

destined to be an enormous one. Under the expanding influence of capital the mines are being rapidly developed, and in this, as in other things, Seattle leads the van.

In this connection a word should be spoken of the company most interested in the development of these mines. A short time since the *Post-Intelligencer* remarked: "About three years ago the Oregon Improvement Company came into possession of the mining, railroad and other property belonging to the Seattle & Walla Walla Railroad Company. Since that time the business as handled by the new management has witnessed an increase almost beyond belief. It is not too much to say that the Oregon Improvement Company has been more instrumental than any other agency in bringing about the marvelous growth and prosperity of Seattle. This statement will not be surprising to those of our citizens who remember what our water front was three or four years ago, and compare its then condition with the present splendid array of docks, warehouses and coal bunkers, remembering that all these structures were erected by the Oregon Improvement Company, or by the Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad, which it owns and controls." The gross earnings of this company for the year ending November 30, 1883, were \$4,089,356, and the net earnings \$1,346,862. The company has other property in Oregon and Washington, but its Seattle holdings are by far the most productive and valuable.

One of the most important factors in the future development of Seattle is its railroad interests. The narrow gauge road of the Columbia & Puget Sound Railroad Company, which was projected to run from Seattle to the Columbia River and Portland, was constructed to the coal fields at Renton and Newcastle some ten years ago. This is now controlled by the Oregon Improvement Company, of which Mr. Elijah Smith was recently chosen president. Last year construction was begun upon a railroad running south from the city to a connection with the Pacific Division of the Northern Pacific, and this line is now almost ready to be put in operation, and will, it is announced, be operated by the Oregon Improvement Company. This will render Seattle the practical terminus of that great transcontinental road and all connecting lines, being the farthest point reached by rail on Puget Sound, and the nearest and most accessible harbor to the entrance of that great inland sea reached by railroad from the East. The advantages it possesses in this respect will be vastly increased when a road is constructed across the Cascade Mountains to Eastern Washington and a connection with the Northern Pacific and the whole railroad system of that region. The interchange of commodities—merchandise, coal, iron, lumber, fish, etc., for wheat, wool, beef and the other products of the great Inland Empire—will of itself build up a large city at Seattle; while the construction of such a road will settle definitely the position of the city as the great commercial port of Puget Sound and metropolis of Washington Territory. If this road is not speedily built by the Northern Pacific—and twenty-five miles have been built westward from Ainsworth, while locating surveys have been ordered

for twenty-five miles more on either end—then the citizens of Seattle, aided by those living along the route and the capitalists of Walla Walla, will take hold of the matter and see that the road is built. They stand ready to do this whenever the way is opened for them to do so. Another railroad project is the Puget Sound Shore Railroad, to run from Seattle down the eastern shore of the Sound to Bellingham Bay. There it will meet the line of the Bellingham Bay & British Columbia road, upon which construction has already been commenced, by which it will be placed in connection with the Canadian Pacific. The commanding position Seattle will occupy both as the leading railroad and seaport town will more fully establish her position as the Queen City of the Sound.

In respect to the value of property and the financial condition of the city, much that is interesting may be said. Real estate has steadily advanced in value, and the transfers have been large, though it can by no means be said that the sale of real estate is the leading industry of the people. They do not invite strangers to locate there simply for the purpose of selling them town lots. There is, however, an active market for real estate. Town property is purchased for business and residence purposes by new-comers, while large purchases are made for investment. The rapid and substantial growth of the city has rendered all such investments highly profitable, and there is no reason to suppose that they will not be equally so in the future. The city is spreading out with wonderful rapidity, adding greatly to the value of outlying property, much of which was laid off in additions last year, sold and built upon. There were recorded during 1883 2,570 separate transfers of property and fifty-nine additions to the city. The estimated consideration was \$4,000,000, the largest transaction during the year amounting to \$85,000. The increase in the value of property is best indicated by the city assessment roll. In 1881 the total value of city property as returned by the assessor was \$1,600,000. In 1882 this advanced to \$3,958,720, in 1883 to \$5,685,575, and in 1884 to \$8,932,045. This only includes property lying within the corporate limits, though a large proportion of the actually occupied area of the city lies beyond them. The rate of tax in 1883 was but seven mills, the city revenue from all sources amounting to \$39,788.41.

One element which adds to the value of property is the improvement of the streets. During last year \$250,000 were expended upon improvements of this character. Ten miles of streets were graded and twenty miles of sidewalk laid. These improvements are being continued. Upon a complete system of water works \$100,000 were expended, and twice that sum will be paid out in the same direction the present year. The system of gas and electric lights will also be extended, and preparations are being made for introducing much-needed lines of street railway.

One of the most important questions asked by strangers is in regard to the condition of society and the educational advantages offered by the city. Seattle has been