

# Cascades of Creator Conquered by Man In Rail Construction

## New Era of Development Is Coming to Klamath Falls and Transportation Is Pictured by Famous Minister, Traveler and Writer, Who Tells of Engineering Problems Overcome.

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to accomplish the seeming impossible just as heroic? Here at our very doors has been accomplished a wonderful achievement, the greatest thing in its way done in the world probably in the more recent years. Who shall write the epic the feat deserves. Not I. But the plain tale of a three-days' trek may have its value.

We started naturally from our home town Eugene taking the train which leaves daily for Oakridge at 7:30 a. m. on Monday morning, May 24. The contrast between a former journey to Oakridge by mixed train which spent the most of the day on the way inevitably suggested itself. Here was a well-appointed train moving steadily and smoothly over a perfect track and reaching its destination in about three hours. Instead of the baker's dozen passengers two cars were well filled with men of the distinctively western type. Only three women were aboard, one of whom was the photographer.

### Valleys Appear Peaceful

The scenes of this part of the journey may be dismissed with a paragraph because the gist of our story relates to the new laid rails beyond. However, the succession of pleasant mountain valleys lying beautiful with winding streams traversing them among the foothills, revealed as the train steadily climbed its upward way, merit passing comment. Very peaceful and pastoral they looked in the dewy morn. And the great new mill at West Fir struck a new note from its screaming saws as we passed by, a note suggestive of the new industrial day which is beginning in somnolent Oregon, lying these many years dreaming with a great store of undeveloped resources in her lap. And it was to be noted that besides the passengers in the two forward coaches there was a full carload of Mexican laborers occupying a car in the rear and these were dropped at a construction camp on the way. Of the important part played by these Mexicans on this big job I shall have something to say farther on in the story.

### Sleepy Village Awakes

One hardly knew the once sleepy little village of Oakridge on arrival there. The little town has been a hive of bustling activity during the past two years and still is, even though now a considerable portion of the storing and freight transfer of materials used on the big job is done at Rail Head, half a dozen miles beyond. Headquarters for the construction work on the Eugene end of the line are maintained at Oakridge with Major A. E. McKennett as chief. I did not personally meet Major McKennett, but I used the magic of his name in the shape of a letter of credential which worked as an open sesame to enlist the hearty co-operation of engineers, foreman, conductors and contractors all along the line.

We were escorted to the caboose of a work train just making up. Conductor Billings looked a little doubtful when he first looked us over, but when he had read our magic letter he became our enthusiastic ally. Soon the photographer was seated in the cupola the little windowed crows' nest jutting above the top of the caboose and scribe and conductor were sitting chummily on the roof of the same, from which point of vantage Conductor Billings ran his train.

### Mountain Vistas Pleasing

The weather was beautiful and clear and the magnificent mountain vistas opened on all sides to our view. At intervals Conductor Billings pointed out scars on the sides of the mountains towering on the right where the "high line" threaded its way. Sometimes we could see not more than two miles away the cuts on the mountain side a thousand feet above us, making it hard to believe that the sinuous path of the rails would take us up there by a long detour on a grade which would never exceed 95 feet to the mile or require any sharper curve than 8 per cent. In order to accomplish this engineering triumph frequent tunnels were necessary. Never to sacrifice the grade has been the rule consistently followed. At all costs the grade line must not run above its maximum. Where going around was hazard-

ous or impossible the way was drilled sheer through the elevations. So we passed McCredie Springs, looking down on the hotel buildings from the ridge above with our slight-seeing car pushed ahead of ten or a dozen laden cars, mostly great steel gravel cars, until we came to a siding where Sam appeared on the scene, Sam Nazor, if you please, trainmaster, if I caught his official designation aright.

