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W. S. BOWERS ABSTRACTS

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FARMERS VERSUS CORPORATIONS

Fighting in Malheur County Over Valuable Water Rights.

Last week several arrests of ranchers in the upper valley were made, upon the charge of contempt of court, the charge being based upon former court decisions relative to water litigation between Nevada water ditch people and the owners of ditch property above Vale.

We know and care less as to the merits of the controversy, but as a disinterested bystander it seems to us that as intelligent citizens and neighbors, these expensive lawsuits ought to and could be dispensed with. This should be done on the grounds of economy and humanity.

The former lawsuit between these two sets of frugal and industrious farmers cost, we are informed, in the neighborhood of \$25,000, to say nothing of the loss of time, damage to crops, and the engendering of enmity between friends and neighbors. This money might just as well have been thrown into Snake river, or burned, as far as the benefit accruing to the parties concerned. To be sure, one side was victorious but when attorney fees, troubles and vexation are considered, it was a costly victory. And the enjoyment thereof only leads to further litigation along the same lines.

As we stated before, we know nothing of the merits or demerits of the controversy, but we do know that enough water flows uselessly down the Malheur river, during high water in the spring, to irrigate the entire valley for the whole season, and then as much land besides. We are reliably informed that a natural reservoir site exists a few miles above Vale that would, if brought into requisition, store enough water to irrigate all the valley below; and that the amount of money and damage heretofore spent and sustained in water litigation between these aforesaid prosper-

ous farmers, would build this reservoir, would not only furnish water in plenty for all lands below and now in cultivation, but for all bench lands above the water line of present canals.

In view of these facts, would it not be far wiser to investigate the advisability of building such a reservoir before plunging into another long, tedious and expensive lawsuit over the little water left in the river after the great floodtide of springtime has gone down to the sea without leaving any benefits behind.—Vale Advocate.

Shepherd Jostling a Stage Driver.

R. D. Larson, stage driver between Vale and Fopiana on the Ontario and Burns stage line, has recently had some queer experiences with a strange wild animal that haunts the road at an isolated point 30 miles between stations. This animal has the form of a man, but has the head of a cow. It comes down near the road and stands quietly as the vehicles pass. The driver has seen the creature several times and had passengers on the stage one time to verify his statements. The animal does not seem to be frightened by the presence of human beings, but on the other hand has a curiosity to investigate them. He makes no sound and is never seen in the night. The driver has prepared to capture the thing the next time it shows up. It is supposed to be a ruse of some kind, but some agitation is being felt. It shows itself in the neighborhood of former stage holdups, and is in the vicinity of where Indians in former times did some of their worst work. Larson has a good reputation and is not easily frightened, and his statement is received with respect. Some shepherd is doubtless having fun out of the neighborhood, but is taking desperate chances. Although it frequently comes within 100 feet of the road in broad daylight, Larson is unable to say whether or not it is clothed.—Exchange.

BIG LAND OFFICE BUSINESS.

Double the Amount This Year Over Last at La Grande.

The ruling of the department on second homestead entries has resulted in a material increase of business at the land offices. Such, at least, is the experience of the United States land office at La Grande.

Hon. E. W. Bartlett, register of the La Grande office, who is in the city on business, states that the business of the office will this year nearly double that of last year. Much of this increase he attributes to the liberal ruling of the department, which enables those commuting or for any reason abandoning a homestead entry to make a second entry. Under the construction of the homestead laws a man who had once applied for a homestead entry was barred from applying for or making subsequent entries.

Another factor that has had a material bearing on the increase of business at the La Grande office is the development of eastern Oregon's vast mineral resources and the applications for patent incident thereto. With the development of the mining industry and the growing knowledge of the value of mineral lands, applications for patents are becoming more numerous. Owners of mining property are beginning to realize that they are better able to make sales when they have their ground patented than they are when the ground is not patented. There are not less than 20 applications for patent to mining claims pending before the La Grande office at the present time, Mr. Bartlett says.

The cash business incident to the purchase of timber lands during the first three months of this year, exceeded the total cash business last year at the La Grande office. This is a showing that few land offices in the United States will probably be able to make for the same period of time.—Telegram.

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