

SAN DIEGO AND EASTERN

A Story of Its Affairs Not Made Public Heretofore

"Genial Jack" McKetchum, vice president and general manager of the Nowhere and Whitherward railroad, spent a portion of the week in Imperial, his palace car being held up by the quarantine officers on the suspicion that it is afflicted with hollow horn. Jack is famous throughout the height and depth of the country. It is he to whom reference is always made by such favored newspaper expressions as: "One who knows," "It is semi-officially announced," and "It is stated on the highest authority."

Jack was kind enough this time to actually permit his name to appear in print when he was interviewed by the Press, and he committed but one offense in all he said. That was by repeating once more those words first spoken by Adam about making the desert to blossom as the rose.

But as usual his main talk was about railroads. Said he:

"You may quite me as saying that the real cause of the sudden termination of negotiations with the Phelps-Dodge people to build the road was that the Southern Pacific Company was cute enough to head off the San Diego promoters. There was a pretty definite understanding between the Phelps-Dodge company and the San Diego railroad people that the road would be built by the former. No contract had actually been entered into, but the deal was about to be consummated, and of a sudden President Marston was summoned East a few weeks ago. It was thought the summons was to close the deal.

"But that's where the San Diego people got left. The Southern Pacific men are not asleep. They have kept a very close watch on the San Diego and Eastern project from the first, and when they saw that the Phelps-Dodge people were getting ready to build the road, they started a counter movement, by threatening to invade the Phelps-Dodge territory in Southern Arizona. That would mean a long fight, and the contention was ended by an agreement solemnly entered into between the Phelps-Dodge people and the Southern Pacific Company whereby each would cease building toward the other's territory for three years—and there you are."

"Well, now that the Phelps-Dodge interest is out of the question for the time being, will not the Southern Pacific or the Rock Island build to San Diego?" was asked.

"All this talk about the Southern Pacific movements aside from continuing the Imperial and Gulf to Yuma is hot air," said he. "At the last moment, when it seemed as though the Phelps-Dodge people were going to build to San Diego, the Southern Pacific threw a force of men in here, and began making all kinds of pretended surveys. Why, when the men got here they had no instruments, and yet they went tearing about the country hither and yon, as busy as a briefless lawyer. They were thrown in here so unexpectedly that there was no provision for them to carry on the work, but the mere fact that the surveyors were here was sufficient to enable the officials in the East to convince the Phelps-Dodge people that they had a fight facing them if they proceeded further. Talk about the Southern Pacific Company building to the Gulf of California is all guff. There is no more reason why they should build there for some years than there is for them to build from Los Angeles to Catalina Is-

land, and it is just as probable that they will build to Catalina as it is that they will build to San Diego, unless they are driven to do so by some competing railroad.

Whether the company will adopt the Imperial and Gulf road as the main line from Old Beach to Yuma remains to be seen. There is no doubt that the surveyors have at last settled down to the proposition of making a careful survey to determine the feasibility of that route, as compared with the old one, and when the survey is completed, if you had eyes that would carry there, you would see the chief engineer or one of his assistants at the main office sit down with a lot of tables and charts and study over the question of distances and gradients and water supply and the need for avoiding the drifting sand on the old route, and when that work was finished, you would find that there was simply a question of dollars and cents in operating expenses, and if this was in favor of the Imperial route, as I think will be the case, you would see the Imperial road extended just as soon as material could be obtained.

"But to come back to the San Diego and Eastern railroad project, now don't

for a moment believe that the people of San Diego are through with this matter. The fact that the Phelps-Dodge people were ready to take it up and that the Southern Pacific people were ready to fight it, furnishes the best recommendation the road has, and you will see the San Diego and Eastern in junction with the Imperial and Gulf and the Nowhere and Whitherward here in Imperial within two years. The road is going to be built.

"You remember the famous speech of Daniel Webster at Rochester, do you not? Well, Daniel had been giving himself up to his one great weakness, and when he appeared on the rostrum he was hardly in condition to face an audience. But, nevertheless, he launched forth on his favorite theme, and when he had grown eloquent he said: 'The national debt must be paid,' and thrusting his hand into his pocket, he added: 'and it shall be paid, if I have to pay it myself.' I was in San Diego a few hours the other day, stopping over on my way from Timbuctoo to Shanghai, and I can tell you the people of that city have caught something of the spirit of Daniel Webster. They know that the road simply must be built or their town is ir-

retrievably lost, and they will come a good deal nearer building the road than Webster did to paying off the national debt."

Just then the chef appeared with a Bologna sausage in one hand and a ham sandwich in the other, and the reporter excused himself and left the genial railroad magnate to enjoy his sumptuous repast in private.

Almonds in Arizona

To THE EDITOR:—I notice in a recent issue of your paper in answering "Subscriber" from Tancred on almond growing, you say none are grown except in California. We Arizonians are quite proud that we can grow them in the Salt River valley. There are quite a number of orchards in this valley. This is my fourth year in charge of the orchard owned by J. M. Locke, of Cincinnati, O. It is a good paying property.—F. H. SIMMONS, Mesa, Ariz.

We are glad to know it and hope the future will be satisfactory also.—Pacific Rural Press.

A Salt River farmer invited a real estate agent to prepare an advertisement of his place as for sale. The agent prepared the notice and read it to the farmer, whereupon the latter declared: "I believe I'll not sell. I have been looking for just such a place all my life, and did not know I had it."—Phoenix Democrat.



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