

THE FUTURE OF PORTLAND.

Henry Villard, Esq., who, in his seven years' business connection with the people of Oregon, has never as yet broken a single promise made to them, recently delivered the following address before the Portland Board of Trade:

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRADE: I need not say that it is very gratifying to me to meet the business men of Portland here to-day. The board of trade was kind enough, on a former occasion, to express to me in more formal manner the kind sentiments that obtain in this community toward me and toward the enterprises that I represent. Let me assure you that I fully reciprocate your good feeling. I always had a strong attachment to your city. From the time of my first visit to this day I have always taken great pleasure in coming here. I regret that I have never had sufficient time as yet to become acquainted with you all and to enjoy more the beauties of your city.

With your permission I will refer briefly to the history of what myself and the parties who have been associated with me for many years in furthering transportation enterprises among you have so far accomplished. Many of you may remember the time of my first visit to Portland. It is a little over seven years ago. I could then make only a very brief stay. But what I saw then of the resources of this state first originated in me the ideas as to its gradual material development, and these ideas I have had now an opportunity to see as accomplished facts. You remember that at that time great discredit had been thrown upon the only transportation enterprise in the form of a railroad in existence in this state, that is, the Oregon and California railroad company, and, through that enterprise, upon the state at large by the financial collapse of that company. That collapse was a great misfortune for your state. It set you back, as far as the introduction of foreign capital was concerned, many years. I felt it more than any of you. For, trying to act upon the ideas that I had conceived for the material development of your state, I found all but insurmountable prejudices created against everything identified with Oregon in consequence of this original failure of the Oregon and California railroad company. Still, I would not permit myself to be absolutely discouraged. I continued my efforts as opportunity offered in Germany, and subsequently in the eastern states. I first succeeded in furnishing you with iron steamers in place of the superannuated hulks that formed at that time the only means of communication between you and the outside world. Then I secured the means for extending one of the two railroads that I found in existence at that time in the state, and finally I formed the combination of the old Oregon Steam Navigation company and the Oregon Steamship company. This combination furnished the real basis for all we have been able to do for the state in starting new enterprises and pushing them as rapidly as any enterprises of a similar kind have ever been pushed toward completion. It was the success of the Oregon Railway and Navigation company to which myself and my associates have been indebted for the fruition of every other effort we have since been making. But for the high credit that the large earnings of that company gave us in the east, we should never have been able to carry out the rest of my programme, which, as I remarked, I conceived many years ago, and have now been enabled to carry to its full consummation.

I do not know, really, whether you men of Portland understand what has already been done and what is sure to be done for you in the next few years. I was talking the other day with a merchant here and incidentally asked him whether he had any idea how much railroad mileage was to-day tributary to the city of Portland. He said he had never given the subject much reflection. And he was utterly surprised when I told him that, owing to this combination of transportation lines that I have been able to effect, there is to-day nearly 1,000 miles of standard-gauge road and nearly 150 miles of narrow-gauge road tributary to this city. This is but the beginning of what

there will be in a short time. Within three years from to-day you will find yourselves here in Portland the focus, the center, the very heart, so to speak, of a local system of transportation lines, aggregating fully 2,000 miles of standard-gauge road. [Applause.] And not only that, but Portland will be the Pacific terminus of a system of railroads reaching from Chicago—I say Chicago—and Lake Superior through Minnesota, Dakota, Montana, Washington territory and Oregon to the confines of your city [applause]; a system representing a total mileage of over 6,000 miles. [Applause.] I say this to you with the utmost positiveness, because I know we have the capital to create these two systems, local and transcontinental, and it is only a question of time and wise expenditure of money. Now, the question has naturally suggested itself to me, during my present stay, is this city of Portland prepared for what is before it? Is it prepared for this enormous material development which is sure to follow the creation of these systems of railway, local and transcontinental? And I say to you, with the utmost frankness, that I do not think the city is as fully prepared as it ought to be. In the first place, I find amongst you a certain petty spirit in looking at the effect which the construction of this or that line may have upon particular branches of business here—upon the methods of doing business upon this Pacific coast. I find a narrow-minded apprehension among some of you that it would be better, at least in certain directions, to continue the present isolation of Portland. Now, I take the high and broad ground that any transportation line, whether directly connecting Portland with any other portion of the country, or doing it merely indirectly, which will result in the development of the material resources of this state and the adjoining territory, cannot be anything but a great boon to all. Some of you have told me that it would be better for Portland not to have a direct railroad connection with Puget Sound. Others have told me that it would hurt Portland to have a direct communication with San Francisco. Now, I say this is a very narrow view to take. You have here the accumulated experience, knowledge of the country and capital gained during the thirty years of your existence as a town. You have an enormous advantage over every other locality, on Puget Sound or anywhere else. And it seems to me that it would be the easiest thing in the world to maintain your commercial supremacy hereafter as you have maintained it hitherto, notwithstanding the construction of any line that may open access to other towns within this state or the adjoining territory. I have been making some addresses at different Puget Sound towns. Perhaps you have read some of them. I took the ground in them that it was our duty as transportation companies in the first place to seek all the paying business we could find; and, in the second place, to put each locality as far as practicable on the same footing as regards transportation rates and facilities. As far as my observation has gone, I cannot see any reason why any Portland merchant should object to wheat being shipped from any port on Puget Sound instead of being shipped down the Columbia. If it is true, as it is claimed, that wheat can be shipped cheaper from Puget Sound than down the Columbia, it is so much more money in the pocket of the merchant who ships it. Now, as I told the people of the Puget Sound towns, they are not prepared to engage in the wheat shipping business. They have no warehouses; neither have they storage facilities of any description; nor have they capital to move the wheat. You have all these advantages, and you can create them in the Puget Sound towns. I do not see why large shipping houses here should not engage in the wheat shipping business by way of Puget Sound. That would be the proper way of averting what I consider an imaginary danger to Portland, but what some of you consider a real one.

