

The following account of a prospecting trip through the Upper Nooksack portion of Whatcom county is condensed from the *Reville*. As they are the first known white explorers of that region, their report is especially interesting. From the east end of Whatcom lake they journeyed eastward, and after crossing a low range of hills, entered a valley three miles in width, through which several small streams were running. On investigation these streams were found to head in the Nooksack valley, near the river, and flowed in a southerly direction. Whether they were tributaries of the Skagit or Samish is not definitely known, but presumably the Samish. This valley, which is only four miles east of Lake Whatcom, is pronounced by them to be the finest for agricultural purposes they have seen in the territory. The soil is a rich black loam, covered with vine maple and alder. Although the streams that flow through the valley are but two feet below the bottom land, yet the valley is not swampy or marshy, except where occasional beaver dams occur. There are occasional patches of benchland on which is found heavy fir timber. Fern land, with a few white pine, were also found in the valley. On the west side of the valley, and especially on the bench lands, no underbrush exists. Considerable birch was found in the valley, which is another indication of the superiority of the soil. On the east side of the valley the land is covered with gravel, and for agricultural purposes is entirely worthless. However, strong indications of coal were found in this immediate section. At the north end of the valley, near the Nooksack, was found the finest body of fir and cedar timber that grows in the territory. The excellence of the timber may be inferred when it is stated that here the Indians procure the material from which their best and largest canoes are made. Its proximity to the Nooksack river renders it valuable to loggers, as the timber can be cut on the banks and at high water rafted down the river and into Bellingham bay. As yet the land is unsurveyed. Fifteen miles above the valley, east, are the foot-hills of the Red mountains, southeast of Mount Baker. The foot-hills afford the finest summer grazing and pasture lands on the coast. There is plenty of grass and but very little timber. Game, such as mule-deer, black and white-tailed deer, elk, bear, mountain sheep, whistling ermine and white grouse or ptarmigan, are here found in great abundance. These meadows are above the timber line, and beyond these are the fields of perpetual snow. Although but very little prospecting was done, yet the party, without any particular effort, found convincing evidences of the existence of gold in paying quantities. On the headwaters of the south fork of the Nooksack, color was found in two different localities. Another and better equipped expedition will soon continue the explorations. The lands about Whatcom lake have recently been surveyed, and the surveyor reports that 10,000,000 feet of timber can be felled and hand-logged into the lake, while vast forests surround it for miles. The timber bordering on the lake is nearly all claimed by actual settlers. Extensive and valuable coal deposits exist, the croppings indicating a quality intermediate between the New Castle and Carbondale. The agricultural land bordering the lake is limited, but far more extensive than a first view of the country would suggest. The soil is excellent. There are several very beautiful fer-

tile little nooks among the hills, and a number of small lakes or ponds swarming with the finest mountain trout. Lake Whatcom is the most picturesque lake of water on this coast. Dark and fathomless, with bold, rocky shores, the gray sand-stone sculptured and polished by the action of the sometimes turbulent waters of the lake—the fir-crowned summit of the mountains towering two thousand feet over the lake—the bold, rocky points and promontories, and the little castle-like island, together make a picture worthy the pencil of a Bierstadt.



The National Park Improvement Company will have sixty large tents set up in the Geyser basin, nicely floored, carpeted and furnished with handsome bed-room sets. A large kitchen tent and another for fine liquors and cigars will make of the camp a complete hotel. The same accommodations will be afforded on the shore of the Yellowstone lake.

The Upper West Gallatin and Bozeman Canal Co., was incorporated nearly a year ago with a capital stock of \$40,000. The object is to build a canal twenty-five miles long and twenty-four feet wide, running from the West Gallatin river and following such a course as to be able to irrigate the whole of Gallatin valley. It will probably cost \$60,000 and will be of incalculable benefit to the valley and to the city of Bozeman.

