

## WYOMING LANDS.

Paper Read Before the Wyoming Industrial Convention, Cheyenne, Feb. 4th, 1903, by C. E. Wantland of Salt Lake and Denver.

It is generally admitted that "Land is the basis of all wealth." A few shrewd men in each section of Wyoming have recognized the truth of this and the great opportunities for land development and have built up great farms and ranches and irrigation enterprises, but generally the people of the state have ignored the favorable conditions and have considered that they had "land to burn," and state legislatures have not taken the steps necessary to promote colonization and publish to the world the true story of the marvelous opportunities existing here for successful home making. Is proof wanted?

Wyoming contains 62,000,000 acres, of which Uncle Sam still offers for settlement more than 40,000,000 acres.

From an official report concerning the proposed state of Wyoming, issued in 1883, we find that the United States senate committee reporting on the admission of Wyoming, estimated that about 10,000,000 acres could be reclaimed by irrigation, and about 4,000,000 acres could be cultivated without irrigation, and that about 43,000,000 had been expended for irrigation works. There was then in the state about 2,000,000 head of live stock, including about 1,500,000 cattle. The population was estimated at 166,000, and the value of live stock \$75,000,000.

The value of the lands presented to the state by Congress was estimated at about \$35,000,000, and it was claimed that "if the receipts from this great patrimony are properly guarded, ample revenue will be afforded for all public institutions and the education of the children of the state for all time to come."

The memorial to Congress from the state legislature of 1887, asking for a school fund, included a request for donations of land, including "a proper percentage of the proceeds of sales of all public lands within the state for the purpose of making and improving public roads, constructing ditches or canals to effect a general system of irrigation of the agricultural lands of the state."

The United States census of 1900 shows Wyoming's population to be 92,000; number of farms and ranches, 6,000; acres irrigated, 600,000. It also shows 5,000,000 sheep and 650,000 cattle, thus reversing the situation found 15 years ago and proving it to be true that Wyoming is now a sheep state.

The state now owns 3,000,000 acres of school lands of which about one-third is leased, and has about 1,000,000 acres selected on special grants, nearly all of which is leased. Revenues from state lands amount to about \$100,000 per annum. State lands are not worth what the senate committee estimated and the receipts do not support the state institutions and educate the children.

These illustrations cannot be considered as arguments against the true worth of Wyoming lands but can be used to direct attention to the grand opportunity before this convention and the present legislature, to put in motion the forces necessary to send to the world the truth about the opportunities here for the investment of capital, and to organize such an agitation as will assist Wyoming's able men at Washington to secure legislation for the improvement of the public lands in order that a greater proportion of the acreage may be put into the hands of men who will control, improve and pay taxes upon it.

The total assessed value of all property of the state is about \$38,000,000, of which farming and grazing land and improvements are valued at \$8,800,000; town lots and improvements, \$5,900,000; cattle and sheep, \$11,500,000.

Now, assuming that the real value of the state's property is four times \$38,000,000, and compare it with the real value of the public lands of the state and the value of the live stock that uses these lands, and you will realize the importance of the public domain as affecting state taxation and development.

The solution of the public land question is the great factor affecting Wyoming's agricultural, grazing and mining interests, and with this properly and promptly handled, the growth of the state will surely astonish the world.

The rainbow of promise in Wyoming's sky is the following from the last message of President Roosevelt:

"The sound and steady development of the west depends upon the building up of the homes therein. Much of our prosperity as a nation has been due to the operation of the homestead law. On the other hand, we should recognize the fact that in the grazing region, the man who corresponds to the homesteader, may be unable to settle permanently if only allowed to use the same amount of pasture land that his brother, the homesteader, is allowed to use of arable land. One hundred and sixty acres of fairly rich and well watered soil, or a much smaller amount of irrigated land, may keep a family in plenty; whereas, no one could get a living from 160 acres of dry pasture land, capable of supporting at the outside only one head of cattle to every 10 acres."

"In view of the capital importance of these matters, I commend them to the earnest consideration of Congress, and if Congress finds difficulty in dealing with them from lack of thorough knowledge of the subject, I recommend that provision be made for a commission of experts specially to investigate and report upon the questions involved."

"This convention and the legislature should certainly follow the action of the National Live Stock association at its recent national convention at Kansas City, and endorse the recommendations of the president."