Take possession of Puget Sound towns, or such of them as are best adapted to shipping grain or other products of the country. Do your shipping at Puget Sound when it is difficult to get tonnage down the river as at present. There has been no discrimination heretofore in favor of Portland as against Puget Sound, and I can assure you

that none need be expected in the future. We must carry the products of the country out of the country. It is our interest as transportation companies to do so, and it is the greatest benefit that we can possibly confer upon this whole region, that we should facilitate in every possible way the shipments of its products. If wheat cannot be taken down the Columbia, let it go to Puget Sound, thus keeping money in circulation, and let those who are entitled to the proceeds of their labor receive them as quickly as possible. That is the ground I take. [Applause.] I am satisfied that it is within your power as shipping merchants to take possession of the grain trade at Puget Sound. And I feel sure that after we complete our railroad connections with the Sound, as we propose to do during the next year by putting in the link between Portland and Kalama, and you see that grain can be carried from the Willamette valley and from the whole region east of the mountains to Puget Sound without breaking bulk, you will avail yourselves of the new facilities thus afforded. I do not see the difference between loading ships at Portland and at Puget Sound as far as the particular advantages to the shipping houses are concerned. They can have warehouses there; they can collect their wharfage dues as well there as here. Our great object must be, as I stated, to open as many channels of transportation as we can create, and to let commerce flow through them as freely as possible.

You may be interested to know what our programme of operations is for the immediate future. [Applause.] I mean with reference to the construction of railroad lines and creating terminal facilities here amongst you, and in relation to the other enterprises of which I spoke in my interview with your committee the other day. As already mentioned, we shall put in the connecting link between here and Puget Sound by having the line from Portland to Kalama constructed, if possible, within the next twelve months. Surveys, as far as made, show that the line on the south bank of the river is far preferable to that on the north bank, and the former line will therefore be adopted. It is not settled whether it will enter the city directly or be carried across the river to East Portland, and then to a connection with the system of the Oregon Railway and Navigation company, the necessary surveys not having yet been fully completed. But you may take it for granted that you will have within twelve months from to-day an unbroken line from Portland to Tacoma and to Seattle. We expect to put in an extension of the Washington territory branch from some point south of Tacoma to Seattle. The Columbia river will not be bridged at present at Kalama, but transfer boats will be used there; and if we do not bridge the Willamette river here immediately, the whole business can be transacted without breaking bulk by means of transfer boats carrying entire passenger and freight trains.

The proposed Oregon Railway and Navigation company's system of roads in eastern Oregon and Washington territory we expect also to complete next year. Your newspapers have kept you well posted as to the extent and character of that system. Suffice it to say, therefore, that it will reach altogether a mileage of over 700 miles, of which about 200 miles are to-day in operation, and of which 150 miles more will be in operation within three or four months—the last including the line from The Dalles to your city, and the remainder will be taken in hand and carried through to completion next year. All the necessary purchases of rails, locomotives and rolling-stock generally have been made. I will state in this connection that we expect to load next year between fifty and sixty ships in New York and Philadelphia with railroad material for the Oregon Railway and Navigation company and the Northern Pacific Railroad company. These ships may come here, but they may also go to Tacoma. The Northern Pacific Railroad company shipped a cargo on the ship Dakota to Tacoma at the rate of \$2.50 less per ton than the rate the Oregon Railway and Navigation company had to pay in sending railroad material to Portland. When it comes to shipping 50,000, 60,000, 70,000 or 80,000 tons, of course such a difference is a very essential item. And you would consider as very poor business

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