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BIDS FOR CONTRACT TO BUILD SEWERS

City Trustees Postpone Formal Award for Technical Reasons

Fifteen Contractors Seek the Job and Figure Closely on the Cost — Los Angeles Firm Puts in the Lowest Bid, Which is Less Than the Engineer's Estimate.

The Board of Trustees of the City of El Centro met last Tuesday night to open and consider bids for a contract to construct a sewer system. All members of the board were present, and the meeting was attended by a large number of contractors and interested citizens.

The city attorney advised the board that because of delay in filing certain formal documents, the Attorney-General had not given final approval to the papers in the bond issue, and until the money for bonds should be received from the State it would not be proper for the board to sign a contract. The bids could be opened, and the accepted bidder could be notified to hold himself in readiness to sign a contract.

On motion of Trustee Pellet, the board proceeded to open the fifteen bids presented. The bids were as follows: Newell Bros., \$36,961; E. R. Werdin, \$33,482.45; McBride, \$31,179; Mr. Hostetter, \$31,000; C. D. Vincent, \$30,470.20; McIntyre Cement Co., \$30,379; J. W. Martin, \$29,747; C. D. Hubbell, \$28,300; Geo. A. Rogers, \$28,269; Stevens & Lowell, \$27,282; California Ornamental Brick Co., \$27,219.65; M. N. Magnovich, \$26,891.45; A. S. Bent, \$26,660; J. D. Kneen, \$26,501; Frick & Ware, \$26,445.

On motion of Trustee Brown, all bidders over \$28,000 were permitted to withdraw their bids and their certified checks. The representative of the California Ornamental Brick Company asked permission to withdraw his check also, saying there were so many responsible lower bidders that he would not contest the matter, realizing that he hadn't even a fighting chance to get the contract. His request was granted.

Further consideration of the bids was postponed to Friday night, to give the city engineer time to check up the figures of the bidders in detail.

Frick & Ware, the lowest bidders, are Los Angeles men, and Frick is one of the oldest and most reliable contractors in that city.

"ARIZONA" TO-NIGHT

Park Committee Stock Company to Appear For the Benefit of the El Centro Park Fund.

Tonight, at the Holt Opera House, El Centro and Imperial Valley citizens will be given an opportunity to view the most ambitious effort of the Park Committee Stock Company in its presentation of "Arizona."

The play is given wholly by amateur talent, every character being taken by the El Centro young people who are anxious to help forward the project of securing for this city a public park. There is no division of proceeds with some outside promoters, and every cent netted is to go into the park fund.

This, of itself, should be an incentive to El Centro citizens to pack the Opera House at this performance, but the play is an attractive one, depicting the stirring scenes of an Arizona cavalry post, the love, romance and intrigue incident to the housing of a few women among many men in an out of the way post, and the meeting out of summary justice to the participants in an affair involving the honor of regimental officers.

"Arizona" has been presented on Western stages for several years and has always proved popular. The advance sale of seats at Dunaway's Drug Store indicates that a good audience will greet the local players to-night.

The principal characters are taken by people who have pleased El Centro audiences before and who doubtless will sustain their record for good work. "Estrella Bonham" is taken by

Miss Janice Meredith, and "Bonita Canby" is the role assumed by Miss Garnet Davis. They have the support of twenty local players, the caste being as follows:

Bonita Canby.....Garnet Davis
Estrella Bonham.....Janice Meredith
Lena Keller.....Mamie Keeney
Mrs. Canby.....Irene Butterworth
Miss McCullough.....Clara Johnson
Col. Bonham.....Marvin Moore
Mr. Canby.....F. L. Davis
Lieut. Hallock.....Charles Stevens
Capt. Denton.....Daniel A. Leonard
Dr. Fenlon.....Phil D. Swing
Tony Mostano.....J. J. Colby, Jr.
Capt. Hedgeman.....Gilbert S. Helms
Sergeant Keller.....Grover Keeney
Lieut. Young.....J. D. Large
Orderly.....Harry Hand
Sam Wong.....Owen Chick
Soldiers, ranch hands, etc.

HIGH LINE CANAL SURVEY

Lines Being Run For Data On Proposed Extension of Reclamation Service Canals.

The Reclamation Service has a party of fifteen men in the field making a survey from which estimates can be made of the cost of proposed high-line canal from Laguna Dam through Imperial Valley and along the easterly side of Salton Sea to the Coachella Valley.

Camp has been established at Old Beach, and the men are now working northerly from that point. According to their present lines, the new canal would cross the railroad tracks of the Southern Pacific about five miles southeast of Imperial Junction.