If we cannot point with great pride to the land history of Wyoming's early days, and cannot ask our new friends to "judge of the future by the past," we can justly praise the founders of the state—the pioneers who crossed the plains, braved the storms and gave their lives to the upbuilding of a commonwealth which is now established upon a solid and conservative basis; practically out of debt; with honest and capable officers, with laws and state institutions better than can be found generally in other new states.

Wyoming land is now on a safe basis and with progressive legislation and intelligent promotion, certainly great progress can be expected. To a greater extent than in any other state land here will be affected by state and national legislation. The fact that leading business men now meet in convention to discuss measures affecting the state's welfare is a great gain. A few

years ago it would have been said, "What's the use?" Wyoming is handicapped, progress cannot be forced. What has brought about the change? Important rational legislation and the development operations of a few brave men. Senator Carey proved his faith in irrigation reservoir construction and proved by the operations at Wheatland that agricultural success in eastern Wyoming was not a dream. H. C. Bigelow and others utilized the waters of Buck's Fork and reclaimed the desert lands near Bridger's home, and southwestern Wyoming became known as an agricultural district. W. F. Cody laughed at panic and disaster and planned and constructed great works in northern Wyoming, and industrious settlers from Utah moved into the Big Horn basin, and that great farming section was opened to the world. Another captain of industry, Willis G. Emerson, appeared and brushing aside natural obstacles and Wyoming croakers, forced the development of a great mining district at Grand encampment, and another strange Wyoming story is now sent out to the mining world.

Another Moses must appear to force the opening of the Wind River reservation built up central Wyoming and give great new mining and irrigation districts to the west. The day of the Indian is in the past. The iron horse, the farmer and miner want to use the hunting grounds which our red brethren have held in idleness. When the efforts of Warren, Clark and Mondell finally succeeded and Uncle Sam jumped into the irrigation ring, and declared that the proceeds from future sales of public lands would hereafter be devoted to irrigation development, it was a great day for Wyoming. And all this has just happened. The present looks good.

What of the future? A great new responsibility appears. Colonization is now a most important subject and deserves careful attention by the legislature and business men of the state. To colonize is as important as to construct irrigation enterprises.

Constructive legislation is necessary. The operations of the National Irrigation Act will force changes in the public land laws. The development of government irrigation works: extension and regulation of forest reserves; the improvement of public land and stock stations and irrigation investigations have an important bearing upon the value and use of the lands already owned and to be selected hereafter by the state, as well as the lands owned and cultivated by farmers and stock raisers. Possibly the prediction of the senate committee may yet come true and the state institutions and schools of the state may be supported from the proceeds of state lands.

We are living in days of prosperity. We are not passing through the days of 1893—in the "valley of the shadow of death." The fortunes of war gave to this nation new lands across the Pacific and this, with the development of the Pacific coast states, has brought a new demand for the products of the mountain states. The grain, cattle and sheep raised in Wyoming can be disposed of in the north, south, east and west and the growth of the mining industry means an increased demand at home for the products of the farms and orchards.

The absolute necessity for a greater hay supply in order that live stock may be fed in winter makes sure a good return from irrigation districts where grain cannot be raised at a profit for shipment outside of the state.

The future is safe, good prices are certain for farming and grazing land because good prices are sure for what is produced from such land. A favorable climate; practically no debt; good educational institutions and the best irrigation and general laws are strong points to attract new settlers. But something more is necessary in order that the competition from other districts may be met and a fair share of

the great new colonization movement under way may be secured. Wyoming is evenly balanced. Farming, stockraising and mining will go hand in hand in future development, and this strength should be recognized in future legislation. Manufacturing should be encouraged; home industries should be supported. The wealth of Wyoming now goes largely to support the business men of other states. Mining laws should be improved so that Wyoming should be at the head of the procession in this as it is now in irrigation matters.

Mining taxation should be put upon a basis of net earnings. Forestry legislation and protection should be provided.

A diatribe irrigation law should be planned for the future.

A state board of trade and immigration should be supported.

Surely, if Wyoming receives about \$10,000 a year from Uncle Sam as its natural share of the proceeds from public land sales, a similar sum could properly be appropriated to maintain an advertising bureau. Wyoming is now advertised too much by Broncho Bustin shows; as the seat of war between cattle and sheep herders and as a state in which the public lands are being stolen. It should be advertised by state fairs, permanent exhibits, a state bureau of immigration and by press agents who would travel and deny falsehoods and spread the truth about the resources and attractions of the state.

