

THE SPRINGFIELD NEWS

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THE REGISTER'S VIEW

The following editorial, appearing in the Eugene Register of September 27, refers to the action of the Eugene Chamber of Commerce on the 25th. It is a fair statement of the case. The interests set forth are held by all communities in this region in common; not all equally, not all alike, but all together:

In endorsing the Southern Pacific side of the Union-Southern Pacific controversy over possession of the Central Pacific, the Chamber of Commerce has chosen the bird in the hand in preference to the bird that is whistling out in the bushes. The Southern Pacific has nineteen and a half million dollars to spend in Oregon just as soon as its ownership of the Central is confirmed by the Interstate Commerce Commission, and of this amount thirteen and a half millions are for completion of the Natron cut-off, construction of the Springfield car shops and electrification of the P.

E. & E. from Eugene to Corvallis. The Union Pacific has offered nothing save vague promises based upon "ifs" and "ands."

The Union Pacific has never promised completion of the Natron cut-off, or the Natron-Vale line, except upon certain indefinite considerations, including common user-ship of Southern Pacific lines in Western Oregon, and there is no reason to believe that it is even seriously interested in this line. What it (The Union Pacific) wants out of the Central Pacific controversy is an entrance to San Francisco and common user-ship of Southern Pacific lines north of Tehama. If it (The Union Pacific) secured that it would own the Pacific Coast in fee simple, and would not need to build another railroad across Central Oregon. It could route the rich traffic of the Willamette Valley out either to the north or to the south, getting the long haul over its own lines either way. Under such favorable conditions, why should it build another costly railroad merely to compete with itself?

The Union Pacific is frankly not interested in car shops at Springfield, and has said as much. The Spring-

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"Say It With A Brick"

field car shops plan is essentially a part of combined operation of the Southern Pacific and the Central Pacific, based on the fact that Springfield is a cross-roads of the system. These shops will mean an initial expenditure of a million dollars, and a payroll in the neighborhood of \$100,000 a month.

But really most important of all is the fact that award of the Central Pacific to the Southern Pacific will put an end to the unmerging suits that have been so disastrous to the transportation hopes of this community. Back in 1912 the Natron cut-off was being pushed westward from Vale up the Malheur canyon to a junction with the Natron line at Odell, and land was being purchased for the Springfield shops. These developments, when completed, would have built a city here, but suddenly, out of a clear sky, came the suit for unmerging the Southern Pacific and the Union Pacific, and instantly development

ceased. The Union-Southern Pacific merger was dissolved, and shortly thereafter the Southern Pacific formulated its plans for completion of the Natron cut-off as a part of the Southern Pacific Central Pacific system, setting aside the money necessary for its completion, but in 1914 came another dissolution suit, this time for unmerging the Southern Pacific and the Central Pacific, and once again action was dropped. The suit hung in the courts until last spring and in all those eight years not a spike was driven and the Natron cut-off and the Springfield car shops have remained only a hazy dream.

The Southern Pacific company has formally asserted its intention to complete the Natron line just as soon as its ownership of the Central Pacific is confirmed, and it has the money to do it. But if the Central Pacific is torn loose from it, we shall face years of uncertainty and inaction while new alignments are being made, and in ad-

dition there is the possibility that few owners may not care to complete the Natron cut-off at all.

There is no hostility in Western Oregon toward the Union Pacific. The passes of the mountains are open, right of way is abundantly available, and if it should decide to build in here from Eastern Oregon in order to share in the traffic of this rich valley, it will be met with brass bands and the keys to all the cities. Nor is that all. If it should complete its Malheur canyon line to a junction with the Natron cut-off at Odell, it can send its traffic representatives into Western Oregon and secure the routing of its full share of freight by that gateway. It is only when it (The Union Pacific)

seeks a warranty deed to the Pacific Coast, attempts to cripple its principal competitor by forced common user-ship rights and gives in return nothing but vague promises of development at some time in the distant future that its desires will be opposed here. Let it so much as mention entering this part of Oregon on its own rails and it will be as wildly acclaimed as was the Oregon Electric a few years ago.

A Nebraska paper reports the marriage of Charles E. Speeder and Miss Annabelle Skidder. This union was no doubt expedited by the spark plug.

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