

THE REBUILDING OF SPOKANE.

SPOKANE FALLS was the latest of the three cities of Washington to be devastated by fire last year. Seattle burned June 6, Ellensburg July 4, and Spokane August 4. The significance of this lies in the fact that the two cities previously burned, in their eager demand for materials with which to rebuild, had more than exhausted the home market, so that Spokane was obliged, from the outset of her rebuilding operations, to get her supply of building materials from abroad. Her disaster was not one whit less severe than that suffered by the others, but the necessity of importing everything to be used in replacing the burned structures was an additional burden that Spokane had to carry. This not only made some delay inevitable, but it materially increased the cost of the articles needed. A new country like this can not be well supplied with facilities for meeting a demand so vast and sudden as that precipitated by the burning of these three cities last summer.

Still, any one knowing the circumstances can not fail to be impressed with the marvelous results that have already been attained in restoring Spokane Falls. Immediately after the fire the city council enlarged the fire limits so that no structures but those of brick, stone or iron could be erected within a large area in the business center. This had the effect of spreading the business of the city over a greater area when wooden buildings could be hastily thrown up and occupied at the earliest possible moment. Within the fire limits tents were made to do service until other than wooden structures could be erected. Many of these are still on the ground, their occupants anxiously waiting for the completion of the new business blocks that will enable them to do business with more comfort and security. It is surprising, though, how substantial a tent can be made in case of necessity. Some of them are neatly papered throughout the interior, and a stranger, judging only from the inside appearance, would not dream he was within a frail cloth tent.

The Spokane opera house block is the most costly structure erected since the fire, costing \$300,000. The Spokane hotel, a five-story brick just receiving finishing touches, the Granite block, built of granite, five stories high, and the Tull block, a five-story brick, each cost \$150,000 and are just being completed. Sixteen other structures to cost between \$50,000 and \$100,000 each are in process of construction, many of them being ready for occupancy. The buildings erected since the fire or now in progress costing \$50,000 or more each make up an aggregate of nearly \$2,000,000 in value. Some forty others, each costing between \$10,000 and \$50,000 are finished or in course of construction. There are comparatively few lower priced

buildings going up. A number of six and seven story structures are planned for erection in the spring. The completion of the buildings now under way will relieve the tent-crowded central business section so that it can also be restored to much more than its former grandeur. Meanwhile, the improvement of streets, the extension of street car lines, the laying out of new additions, improvement of water power, and many other enterprises, go on unchecked. The building is by no means confined to the business section. One man is erecting residences costing \$65,000, another firm has just finished \$13,000 worth of flats, another is building a residence to cost \$27,000, and so on through a long list. Though cold weather somewhat interferes with the progress of the work, it is not suspended. Even masonry work is prosecuted when the snow must be swept away for each successive layer of bricks. When entirely rebuilt Spokane will be one of the handsomest cities in the country, and none will exceed it in the substantial character of its buildings and business. The progress Spokane Falls is making is little less than phenomenal.

Notwithstanding the interruption of business by the great conflagration, the record made by Spokane Falls in 1889 was a remarkable one. Sales of real estate amounted to more than \$18,000,000, and the land office records show that 285,594 acres of public land were filed upon in the district. Seven banks with a total capital of \$857,661, are carrying deposits of \$3,212,332, besides the deposits in savings banks, of which there are several with a capital of \$150,000. The total freight received in the city was 49,733 tons, yielding about \$2,000,000 revenue to the railroads. The total output of lumber was 30,000,000 feet. \$2,510,450 were expended in public and corporation works. The value of buildings erected since the fire has been given above, added to the value of those now under contract, it reaches a total of \$3,000,000 for less than five months. One most significant fact is the liberal subsidies raised by the citizens for various purposes for the general good of the city. These aggregate \$641,000, being \$275,000 for railroads, \$36,000 for bridges, \$100,000 for churches, and \$30,000 for colleges and seminaries. The business record of Spokane Falls in 1889, great as it was, will be completely eclipsed in 1890, under the more favorable conditions that now prevail. It would be hazardous to record a guess as to the magnitude of its manufactures, trade, real estate transfers and building improvements, or as to what figures its present population of 22,000 will be increased.

If the influenza tackles all the ducks and counts living on the Pacific coast, some of our hotels and restaurants will have to look for new help.