

the East. These figures represent a great volume of business, but are insignificant when compared with the commerce which will develop here when a railroad is built and the Columbia river is opened to the interior. The city has a chamber of commerce, which is energetic in its work for the good of the community. It has done much to forward the work on the improvement of the river, both at the bar and in the interior, and is laboring to secure railroad connection with the great lines now terminating in Portland.

The opening of the Columbia river and the construction of a railroad are both vital questions with Astoria. Upon their successful solution depends much of her future growth. The work on the bar at the mouth of the river has so far progressed that it is practically no longer an obstruction to shipping. What is most necessary is to open the river to continuous, uninterrupted navigation from its mouth to the line of British Columbia, on the main stream, and to Lewiston, on Snake river. (See article on Cascade Locks, on page 544 for details of this question). When this is done the varied products of the interior, especially the wheat and flour, can be taken direct to Astoria almost as cheaply as to Portland, and can be shipped from here much cheaper than from there, since the expense of towing the vessel up and down the river will be saved.

A railroad to Portland and the Willamette valley would be of vast benefit to Astoria, and, happily, the prospect of one is very bright. Until recently the Oregon & California road held a grant of land to aid construction of a line from Forest Grove to this city. The company did not feel able to build it, although the route was carefully surveyed and the resources examined. The grant has been forfeited, and the route is open to any company which may see fit to build. The Oregon & California has been sold to the Southern Pacific, a company with ample capital, and the prospects of an early construction of a line to this city from Forest Grove are now good. The wheat crop of the Willamette valley can be carried to this point over such a road almost as cheaply as to Portland, while the expense of shipment will be less. The amount saved in shipping will so far exceed the added railroad charges, if, indeed, there be any, that the great bulk of grain and flour shipped to foreign countries from the Willamette valley will be loaded at this port. Along the route have been discovered deposits of good coal, and large areas of the finest fir, spruce and cedar timber on the coast would be penetrated, making Astoria the most favorably situated milling and lumber shipping point on the river. The bringing here of the wheat crop would naturally lead to the establishment of large mills for the conversion of a portion of it into flour. After such a line has been built by the Southern Pacific, there is little doubt that the Northern Pacific will feel the necessity of a line down the river from its present point of crossing, opposite Kalama. There are other railroad possibilities. A road will be built from a point on the north bank of the river to Shoalwater bay and Gray's harbor, to connect with a line now partially constructed through the rich Chehalis region, from Puget sound to Gray's harbor. A road down the coast to Seaside, Nehalem river and Tillamook bay is one of the projects of this nature under consideration. This road would do a large passenger business in the summer season, and at all times would have a paying freight traffic in logs, materials for construction of jetties at the mouth of the river, and products and merchandise. A company has been organized