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HOW STATE LOST MILLIONS THROUGH TRICKERY IN LAND

State, Public School and Institutional Funds Robbed of Vast Sums, and Sales Records Spirited Away

EXAMPLES INDICATE EXTENT OF TIMBER FRAUDS

Crooked Work in Land Commissioner's Office Responsible for Extensive Frauds In Selling Timber Lands

Below we produce another of the tax stories which are being told by E. D. Cowen, in the Spokane Spokesman-Review, which tells its own lamentable tale, and accounts in a measure for the high rate of taxation:

"When economy and retrenchment are demanded in general terms it is proposed to abolish some state board or department without considering the real value of usefulness; or whether the less expensive service to be substituted will not in the end prove the more extravagant.

"Such was the case in the revolutionary period of politics in this state, when the appointive land commission was put out of business, and the land commissioner given supreme and nonsupervised management of the biggest and richest asset of the state government, with a dummy commission of elective state officials to legalize automatically the department records.

"This stroke of economy has cost the permanent school and granted land funds millions of dollars' worth of first class property selected by the appointive commission and juggled out of the possession of the state since then by corrupting timber syndicates and mill companies.

Even Original Appraisments Are Spirited Away.

"Even the original appraisments of the high grade selections made by the appointive bipartizan commission have been spirited out of the state records, lest they serve some time as a clue to the thrifty and economic system of public land management—instituted by the reformers.

"In no other department of the state government is honesty and vigilance afforded such chances of distinction, and in no other department are the temptations of personal interest so luring.

"Although it was a matter of common understanding for years among the woodsmen of western Washington that the state was parting company with its most valuable timber lands at inconsequental prices, and that moreover, there was dishonest commerce somewhere between the land office and the buyers, the seriousness of the losses to the permanent school and other land grant funds did not become apparent until the tax commission tutored the county assessors into assessing the timber lands which had been escaping taxation.

"In further pursuit of an inquisitive and defensive policy they persuaded the legislature to incorporate the tax commission into the state land commission. Since then publicity and a more searching consideration of land sales have silenced scandal and promoted competition as well as prices.

Unpublished Records Contain Story of Losses.

"In the archives of the state somewhere, if not lost or destroyed, are unpublished proofs of many transactions by which the timber syndicates have enriched themselves at the expense of the public school and institutional land grant funds.

"Not going beyond Pierce county, two illustrations of injury inflicted upon the state by connivance between buyer and seller's agents may be cited. In the case of the northeast, northwest and southwest quarters of section 16, township 16 north, range 5 east, the application was for the purchase of 'land.' This was an almost certain method of concealing the actual value of the property and the ulterior design of the applicant. Purchase of 'land' implied settlement and development, and when the tracts applied for were at a remote distance or away from the natural highways the advertisement of sale designating mere 'land' attracted no inquiry or competition.

"The state cruiser sent out to apprise the 'land" reported a valuation of $6400 for the 640 acres in the entire section (this was the lowest rate at which it could be appraised legally) and $2287.50 for the timber. He further reported that 12 of the 16 forties in the section had been burnt off seven years before. On the basis of this valuation a timber syndicate agent made the purchase of 480 acres.

Owners Paid Taxes on 60 Per Cent

"The first cruise of the tract made under the direction of the Pierce county assessor in 1907 showed for taxation purposes a 60 per cent valuation of $48,160 and the owners paid the levy without protest. The county cruise disclosed on this 'burnt off' land, for thus reads the state cruiser's report on file in the state land department, 32,942,500 feet of merchantable timber and 1500 cedar poles.

"Another instance of heavy loss to the state was the sale of all of section 16, township 15, north, range 5 east, school land, and of the south half of section 24, township 15, north, range 5 east (granted lands, C. E. P. & R. I. fund). The applicant was evidently a dummy, as the deed passed to a syndicate manager.

"Two cruisers inspected the two tracts, comprising 960 acres and appraised them at a valuation of $10,386; timber, $9586 and land $800. At this price the property was sold.