Some time ago a company was organized with a capital stock of \$1,000,000, to construct a canal from Tongue river for the purpose of irrigating the dry lands in that region. The ditch is now half completed and conducts water to a natural reservoir which has a capacity of 11,000,000 gallons. As it now stands the ditch will convert 400,000 acres of land from a worthless condition into extremely valuable farming land, valued at from \$30 to \$100 per acre. Montana with her irrigated farms will soon boast of her gigantic and never-failing crops, notwithstanding the opinion of the poor nunsuk who recently wrote to a leading eastern paper that he "did not see a foot of farming land in Montana."

The amount of fine agricultural and grazing land locked up in the Indian reservations of Montana is simply enormous. Much of the finest land in the territory is withheld from settlement and is under the exclusive control of a few hundred Indians who make no earthly use of it and to whom it does no good whatever. A few acres near each agency are cultivated, and the remainder is seldom even visited by the lazy proprietors. These vast areas would furnish thousands of homes to industrious and thrifty settlers who would be only too glad of an opportunity to go upon them with their families. The Crow reservation occupies many thousands of square miles upon which are the rich farms of the Big Horn, Little Big Horn, Clarke's Fork, Stillwater and many lesser basins. Gen. Miles, who has examined it

thoroughly, declares it to be the best reservation in the northwest in point of farming and grazing lands and minerals. The Piegan and Blackfeet reservation, to the north of the Missouri, occupies a vast expanse of the choicest of lands, the Milk river portion of it being similar in topography and in the richness of its soil to the famous Red River valley of the North. Its altitude is lower than the valleys to the south, and it would seem that its crop products would be less subject to the blighting influences of frosts. The warm breath of the Japan current penetrates to a certain extent over this country, and as a result its winters are many degrees milder than those portions of Dakota and Minnesota on the same latitude. The bottoms on this reservation are known to be very rich. The same may be said of the Flathead reservation, in the extreme northwest, with the addition that here the genial influences of the Japan current are more perceptibly felt, and apples, pears, plums and other fruits can be produced in great abundance. It would seem that here are bodies of land that should speedily be surrendered to the use and occupation of the incoming tide. It certainly will not be many years before the popular demand to have these enormous reservations reduced or abolished will be heeded.

At last an effort is being made to utilize the vast water power of the Great Falls of the Missouri. They have roared on in silence and wasted their gigantic force for ages, but must now submit to the yoke and work for the good of mankind. From the *Benton River Press* we learn that a town site has been selected and will soon be surveyed. The location is just below the mouth of Sun river, taking in the Black Eagle falls, some two miles below, and in one of the most delightful spots in Montana. Here is the most beautiful part of the Sun river valley, a great, wide bottom stretching off to the northwest, while the valley of the Missouri partakes of the same character, the bad land banks disappearing entirely from view. As far as situation is concerned, it would probably be difficult to find in any part of this great territory a more delightful location for a town. The name of the coming metropolis is Great Falls, and a more appropriate one it would be difficult to find. The gentlemen interested have secured title to about 6,000 acres on either side of the Missouri, from the mouth of Sun river down, at an expense of scarcely less than \$100,000. The head and front of the enterprise is J. J. Hill, president and principal owner of the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba road, and its various important branches, and also president of the Canadian Pacific syndicate. The simple fact that Mr. Hill is the leading spirit in this enterprise, and has interest enough in it to come a thousand miles to look the situation over is ample assurance the city below the mouth of Sun river is to be an established fact, with grander possibilities than any of us may have conceived. The theory of the interested parties is that there must be somewhere in this great northwest a manufacturing center, and the magnificent water power of the falls of the Missouri, which cannot be excelled in the world, clearly indicates where that center is. Great Falls will lie adjacent to the great coal district that stretches from the Missouri to Belt creek; the Sand Coulee mines are but four or five miles distant, while the Deep creek coal, acknowledged the best that has yet been found in Montana, is distant but twelve miles; the mount-