At the Louisiana Purchase exposition, Wyoming should be properly advertised and permanent exhibits should be maintained at Denver and Chicago.

The newspapers of the state should be supported better. The state land board and state engineer's department should be put upon a basis to enable them to properly protect the lands and irrigation interest, plan experimental farms, and anticipate the demands of the future because of the operations of the national irrigation act, forest reserve measures and probable interstate complications.

Hold over members of the legislature should be constituted a permanent committee with a state fund at their command to investigate conditions at home and in other states and recommend legislation.

A million people are wanted in Wyoming. Homes can easily be made for them.

A great railroad officer says, "Land without population is a wilderness; population without land is a mob."

Wyoming has many thousands of acres properly called "A wilderness." A proper effort can get for this wilderness thousands of people from other states, some of whom will, otherwise, compose part of the great landless mob when the next period of depression comes to the country.

Other states and countries are securing new settlers. They don't get them by dreaming that they want them. They hustle. Business men of the south finally got tired of talking about the war and wondering why colonization went to the western prairies. They woke up and their strongest men went to the east where the money is and talked there of the resources of the south, and business men and railroad officers worked together and built up the new south. They told the farmers from Iowa, Illinois and other states what they had to offer and got them. They told eastern capitalists that cotton should be manufactured where it was grown, and it was done. What the south did and what Oklahoma did, Wyoming can do. Settlers can be brought in and capital can be secured to manufacture wool in the west where it is produced.

Canada has better land laws than Uncle Sam and spends a quarter of a million dollars a year to advertise its lands, and pays a commission to agents in the United States to send it farmers. Thousands of young men from this country go each year to Canada to establish homes under a foreign flag. At

15 years of age they can file on a homestead in Canada and prove up while living on adjoining land with their families while here they must be 21 and take chances of being branded as criminals if they prove up at all in an arid state.

Canada furnishes maps and pamphlets to show home-seekers where her lands are located and what can be done with them. Uncle Sam does not have time to get out maps and turns loose the prospective home-seeker to find a good 160 acres of arid land if he can with the certainty that the grass all around it will be quickly stepped on by somebody else. We hope when the work under the National Irrigation law is inaugurated Uncle Sam will also do something to put the non-irrigable lands into condition for home-seekers.

The state of Wyoming can afford, in the meantime, to furnish proper information to home-seekers about government lands within its borders and what it can to back up its senators and representatives in Washington to try to have the laws so amended that the grand old homestead law can be made to do for the upbuilding of the arid west what it did so successfully for the prairie states.

Among the great practical blessings that can be secured for Wyoming will be lower rates of taxation and lower interest rates. The rapid development of its industries should bring lower tax rates and the investment of state land money in farm and ranch loans will bring lower interest rates for the benefit of farmers and ranchers, and nobody will be harmed if the state helps its own people because the expanding industries of the state will require more money than local capital can supply for many years.

National legislation can do much to promote Wyoming's prosperity and all the conditions are favorable for successful advertising and promotion efforts to secure new capital and new people, which state legislation and co-operation between business men of the state can surely supply.

C. E. WANTLAND.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

"Henry, my dear," said Mrs. Cobwiger, in a tone of voice that told him only too plainly what was coming, for he had heard it every New Year's eve since they were married. "I think it is about time that I ask this, for the doctor has often said you would be better if you gave up drinking, and I can see myself that smoking is making you nervous, while all the neighbors know that if you didn't play poker I would have a fine time once in a while. Even though you think neither of yourself nor of me you should think of Freddie, who is getting to be a big boy now. Just ask yourself if this is the proper atmosphere for him to be growing up in."

"But, tut!" yawned Cobwiger. "I see you have started in on one of your moral strains again. Now try to be a little reasonable even though you are a woman. You know very well that if I swore off all those things you just mentioned you would be the saddest woman in the world in a little while."

"Henry," she sobbed, "how can you say I would be sad so soon if you were a perfect man?"

"Because, my dear," he replied, "with a self-satisfied smile, 'when Lent came around there would be nothing left for you to beg me to give up.'—New York Times.

## Mother's Recommendation.

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