

The Santiam News.

Politically Independent

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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WILL HAVE TO DISGORGE.

It has been known for years that large bodies of Government lands were being illegitimately acquired by corporations and syndicates. Nor will this absorption cease so long as there is an acre of available public land left. In fact that time seems now to be upon us. Public lands at all desirable are almost unobtainable by the honest settler.

This being a fact it is nonsense to lock the stable door after the last poor old crowbar has been stolen. The thing to do now is to recover to the National domain these millions of acres of which the people have been despoiled.

Railroads which have been granted bodies of lands and which have constructed their roads as required by the terms of the grant should be protected in their holdings. Likewise wagon roads which actually built wagon roads—not trails—have legally acquired their properties. But railroads that hold their lands by virtue of the lieue land law, and wagon road companies which built mere trails, hold millions of acres of the public domain to which in equity they do not possess a shadow of a title. Also land syndicates and individuals who have obtained valuable timber lands through hiring dummies to file upon the same and who hold a title obtained through fraud and misrepresentation should certainly be made to disgorge. These lands that are wrongfully and fraudulently held cost the holder not to exceed \$2.50 to \$3 per acre, and that acquired with lieue land scrip, but a few cents.

At the risk of becoming tedious, a little explanation of how the lieue land law originated is in order. These big transcontinental railroad companies, through their lobbies at Washington, obtained the passage of the law. The lobbies then secured the establishment of Government reserves and, strange to relate, these reserves were always so marked out that large bodies of worthless lands belonging to the railroad companies were included. For these absolutely worthless lands the Government issued lieue land scrip to the companies. This scrip could be laid upon any Government lands in any state through which the particular railroad had trackage. Through this infamous law the Northern Pacific Railroad Company has secured millions of acres of the finest timber lands in Oregon. Other large land holding companies have operated through dummies to secure large bodies of school lands at a cost of \$1.25 an acre with an additional trifle to the dummy.

Taking all of these holdings together, and which are held for speculative purposes, fully one-half of the territory of Oregon is held by these high financiers. As all of the public lands in the State, National or State, have been absorbed as above stated, the question now is, what can the State or Nation do about it? Ought a vested right obtained through trickery or fraud be held sacred?

Law and equity holds that the rights of the public are superior to those of a corporation or individual. Even when the individual or corporation honorably and honestly holds lands required by and for the good of the public the lands are taken by the payment of, not what the holder demands, but what a board of appraisers says the property is worth. This being true, these high financiers who have gobbled lands from the State and Nation in square miles and townships, ought not complain if they receive their money back and are dispossessed. If some law should be enacted by Congress and the State Legislature to repossess the Nation and State of all lands held for speculative purposes, everybody in the Nation, save the guilty holders, would say "Amen." Of course the honest settler, who is improving his land and is building a home, whether it be upon Government or State lands, should not be disturbed, for the object of recovering these lands to the State and Nation is that they may become the homes of industrious, home-loving citizens. The Federal Government should pursue a similar policy towards corporations that have fraudulently obtained coal lands.

The public domain rightfully belongs to all the people; likewise does the coal and oil within the bosom of the earth, and the public is defrauded whenever individuals or corporations are allowed to gobble them up at a fraction of their value. The day of reckoning is not far distant when all of these matters of a fraudulent character will be fought. Every man or corporation who obtains lands, either agricultural, mineral, or timber, and honestly complies with the law regulating the sale

of them should and will be protected in his holdings; but every individual, corporation or company who secures his holdings through trickery, fraud, or in any way neglecting to comply with the law, should have his holdings declared forfeited and the same should revert to the State or Nation.

The Nation or State would do us wrong nor an injustice should these lands which have been secured by fraud be reclaimed. Individual who commits a fraud of this character or causes it to be committed, should consider himself most fortunate if he is not caused to undergo a term of imprisonment in addition to losing his ill-gotten holdings. The law placing a limit for which a man can be prosecuted for offenses of this character, is but a shield for rascals to hide behind. It should be repealed. Even when these lands pass into the hands of a third party the holder should be held responsible, for it should be his business to know whether or not the land has been secured from the Government according to law.

