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ANOTHER BIG EXCURSION HEADED FOR IMPERIAL VALLEY

Los Angeles Merchants Who Could Not Find Room in First Party Are Not to be Balked of Visit to California's Richest Region. El Centro Preparing Great Reception.

The "overflow" excursion of Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce members will arrive in Imperial Valley on the morning of Friday, March 27, and spend two days visiting the towns and seeing the farms of the valley.

The party will reach Brawley early Friday morning, Imperial at noon, and Calexico on Saturday morning. Returning from Calexico, the train will arrive at El Centro at 11:30 a. m., and remain until 2 p. m., and during the stay the visitors will be entertained at luncheon by the ladies of El Centro, assisted by the local Chamber of Commerce. At 2 p. m. the party will leave for Holtville on the Interurban line, returning to El Centro at 5:30 p. m. In the evening there will be a reception and entertainment at the Holt opera house, beginning promptly at 8 p. m., and lasting until 10 p. m., the hour of departure for Los Angeles.

In a letter to the El Centro Chamber

of Commerce, Secretary Frank Wiggins says:

"This excursion, we hope to be as large as the first, although we cannot give you the exact number yet. Our idea is to give those of our friends who were unable to accompany us on the last excursion, an opportunity to see the wonderful advancement which has been made in all directions throughout the valley. We do not want you, however, to go to any extra expense for our entertainment.

"I herewith enclose you expression of a few of our members, which you will note are most praiseworthy. I trust that they will be the means of encouraging numerous settlers to make their homes among you.

"You will note in enclosed itinerary we are giving more time in each city than we did last time; this is being done by cutting out the trip to Mexico."

EL CENTRO BUSINESS MEN PROMOTING PUBLIC INTERESTS

Chamber of Commerce Urges Protection of Rights of Irrigators. Preparing for Reception of Los Angeles Excursionists.

The El Centro Chamber of Commerce held a meeting in the school house on the night of March 13, and outlined plans for active work. There was a large attendance of leading business men, and several new members were admitted.

President J. Stanley Brown addressed the Chamber on the importance to every settler of such work as the body undertakes for the public benefit, and urged that all should do their share and not leave the whole burden upon a few citizens. Every settler in the district ought to be a member of the Chamber.

The president appointed a committee of three to call upon citizens who are not members and urge them to join the Chamber, and requested every member present to act as volunteers assistants to the committee, which is composed of Messrs. Pearson, Blanchard and Hayden.

H. B. Pearson offered a resolution approving the proposed organization of a county board of trade, naming the president and secretary as delegates to such a body, and instructing the delegates to request the county board to present to the Supervisors a petition for a monthly appropriation of \$25 to maintain an Imperial county exhibit in the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

Several members spoke in support of the resolutions, and it was explained that the Los Angeles Chamber had offered to give space to an exhibit of valley products, put the specimens up in attractive shape, take care of the exhibit and distribute advertising matter to visitors for the sum named.

President Brown said that a county board of trade was formed some time ago and had held a few meetings, but for various reasons the meetings had been discontinued. It seemed an op-

portunity to revive that body and get into active working order for the good of the whole county, and the El Centro Chamber was ready to cooperate with the other valley towns.

Dr. Blackinton said he thought there would be no further obstruction to united and harmonious action. He had been assured by a leading citizen of Imperial that the people of that city had abandoned the idea of contesting the county seat election and decided to devote their energies to building up their own city and promoting the interests of the county. If that was so, and he saw no reason to doubt it, all the valley towns could get together and work effectively for the common good through a county board of trade.

The resolutions were adopted by unanimous vote.

Notice was given of a proposed amendment to the by-laws fixing the dues at \$12 a year, payable quarterly.

Ira Aten, chairman of the finance committee, reported that \$98 had been expended for entertainment of the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, leaving a balance of collections in the treasury.

President Brown thanked all the committees for the work done in preparing the very successful reception to the excursionists, and reappointed them to arrange for entertaining the party that is to visit El Centro on March 28. Ira Aten and Dr. Blackinton are members of the finance committee; Allen Kelly, C. E. Paris and John M. Eshleman are the programme committee, and H. B. Pearson and R. H. Clark constitute the active members of the committee on exhibit of products and supplies for luncheon, Mr. Forrester being out of commission because of injuries recently sustained. The latter committee will assist the ladies of El Centro in preparing an Imperial Valley repast for the visitors when they arrive in El Centro at noon on the 28th.

