

VISIT OF N. P. OFFICIALS.

A special train of seven coaches was sidetracked at North Yakima Thursday night, containing Mr. E. D. Adams, chairman of the board of management of the Northern Pacific; George F. Baker, president of the First National bank of New York; President E. W. Winter, General Manager J. W. Kendrick, Land Commissioner W. H. Phipps, Chief Engineer E. H. McHenry, Assistant Superintendent W. G. Pearse, Division Superintendent F. W. Gilbert, Western Land Agent Thomas Cooper, Assistant Secretary W. H. Gemmel.

The officials were driven for several hours through the valley on Friday, and expressed themselves as well pleased with the material progress among the irrigated orchards and fruit farms.

In answer to an inquiry from a representative, as to the object of the trip of the party, Mr. Phipps stated that they were on a general tour of inspection.

"It may interest your readers to know that the company is considering the advisability of establishing an experimental seed farm in the Yakima valley," said he. "Mr. A. B. Leckenby, who is now in the regular employ of the company engaged in investigating the possibility of grass and forage plant culture in Washington, will have charge. The purpose of establishing this seed farm is to give an opportunity to Mr. Leckenby to fully test and bring out grasses that will grow on the ranges, thus making them able to sustain more stock, and hay and pasture plants for the farm.

"The question of leasing grazing lands owned by the company, as it has signified its intention of doing, is meeting with strenuous objection by our sheepmen," said the representative, "and they have formed themselves into an organization and signed an agreement not to lease the land under the terms offered."

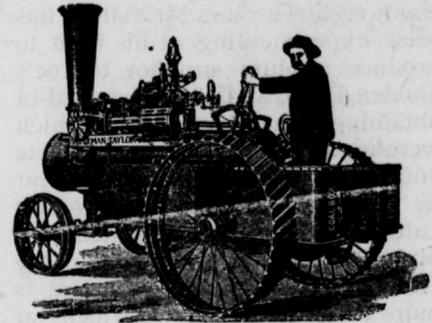
"The leasing system has come to stay," he replied. "Experience has proven that it is the most practical method that can be devised."

"But," persisted the interviewer, who realized that he had a rare opportunity to gain desirable information on a most important subject, "our sheepmen say that the company does not guarantee to keep other stock from their lands, and then they think they cannot be prevented from driving over the odd sections even if their bands go across so very slowly as to eat all the grass."

RANCHE AND RANGE.

"I see," said Mr. Phipps, "you have been hearing only one side of this question: It is the aim of this department to aid in so far as possible the development of the stock industry along its line, and we believe that the system adopted last year of leasing our grazing lands to stockmen will result in great advantage to the stockmen. Before this system of leasing was adopted, conflicts between the various stock interests along the line were frequent, the sheep herds often encroaching upon the ranges of the cattlemen, and vice versa. Those conflicts frequently resulted in great loss, and sheep camps were destroyed and a bitter feeling generally engendered among the various interests. Further, the more convenient stock ranges were being over-fed, with the result that for several succeeding years the growth of the grass was checked and lands that formerly offered good grazing became almost barren. Under our recent experiment of leasing grazing lands over 300,000 acres have passed under the control of sheep and cattlemen, the result being that the lessees have respected one another's rights, each confining himself to the special tract set apart for him. These leases are given for periods

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