Whenever the rights of the public have been trespassed upon, any acquired rights of the individual should give way if necessary to restore and make good any loss to the public. Unless this principle is carried out a premium is offered for individual rascality by the State or Nation. Our law-makers and law-executors should look first to the rights of the public and then to the rights of the individual.

WE NEED MORE LIKE HIM.

Senator LaFollette, who delivered a political lecture in Portland last week, handles matters pertaining to Congressional enactments without gloves. In other words, he shows up the action of senators on public questions, especially of the bill regulating railroad freight rates. On this measure Senator Fulton is shown to have given his vote against all amendments that would make the rate law really regulative. On the final passage of the rate bill, after the defeat of the several amendments that would have made the law much more effective in its operations, Mr. Fulton voted "yea." That is to say, after the law had been made harmless to the railroads, Mr. Fulton, Mr. Aldrich, and others, who at heart were opposed to any sort of railway freight regulation, made a virtue of a necessity and voted for the president's emasculated rate law.

Senator LaFollette shows very plainly that he has no use for Congressmen who are servants of the trusts and who are at all times careful that no legislation hostile to the interests of corporate wealth shall be enacted. The Senator's first thought in the enactment of law is the interests of all the people and, while he believes large aggregations of capital necessary to inaugurate and carry on large undertakings, he insists that any privileges granted to such corporations should at all times be made secondary to the interests of the public. As Governor of Wisconsin Mr. LaFollette caused the railroads to pay taxes and to reduce their freight rates. With the experience gained in the Wisconsin railroad rate problem he was especially qualified to enact a Federal statute that would regulate. Senator LaFollette was not in favor of the rate law enacted last Spring, but as it was apparently the best that could be secured at that time he voted for it.

If President Roosevelt could have been supported by a Congress composed of LaFollettes it is safe to say a rate law would have been enacted that would have regulated the railroads effectually instead of the present make-believe rate law. Senator LaFollette is a Republican in politics and was elected as such to the United States Senate, yet he is honest and independent enough to condemn Senator Fulton, a Republican, for voting for the railroads and against the people's interests and to commend Senator Gearin, a Democrat, for voting right and for the people's interests upon every question affecting railway rate legislation. Let us hope that Senator LaFollette may be permitted to serve many years in the United States Senate, and that just as rapidly as senators', who are servants of corporations and trusts, time expires, their places may be supplied by men of the LaFollette caliber.

Special Assistant District Attorney Heney is uncovering about the most unsavory mess of grafters down in San Francisco that can be found in the pages of history of modern times. The propensity to graft seems, under the tutelage of Abe Ruef the political boss and prince of grafters, to have involved Mayor Schmitz and the entire Board of City Supervisors. In addition to the blackmail collected from franchise-holders, French restaurants, saloons and houses of ill repute, this band of scoundrels are said to have stolen thousands of dollars from the relief funds contributed so liberally by the entire country when that city was stricken by earthquake and fire. Mayor Schmitz, who has been visiting European countries, was elected to the chief office of the city five years ago as the champion of reform and of organized labor. If reports are true he entered the office a poor man, but is now so rich that he can afford any extravagance he may desire. Before Mr. Heney gets through with him he will probably regret that he abandoned his career in music to enter the field of politics. Nothing short of landing the whole bunch behind prison bars will satisfy Mr. Heney and the people.

Deputy District Attorney Francis J. Heney ought to be a very happy man these days. In addition to lifting the lid and exposing San Francisco's official corruption, with a fair prospect of landing the whole bunch of grafters in the penitentiary, he has taken to himself a wife. When a man is successful both in social and business life he should be wholly satisfied with himself, and satisfaction usually gives happiness.

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Flour, per sack..... 1.00	Barley, " " " "..... 1.00
Butter, (Country) per roll..... 40	Eggs, " " " "..... 22
Chickens, " " " "..... 11	Chickens, " " Young..... 11
Ducks, " " " "..... 16	Turkeys, " " " "..... 16
Hog, per pound live weight..... 12	Hog, " " " "..... 12
Veal, " " " "..... 12	Veal, " " " "..... 12
Sheep, " " " "..... 12	Mutton, " " " "..... 12
Butter, " " " "..... 40	Butter, " " " "..... 40

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Wednesday and Saturday

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The rates will be the same as during the summer, and will be good for return in days from the date of issue.

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