A peculiar feature was developed the past week, say these surveyors, in the discovery that the railroad station at Imperial Junction is located exactly on the spot where one of the steel tubes of the topographical survey of 1903 should be located. At various points, when this survey was made, hollow steel tubes, with point on one end and screw top on the other, were embedded in the earth, and within them were copies of the topographical map of the region.

It is estimated that about six weeks will be required to carry the survey through to the Coachella Valley.

SUGAR BEET PLANTATIONS

Several Half-Acre Tracts to Be Devoted to Tests by Sugar Company.

During the present week another step has been taken towards making definite tests of Imperial Valley soils for the purpose of raising sugar beets under expert direction. C. E. Paris received from the Lyons Beet Sugar Refining Company, of Lyons, New York, 130 pounds of tested beet seed for distribution to valley ranchers, who agree to plant experimental plots of one-half acre or more. This seed has been distributed to several persons and more will be placed during the ensuing week. Several portions are still available, and it is desired that anyone who wishes to test his land for sugar beet growing should at once call at the Holton Power Company's office, at Sixth and Main streets, El Centro, and receive seed and instructions for planting.

Half-acre tracts will be planted at once by R. A. Holt, George Lewis and James S. White, Jr., at Holtville; Wm. Griseth, H. B. Wright and C. N. Tufts, at Meloland; Fritz Kloke and Peter Barnes at Calexico; R. H. Clark at El Centro, and Peter Hovley at Brawley, Frank Salisbury, at Imperial, will secure some half-acre tracts in that vicinity for these tests.

HOLTON IMPROVEMENTS

New Wire Line, Power Plant and Ice House Nearing Completion.

The Holton Power Co. is putting up a new line of poles from El Centro to Holtville in order to string its own direct telephone wires, the telegraph line and the wires of the Imperial Valley Telephone Company across the right of way from the poles carrying the high-tension power line.

Rapid progress is being made in installation of the new power plant at Holtville, and the addition to the ice storage house at El Centro will be completed by March 1, at which time the old house will be filled to last season's capacity.

CROOKED METHODS OF LAND JUMPERS

Woman Says She Is Victim of the Skinner-Oxford Outfit

Paid For Location On a Contested Tract and Then She Was Swindled Out of Her Possessory Right, Is the Allegation of Plaintiff in a Suit Against Oxford.

Clark Oxford, who has had more or less interesting career in connection with land cases in Imperial Valley, and who until recently was a side partner of Sigel Skinner in various contest cases, has been made defendant in a case filed in the Superior Court of Imperial County this week, wherein Lizzie L. Smith is the plaintiff.

The plaintiff alleges in substance that on the 7th day of April, 1908, and for many months preceding this date, she was an actual settler and resident upon and remained in peaceable possession, under a claim of right, on the northwest quarter of section 10, township 16 south, range 15 east, according to the Imperial survey; that on April 7, 1908, the defendant, Clark Oxford, being aware that the plaintiff merely has a possessory right in this land, was desirous of purchasing her possessory right, and that at Holtville on this date he induced the plaintiff to enter into a contract with him, whereby plaintiff conveyed to Oxford all of her possessory right in the land in question. She alleges that the contract was duly signed, certified to and delivered into her keeping, and that by the terms of this contract Oxford was to pay the plaintiff for her possessory right the sum of \$1000 in cash within six months from its date or he was to deliver to her a secured mortgage note for said sum or price, the note to bear interest at ten per cent per annum.

The contract also provided, says the plaintiff, that if M. P. Smith, father of the plaintiff, should lose his claim to certain land then this contract should become null and void and the plaintiff should be entitled to take possession of the east half of the tract of land above described.

Lizzie L. Smith avers in her complaint that Oxford took possession of her house and land and still retains possession thereof; that Smith did not lose his claim to the land referred to, but on the contrary that he has long since sold and disposed of this land with the consent of both plaintiff and defendant; that plaintiff has performed all conditions of the contract on her part; that after six months from April 7, 1908, she made a demand for the payment of \$1,000 or the delivery of mortgage and note, but that defendant refused and he still refuses to deliver to the plaintiff either the money or the note and mortgage.

Plaintiff prays for judgment against defendant for the sum of \$1000 with interest at ten per cent from April 7, 1908, and for costs of suit and such other relief as the court may grant.

The complaint gives only a bare outline of the story told by Miss Smith to her counsel, T. M. McNamara Esq., a story which throws light upon the methods of the speculative contestants infesting Imperial Valley. The land is one of the tracts for which Sigel Skinner has a contest pending in the land office.

