

it gives them assurance, which they have never before had, that their products will reach a good market. Already the influence of this road is seen in the increased acreage of land growing farm crops where last year stock reveled in the choicest bunch grass. One, two, three, or half a dozen sections of land are held by individuals who can never cultivate such vast holdings. They made their investments profitable by raising stock, but now that the land is made so much more valuable for general farming, the large land holders are willing to sell to settlers in smaller tracts. People with a little capital are going into the country and securing homes, and it is to such that this country offers the strongest inducements.

An important crop that comparatively few sections of the west can grow successfully is corn, and this is produced in abundance throughout the region traversed by the Hunt railway system. Thousands of acres of this cereal are now grown, and the acreage is increasing annually. With the transformation now being wrought in the country between the Blue mountains and the Snake and Columbia rivers, corn, hops, vegetables and general fruits will be important productions, as well as the stock, wheat and peaches which have heretofore almost monopolized the attention of producers.

Farmers in general have a deeply rooted prejudice against undertaking to cultivate the soil where irrigation is necessary to make it productive. There is a widespread impression, gained from unreliable sources, that this portion of the Columbia river basin is an arid tract, which is very wide of the fact. No rain to speak of falls during the summer season, but the ground retains the moisture and gives it off to growing vegetation throughout the dry summer. Irrigation is not employed in farming there, and surely enough in that line has been done to demonstrate the feasibility of farming without it. People passing over the country before it was cultivated jumped at the conclusion that ordinary crops would not thrive there, because the climate is dry and the land, in a wild state, is covered with a growth of bunch grass. Even many of those who have lived in that section for years only recently dared to leave the creek bottoms to attempt to till the soil of the rolling hills. Many old-timers were amused to see a new-comer innocently set his stakes on the hills and start his plow, they being so sure that the efforts of the tenderfoot would result in failure. But when the harvest came and the farmer on the hill gathered as much or more per acre as his neighbor in the canyon, the wise ones were surprised, and could scarcely believe the fact until successive years proved beyond peradventure that the hills are susceptible of the highest culture. So now the whole country is equally inviting.

A trip over the lines of the Hunt system in June affords a revelation for those unacquainted with the country or imbued with the old idea of it. Of course, there are long stretches of land as yet unimproved, for it has only been accessible to settlers a few months. But there are many places, too, where the growing crops extend as far as the eye can see on either hand. Wheat is king. In the latter part of June it is ready for the harvest, and the fields present a busy spectacle. In many of them the wheat is as tall as six feet and the heads are long and well filled. The evenness of the growth is somewhat remarkable. The fields are not spotted, nor is the grain lodged or killed by insect pests that cause such wide devastation in the crops of eastern farmers. One may ride along the edge of grain fields for miles, or through the middle of them, and find the growth everywhere the same. At intervals the broad expanse of ripening grain is broken by fields of thrifty corn, some of which contain hundreds of acres. Its dark color and luxuriant growth show that it is in the midst of favoring circumstances, and the yield, when the harvest time for that cereal comes, is all that could be desired. Peach orchards are coming to be quite numerous in that country, and, now that there are facilities for getting the fruit to market in proper time, orcharding will be one of the chief occupations of the people. The quality of the fruit product, as well as of the grain, is most excellent, and is making a reputation wherever it is known. The country is still so new that it is not well known what the range of products it can accommodate is. Almost everything which has been tried, whether of fruits, grains or vegetables, has proved successful.

Besides the lines of the Hunt system now in operation as noted above, work is now being prosecuted on extensions that will greatly increase its influence and patronage in the Inland Empire. The extensions to be completed this season are:

First—From Walla Walla to Waitsburg by way of Dixie, thence to Dayton and on to Whetstone hollow, a total distance of about forty-five miles. A large force of men is now at work on this line, which will be ready to carry this season's crop to market.

Second—From the present terminus of the Eureka flat branch to Riparia, on the Snake river, a distance of fifteen miles.

Third—From Walla Walla southerly through Milton and up the Grande Ronde valley to Union, a distance of about ninety miles. This still rests upon the contingency of raising a subsidy of \$180,000.00, for which a proposition has been submitted to the citizens of Union and the other towns of the valley that will be affected by the construction of the road.

Fourth—From Fulton, near Pendleton, in an east-