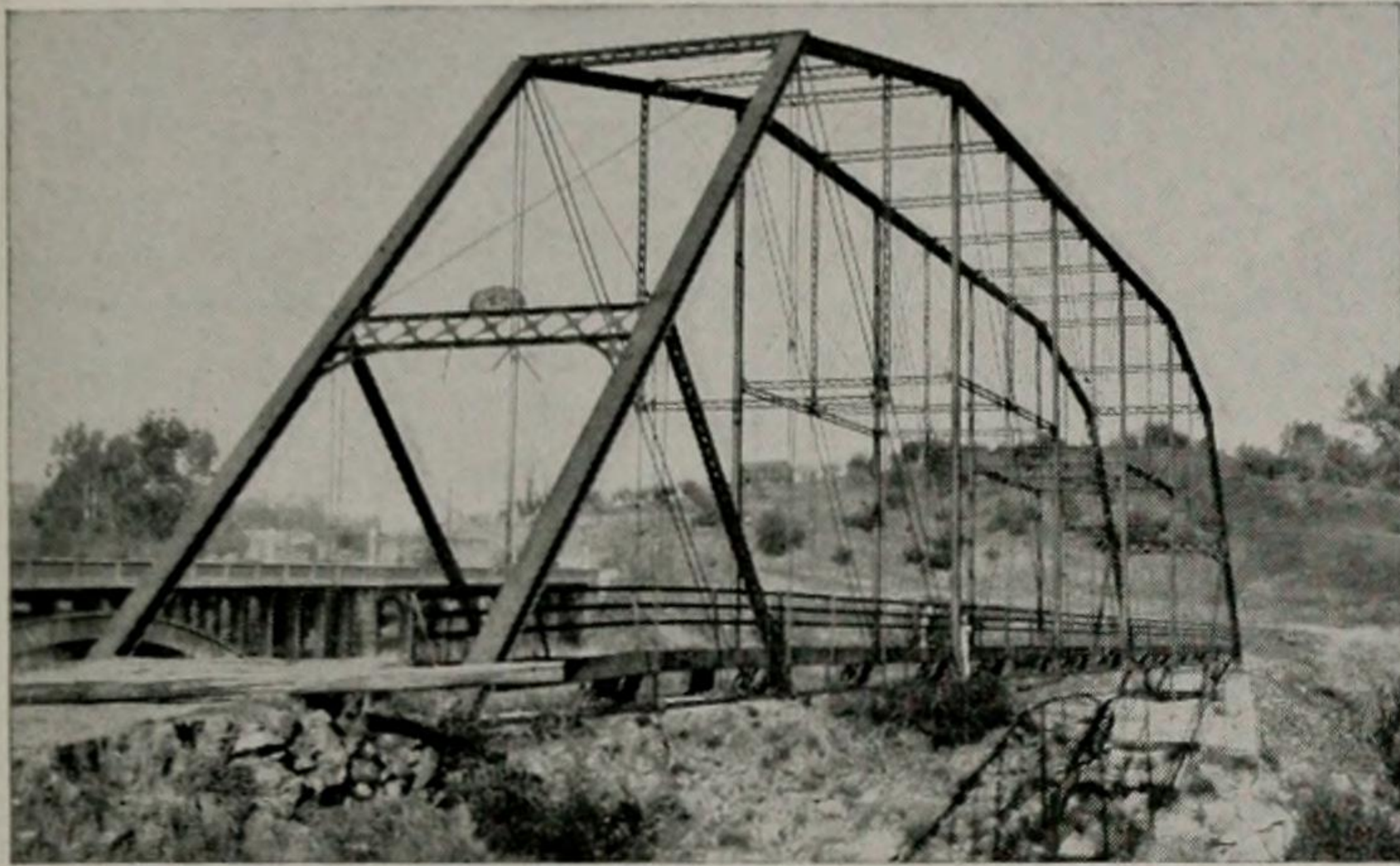


Romance in the Life of a Bridge

By JAMES GALLAGHER, Assistant Bridge Engineer

BRIDGES, like humans, grow old. They outlive their usefulness. Then its the junk pile and oblivion. But not so with the old Folsom Bridge, in its youth acclaimed the finest bridge on the Pacific coast.

The vicissitudes of its life compose a veritable bridge romance—beauty and fame followed by old age and the discard; plans for a tour abroad to start anew in a foreign country blighted by war; a relapse into oblivion and decay; sudden recall to active duty and



LIKE A SKELETON of the past the abandoned span stood for years beside the modern concrete structure that relegated it to the discard.

a new lease on life in another locality 300 miles distant.

Such is the story of the steel span built across the American River at Folsom, Sacramento County, in 1893 and now on its way to bridge the Klamath River at Walker, Siskiyou County. The span is 380 feet long with a 17-foot 6-inch roadway. It served Sacramento County for 25 years and was abandoned when the present concrete arch was built about 100 feet down stream.

For years it remained in its original location, its slim girders vaulting 55 feet in the air, a steel wraith beside the modern concrete structure.

WAR INTERVENES

Finally a Roseville Japanese saw an opportunity for a shrewd business deal. Steel was high in Japan. He bought the bridge cheap from the county and prepared to ship it for use on a Japan river. War intervened and the deal was off.

Where the Pacific Highway makes its first crossing of the Klamath River near Walker, a single lane, light suspension bridge built many years ago, is reaching the end of its service life. It has been posted as not safe for loads in excess of five tons. The future improved highway will not cross the Klamath at this point but will continue down the river on the north side of the stream. However, the present condition of the suspension span will not permit of its continued use until finances are available for completing the next section of highway on the north bank.

