even the makers to understand. Prior to 1883 the railroad was completed to The Dalles and beyond, and as late as 1893 the charges per ton on grain from The Dalles, and on the heaviest goods to The Dalles from Portland, were as follows:

C. L. L. C. L.	C. L. L. C. L.
Salt	\$5.20 \$7.40
Sugar	6.20 7.40
Canned goods	6.20 7.40
Nails	6.20 7.40
Grain	2.70

On other classes of freight the rates were higher.

In 1896 the locks were opened and rates immediately fell, and in 1905, on the same commodities, the rates were as follows:

C. L. L. C. L.	C. L. L. C. L.
Salt	\$1.50 \$3.00
Sugar	2.00 3.00
Canned goods	2.00 3.00
Nails	2.00 3.00
Grain	1.50

It will be observed that on all up freights the tariff was reduced over 300 per-cent, and it would be greater still were it not for a combination between rail and water to maintain rates. Neither have the boats been run off the river. There are more in operation now than in the palmiest days of the O. S. N. Co. when it was operating as far as Lewiston. This object lesson should arouse the determination and enthusiasm of every public-spirited citizen in having

the obstacles Celilo and The Dalles cleared and the river above opened. A start has been made. Will this work be dragged along as was that at the Cascades? If so, a half a century will not see it completed. With so rich a prize at stake, the fight will be a bitter one. The river open, means low rates from Portland through the Inland Empire—closed, a goose for two railroads to pluck instead of one, for these roads may fight all they please over construction, they won't over rates. They all operate on the same general lines, and if they won't compete, you can't make them compete. The railroads are operated primarily in the interest of the owners, and to develop business on the basis of charging all the traffic will bear, as Mr. C. P. Huntington used to rankly admit. On the other hand, we without any unkindly feeling, look at it from another standpoint. We believe that rates should be fixed with some relation to cost and true capitalization, and that a reasonable return on the investment is all that should be charged. We believe some regard should be paid to the development of the country, and that the railroad should aid in this where its gets primarily the first and greatest benefits. We believe that natural advantages should not be arbitrarily disregarded, through artificial agreements entered into for reasons having in many cases no relation to the country affected, but that the shipper should have some of the benefits resulting from low operating cost, and not be compelled to pay exorbitant rates because someone else built a road over a mountain instead of on a river bank, as has been the case in the past when the O. R. & N. Co. has made the same rates to tide water as has the Northern Pacific Railway Company, which crosses two mountain ranges.

By a glance at the following figures, one can readily see why the people affected insist on water competition, and why the railroads insist there shall not be.

Portland	Salt	Sugar	Canned goods	
to Miles C. L. C. L. C. L.	C. L. C. L.	C. L. C. L.	Grain	
The Dalles 88	\$1.50	\$2.00	\$2.00	\$1.50
Umatilla 187	7.50	10.20	10.20	3.00

The rates to Umatilla are higher by from one hundred to over five hundred per cent than they are to The Dalles. It costs to \$2.00 to carry a ton of sugar to The Dalles, 88 miles, but to carry it the next 100 miles costs \$8.20. Before the river was open it cost \$6.20 to transport the same amount of sugar the same distance now carried for \$2.00, and which should be carried for less, and that is why we stand for an "open river" now, not in 1950.

There are three and only three ways to control freight rates:

- By competition.
- By regulation.
- By ownership.

We are trying the first, through natural means, but if this fails, the second will surely follow. If it is essential to regulate interstate traffic through a commission and by law, the same reasoning applies with equal if not greater force to the regulation of intrastate commerce and by law.

The completion of the "Portage Road" by the State between Celilo and the Big Eddy, and its tentative operation, has shown that it can be made to regulate freight rates, that it will lead to a greater and speedier interior development, and also has developed what is necessary to be done to make it a success.

The Open River Association found when this road was completed that they were expected to furnish transportation facilities also. Through the "Mountain Gem" on the upper river, they finally succeeded in establishing, with connections below, a service that was far from satisfactory either to themselves or patrons. Between The Dalles and Port-