### Bulwark of Knowledge

Sam is typical of the energetic set of foreman and leaders who are right on the firing line putting the big job over. Sam is a short man inclined to stoutness but I will wager there is not an ounce of soft fat on his body. He carries around under his hat the where-abouts of eight or ten work trains, knows just what each car in each train is carrying, remembers the needs of all the numerous gangs and contractors and moves like a flea up and down the line on speeders or swings himself on passing trains. Perhaps he wants to get to a piece of work higher up or lower down when no conveyance is handy and then he takes to the trails up a mountain or down and passes his days in a whirl of activities, yes, and his nights too, often enough Sam had just put in a solid twenty-four hours of greased lightning activity when we met him and was still going strong, but guessed he would hunt for a bed before long if nothing important prevented. I write thus freely about Sam because I feel sure that modest man, who shunned the camera of the photographer as he would the devil, will never take the time to read this.

### Captains of Industry

But the point I wish to make is this: The driving intensity, the forgetfulness of tired bodies, the go-

ing ahead when the nerves are worn to a frazzle, characterizes the fifty or sixty men who are the captains in this big undertaking in which they pit the resourcefulness of men against snow and rain, slides and rock and deep ravines and rushing streams in one of the roughest and wildest sections of country on the whole map of this United States of ours.

And then came dinner in the dining car. This is no joke I assure you. Perhaps you wonder where all the old cars go. If you go along a construction job like this one you find out. They are used to meet the needs of the workmen and right good camps they make, yes and headquarters, too. All the details at both ends of the line are handled from an office car which is one car in a line which includes cars for sleeping quarters, kitchens and dining rooms and a box car to hold supplies. Major McKennett functions from just such a palatial headquarters and so does Mr. Beattie located at the other end on the shores of Odell Lake. A longer string of cars compose the camp of the big gangs where fifty to a hundred men sleep and eat. The cook is usually a Chinaman and the board is bountifully spread. Both the photographer and myself can testify to that. Some kind mentor always saw that we arrived at some camp or headquarters just ahead of the sweet sound of the triangle which is beaten as a dinner bell.

### Camps Are Most Sanitary

These camps are models of cleanliness. There is never any unsightly refuse heaps in sight and everything moves with clock-like regularity. Just at the hour for a meal speeders come whirring down the track completely covered with workers, in five or six minutes they are washed up and seated at the table upon which the meat hot bread, beans, spaghetti, spuds and other vegetables crowd shoulders with pie, cakes and stewed fruit and in the midst steam the great tea and coffee pots. Everybody helps himself while the cook hovers about to refill dishes as fast as they are emptied. In fifteen or twenty minutes it is all over but clearing away the wreckage. Then comes, time to smoke and chat for another fifteen or twenty minutes. But not long for the speeders pull up, the gang climbs aboard and are whizzed away, all within the hour if it be the noon meal.

### Conductor Is Resourceful

To continue our personal chroni-

cle. After lunch Sam and Conductor Billings put their heads together and suggested a plan for our afternoon. A contractor needed another donkey engine which was loaded on a nearby car. Sam had promised to deliver it and so the engine was hooked up to this car, the caboose was placed ahead as a kind of observation car and away we went up and up the line until we reached the second curve of the S, which roughly describes the course the railway takes in surmounting the elevation. On the way my companions explained with object lessons the things accomplished, the difficulties met and the innumerable things still to be done. They did not lecture, these men of few words. They just showed me one fact after another. Such is the way of men of action. I saw great pipes being hoisted up the side of a mountain to carry water half a mile to a water tank in process of erection. They showed me where twenty thousand dollars' worth of work was destroyed in five minutes when a rock slide covered the approach to a tunnel. They showed me work that had been done over five times before it was a success. They told me of the difficulties in the division just ahead over which C. C. Berkeley is resident engineer, where a whole mountain side seems bound to slide and slide and nothing stays put, not even tunnels all completed. They explained that every tunnel will, before the job is finished, be cemented for 50 feet at each end as a precaution against fire hazards.