It was represented to Miss Smith that Skinner, in case he should win, could not use his preference right of entry, and that she could take possession of the land, which was unoccupied, and be in position to make the entry. She says she paid Oxford \$250 for locating her on the land, and that she built a house and lived on the claim. She alleges that Oxford imported some relations and wanted to put them in possession of the tract, and that he virtually ordered her to vacate and bullied her until she finally consented to give up the land for a consideration of \$1,000.

In brief, Miss Smith's story is that she was inveigled into holding the land for Oxford and paying him for the privilege, and then was dispossessed under promise of payment for her rights and never got a cent.

Sonoma appeals to State Health Board to find cause of epidemic of typhoid.

WANT PUBLIC VOTE ON SCHOOL LOCATION

Trustees Call for Meeting of Citizens to Select Site for a New Building

Have Authority to Decide, But They Desire Instructions Because of Difference of Opinion Among Patrons of the Schools—New Site On South Side Suggested.

Where shall El Centro locate its new school building?

This is a question which is being much discussed and one which seems to demand a public expression of opinion. To this end, Trustees R. E. Jauman and W. O. Hamilton have issued a call for a public meeting of qualified voters of the El Centro school district, to take place at the school building at 2 o'clock on the afternoon of Saturday, February 20, to "instruct and direct" the Board of Trustees concerning the purchase of a school site.

Numerous citizens have declared in favor of a site being selected in the district lying south of Main street, as they believe the general growth of the residential section will be in that direction. They hold that the Board of Trustees should not place an expensive building on the present school site on Commercial street, as the prospects are that with the coming of the San Diego & Arizona Railroad, and the general expansion of the city, the district will be a commercial one not suitable for school purposes.

Other patrons of the school are strongly in favor of its location on the north side of Main street, either on the present school grounds or on some site which may be secured, and they believe they can show that the greater number of school patrons will be accommodated by placing the school on the north side instead of taking it southward.

It is to be hoped that every patron of the schools will be in attendance and register his preference at the forthcoming meeting, so that the question may be settled promptly and steps may be taken at once to secure site and arrange details for the construction of the new building.

The Board of Trustees has it within its power to proceed and select such site as it deems best suited for the purpose, but in view of the presentation of a petition signed by numerous citizens, asking that the matter be submitted to the patrons of the school, the board has called the public meeting.

"UNITY" TROWEL COMING

Masonic Emblem to Reach El Centro in Its Trip Around the World and Will Live in Salton Sea.

The mystic "unity" silver trowel of Masonry will arrive in El Centro on the 27th of February, escorted by a corps of prominent Masons from Los Angeles and Pasadena. On the 28th the trowel will be taken by the Masons of Imperial Valley to Salton Sea and there with full Masonic ceremonies it will be dipped into the Salton Sea and then will resume its journey to other Masonic lodges until it circles the globe.

Three years ago this silver trowel was started on the round of lodges in New York, as an expression of unity amongst Masons, and the idea was evolved until it was decided that the "unity" trowel should be placed in the custody of every Masonic district in the world and finally returned to its place of starting. In each move it is accompanied by Masons who turn over the trowel to their brethren and they in turn forward it under escort to the next stopping place.

The Los Angeles and Pasadena Masons will come directly to El Centro and place the "unity" silver trowel in state in the local Masonic Hall. Early the next morning they will be taken with local Masons by automobile to Calexico, where the pilgrimage to Salton Sea will start.

A special train has been arranged for, and will leave Calexico at 9 o'clock, stopping at El Centro, Imperial and Brawley to take on parties.

The run will be made direct to Salton, the lowest spot reached by the Southern Pacific, 200 feet below sea level.

At this point the ceremonies of dipping the trowel into the waters of the inland sea will take place. Several addresses will be given and the special train will bring the visitors back to the valley early in the evening.

HAYWOOD SPEAKS HERE.

William D. Haywood, former secretary of the National Federation of Miners, spoke in the Holt opera house Friday night to an audience of about 200. A slight ruction between Haywood and the presiding officer of the meeting over a resolution which Haywood wanted the audience to endorse was one of the features of the meeting.

TALK FROM MOUNTAIN TOP

State Superintendent of Schools to Address County Teachers From Topmost Heights of Signal Mountain.

A novel feature of the next session of the Imperial County Teachers' Institute, which will open in El Centro March 15 and will continue one week, will be a trip by teachers and instructors to the very top of Signal Mountain, the peak which stands out alone in this valley, right in the line of the international boundary between United States and Mexico.

From this height will be wafted oratory and instruction, while the teachers sit at the feet of their leaders. State Superintendent Hyatt is to be the principal speaker, having accepted an invitation from County Superintendent J. E. Carr to be present at the institute sessions and make the address on the occasion of the Signal Mountain pilgrimage.