and the "Regulator line of boats, controlled by the N. P. Railway Company, made irregular trips, and the manner and time of delivery were unsatisfactory although a satisfactory undertaking was had when the service started, but finally, on one day's notice to the committee, it was cut out altogether. To the committee the character of service rendered, followed as it was by the preemptory cancelling of the agreement, has the earmarks of a deliberate intent to hamper the operation of the Portage Road and to weaken the "open river" movement. This view is further strengthened by the fact that it was again followed by an equally preemptory violation of an implied agreement covering the handling of freight on the upper river, when after we had rendered all the service possible in furthering the work of the North Bank Road, and it was thought our services were no longer necessary, without even a formal notice, the undertaking we were working under was cast aside as though it were not of the slightest consequence. Above Celilo, as the Association could not control the boat, its operation did not tend to develop commercial traffic as it should. Notwithstanding these discouragements and troubles, results were obtained. Rates by river less to common points; the railroad in a number of ways bettered its service; cars were furnished more promptly, patrons' interests more closely looked after, and we believe the Washington farmer on the north bank or some one else profited largely, for we found at river points we could not get wheat, although we offered to carry for 25 cents per ton less than rail rates, besides saving a crossing charge of 50 cents a ton. As we have run across no one that was giving us any money, we are forced to the possible uncharitable conclusion, that there was some "absorbing going on." We hope the farmer got the benefit. Following a visit of a representative of the Association to Condon in April of this year, a reduction was made of from one to three dollars per ton on freight to that point. A reduction on wheat from Arlington of 40 cent per ton has also been made, and the O. R. & N. Co. has promised to take care of the differential on grain shipped in sailing vessels from this port. Since the Portage Railway was finished the "Hill" line down the North Bank has commenced building and as a direct result of the opening of the river Walla Walla capitalists are now projecting an electric railway line to connect all of the Walla Walla country with the river and a boat line. Another line has been projected and considerable work has been done on the same, through Sherman and Gilliam counties. The Lewiston electric line will depend largely upon river connection for handling its traffic. The projected line from Spokane to the Columbia River will also depend upon the river for a like service. The "Oregon Trunk Line" has now completed a survey up the DesChutes as far as Madras on Agency Plains, and it is stated intends to commence construction work this month. All of these proposed roads are the direct result of opening the river to navigation by the building of the Portage Railway, and it cannot be questioned but that when the Locks and Canal are finished between Celilo and the Big Eddy there will be numerous short roads leading to the interior from the river, opening up more country to settlement, insuring a much larger population and a speedier development.

It has been demonstrated, however, from the experience of the Open River Association, that it is absolutely essential to have an independent boat line free from any entanglements of any kind, if the river transportation is to be effective. This has been practically accomplished by the organization of the Open River Transportation Co., with a capital of one hundred thousand dollars, which now has under contract the construction of two excellent boats for the upper river, and the committee feel that they are safe in saying that satisfactory arrangements can be made for operating below.

The next great essential is the extension of the Portage Railway from the Big Eddy, its present western terminus to The Dalles, a distance of about four miles. This will induce a very much greater local traffic and will reduce the freight rates on both up and down freight, as The Dalles is the natural terminus for steamboat lines. In this connection we are glad to announce that the Commercial Club at The Dalles has had the road surveyed and will furnish the right of way into The Dalles, but this road must be extended and as soon as possible. The benefit to the country of the Portage Railway can not be measured by its earnings. Its purpose is primarily that of a Regulator and not a carrier, and if from its opera-

tions and as a result there from a fair reduction is made on freight rates, it will have served its purpose. Ordinarily, on Governmental works of this character, no charge whatever is made, they being operated free like the Locks and Canal at the Cascades. To measure the benefits resulting from this character of work by the receipts from traffic is manifestly misleading.

The following steamboats are operated on the Columbia River above Wenatchee by the Columbia River & Okanogan Steamboat Company:

W. H. Pringle	Net tonnage 507
Alexander Griggs	Net tonnage 100
Chelan	Net tonnage 154
North Star	Net tonnage 91

New steamer, now building at Astoria—

(Owned by Mr. Miller and associates.)

Columbia at Blalock 106 tons.

(Owned by Smith & Mariner.)

Mountain Gem Lewiston 282 tons.

(Owned by Lewiston Navigation Co.)

Norma Riparia 452 tons.

(Owned by Jacob Kamm.)

Gerome mouth of Snake River 130 tons.

(Owned by Todd & Cover.)

Lewiston Riparia 487 tons.

Spokane Riparia 408 tons.

(Owned by O. R. & N. Co.)

New steamer contracted for 450 tons.

(Owned by Open River Transportation Co.)

Hannaford, Pasco 444 tons.

(Owned by N. P. Ry. Co.)

It will thus be seen there are quite a number of boats even now on the river if they were available for our use, but most of them are owned or controlled by the railroad companies. It, however, gives some idea of what will be on the river when it is really open to navigation.

In order that there may be no misapprehension as to the facts in respect to what is necessary to be done if it is desired to have the locks and canal speedily completed at Celilo, the committee wish the people generally to know that Hon. Theodore E. Burton, the chairman of the Rivers and Harbors Committee at Washington, stated that he would view with a great deal of interest the result of the operation of the boats on the Upper Columbia, and that if he found that the river was not used and that no benefit resulted therefrom, it would be sufficient evidence to him that the project was not a meritorious one, and he would oppose further appropriations. He practically confirmed this statement in a letter dated April 25, 1906, in which he stated that he should watch the trial of the operation of a line of steamers on the upper river with interest. With these frank statements from a man of the character, standing and influence of Mr. Burton, the question of whether or not the river is to be opened to navigation will rest largely with the people themselves. It is now for the people to say whether or not it is worth the making of any effort on their part to secure this improvement, for it is in their own hands. If the river is used, or its possible use brings the results claimed, the canal and locks will soon be a reality. If not, it will take years before they are finished.