A committee, composed of Messrs. Carter, Havens and Hayden, was appointed to consider the advisability of employing a secretary to attend to the accumulating correspondence, and was instructed to report at the next meeting, Friday, March 20th.

R. H. Clark suggested that the chambers of commerce and water compan-

ies of the valley take steps to have the settlers represented before the United States Circuit Court when the matter of the injunction against the C. D. Co. again comes up. It was evident that the litigant corporations had not considered the interests of the people in the presentation of their case, and the court had no means of knowing what reducing the supply of water would mean to the valley. There should be some way of introducing evidence without offending the court, and it seemed to be the business of the water companies to look after the interests of settlers and see that their rights were safeguarded.

It had been reported that the injunction would be enforced again, and if that should be so, the cantaloupe growers would be placed in a perilous situation and their crops might be ruined. The irrigation system could not be maintained under any such method of regulation as had been tried in obedience to the injunction. Mr. Carter, who had lived at Hanlon Heading for many years and studied the ways of the Colorado river, had explained the danger of reducing the flow in the intake. While the headgate was partly closed to comply with the court order, the intake silted up and the channel shifted over toward the opposite bank. A fortunate rise of six inches in the river helped to scour the intake when the gate was reopened, and the current was brought back to the west side. Had a fall of six inches occurred instead of a rise, a permanent bar would have been formed, the current would have swung over to the east bank, and the intake would have been closed entirely. The Imperial Valley would have been deprived of water absolutely had the river fallen a few inches or had the injunction been maintained ten days longer.

After some discussion of methods of getting the facts before the court, the secretary was instructed to communicate with attorneys of the C. D. Co. and ascertain what steps the people of the valley could take to get their interests represented in the hearing.

CHANCE FOR SMALL FARMERS.

Los Angeles Visitors Return and Buy For Subdivision Tract Near Calexico.

Among the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce excursionists last month was Joseph R. Loftus, who organized the Arrowhead Realty Co., which has 3850 acres near Cucamonga, including 1000 acres in vines. Mr. Loftus saw enough on his trip to satisfy him that Imperial Valley is the coming country, and this week he returned with Dr. M. P. Burnham and bought 480 acres in section 10, northwest of Calexico, from the "Three C's" outfit for \$40,000. The land is deeded, and therefore may be subdivided.

It is the purpose of Messrs. Loftus and Burnham to put the entire tract in good shape, plant vines and fruit trees upon a part of it, and offer the larger portion for sale in ten-acre lots to settlers desiring small farms for intensive cultivation. The land was in alfalfa before the overflow of New River, and is of the finest quality for vines and fruits.

SHORT OF POWER.

Attempt to Comply With Injunction Causing More Trouble.

The Liverpool Salt Company has renewed its demand that the injunction against flow of water through Imperial Valley canals into Salton Sea be enforced, and hearing of the contempt cases against officers of the C. D. Co. probably will be renewed. In the meantime the C. D. Co. is trying to obey the order to the extent of reducing the waste flow and is causing more trouble to users of water and power. District No. 5 is suffering from lack of water for irrigation, and the power plant is out of business a part of each day. Sufficient head is allowed to run the lighting circuits at night, but machinery depending upon electric power is idle several hours during the day.

THE "TOOLEY-STREET TAILORS" TAKE CONTEST TO COURT

Imperial County Officials Gravely Ordered to Show Cause Why They Should Not Pack Up and Move. Rehash of Old Charges of Fraud and Bribery in County-Seat Election.

An effort to institute a contest of the election whereby El Centro was made the county seat of Imperial county was made last Tuesday in Los Angeles by the "three tailors of Tooley Street," D. G. Aplin, Wilber Clark and J. E. Back, purporting to represent the city of Imperial.

The election was held in August, 1907, and the disappointed Imperialites began talking "fraud" and "contest" as soon as they knew they had been defeated. The matter was submitted to a reputable firm of attorneys, Hunsaker & Britt, and the case was investigated by the firm for some months and finally thrown up. When the reputable lawyers declined to bring suit or to have anything more to do with the matter, the case was taken up by E. A. Meserve and Shirley Ward, the Imperial soreheads having managed to raise some money with which to hire them.

