

culture that is bestowed upon lands in the Mississippi valley, there is scarcely a limit to the producing capacity of the soil of Washington county. The land can be plowed at any season of the year and is always friable.

Washington county shares in the greatest measure the fame of the Willamette valley in the fertility of its soil, its salubrious climate and its general productiveness. The natural conditions are as favorable for the growing of many fruits as can be found anywhere. In a wild state numerous kinds of fruits and berries are produced in abundance, especially strawberries, blackberries, huckleberries, plums and crab apples, and the size and flavor of these spontaneous productions would compare favorably with the cultivated fruits of some states that make an effort to rank high in fruit growing. Cherries, peaches, pears, quinces, apples and all the common small fruits are grown in abundance, and with the possible exception of peaches and grapes, they are characterized by large size and exceptionally fine flavor. However, good peaches and grapes are raised in large quantities. Throughout the county, wherever fruit culture is undertaken it is a most gratifying success. The hill-sides seem to offer the best locations for orchards, from the absolute certainty of the crop there, but the marked excellence of the product on timber lands bordering the streams shows that no portion of the county is unfitted for orcharding with profit. The proximity of a never-failing market is a great incentive to the development of this industry. The great staple product of this county, as well as of the whole Willamette valley, has been wheat, which still receives more attention than any other crop, though it is giving place to more profitable branches of agriculture. The strength of the soil is evidenced by the yields of wheat which are obtained, eighteen to forty bushels being the usual crops, the system of tillage, or lack of it, governing the result more than the difference in quality of the soil. The grain is first class in every respect. With good cultivation oats yield in the best localities one hundred to one hundred and twenty-five bushels per acre, and are of very heavy weight. Of course, root crops and vegetables do well.

The considerations which, until a very recent period, influenced the operations of farmers, have been changed. The great lack of adequate facilities for transporting products to market, from which the entire northwest suffered, was nowhere more manifest than in the realm of agriculture. There being no reliable market at hand, nor any convenient means for reaching one, there was no inducement for striving for the finest results from the soil; wheat, being the grain that brought sufficient money to pay for trans-

portation by water to distant markets, and being of a nature that would permit such transportation, was the farmer's staple. The railway connections that have been established within the last five years have entirely changed the status of agriculture. They have brought within reach the best markets of the world, not only for one product but for all. In addition to this they have been one of the most important agents in the growth of the northwest, and the incidental creation of a reliable home demand for farm products. With safe markets for encouragement and with favorable natural conditions as the foundation for his business, the farmer is not averse to making progress, and when such conditions were established here the farming communities were not slow to recognize them. The wheat crop, though still important, is not an exclusive one. The cultivation of barley, oats, rye, corn, beans, hops, fruits, roots and grasses, in a word diversified farming, is coming into vogue, and the improved methods of operation are the result of the new status of affairs. Recent experiences, also, have convinced farmers that they will do well to take advantage of their facilities for dairy products, for supplying meat markets and for raising vegetables. Washington county is unsurpassed in its natural capacity for producing and marketing those products. Its proximity to Portland gives it superior advantages, for the cultivable area of Multnomah county is too small to supply the requirements of the metropolis.

Among the considerations which specially commend Washington county to dairymen is the unusual adaptability of the soil for the production of foods for cattle. Clover grows to a rankness and richness which few other localities can show. Roots, such as carrots, turnips, rutabagas and beets also yield large crops. Timothy, red top, orchard grass, and many other varieties are natural to the soil, and with reasonable care green grass can be provided for cows the entire year. The creek bottoms and swale lands produce enormous crops of grasses, three or four tons of hay not unusually being harvested from an acre of ground. By reason of its location with reference to market, and by its climate, soil and productions, this county claims attention as a section of superior qualifications for fruit growing, dairying, gardening, stock raising on a moderate scale and a system of generally diversified agriculture. Small farms are the most profitable and satisfactory.

Hillsboro and Forest Grove are the only incorporated towns in Washington county, the former being the county seat. There are numerous other trading centers for farmers distributed over the county, and many lumber mills and flouring mills, about which more or less of the population is located. Hillsboro's