

Henry Ford Will Purchase the Seaboard, According to Report

Rumor Says Automobile Wizard Will Acquire Railroad if He Secures Muscle Shoals; Would Give Him Direct Communication With Big Sea Ports

The report that Henry Ford, the automobile manufacturer, planned to purchase the Seaboard Air Line Railway could not be verified by the Monroe officials of the road. They have heard nothing of the proposed sale of the road other than newspaper dispatches. Most of the employees, it is believed, would welcome Ford control as it is highly probable that he will establish a minimum wage of \$6 per day if he does buy the property.

Raleigh, Jan. 23.—Purchase of the Seaboard Air Line Railway through which he will be able to find an outlet from the gigantic development contemplated at Muscle Shoals, Alabama, will be undertaken by Henry Ford in the event that his negotiations for the purchase of the nitrate plant and hydro-electric plant in Northern Alabama are brought to a successful consummation, declares the Raleigh News & Observer.

That is the substance of an able-bodied rumor that got into circulation in Raleigh Saturday, and in the second day of its life Friday gained strength. It came into North Carolina through the medium of private wires maintained by bond brokers, connecting with the New York Stock Exchange. In New York Saturday Seaboard bonds advanced two points, after months of stagnation and decline.

Road 3,123 Miles Long

Through the Seaboard, the Muscle Shoals development will have direct connection with every port in the Southeast from Tampa, on the west coast of Florida, to Norfolk, with easy connection with the ports of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. The road owns and operates 3,123 miles of road, extending from Washington to Birmingham, and as far south as Tampa. Direct lines run to Jacksonville, Savannah, Wilmington and Norfolk.

Bankers and railroad men in Raleigh who have heard the report are disposed to give it serious consideration, and go further with speculation as to the probable purchase by the Detroit Wizard of the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio, which would connect with Mr. Ford's other railroad property at Cincinnati. With all three systems of roads, he would assume a commanding position in the transportation business, and establish a direct connection with the Detroit interests, and those that he contemplates for the South.

The Seaboard Air Line Railway is valued on a cost basis of \$188,577,216 which includes the cost of building the 3,123 miles of road, and purchase of equipment. The road cost \$162,215,216, and the equipment cost \$26,362,000. The Seaboard Air Line Railway is capitalized at \$200,000,000, and has a funded debt of \$131,380,800. S. Davies Warfield, of Baltimore, is chairman of the board of directors.

Throughout the period of depression, the Seaboard, never an outstanding financial success, has been known and rumors of receivership have been current at times. It is the opinion of many that if Mr. Ford, who is said to have one hundred and eighty-five million dollars in cash in his bank, desires to buy the road he can obtain it on almost any terms that he desires to make. Seaboard stock sold on the New York market Saturday for 1 1/2, an advance of 1/4 points from Thursday's closing.

An outline of the gigantic scheme of development planned by Henry

Ford in Northern Alabama was printed in the News and Observer during the past week. He would develop there a power plant with a capacity of 850,000 horse power. Nearby are the Alabama coal and iron fields, and at hand the plant for reducing nitrogen from the air for explosives and fertilizer. He would build a town 75 miles long, and make it the model city of all the world.

Sheffield, a town that has twice before been a city, is not far from the Muscle Shoals plant, and is included in the automobile maker's dreams of a new world in the South. A quarter of a century ago Sheffield became a city of twenty thousand people overnight when the Alabama coal and iron fields were unearthed. Twelve blast furnaces went to work almost by magic, and the town grew and grew.

Within a few weeks, Sheffield was a city, with streets a hundred feet wide, with a trolley car system, handsome residence and big stores and office buildings, and even a handsome club house made of sandstone. For a few years it flourished and then the boom was over. A dozen smelting furnaces dwindled down to one lone plant. Weeds grew in the 100 feet streets, and wild vines climbed over the trolley poles. Sheffield died.

Then came the Muscle Shoals development, and but a little ways off grew up a second magic city of Sheffield during the war. The history of a quarter of a century before was repeated, and the decline has been duplicated again. Weeds were growing the streets last summer, and in the vast hotel of 300 rooms there was no one to save a lone Tar Heel whose business required him to go there in connection with the salvage of some of equipment of that mighty place of industry that began to rust into oblivion when the armistice was signed.

Depend on Purchase

Though the negotiations seem endless, the public generally believes that Henry Ford will in time own Muscle Shoals, and business men who have followed his career cannot believe that he would buy it, and launch his gigantic dream of a great model city and industry, without taking care of the most vital necessity of modern industry—transportation. Without it his hands would be tied, and he would have to depend upon other people. Nothing in Henry Ford's career justifies the entertainment of that thought.

Requiring a railroad, the only logical road that transportation men see for him to acquire is the Seaboard Air Line. It goes within a short distance of his proposed city and gives access to the world. In owning it, he would have a dozen ports at his command. With the other speculative purchase, his two enterprises would be connected directly. From Detroit to Muscle Shoals, he would have communication, and thence to the Atlantic ocean and the world.