"In 1907 the Pierce county assessing cruisers found the actual value of the stumpage on the 960 acres to be $148,000. They further estimated than when the state sold the timber five years previously it had a commercial value of $75,000.

In Half Section State Overlooked 13,495,750 Feet.

"In the school section the state cruisers found 16,272,000 feet of merchantable timber, where the county cruisers discovered 55,488,000 feet. In the south half of section 24 the appraisers for the state overlooked 13,495,750 feet. Inasmuch as only five years had elapsed from the time of sale until the county cruise the natural increment is of slight consideration as against the increase of value which the state cruisers placed at 35 cents per 1000.

"If the truth were known, the total loss to the public school and granted land permanent funds, all of which are intended to relieve the tax burdens of the state, would run into many millions. Transactions of the character outlined in the two instances cited covered a period of 10 years' administration of the public land department. They could not have occurred under the administration of an appointive bipartizan commission, the members of which were accustomed to following in the trail of the cruisers and public land appraisers, while the elected land commissioner was at the same time on duty as ex-officio chairman of the commission."

The White House Wedding Yesterday

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SECRETARY WILLIAM G. M'ADOO, MISS ELEANOR WILSON AND MISS WILSON IN THE BIRD MASQUE "SANCTUARY."

COLD BLOODED MURDER IN ELMA

Frank Aschberg is Shot to Death by Supposed Friend in Elma Thursday

ELMA, May 7.—Frank Aschberg, an old and respected citizen of Elma, was shot and killed yesterday about noon by Otto Miller, a man whom Aschberg had befriended.

Aschberg was in place of business yesterday morning when Miller came in and, without any apparent reason, shot him, the bullet going through his abdomen, resulting in death at noon today.

Miller was seized by Rodney Maxwell, who borrowed a pistol and overtook the murderer, and is now in the county jail. The wonder here is the motive. Frank Aschberg was not only an inoffensive man but one who made no enemies, being universally popular.

When taken to the county jail, Miller said:

"I couldn't stand it no longer. He played me dirty and I got even. That's all."

After considerable pumping, he said: "I was going to get married and buy a saloon and he knocked me from the license and I couldn't. So now I couldn't get married and I couldn't get the saloon. Also he said I was an I. W. W. and I couldn't get work. So I couldn't stand it any longer."

Miller has been living around Elma for two or three years. The past few months he has not been doing any steady work. He has worked some for Ascheberg about his home yard. Most people here seem to think he must be insane.

You will like the Herald.

GRAYS HARBOR STILL ON MAP

Committee from Grays Harbor Convinces Engineer Board of Harbor's Importance

PROJECT IS KEPT ALIVE

Recommends Appropriation to Maintain Present Work, will Care for Future

It is a source of no small gratification to the people of Grays Harbor to learn that the committee of the commercial bodies of the county were successful at Washington to the extent of having the deepening of the Grays Harbor entrance practically assured. The committee, aided by the Washington state delegation in congress was given an hour before the federal board of engineers Tuesday, and succeeded in so conveying to the board the importance of this harbor that it was recognized, and the government virtually bound to improve the entrance until a depth of 24 feet is reached.

W. B. Mack, H. M. Delanty and Frank H. Lamb, the committee made good use of the hour allotted them, convincing the board that Grays Harbor was not a dot on the map but one of the important indentures on the north Pacific ocean, with a tributary country to amply justify the government in assisting in giving the depth of water required for the commerce the volume of which is only controlled by that factor.

After hearing the committee the board agreed to recommend an ap-

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MAYOR FRANCE TALKS ECONOMY

In Annual Message, the May or Suggests Several Plans for Economizing

The city council reorganized Wednesday night when the six new members took their seats, and but little business was transacted beyond the delivery of the annual message of Mayor France and the appointment of the new committees.

The message of the mayor recommended several measures making toward economy and efficiency; reappointed all the present heads of departments and had Edward Lytle appointed plumbing inspector, in addition to his present work in the water department.

A protest against the concrete roadway on Thornton street was filed.

The monthly reports of the various departments were read and referred.

The following committees were announced by the mayor:

Fire and light—L. D. Evans, W. J. Egerer, J. M. Bowes.

