

The extension of railroads, the gradual reduction in cost of transportation, and the increasing facilities for handling dressed meats, all tend to increase the demand. Everything being considered, it would seem that ten years hence the beef market will not be so badly glutted as to take all the profits out of the stock business.

THE enchantment of distance is better illustrated by the many mining excitements the Pacific Coast has witnessed than by any other event in the history of the Nation. The disposition to believe that the mines the most distant and most difficult to reach are the richest, seems to be universal. This season Alaska will occupy a large share of public attention, simply because its distance and the fact that so little is known about it, combine to charm the imagination and excite the credulity of those who seem to be unwilling to learn a lesson from history. On another page will be found a statement of the mineral resources of Alaska, and the nature of the country in which they exist. If, upon reading that, any one shall decide to pass by the numerous mining districts of the Coast, which are convenient of access and easy to get away from, and whose richness is not a matter of doubt, and seek the gold fields of Alaska, he will at least be able to start with some idea of the probable chances for success and the nature of the obstacles to be encountered. Alaska may, eventually, prove to be the greatest gold-producing region yet discovered, and, in fact, it now possesses the richest quartz mine in the world; but summer is not made by a single swallow. It is known positively that placer gold is diffused over a vast region, but its concentration in good paying quantities in any particular spot has not yet been ascertained, and until that is done none but experienced prospectors, well aware of the special hardships they will be called upon to endure, and the unusually rugged nature of the country, should venture into that region. When it is known beyond a doubt that rich and extensive placers have been found, it will be time enough for less experienced men to court the fickle jade in that far region, where failure means more than it ever did in any mining camp on the Pacific Coast.

SOME of the decisions made by Land Commissioner Sparks have raised considerable commotion in the West, not alone among "land sharks" and "timber thieves," but among honest settlers and innocent purchasers as well. The most recent one of note is to the effect that the Northern Pacific has no land grant between Portland and Puget Sound. The original act of 1864 provided for a main line across the Cascades to Puget Sound, and another down the Columbia to Portland, a land grant provision accompanying it. The act of 1869 authorized the construction of a road from Portland to Puget Sound, but did not contain a land grant clause, and Commissioner Sparks holds that none was implied, and that the former grant can not be extended so as to attach to the latter line. This is, of course, a legal question, and if the decision of the Commissioner be sustained by Secretary Lamar, will have to be passed upon by the Supreme

Court of the United States. In that event, even should the final decision be favorable to the company and to the holders of land along this line under purchase from the Northern Pacific, the delay and uncertainty of titles must have a most harmful effect upon Tacoma and other towns located partially upon railroad land. Few people will invest in land with such a cloud upon the title. Should the final decision be averse to the company and the settlers upon the lands, Congress will probably pass an act relieving innocent purchasers, as much as possible, from the effects of the decision, either by confirming their titles or by allowing them an opportunity to purchase again from the Government at a nominal price. Such a measure would be but simple justice to *bona fide* purchasers from the company. In any event it is a serious complication, and traffic in town lots in towns effected by it will be at a low ebb until the question is finally determined.

POLITICS force party men into many inconsistent and undignified positions, but in spite of this they seem to worship the party idol with all the blind devotion of the typical heathen who raged and imagined a vain thing. An illustration of this is the captious opposition to the admission of several Territories, now being made in Congress by men representing States which, at the time of their admission, were much less qualified for Statehood than these new applicants. They then possessed far less population, wealth and prospects of rapid and permanent growth, and, indeed, even now, are threatened with being soon surpassed by these Territories their representatives affect to look down upon.

The leading Republic of the world, the boasted champion and personification of equal rights and popular government, presents to mankind an elevating example when it makes the admission of a fully qualified Territory dependent upon its possible political action. These men seem to forget that States are neither Ethiopians nor leopards, whose political skins and spots are unchangeable, and that Washington, Dakota and Montana will be powerful members of the Union when the Republican and Democratic parties are but a memory. It is of far more importance to the people of the United States how these aspirants for Statehood stand on the questions of silver coinage, tariff, honest government and the protection of the individual from the oppression of monopolies, than their possible temporary attitude toward the two political parties now fighting each other for the spoils of office. Yet, since such is the condition of affairs, it is to be hoped that the political scales may be so evenly balanced by the skillful party manipulators at Washington, as to give these Territories the recognition they justly claim. Dakota is Republican, Montana is Democratic, and Washington may be said to be doubtful, since it elected a Republican Legislature and a Democratic Delegate to Congress. A compromise may be effected by which all three may be admitted, giving each party one State and a chance to capture the third one, until such time, happily not far distant, when live questions, now kept under by the fast-failing strength of party worship, shall rise to the surface and change the political character of them all.