### Sam Is Again Active

"Well, we spotted the car, that is we left it with brakes set on the track, to be unloaded by a crew of men already there and picked up another train a few hours later. Sam had already arranged all these little details. And then we went down the track at a lively rate, for Conductor Billings was nearing his time limit. He could only work sixteen hours on one shift. Such is the law and he had only a little over an hour to reach Oakridge with his train. Well down on the second curve of the S we were placed on the ground where a trail started up the mountain to the high line, that is the upper curve

### PIANO SALE

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of the S. The trail would bring us out near Seymour's headquarters, we were told and there our friendly counselors suggested we had best spend the night.

### Travel Fascinating Trails

This trail business was old stuff to the photographer and myself from years spent in the coast region as ranchers. But we do like to travel steep trails with the good legs of a saddle horse to do the stepping and then, somehow, those were long miles and our baggage, reduced as it was to the lowest limit, grew curiously heavy. But the trail led through wonderfully beautiful surroundings, following a branch of Salt Creek for a ways and then growing steeper as we swung off up the grade that mountain goat of a creek, Nolsk creek, courses in its mad career. But the day was ideal for climbing and there was plenty of daylight left. So we took our time and stopped to admire and look and listen and find excuse to rest awhile after we

rounded the corner of one switch-back after another. The rhododendrons were just bursting into beauty along the way at that height and many another familiar plant friend was discovered by the photographer who is the amateur botanist of the family.

### Approves Artistic Colors

Now, I cannot say that I admire the glaring atrocity of the red paint with which the Southern Pacific company is prone to make hideous their buildings. But for once that red paint shone like a thing of beauty to me when I caught a glimpse through the trees above of a trestle decked out in its flaming hue. There our trail ended, but the climb did not, for Seymour's headquarters perches high above the track on the jutting shoulder of a mountain side. The camp site is terraced with bulkheads of logs and one mounts by stairways from one level to another. At an open doorway marked "office" I asked of a man in corduroys and flannel shirt

for Mr. Seymour. "I am Seymour," he replied. Let this close the story of our first day.

(Continued Next Saturday.)

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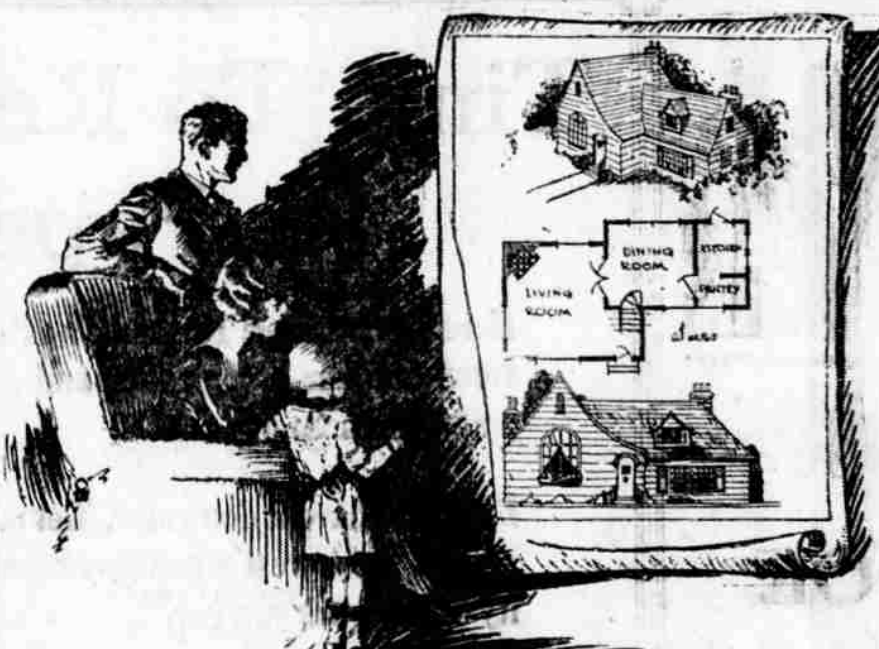
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