

COMMENTS.

During the past year twenty daily and seventy-four weekly papers have been started in Dakota, there being now sixty-three of the former and 243 of the latter. That a territory with such a showing should be denied admission to the Union is absurd, and the probabilities are that congress will be shamed into doing it justice at the next session. The question of a division of the territory is still discussed, some favoring the 46th parallel as the dividing line, others preferring the Missouri river, and still others opposing a separation of any kind. In size and the certain extent of its population, Dakota would make three good states, and it would seem as though a division into at least two parts would be desirable for many reasons.

In a recent interview at Mandan, Roscoe Conkling expressed himself as follows of that portion of Dakota and Montana recently visited by him: "There is no question but that the railroad is doing a glorious work in the opening up of this great northwest. This I realize more than ever since my connection with the road. In this the people, as well as the railroad, have an interest. I hope, therefore, that we shall see less of that of which there is so much; I mean, a jealousy between these two. This should not be. Both are interested partners in a common cause, and should join hand and work together. Agriculturally speaking, I believe there is not a finer belt of country in the world than that traversed by the Northern Pacific railroad. It seems to me that the only question is one of irrigation. Let this be successfully grappled with, and nothing else is necessary to make this the garden of the world. There is now a great procession on its way to the northwest, composed, not of the poverty stricken nor useless members of society, but men of nerve and of muscle, every one of whom, if he keeps his eyes open and his head level, will do well. These men will cultivate these valleys and place cattle upon these hills, and, in the country west of that great body of water, the Missouri, will develop during the next decade—one decade, mind you—a country which will be an empire of itself."

The question of tree planting on the plains and valleys of Eastern Montana is one that has attracted more or less attention. The advantage to agriculture to be derived from it is great. Already it is noticed that the cultivation of the soil is producing a change in climate so far as an increase in rainfall is concerned, and that in a few sections irrigation is not as necessary as formerly. The influence of forests upon the climate is still greater, and tree planting would be highly beneficial. The value of the trees themselves would be the leading inducement, ten acres of black walnut being equivalent to a fortune in twenty-five years. Much tree planting has been done in Kansas the past few years, and the experiments promise well at the present time. The Fort Scott & Gulf R. R. Co. has a forest of over 500 acres, those planted in 1879 being now from ten to sixteen feet in height, and others three years old over six feet. To insure 2,000 to the acre when grown, 3,720 were originally planted. The tree is the catalpa, a native of the bottom lands of Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri. It makes superior ties, etc., and is excellent for fine cabinet work.

H. H. Hunniwell, a Boston capitalist, has a grove of more than 500 acres, chiefly the alantus, and many others have groves of varying sizes. Black walnut, chestnut, white ash and butternut flourish when planted with the catalpa, and those varieties are freely mixed with the others. Among the hundreds of timber culture claims taken in Eastern Washington, Idaho and Montana, we hope to see some good groves of valuable trees brought to maturity.

The surveys made at the Cascades of the Columbia, in the work of constructing the government locks at that point, furnish some interesting facts about the volume of water that comes pouring through the Columbia gorge from the vast inland empire. Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia contribute their portion to swell this mighty stream. At extreme low water the river at this point is 600 feet wide and a cross section measures 19,900 square feet; at high water it measures 62,250 square feet, the stream being 950 feet wide. The velocity of the current varies from $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles at low water to 18 miles at high water. The quantity of water passing per minute varies accordingly from 16,156,690 to 70,093,500 cubic feet. This would be an average of 40,125,095 cubic feet per minute. This would give 21,089,749,932,000 cubic feet per year, a volume of water sufficient to cover to the depth of one foot an area of 752,903 square miles; it would flood the entire states of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Missouri, Kansas, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi and Louisiana. The Cascades are 160 miles from the river's mouth, and below that point it is joined by the Willamette, Lewis, Cowlitz, and other streams. It no doubt receives enough more water from these sources to add Nebraska to the list. Collect this body of water into a lake with a uniform depth of 100 feet, and it would cover the state of Massachusetts.

A Dakota exchange says: "The habit some New York men have, who are interested in the northwest, of misrepresenting things out here to foreigners, is calculated to do the country injury. We recently had an interview with a gentleman who came out here on the representation of these New York men, who pictured to him a certain town, with its fine drug stores, groceries, dry goods and hardware stores and solid blocks of business and residence houses. He came to the town and was disappointed. Instead of what had been represented he found one of our flourishing new western towns, with its buildings scattered, as is always the case with new towns. It is time this paper town business should cease, and the sooner the better. The facts and the truths are enough to build up this country without misleading people and thus causing disappointment. Such men as these New York gentlemen should be throttled at once." Though speculators of that class are uninterested in Oregon and Washington, there are a few local dealers and speculators who are inclined to "boom" a little too hard. We have a glorious country with resources both varied and valuable, and are enjoying a healthy growth and merited prosperity. We believe that there is no better country in the world for an enterprising man, and are pleased to see its advantages brought to the attention of strangers; but all efforts to mislead by praising any section

beyond its just merits should be discouraged by every true friend of the northwest.

TRANSPORTATION.

A new steamer, called the *Alber*, has been put on the route between New Westminster and the North Arm settlement.

On the Oregon & California extension the Cow creek tunnel is on the verge of completion, and in a few weeks the end of the track will reach Rogue river.

The C. P. N. Co. has purchased the steamer *Yosemite*, and placed her on the route between Victoria and New Westminster. She is 283 feet long, 80 feet beam and 22 feet hold, and is finely furnished and fitted up for the convenience of passengers.

Work is being pushed rapidly at two points on the Cascades branch of the Northern Pacific, one being fifteen miles from the mouth of the Yakima, and the other thirty miles from Yakima City towards the mountains. Contract has been let for the first 120 miles, to be completed at once.

The enterprising business men of Walla Walla have incorporated the Walla Walla & Snake River Railroad Co., with a capital stock of \$3,000,000, to build a road from that city to Snake river. It is their intention that their city shall maintain its position as the metropolis of the inland empire.

A map of the Wyoming and Montana road has been filed at the Cheyenne land office. The line begins at Fort Steele, on the Union Pacific, and runs parallel to the North Platte as far north as the Seminole oil springs, a distance of 100 miles. It is the supposition that the line is to be extended to the National Park of the Yellowstone.

The citizens of Helena have received assurance that a branch of the Northern Pacific will be constructed from that city to the town of Wickes, via. Clancy and Jefferson City. It will be called the Helena & Jefferson County Railroad, and will be completed this fall. This is the first of a number of short branches that will no doubt be extended from Helena into the rich mining regions surrounding her. Helena promises to be an important railroad center.

On the twenty-second of August the two ends of the Northern Pacific were united, and that great enterprise which has been before the public so many years brought to successful issue. The day finally selected for the driving of the golden spike and the other ceremonies of formally opening the road, is the eighth of September, and the place selected is a point on the Little Blackfoot, on the west slope of the Rocky mountains, between Hellgate river and the Mullan tunnel.

The Blakely Mill Co. is constructing a logging railroad about four miles in length, up the south fork of the Skagit. This will be a substantial iron or steel railroad and will be equipped with locomotives and cars to do an extensive logging business, as it is the intention to extend the road into the interior as the timber holds out and business will warrant. No doubt several such roads will be built on the Skagit and Samish within a year or two, for this appears to be the only practicable way of getting out the timber lying back of Puget sound.