It was therefore imperative that a new bridge be built and at the same time desirable to invest as little money as possible in the new structure since it will only serve State highway traffic till such time as the new highway is completed.

LONG SPAN NEEDED

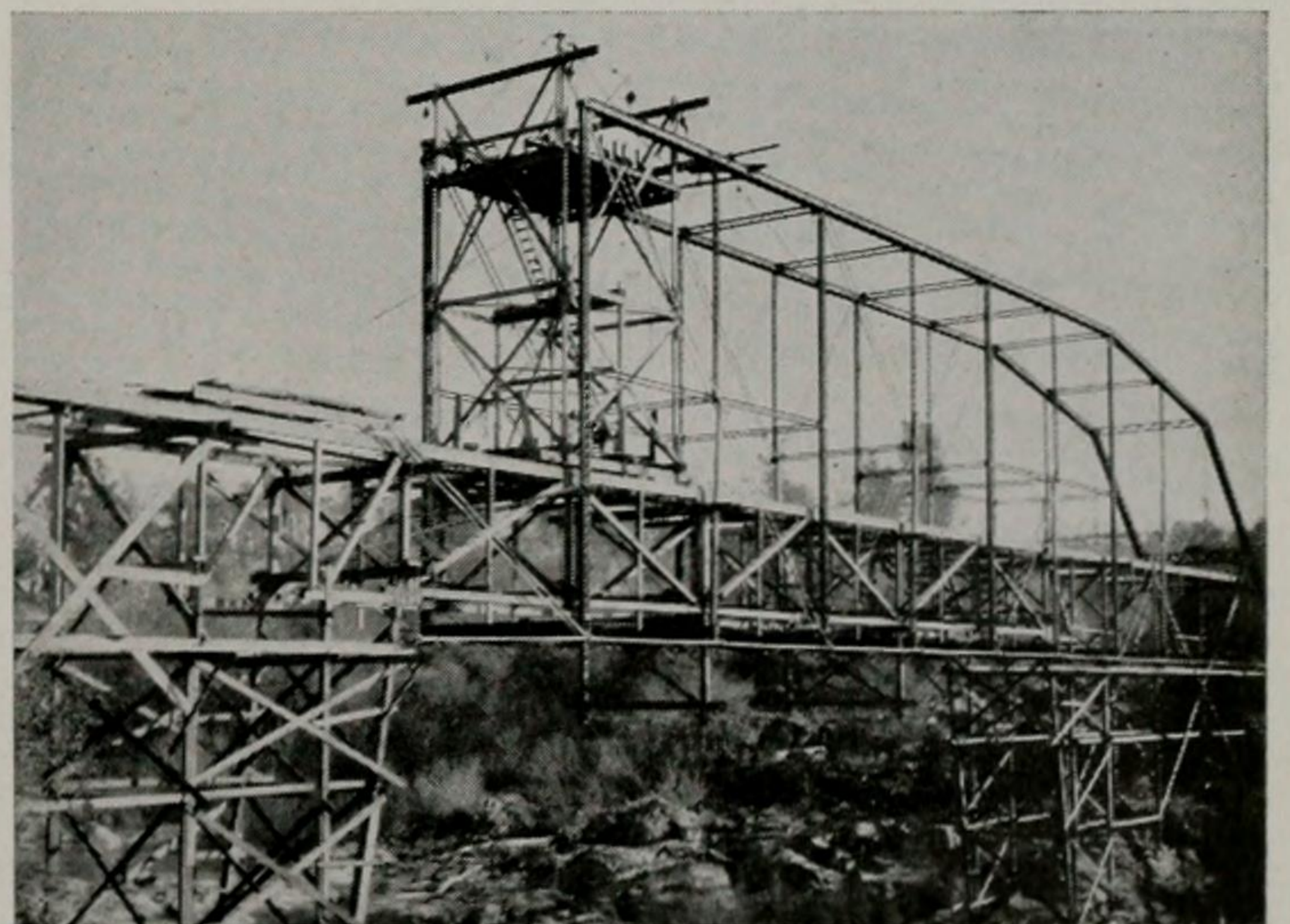
To cross the Klamath requires a long span bridge and an inexpensive timber trestle was out of the question. A second-hand truss span offered the best solution for a long span structure at a cost within the limits of funds which could be economically allotted to this project.

The old Folsom span was carefully inspected by engineers of the State Bridge Department and the steel work found to be in very good condition considering the length of time it had been exposed to the weather without painting or other maintenance. It had no defects which could not be easily repaired at small expense and was found to be amply strong to carry full legal present day loads.

The State was able to purchase the span from the Japanese for \$250, much less than he paid for it. The steel in the structure would cost, new, several thousands of dollars.

A contract was let to dismantle the bridge in its present location, transport it to Walker on the Klamath River and reerect it there. The contractor's false work for dismantling the span was quite ingenious.

The channel of the American River at this point is a deep, rocky gorge and on account of the danger



ON ITS WAY—Old Folsom span in process of being ingeniously picked to pieces and packed off to a new home on the Klamath River, 300 miles away.

from floods at this time of the year, it was necessary to span this gorge. The contractor constructed a timber truss span inside of the steel trusses but supported on suitable false work bents at either end. A traveler reaching above the highest point of the steel span was built on top of the timber truss.