

IMPERIAL VALLEY PRESS

Official Paper of Imperial County

VOL. VII

EL CENTRO, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1907.

NO. 37

OPENING THE GATEWAYS OF THE IMPERIAL VALLEY

Orders to Go Ahead With Track Indicate Early Direct Connection With the East. Greater Imperial County May Follow Negotiations With Mexico. Possible Waterway and Gulf Port.

Last Saturday a party of Los Angeles men having interests on the Mexican side of the line, including Harry Chandler and other stockholders of the C. M. company, were piloted by Superintendent Bowker on a trip to the front of construction work on the Inter-California railroad, which is an extension of the Imperial Valley line, headed for Yuma by way of the C. D. Co's dam and the lower heading.

From Mexicali the road runs through the C. M. ranch, and there are to be four stations on the ranch lands, a part of which may soon be cut up and colonized and so converted from a cattle range into small, highly productive farms. During the overflow of the Colorado a great area of this land was under water. Previous to the overflow it was a bare plain, a wide stretch of dusty desert. The water brought seed and now thousands of acres are covered with a heavy growth of willow, and there are large patches of tules, weeds and grasses. The soil is light, containing very little clay and very fertile. Within a year probably the willows will die for want of moisture, when the growth may be burned off and the land will be ready for the plow. Tules and other lighter growth are being burned now and some of the land will be plowed and seeded this season.

Lycurgus Lindsay and associates have bought a tract of 10,000 acres adjoining the C. M. lands on the west through which the new main canal for the West Side runs, and intends to sow barley and oats on several hundred acres this winter.

BORDER ZONE SETTLEMENT

Some of the best land in the valley lies on the Mexican side, but as it may not be sold without the Mexican government's approval, and the policy of Mexico is to prevent the occupation of land near the border by American settlers, it is held chiefly by corporations and used for grazing and has not acquired the market value of land on the American side.

Unless Lower California becomes American territory by treaty and purchase, colonization must be conducted by companies having Mexican charters and the settlers must be either stockholders of the corporations or leasehold tenants. Mexico will not consent to individual ownership of border lands by Americans, because of the possibility of international troubles arising from the presence within her lines of a large number of settlers who might not be disposed to adapt

themselves to Mexican laws and customs.

POSSIBLE ANNEXATION

It is not impossible that Lower California may be acquired by the United States. Negotiations to that end have been going on and a bill authorizing the purchase will be introduced during the present session of Congress by one of the California senators. In event of the passage of such a bill and completion of the purchase, several hundred thousand acres of irrigable land will be added to Imperial Valley and much of it doubtless will be sold in small tracts to settlers. Naturally the region lying between the Colorado river and the Cocopah Mountains, from the present boundary to the head of the Gulf of California, would be made a part of Imperial county. It is not contiguous to any other county, and it has not sufficient population to constitute a new county.

A GREATER COUNTY

Annexation to Imperial county of the triangle bounded by the Colorado, the Cocopah range and the present international line, comprising approximately 1,800 square miles or 1,150,000 acres, opens up vistas of magnificent possibilities. Roughly estimated, a third of the area may be irrigated, more than a third is watered by the annual overflow of the Colorado and is capable of supporting vast herds of cattle, and only a small area of land near the foothills seems to be worthless. Because of the unequalled fertility of soil and the climatic conditions which make one acre of silt land the equivalent in productivity of ten acres of the best farm land elsewhere, the Imperial Valley, from the north end of Salton Sea to the junction of the Hardy and the Colorado, is capable of supporting on small farms a population or more than a million.

OUTLET TO TIDEWATER

When the San Diego and Eastern railroad is built there will be three outlets from the valley to market by rail: to the East via El Paso; to Los Angeles on the north, and to San Diego and tide water directly west. But there is another possible outlet to the south which may mean more to Imperial Valley than any other when the Panama canal shall be opened. Beltran Slough, from a point five miles south of the boundary line and about fifteen miles by rail from Calexico, can be converted into a navigable channel connecting with the Hardy Colorado, at a cost of about \$25,000. Such a channel would give water transportation from almost the centre of the Imperial

country to a port at the head of the gulf, whence the products of the valley could be shipped to the east by way of the Panama canal.

A LOOK AHEAD

By the time of the opening of the Panama canal, Imperial Valley will be producing the earliest and best citrus fruit in the world, more and better cotton to the acre than Texas, figs, dates, hay, grain and innumerable other crops in great quantities, and the South and the East will be ready to take the bulk of the valley's products. Refrigerating cargo ships are as practicable as refrigerating cars, and no transshipment being necessary, perishable freight may be sent east by water as safely and more cheaply than by rail. Where rail and barge canal meet, a busy inland port will be brought into existence, and at the head of the gulf there will be a port for deep water vessels. Branch railroads and electric railways will gridiron the valley and serve as feeders to the main east and west roads and to the canal, and Imperial county will be in fact as well as in name an agricultural and industrial empire, having a deep water port of her own and independent of all other Pacific coast shipping points.

That is a look ahead, but considering the rapidity of the march of progress in the Southwest, it may not be a very long look ahead.

ON THE MAIN LINE

In the mean time, the valley will have direct rail connection with eastern markets, for it will soon be on the line of through traffic between El Paso and the Southern California ports. The track of the Inter-California was laid last Saturday to a point 38 kilometers, or 23 1-2 miles, from Calexico toward Yuma and the grade was ready about ten miles in advance of the rails. The work completed fulfilled the conditions of the Mexican concession, and the superintendent of construction was ready to quit or go ahead.