In the meantime private "detectives" had been sleuthing about in the valley, gathering evidence, drawing pay and offering to sell out to El Centro. Following each refusal of El Centro men to pay blackmail to "detectives," threats of immediate contest proceedings floated down on the wind from Imperial and were treated as the vapors of a vacant mind. Time and again emissaries from Imperial came to El Centro and confidentially announced that "the contest was off" or would be called off if certain concessions were made in other matters.

Slept On Their Rights.

The time for proceeding under the statute governing election contests expired long ago, and the method chosen by the dissatisfied Imperialites was a petition for a writ of mandate ordering the county officers to show cause why they should not move from El Centro to Imperial. Such a petition was presented to the Second District Court of Appeals last Tuesday, and an alternative writ was issued, returnable April 15.

Holt the Target.

Most of the charges made by the petitioners are aimed at W. F. Holt, the founder of El Centro. It is alleged that he entered into a conspiracy with M. W. Conkling, one Brown, A. Casner, F. G. Havens and others to bribe voters, and spent \$100,000 to corrupt the election whereby the county seat was brought to El Centro.

The returns showed that El Centro got 563 votes; Imperial, 455; Brawley, 222. The charge is here made that 250 of the votes for El Centro are illegal.

More than 150 voters are alleged to have been bribed, and 110 are alleged to have been men not legally qualified to vote.

The election boards are alleged by the petitioners to have been under the domination of Holt, and to have done whatever he or his attorney, M. W. Conkling, demanded.

A. Casner, Deputy County Clerk, who attended to the registrations, is alleged in the petition to be an ex-convict, and to have been appointed to his position, prior to the election, by Holt.

After the registrations legally closed July 16, affiants charge that Casner took affidavits of voters and wrongfully added their names to the Great Register. More than fifty are alleged to have been allowed to vote who were not registered in time.

The polls instead of opening at the legal hour—6 o'clock—are alleged to have opened twenty minutes too early,

to allow a number of illegal voters to be rushed in. In excess of twenty are alleged to have been allowed to vote on the mere typewritten statement of Casner that their names were on the Great Register. Casner's typewritten statements were kept together by the election board but have been destroyed, it is asserted.

Imperialites Sold Votes.

Twenty-one voters who would otherwise have voted for Imperial as the county seat, are alleged to have been bribed to vote for El Centro, "which amounted to nothing as a town, having been just started" as the petition states crushingly.

According to these petitioners, when the polls closed it was discovered that the poll lists and the number of ballots did not compare; that voters were not required to submit to a comparison of their names with the register before voting, and that no list of the challenges made against any of the voters was kept, in spite of the demands of the bystanders, that a list of all challenges be kept. Affiants assert that the election board refused to swear the voters when challenged, but merely allowed the challenged voters to make off-hand statements as to their status, that the election board changed the voting lists and erased names therefrom.

Scattergun Charges.

Instead of immediately counting the votes at El Centro, it is averred that the ballots were allowed to remain unguarded in a large room where access could easily be had to them and that they were not counted until 8 o'clock that night.

While the counting of the votes was in progress, it is asserted by affiants that the bystanders were compelled to stand outside a rail and were unable to hear the votes being counted on account of the low tones in which the tellers read them out.

After being counted, the ballots are alleged to have been wrapped in an old newspaper and delivered to an employe of W. F. Holt, being deposited in Holt's bank for several hours where access was easy for Holt or his attorney.

Holt's attorney, M. W. Conkling, affiants naively point out, was to receive a fee of \$10,000 provided the El Centro party won the election.

In the precincts of Brawley, Calexico, Silsbee, Laguna and Hanlon, various election outrages are alleged.

In Imperial, one Joe Denn is alleged to have received \$250 to colonize eleven men to work for El Centro.

MUDDLED SURVEYS.

Priest Case Dismissed Because of Fatal Error in Land Description.

The case against Archie Priest, who is charged with cutting timber on government land in Imperial Valley, was dismissed in the United States court at Los Angeles because of erroneous description of land in the complaint. When Judge Wellborn learned that there are discrepancies in surveys so serious that a locator may find his entry a mile and a half from his land, he was greatly surprised and remarked that Congress should be asked to straighten out the matter promptly. He also instructed the District Attorney to so inform himself of land matters in Imperial Valley as to avoid in future such muddles as that made of the Priest case.