It is expected that forty-five teachers, outside of those engaged in the schools of El Centro, will be in attendance at this year's institute, and numerous visitors are also expected from outside points. Mark Keppel, County Superintendent of Schools of Los Angeles county and other Coast instructors will be here.

The Women's Section of the Ten Thousand Club has been requested to arrange for a public reception to the visiting teachers, and will take this matter under consideration at its next meeting.

It is probable that drives will be arranged by citizens, so that the teachers may become more familiar with the great valley in which they labor.

EXPERIMENT STATION

Senate Bill Provides For One In Imperial Valley and El Centro Offers Land.

Senate bill 349, introduced by Senator Wright in the state legislature authorizes the regents of the University of California to establish an agricultural experiment station in Imperial county, provided the land is obtained without cost to the State, and appropriate \$6,000 for carrying out the project.

The presidents of the El Centro Chamber of Commerce and the Ten Thousand Club have notified the regents that El Centro will provide a location for the station and any area of land required, without cost to the State, if the bill passes.

GOOD CABBAGE PRICES.

The first carload of cabbage sent out from Coachella Valley this season was contracted for by the California Vegetable Union at \$35 per ton, and the growers were jubilant, but the second car sold for \$41 per ton, and the highest hopes for the raisers were more than attained. The former price was \$6.00 per ton higher than the first carloads brought last season. The total cabbage acreage in the Coachella Valley will reach about 300 acres, and all of it is in fine condition. The bulk of the crop will be shipped during the first week in March. The Imperial Valley crop is making a good growth and the prospects are good for cabbage growers making a big thing out of their crops this season. Produce men who are in a position to know the market thoroughly predict that the high prices will continue until well into April.

EFFICIENT WORK BY COUNTY CHAMBER

Imperial Valley Getting Attention and Advertising in Los Angeles

Frank Wiggin Wants Valley Products For Display at Seattle, Especially Honey and Cotton—Dr. J. C. Blackinton Reports Results of Week's Work For Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. J. C. Blackinton, of El Centro, recently spent a week in Los Angeles as a representative of the Imperial County Chamber of Commerce. He returned last Saturday, escorting six persons, who had been induced by what they saw and heard at the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, to come to Imperial Valley and look over the field with a view to investment or settlement.

Dr. Blackinton reports that Miss Gifford, the lecturer employed to present the merits of Imperial County to the public, is doing effective work, and that the Imperial County exhibit attracts much attention. From forty to a hundred persons attend the lectures, and many of them make close inquiry for detailed information from the county representative in the exhibit hall.

Dr. Blackinton tells of a man from Australia who studied the exhibits and then announced that he would locate in the valley without making further investigation. "All I want to know", he explained, "is that you grow these things in your country. I shall go back to Australia and sell out all I have there, and return to make my home in Imperial Valley. I leave my children in Los Angeles as hostages. I don't need to see the valley first. I judge a country by its products, and the Imperial County exhibit is all I need to see. We can't grow such things in Australia."

Secretary Wiggins told Dr. Blackinton that he wants to see a good exhibit of Imperial County products at the Alaska-Yukon Exposition in Seattle, and will see that products are well arranged and displayed. Material will be forwarded from Los Angeles about March 25, and exhibits from the valley should be delivered at the Chamber of Commerce on or before that day. In a letter dated Feb. 3, Secretary Wiggins says:

"We would like for you to canvass the matter at as early date as possible and give us the number of packages and weight. We will then forward you the proper shipping labels and give you such instructions as will guarantee the safe delivery of your material in Seattle. You understand there is no expense connected with transportation of your goods after delivery to us, either at Los Angeles or San Francisco.

"If you desire any special installation other than general character adopted by the Commission, you will have to assume extra expense necessary to carry it out. All signs and labels will have to conform to general rules governing such, so if you do to supply either, kindly confer us before hand and we will do the same and submit the proportion.

"As far as honey is concerned, we can use ten or twenty gallons of extract from 100 to 500 pounds of honey. This of course could be disposed of after the Exposition and would be sufficient to reimburse the Association for contribution. We have never had any trouble in disposing of honey after an exposition. The Commission does not guarantee any return, but always remit the amount received for the sale of goods when ordered to dispose of them. We want from 30 to 50 bushels of cotton securely packed in crates so as to stand shipping by rail and boat."

Wiggin wants plenty of cotton and proposes to cover the end wall of the exhibition room with the stocks.

FRUIT TREES BLOSSOMING.

E. E. Forrester reports blossoms opening freely on almond, apricot, orange and lemon trees on his ranch west of El Centro. The peach and prune trees are setting full of buds, which will soon be open.