Most of the United States laughed outright when Henry Ford purchased a broken down railroad running from Detroit to Cincinnati. The road was costing a dollar for every 57 cents it earned. It was broken down. He announced that he would make the road pay, and as a start in that direction, he raised wages all round. Within a year the road was paying dividends, and he had improved its road bed and its equipment.

Critics declared that he did it by shipping all of the product of his great automobile factory over the road, but now the road depends di-

rectly on this traffic but little. At Cincinnati he finds numerous competitive roads. He gives them his automobile traffic, and in turn requires traffic of them. He is hauling all the freight his road can handle, and his broken down railroad, within two years, is paying for itself.

Henry Ford will repeat his tactics in the South, many able business men believe. In Birmingham and Atlanta, in Norfolk, Wilmington and other ports, he can bring the same sort of business methods into play. The Seaboard, which has paid few dividends in recent years, may come in the hands of the Wizard of Detroit, to be one of the paying railroads of the country. It is said that he will electrify it from Muscle Shoals, and from other plants to be acquired along the route.

Rumor is the foundation of the story. It comes from sources that appear to be reliable. It has stood the test of the analysis of men of business, men who are in the railroad business, and men who are in the banking business. Mr. Ford moves in his own fashion, and he alone probably knows what he intends to do about it.

Boll Weevil Lore From Union County Farmers

(From the Charlotte Observer.)

The Union county farmer who stripped a corn stalk or two in his fields after the cotton crop was out of the way, and found several families of boll weevil snugly tucked away in the shucks for the winter's sleep, made contribution of entomological value to boll weevil lore. No doubt the Bureau of Entomology at Washington placed the discovery on record along with other data in connection with the habits of the pest. If it did not, it missed a detail of considerable importance in development of defensive measures for the farmers. But the Bureau is sending out further information about the weevil that will prove of much assistance in the fight to exterminate the weevil. The Wall Street Journal is carrying a series of articles in promotion of warfare against the weevil and in one of the contributions we are told that the weevil spends the winter in or near the cottonfield where it was working when cold weather overtook it. Of those that go into hibernation only a small percentage live through the winter, but every one of them represents myriads of weevils later in the season. Here the writer draws on the Bureau of Entomology for the information that female weevils have deposited 450 eggs in a season. Also, after one generation has matured, it begins to produce another. Thus seven generations have been produced in a season. What one pair of overwintered weevils mean can be quickly worked out by geometrical progression. If you have forgotten how, then recall the old story of the blacksmith who agreed to shoe a horse, charging one cent for the first nail, two for the second, four for the third, and so on up to the thirty-second. Theoretically, the increase from one pair in a season would run into billions. In a few billions of weevils could be destroyed by a pinch of the thumb and forefinger, who would refuse to do it? Yet it can be done. When they come out of winter quarters the weevils are so feeble and sluggish that they can be easily picked by hand.

The farmers are advised that beginning with the first appearance of the squares, the fields should be gone over once a week and all infested ones picked up and burned. From every infested square, unless the weather is very hot and dry or the soil moist, will come a weevil, which in turn will begin producing others of its kind until the end of the season. Leave the squares and the weevils will come; destroy them and the early crop will be saved. The farmer must reconcile himself to the fact that the weevils will get the late crop. His fight must be to keep down the numbers of the earlier generations and give the first blooms a chance to set.

Of course, this added attention would call for more back-bending exercise and more expense on part of the farmer, but there is a suggested compensation—the cotton consumers would pay him for the time, trouble, and expense. The writer in The Journal maintains, and with fairness, that "in increased prices for cotton, the consuming world must hereafter pay for this extra work as well as for any reduction of yield through loss of top crop, for cotton is a fundamental of life. The weevil danger will open the eyes of the consumers to the necessity of paying the farmers sufficient to encourage them to produce the cotton."

Georgia Town Is Shot up By Bad Moonshiners

Blackshear, Ga., Jan. 23.—A gang of men, believed to be members of a whiskey distilling ring, at an early hour this morning, visited the city and proceeded to shoop up the business district. Many guests at a local hotel had narrow escapes from bullets when the building was subjected to a heavy fire. Ten other buildings in the city were riddled with bullets. There were no casualties.

The postoffice windows were broken by a bullet, as were the windows of the Blackshear Drug Company, Strickland Bros. Co., S. E. Cohen and Dr. G. Henry. No one was injured and the men who did the firing escaped.

Former Sheriff Roberson was killed last August in raiding an illicit still near here and the attack on the town came within a few hours after the son who succeeded to the office had seized a large copper still during the raid.

The hotel was owned and operated by Mrs. J. W. Roberson, widow of the former sheriff and mother of sheriff Olin Roberson of this county. The firing started about 1:30 o'clock and lasted for twenty minutes, pistols, shotguns and rifles being used by the outlaws.

The gang evidently waited outside the city limits until the local power house cut off its lighting system for the night. With the town in total darkness the gang swooped down, firing at random. Residents on the outskirts of the city say a speeding automobile loaded with men left the town after the shooting.



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33x4	16.36	32x4 1/2	29.52
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