The amount of money now on hand and available, including the \$300,000 to be provided for in the Sundry Civil Bill, is \$435,000. There is outstanding against this amount \$14,000, and the amount required to complete contracts now in force, which is approximately \$284,000.

The contract for the removal of the obstructions at Three Miles Rapids will require another low water season, and it is hoped the work will be finished about next December.

The contract for the basin and locks at the Celilo end of the canal stipulates for its completion by January 1, 1907, but it is probable that it will take several months more to do the work. With annual appropriations of \$500,000 it will require eight or ten years to complete the work, but if the whole amount of the estimated cost were available, the work could be completed in about three years. From the foregoing facts, one is about as well qualified as another to predict the date of completion. If we cease working for appropriations for this purpose, its completion will be delayed indefinitely. We believe that when the people generally realize the comparatively small amount appropriated for river and harbor improvements, and the great waste and loss, both direct and indirect, caused by delay, they will demand that appropriations be made in sufficient amounts to properly care for and complete all approved projects. There is no reason why this should not be done. There is no purpose for which money is expended by the United States that does so much good to such a large number of people. The United States has taken

jurisdiction over the navigable waters and harbors and it is in duty bound to improve them. For a number of years past the amount available annually for the entire country for river and harbor work has been but about \$18,000,000, and this in many cases has been appropriated at such long intervals as to greatly increase the cost. No part of the country has a greater interest in the speedy completion of the Panama Canal than has the Pacific Coast, but at the same time it does seem that if \$33,000,000 or thereabouts can be appropriated for the Panama Canal by this Congress, a river and harbor bill for home purposes might have been in order. It would also seem if it is right and expedient to issue bonds to raise the money to push the Panama Canal work, the same reasoning would justify the issuance of bonds for work in our country. Indeed, in view of the fact that there is now pending before the Rivers and Harbors Committee a prepared project to cost about \$300,000,000, and that an average of but about \$18,000,000 is being appropriated annually, it is well worth while to give serious consideration to the advisability of issuing, say \$500,000,000 in bonds, more or less, as may be needed to carry out on projected lines the river and harbor improvements. If something of this character is not done, this generation, which is being taxed to raise the money to pay for the work now under way, will get but very little of the benefits.

It has been stated that the total amount appropriated since 1820 for river and harbor work in the United States is but \$450,000,000. Holland, with a population of 6,000,000, as against our 80,000,000 or more, has expended in this class of work \$1,500,000,000. France has expended \$1,120,000,000. It is stated that the Manchester Ship Canal cost \$75,000,000; that the deepening of the Clyde cost \$70,000,000; that on the improvement of Liverpool Harbor there has been expended \$200,000,000, or for these three last mentioned undertakings \$345,000,000, as in contrast with the United States with an expenditure of \$450,000,000 since 1820. Patience ceases to be a virtue when one compares the appropriations made since 1820 for rivers and harbors with those made for pensions and the army and navy, which amount this year alone to \$375,659,799. Not that we object to the payment of pensions or the proper maintenance of the army and navy, but we do object and protest against the niggardly policy which obtains so far as concerns the action of Congress towards the improvement of our rivers and harbors as compared with the generosity in other directions. The same Congress which votes the one appropriation votes the other, and if her interests made their wants and wishes known as she should there would be no doubt as to the result. \$50,000,000 a year, or more, could be profitably expended in this country, and with this amount available there would be no rivalry as to which project should receive aid and which should be delayed, throughout the continent of Europe, vast amounts of money have been expended in the improvement of the rivers and harbors, and it must be self evident that they do it because it pays. On this question, The London Chamber of Commerce, the best authority or industrial ethics, says in its journal, editorially that "the numerous sums expended in France, Germany, Austria and other countries on the Continent in construction of canals and other waterway improvements is, from this enlightened commercial policy, giving the easiest and most economical transportation of their products to market, and unless Great Britain adopts similar measures she will lose her pre-eminence as a producing nation." As to the benefits to come from such expenditures, note what Mr. Albert Noyes president of the American Society of Civil Engineers and one of the consulting engineers of the Pennsylvania Railroad, says:

"The amount of saving on Lake Superior alone during the year 1902 is with \$5,000,000 of the entire amount appropriated by the United States for all harbors and waterways above Niagara Falls, from the formation of the Government; if the commerce between Lake Michigan and Lake Erie be included the annual savings greatly exceeds the amount thus appropriated."

But why continue? No argument is required to convince the people of the Northwest of the necessity for these improvements and the benefits that will result from their completion. The vital question is not as to their necessity, but as to the time of their completion. This rest entirely with the people themselves, for after all is said and done, they are the masters of the situation and what they demand will be carried out by Congress. This committee will

Continued on page 5.