Streets, alleys, wharves and bridges—J. D. Walker, L. D. Evans, A. J. Grant.

Sewers and public health—Grant, E. C. McKnight, E. A. Milette.

Finance—A. S. Brecht, J. H. Empey, J. H. Sawyer.

Judiciary—McKnight, J. W. Fraser, E. E. Wieland.

Ways and Means—Milette, McKnight, Brecht.

Auditing—Fraser, Evans, Grant.

Building and public grounds—Weiland, Brecht, Milette.

License—Egerer, Weiland, Sawyer.

Police—Sawyer, Egerer, Bowes.

Special assessments—Bowes, Empey, Walker.

OIL ON OLYMPIC PENINSULA GRADES HIGH IN GASOLINE

Correspondent to Tacoma Ledger Says Peninsula will Furnish Fuel for Northwestern Motor Cars

TESTS SHOW 11 TO 14 PER CENT GASOLINE

Lack of Transportation Facilities Only Handicap to Development of Immensely Rich Oil Field

The Olympic peninsula will be the source from which western motorists will obtain their future supply of gasoline, if oil in paying quantities is found, as now seems certain, for tests of Olympic oil shows that it contains from 11 to 14 per cent of high grade gasoline, says the Sunday Tacoma Ledger. This percentage is four times as high as that of California and ranks with the best paraffin base oils of Pennsylvania, says the Western Motor Car, in its May number.

It is not likely that the opening up of the Olympic oil field will reduce the cost of gasoline to any great extent, but it will unquestionably make some difference. The production in the eastern fields has been steadily decreasing for several years, in spite of energetic efforts to open up new fields and new production. On the other hand, the demand has increased by leaps and bounds, owing to the immence growth of the automobile manufacturing business and the use of oil and gasoline in every class of boats and ships, for rail transportation and other uses too numerous to mention.

Needed Only Transportation.

The possibility of the existence of a large field of very fine paraffin base petroleum in the western part of the Olympic peninsula has been realized for a great many years by the scattered settlers, timber cruisers, oil experts and geologists who have traveled along its rocky coast or through its dense forests. Outcrops of sandstone and shale saturated with oil, seepages of oil, seepages of gas and sulphur springs occur at numerous points all the way from Grays Harbor to Neah bay, from the coast to the heart of the Olympic mountains, and the only reason why the state of Washington does not, like California, reap a rich harvest from its buried treasures is the lack of transportation.

Many years ago the old settlers tell of the large vote polled by the homesteaders who had cast their lot in the "Farthest West," only to be driven away by the withdrawal of the whole peninsula in the name of conservation. To my mind no greater crime has been committed against the people than that withdrawal. The quality of the oil on the western slope of the Olympic range will probably average better than any equal area west of the Cascade mountains. Cattle range and fatten in the heart of the forest to the finest condition the year around. Practically the whole peninsula is covered with one of the finest stands of timber in the world. Today, as a result of conservation, I doubt if there are 200 people in this district, 25 miles wide and 70 miles long. It is the avowed intention of the timber companies to freeze out what few esttlers remain, and I think it would be safe to say that not less than 75 per cent of the land in the above territory is owned by less than two score of corporations or large individual owners, who will not only do nothing themselves toward developing the great welath of the peninsula, but who throw every obstacle in the way of those who are doing all they can single-handed. So today, instead of green fields owned by prosperous dairy farmers, humming sawmills and producing oil wells, we have in the name of conservation a very few wealthy men who boast of the hundreds of square miles of land which they own there, and the great profits which they expect to reap when they have decided that the proper time has arrived to make the consumer and purchaser pay the highest possible price for their oil, timber and land. A representative of the corporation having the largest holdings on the peninsula told me that his company considered that the west coast would make the finest dairy section in the world, and that they expected to realize hundreds of dollars an acre from their holdings.

