

CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper.

SCHOOL LAND SUGGESTIONS.

LAKE VIEW, Utah Co.,
January 31, 1896.

With the advent of Statehood to Utah, there are some very important questions that now confront many of our citizens, especially those who are and have been for many years located and have made homes through much hard labor upon what is known as school land. After many years of toil, privation and self-sacrifice, we have built up our little homes upon lands which to all appearances was worthless and ill-adapted to produce a bare living for either man or beast. It is true there are many school sections throughout the State that are not by any means to be despised, because their fertility and location are equal to more favored lands which would readily bring today \$100 and upwards per acre. It will then be conceded by all fair minded persons, since all school lands are not alike profitable, that a universal price should not be charged. Take for instance school section No. 16, township 6 south, range 2 east, situated in Lake View, Utah county; and there you will find that so sandy is the soil that after all the years of cultivation it is yet impossible to raise garden vegetables enough to supply the table of an ordinary family the year round. Not only is the soil of itself poor, but the shifting and drifting of the sands by high winds and storms often brings destruction to our labors and disappointment to our expectations as to eating a dainty morsel like others who occupy more favored spots of mother earth.

As our lawmakers now proceed with their legislative work, we, their constituents, anxiously watch every action taken upon this important subject of school lands. Upon them depends much whether we shall have to leave our homes because of our inability to buy them or remain and toil for years to pay a heavy price for the improvements that already have taken us years to make. It is not for me to dictate to our legislative body or to those who may be appointed as land commissioners as to what price should be set upon our school lands, for I believe the men whom we had confidence in and voted for last November will deal justly by us as well as to themselves and to the State; but if my audacity can be overlooked I might make a few suggestions that in my opinion if carried out would be satisfactory both to the settlers of school lands and to the authorities of our new State.

Would it be too unreasonable for us to expect one or more disinterested persons of our own choosing and residents of our own locality to be appointed to meet with some other appointees of the powers that be, and examine the school lands and put a valuation thereon? In the event of the settler refusing to purchase at the valuation price, should not the improvement of the settler be appraised and the purchaser of the land compelled to pay the appraised value thereof? There is

another important point to which I would like to draw your attention. There are a great many settlers upon school land whose industry and frugality cannot be questioned, but whose ambition has been to build comfortable houses, fences, barns, etc., etc., and what little money they have earned, has all been spent upon these improvements, and today few would be able to buy their own homes if they were compelled to pay down spot cash for them. Now, my opinion is, if a little time was given to pay for their homes, say from three to seven years, with the privilege of paying sooner if possible, and when paid a clear title be given them, the settlers would be incited to greater exertions and soon our sterile school lands would become fertile and valuable and from them the revenue of our State would be increased, thus bringing about a consummation of the purposes for which these lands were appropriated by our government to the new State of Utah.

Yours respectfully,
NIELS LARSEN.

A WORK FOR THE RAILROADS.

The following communication was written for the News many months ago, when there was quite a newspaper controversy regarding railway affairs in Utah, growing out of a conference of the managers of the two important lines, who met in this city to discuss matters pertaining to the interests of their respective companies, and concerning which widely diversified rumors of increased and extortionate rates, discriminations and combinations against other less powerful common carriers, were set afloat. It was written with a view to commenting in a spirit of fairness on the railway situation in Utah as it had been and was. It never left the writer's possession, however, until a day or two ago; when it was handed in with the remark that perhaps present circumstances would justify an explanation or at least a statement of the local railway situation. The News believes in a fair hearing all round, and therefore gives place to the communication with pleasure.

The completion of the overland line across the continent, universally regarded as the consummation of the most daring enterprise the world had ever seen, brought Utah in close communication with the commercial world, and invited the attention of capital to her varied resources and attractions. If it is urged, as it often has been, that interior territory was neglected in favor of eastern or western terminals, it may also be justly said that the immense transcontinental traffic at first commanded the entire efforts of the lines to handle it, while at the same time the almost uninhabited country through which they ran offered no local business and it could not be created until the slow process of time made possible the settlement and civilization of that which to the memory of young men was thought to be correctly termed "The Great American Desert."

The advent of another line into the Territory (projected, built, controlled and operated by far-sighted western men), traversing from east to west the most fertile valleys and forming an important link in another transcontinental route, inaugurated an aggressive policy which marked a new era in the development of our resources and afforded the advantages of competition so necessary to prosperous communities. They neither asked nor received land grants or subsidies, but invested their capital in an enterprise which was extra hazardous from the very nature of the country it benefited, and expecting only the fair returns on their money which their treatment of the localities they served merited and to which they were justly entitled.

Has the attention of the two principal lines toward the varied and often conflicting interests in the Territory been characterized by that degree of consideration that is shown other communities similarly situated by their common carriers? It is maintained that it has. Conditions which contribute to the advancement of cities are not always controlled by the railroads engaged in the transportation of their traffic. Other cities more favorably situated geographically with reference to the markets of the world, having more productive territory tributary to them, and populated with an enterprising element, often draw the business of large areas to their doors, and railroads are frequently attracted by their growth.

Since the advent of railway competition in the Territory, at least one of the lines has never ceased its systematic, intelligent, attractive and expensive advertisement of Utah. What assistance has Salt Lake City given in this meritorious work?

As regards the exorbitance in freight rates and the reported advances made, let them be treated as investigation proves them to be. At the conference of railway representatives and the Chamber of Commerce held in this city in October, 1892, it was shown by a comparison of the tariffs that the class rates between Salt Lake City and points in the Beaver and Sanpete valleys; in a sparsely settled, mountainous country, were as low and in some instances lower, than the rates charged in some portions of Kansas and Nebraska in a thickly populated agricultural district for the same distance, where rates are regulated by state laws and where the cost of railway construction is materially less. These rates have been still further reduced, as noticed recently in a morning paper. Within a year the rates on ore from Eureka to the Utah smelters have been reduced 33 1-3 per cent, while a substantial reduction followed from Bingham, and these rates remain. The rates on wool and live stock from points in the Territory have not been advanced, but the tariff rates simply restored from the very low special rates which the railroads gave last June and under which these commodities were moved. The sheep men could only obtain nominal advances on their wool during the summer and were unable at that time to realize on their wethers which in former years were sold after shearing and trailed to eastern feeding grounds. The overstocked ranges would not support them, the banks