

neighborhood of 8,000 square miles, 3,000 of which are fine valley land, bearing rich, nutritious grasses, while on the hillsides a very good quality of grass grows profusely, which would make 4,000 miles admirably suited for cattle ranches. Several small streams flow into the ocean, which abound with trout. The lowest temperature recorded by the United States signal station was 6 degrees above zero, and the highest hot term never exceeded that of Western Oregon, while gnats and mosquitoes, so prevalent in other countries, are unknown here. Prairie fires are unknown, grass keeping green up to the first frost in December. The Japanese black stream, corresponding to the Gulf stream in the Atlantic, flows almost around these islands, making the temperature better than that of Great Britain.

East of Mount Baker, and extending from Skagit County, through Whatcom, to British Columbia, is a large valley containing much fine arable land. At present it is a sportsman's paradise. Bear, elk, deer, mountain sheep, grouse, partridge, geese, ducks, and such fur-bearing animals as beaver, otter, mink and marten, abound. Mountain trout swarm in the numerous streams and small lakes. The soil is rich loam, and it is not difficult to clear the land of the underbrush and somewhat scattered timber. The timber of the valley and adjacent mountain slopes consists of cedar, spruce, fir, hemlock and a little white pine, the smaller growths being vine maple, alder and salmon berry. Placer gold has been discovered and some prospecting has been done on quartz ledges, which are numerous, and show assays from \$20 to \$60 per ton. At present there is no road nor pack trail into the valley, but one will probably be built from the head of navigation on the Skagit. The scenery is grand beyond description—streams, lakes, mountain canyons and numerous snow-crowned peaks of varying outlines combining to keep a pleasing picture constantly before the eye.

Recently J. J. Hill made a careful inspection of the line of the proposed railroad from Butte City, via Helena, the Great Falls and Sun River, to Fort Benton. In a subsequent interview, after remarking that he would prefer the railroad business of Butte City to that of an Eastern city of 60,000 inhabitants, he said: "You can say that I think very favorably of the proposed road from Helena to Fort Benton. Colonel Dodge, who visited this section a few days ago, came in my interest and has made his report. I am well satisfied with the outlook. In a few weeks I will have a force of engineers in the field, and as soon as practicable the route will be determined upon. But what this section of Montana wants is cheap transportation, and that is best secured by direct railroad communication rather than that which is circuitous. By information I have gleaned from various sources, I know there is a country of great resources and capabilities east of us (the region north of the Missouri in Montana and Dakota), and that is the direction whence your most important railroads will come. By that route Northern Montana can ship her grain and ore and cattle

at a profit, when it might not be possible to do so by any other. I am very much interested in that country, and will watch with as much interest as any of your citizens the action of Congress in regard to the reduction of the immense northern reservation."

NEW LANDS IN WESTERN MONTANA.

THE *Frontier Index*, published at the new town of Thompson's Falls, which is the railroad shipping and supply point for the Cœur d'Alene mines, on the Montana side, thus speaks of the agricultural prospects in that region: "Our people should petition that the lands between Frenchtown and Pend d'Oreille Lake be surveyed. We have in this valley of the Upper Pend d'Oreille River (properly called Clarke's Fork of the Columbia, and generally so indicated on the maps,) and its immediate tributaries enough acres of agricultural land to make good homes for 15,000 people, with 160 acres each. As an instance of what is going on right at our doors in the gardening line, we will mention that James and Denver Laughlin relocated a ranch at the mouth of Thompson River this spring, and that from volunteer potatoes that lay in the ground all winter they have one acre that will give us new potatoes on the market by the 4th of July. They have corn two feet high that was planted in April. They are growing every variety of vegetables that usually flourish in the kitchen gardens of the Northwestern States. Wild clover grows profusely. The water is the purest on earth. Winter wheat would be covered with two feet of snow, and if the grass is any index of the growth of wheat, this cereal will attain to a height of ten inches by the time the snow is fairly off, for that is exactly what the grass does. We do not hesitate to say that the valley of the Upper Pend d'Oreille and its tributaries, for 200 miles, is to-day the choicest place on the American continent for a man to locate a homestead. The Northern Pacific Railroad runs the full length of the valley. As the land is not surveyed, and may not be for many years, unless settlement is rapidly made, all that it will cost to take it up is a man's occupancy, as no money is required at the United States Land Office until after survey. Should a portion of any settler's farm be found to be on an odd, or railroad, section after the Government surveys are made, the railroad company will not tax any one more than \$2.60 per acre, even if Congress finally decides that any portion of the land grant along here shall be confirmed. And whatever portion is found to be on even sections will be as free to the homesteader as our mountain hospitality. The alfalfa of California is grown successfully in Utah, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. It cuts an average of three crops per year. In this valley of the Upper Pend d'Oreille this clover would do better than in any other part of the inter-mountains, mainly because the snow will protect it in winter and because the ground never freezes. Every person opening a farm along here should put in a few acres of alfalfa this season. It will make a sure and rich crop of hay, and will be very profitable on this land, where clover is indigenous in great profusion."