Cost of Freighting High

The oil prospector is endeavoring, in the face of almost insurmountable obstacles to develop the Olympic oil fields. The cost of freighting in machinery and supplies is very high and the time during which they can be shipped in at all is short, only four months at best, and sometimes not that depending on the condition of the weather, as there is no harbor between Grays Harbor and Neah Bay. Everything of any consequence has to be loaded on a barge in Aberdeen, towed over the bar and dumped on the beach somewhere up the coast. In spite of these obstacles, there are now two standard oil well drilling rigs operating on the west side, one at Hoh river and the other at Forks, in Clallam county. There is also a rotary rig boring at Taholah, in Chehalis county.

Near the mouth of the Hoh river large seepages of the finest paraffin base oil occurs. About 800 feet north of the Jefferson Oil company's well a shaft 18 feet has been sunk, and when this well was first completed and was clean, it prodcued abut five gallons a day. It carries from 1½ to 2 per cent of paraffin. C. T. Lupton of the United States geological survey, who made a preliminary survey of the field last summer, says that the finest showings on the peninsula are to be found in the Hoh River district. The Jefferson Oil company has its first well drilled to a depth of 865 feet, at which point the three oil sands were passed through and 10 feet into the fourth. Each of these sands made large quantities of gas and some of them showed considerable oil. The gas pressure in the fourth sand, where the tools were lost, was estimated to be between 500 and 600 pounds to the square inch. The gas pressure has rapidly increased with each succeeding sand, and from the present indications it is believed that a producing well will soon be brought in.

The Washington Oil company, at Forks, has a well over 1,500 feet deep and is preparing to continue drilling with a smaller casing. They have found considerable quantities of gas at various points in the well, and claim that at times the showing of oil was sufficient to produce several barrels a day. Their location is considered to be very promising by representatives of some of the large oil companies.

The Indian Oil company has its well down 400 feet on the mud volcano, near the mouth of the Quiniault river. This mud volcano has been built up to a considerable height by the actions of oil and gas forcing its way to the surface. Some of the best authorities claim that wells drilled near mud volcanoes of this character have invariably been great producers. The Indian Oil company has already encountered heavy gas pressure at several points, and some oil. Mr. Paulhamus, the manager, feels quite confident that with greater depth he will encounter one of the greatest gushers ever brought in. He has had a wide experience and claims that the showing at the Indian well so far has surpassed some of the greatest gushers in the Beaumont (Texas field).

Drilling in Mud Volcano

All of the above mentioned wells have encountered a great deal of trouble with soft caving ground, and until several wells have been drilled and the drillers become familiar with the formation, the work will be tedious; but the showings so far encountered have convinced those who are doing the work that it is only a question of drilling a well to the proper depth and in the proper place to get an abundance of paraffin oil.

Some idea of what a big oil well will mean to the state of Washington may be gathered from the statistics concerning the production of oil in the state of California for the year 1913, which gives the total output at about 95,000,000 barrels, worth something over $40,000,000.

Among the other associations that will drill for oil in this district the coming summer are the Milwaukee Oil company, which is said to be backed by wealthy Wall Street operators, and the Old Glory Oil company, financed by a syndicate of Wisconsin capitalists. These two organizations own and control about 15,000 acres of valuable oil lands in the peninsula and both are under obligations to begin active development work within a few weeks.

ELECTRIC PARK

Grays Harbor Railway & Light Co. Co-operates With Parent-Teachers' Association for Playground

After all the discussion about parks the Grays Harbor Railway & Light company appears willing to solve the problem for Aberdeen for years to come. Improvements are now under way at Electric park consisting of filling the loop with clay and sand, renovation of the ball park for this season's use, cleaning out underbrush, cutting out and graveling all paths in the woods on the hill and the construction of two fire brick stoves with heavy steel plates on top for cooking purpose for picnickers being made by the Grays Harbor Railway & Light company. Added to this, there will be a large supply of wood placed within reach of the two stoves one of which will be located on the low ground and the other in the woods.

In speaking of the improvements, Manager P. A. Bertrand said: "We are making some improvements out there now, to provide a suitable recreation and picnic ground for the people of Hoquiam and Aberdeen. The grounds will present a clean, attractive appearance and later on more improvements will be carried through.

"We are going to co-operate with the Parent-Teachers' associations and will aid them in making the park a model."