

The soil of the entire region is rich in all the elements of vegetation. The soil of the hills and plains is composed of basalt and volcanic ashes. The valley lands are of the same inexhaustible elements, more or less tinged with alkali. Fields of such soil have successfully grown wheat for years without fertilizers, the crop often yielding fifty bushels to the acre. Fruits and vegetables attain the highest excellence in point of size and flavor. Grapes grow to fine size, and in some localities are perfect in flavor. Peaches have done well in many places, but are not considered a safe crop. With this exception there is everything to encourage the fruit grower. Vegetables are of the finest quality. Small fruits attain astonishing size and perfection in flavor. The climate is such that fruits, like flowers, receive the most delicate coloring, and no insect has yet appeared to injure them.

The climate of Central Washington is highly eulogized by the people. It is their opinion that nowhere else are experienced so many bright, sunny days. An overcast sky is seen but few days in the year. The fogs of the coast seldom find their way into the interior. Two or three months in the summer the mercury runs high in the middle of the day, but the heat is modified by mountain breezes, and the evenings and nights are comfortable. In a well-constructed house it is never so warm as to prevent sleep. The warmth of summer lingers far into autumn and that of autumn into winter. The snow creeps down the sides of the mountains by December, usually covering the valleys about the holidays, but by the middle of February it is generally gone. The winter days are bright and the atmosphere dry. The nights are freezing cold, the middle of the day warm, and no wind is felt in winter save the warm Chinook, which frequently takes the snow off in a single night. The spring is early and its showers are frequent. It rains but little from the first of June until the first of September.

Irrigation is necessary to insure a crop, one year with another, on the bench lands. The numerous mountain streams make it practicable to irrigate with ease a greater portion of this class of land. Forty acres properly tilled and watered will give a greater return for the labor of cultivation, harvesting, etc., than one hundred east of the Rocky Mountains. To those accustomed to this mode of farming there is a satisfaction which comes only with an absolute certainty of a good crop. In no country can more grain or vegetables be raised per acre. The valley bottoms, which receive moisture from the rivers and adjacent hills, require no irrigation, and are extremely rich. The portions known as Kittitas, Wenas, Moxee, Ahtanum, Selah and Natches valleys, and the Indian Reservation, are the best lands in that region. In the centre of this grand system of valleys, at a point where all their waters north of Union Gap converge, surrounded by this vast region of agricultural and mineral wealth, and in a valley of great natural attractiveness, is situated the city of North Yakima. The valley is the natural centre of commerce, trade and population for all Central Washington. There, doubtless, will be the future city for all those hills, valleys and mountains. Nature has opened the moun-

tains that the waters of the whole country may unite their volumes there, and in opening these waterways she has provided passes through the mountains for the commerce of the country, by easy grades, to that point.

When the Northern Pacific decided to begin actual construction upon the Cascades Division, the officials of the Land Department made a careful examination of the Yakima country. It was plainly evident that in that region would spring up a large inland city, the centre of trade for the great agricultural, mineral and timber district through which the road would run. Being also the geographical centre of the Territory, and, when the road is completed, the point most accessible from all portions of it, there seemed little doubt that a city suitably located and properly laid out would receive the general preference for the State capital, when, in the wisdom of Congress, the time should arrive for the admission of Washington into the sisterhood of States. These considerations, combined with the fact that some central point on the line must be selected for the location of repair shops and division headquarters, placed considerable responsibility on the shoulders of those charged with this duty. Their examination resulted in the decision that the site described above was the natural commercial centre of the Yakima country. In that valley they found the town of Yakima City, containing about 500 people, and transacting the business for a large portion of this new and sparsely settled region. In several respects the town did not meet the requirements for a great inland metropolis, and the officials were compelled to decide between adopting it with its imperfections or founding a new one. The latter course was decided upon as being the wisest one to pursue, and a site in every way eligible was selected three and one-half miles north of the old town. This was surveyed and laid out in blocks, lots, streets and alleys, with plats reserved for public uses, State capitol and other buildings of a public and educational character. To compensate the citizens of the old town as much as possible, the company offered to donate to such of them as would remove their buildings to North Yakima, the name chosen for the new town, or would erect new ones there, business and residence property equivalent in value and location to that occupied by them in the old town.

As soon as this decision was announced, there was a great rush of enterprising business men to the new town site. The company immediately began the construction of depot, side tracks, etc., and work was commenced on two score buildings almost in a day. Several business men of the old town, clearly appreciating the situation, immediately began the removal of their buildings or the construction of new ones upon lots accepted on the company's proposition. Others held back and sought to maintain the prestige of the old town; but one by one they recognized the handwriting on the wall, and were wise enough to see a permanent advantage in what appeared to be a temporary calamity. More contracts were daily let to the house-movers, until now the movement northward is a continuous procession. Large buildings