ORDERS TO GO AHEAD

On Monday morning the superintendent received telegraphic orders to go ahead with track-laying to the 52-kilometer point, an advance of more than eight and a half miles, which will leave a gap of less than ten miles between the "front" and the end of the track on the levee. A part of the gap is already graded, but the line probably will strike the levee at the end of the Clarke dam instead of connecting with the end of the levee track, making a few more miles of grade and rail necessary. If further go-ahead orders are given, the line can be completed this winter.

One hundred men and 300 mules are at work on the grading, 140 men are in the track gang and 60 men are on trestle and bridge work. Heavy steel is being laid upon a substantial, well finished road bed, the right of way is being cleared and fenced, and depot sites are being graded. The station building at Mexicali is nearly completed and four others will be put up at once along the line.

GREAT GRAPES, HOW THEY GROW!

Three Crops a Year the Regular Stunt of Young Vines in the Imperial Valley.

RAISINS FINER THAN FRESNO'S

Asparagus on the Corwin Ranch Has Jack's Beanstalk Beaten to a Frazzle—Successful Experiments with Fruits by an Expert Grower.

Remarkable results have been obtained in fruit-growing on the W. S. Corwin ranch, three and a half miles north of El Centro, particularly in growing certain varieties of grapes. Mr. Corwin has fifty acres in grapes, and some of the vines are three years old. Several varieties produce two and three crops a year, and red emperors bear continuously. This week, in the middle of December, Mr. Corwin brought into town a quantity of ripe red emperors in large clusters. The grapes were firm, well colored and in every way fit for the table.

Among the varieties so far found adaptable to soil and climatic conditions here are malagas, muscats and purple Damascus. Only a few vines of the latter variety have been set out, but it has been found that the grapes grown here are superior to those of other districts. The muscat of Alexandria grows to perfection and makes a finer raisin here than it does in the famous raisin district of Fresno, besides being a month earlier in readiness for market. The dry heat of Imperial Valley and entire immunity from fog and rain during the curing season, make this an ideal raisin district. Mr. Corwin has made raisins of his muscats and has satisfied himself that raisins will give returns of better than \$300 an acre.

"Mildew does not come upon grapes here," says Mr. Corwin, "and it is necessary only to keep out phylloxera to make this the best and most profitable grape-producing region in the world. There is no danger of the Anaheim disease getting in, for the dry heat will prevent it, but that same dry heat is just what phylloxera thrives in, and the most rigid measures must be taken to prevent its introduction. Cuttings from infected districts will be smuggled in unless every consignment purporting to be something other than vines is inspected. You cannot exaggerate the importance of extreme vigilance in this matter."

Apricots, peaches, plums, pomegranates and figs are some of the fruits grown successfully on the Corwin ranch. Figs do particularly well, and Mr. Corwin says they are better than the same varieties grown in other parts of the state.

There are forty acres of asparagus on the ranch, and the things that asparagus does are almost beyond belief. Apparently the most serious objection to asparagus culture here is the back-ache

incurred in cutting the sprouts. Asparagus is ready to cut on February 1, and the season lasts 100 days. The growth is nine or ten inches in twenty-four hours. Rust does not attack asparagus in this climate. Mr. Corwin declines to make an estimate of the returns from an acre of asparagus, because the figures might seem to be the product of an overheated imagination, but he says the business of raising the vegetable for market is a good one for a man who has no rusty hinges in his back.

Mr. Corwin has been a fruit-grower, nurseryman and irrigation farmer for many years, and his experience and knowledge are of inestimable value to the horticultural interests of the valley.

WATER COMPANY AFFAIRS

Calexico Objects to Stock Increase and Delays Nomination

Calexico stockholders of Water Co. No. 1 met last Saturday night to discuss the proposed increase of capital stock and to consider the selection of a candidate for director. J. B. Hoffman presided and J. A. Morrison acted as secretary. The stock proposition was debated pretty thoroughly, and a motion by Edward Carr in favor of the increase was defeated by a decisive vote.

Opposition to the Silsbee plan of naming three candidates representing Silsbee, El Centro and Calexico districts and combining in support of them developed, and on motion of Mr. Rockwood a committee of five was appointed to meet to-day and choose a candidate by ballot. The nominating committee consists of Edward Carr, E. S. McCollum, J. B. Hoffman, Peter Barnes and F. Kloke.

An adjourned meeting of the stockholders will be held to-night.

Water for West Side.

Engineer Hermann, of the California Development Company was in El Centro yesterday. He said the contractors who had a strike on their hands last week have secured a new force of men and are going ahead with work on the canals. Work on the Mexican side will be finished in about two weeks or less. If all goes well, says the engineer, the canals will be completed and water will be supplied to No. 8 by the first of March.

Trains Below The Line

Local train service on the Inter-California railroad will begin very soon, and when the line is finished at least one through passenger train between El Paso and Los Angeles and one or more freight trains will use the new track. Calexico, Heber, El Centro, Imperial and Brawley then will be on a main line of transcontinental traffic, and the present inconveniences of travel between valley points and Los Angeles will be abolished.

Bar Association.

The Bar Association of Imperial County has adopted a constitution and by-laws, and officers will be elected in the first week in January. There are twelve resident attorneys in the county.