

LAFAYETTE, OREGON.

SITUATED in almost the geographical center of Yamhill county is the town of Lafayette, on the southern slope of the hill that rises on the north bank of Yamhill river, about five miles in a direct line from where it empties into the Willamette. This town that dates its origin from the early part of the forties, is advantageously located. The west side division of the Oregonian Railway runs within a quarter of a mile of the center of the town. By this line, Portland is distant but thirty miles. St. Joseph, which is distant a mile and a half, is a station on the west side division of the Southern Pacific Railroad. In addition to having these two railways connecting this section of the country with Portland, it possesses an outlet by way of the Yamhill river from Dayton, which is the head of navigation of that river, and which is only two and a half miles distant from Lafayette. The constructing of about a mile and a half of railway connecting the narrow gauge at this place with the Southern Pacific at St. Joseph, would give the people of the Willamette valley, living south of St. Joseph, an all-rail connection with Portland, via Lafayette, that would be fifteen miles shorter than the present Southern Pacific route. It is the hope of the people of this portion of the valley, since the Southern Pacific Railroad has acquired the Oregonian Railway, that it will be converted into one of standard gauge, and if this is accomplished and Lafayette connected by rail with St. Joseph, Lafayette would become the place of junction of the two leading branches on the west side of the Willamette river. The company has stated its intention of doing this the present season.

The town has been gradually, but slowly increasing until it now claims a population of 600, and must, in the event of the increase of the railroad facilities, secure very large accessions to the number of its inhabitants. Few places throughout the whole of this portion of Oregon can boast of a prettier or more healthful location for a town. It is situated on the slope of a hill at the foot of which flows the tortuous Yamhill river, high enough above the bed of that stream to afford abundant protection against freshets and floods, and the site possesses sufficient descent to give excellent drainage. The view obtained from the summit of this hill is grand. Everywhere one looks may be seen plains and rolling hills with towering hills and mountains for a back ground. Throughout these plains and on the sides of these hills may be seen small patches of timber, the larger portion of the land adjoining the town being under a high state of cultivation. All of these plains are sufficiently high to afford excellent drainage. The soil is a dark loam, while that on the slope of the higher hills is designated

here as "red lands." These hills are proving to be as fertile and productive as the plains, and produce the finest of crops even in the dryest season of the year. The principal products of this section are wheat and oats. There were shipped from there last year, between forty and fifty thousand bushels of wheat and between thirty and forty thousand bushels of oats. The bottom lands along the river have been found to yield large crops of a high grade of hops, while the upland soil is considered among the best for the growing of fruit, such as prunes, plums, pears and apples, and the smaller fruits, such as gooseberries, blackberries and strawberries.

A portion of the land is still held in large tracts, as it was acquired from the government under the donation law; but many of these large holdings are being sub-divided and sold. The past year was a very active one in real estate, greater than was ever known before. The hills that surround Lafayette may yet prove rich in minerals. Good seams of coal have been discovered within three miles of the town and the indications are that it exists there in large quantities. Large deposits of iron have also been disclosed near the town. The river is capable of supplying a good motive power at a very small cost. It has a fall of ten feet within a short distance of town, and by the erection of a dam, a few more feet could be procured which it is thought would be ample for mechanical purposes.

This town, since the establishment of the college there, seems to be taking up a new life. The whole community speaks of the efficiency of this new institution. Last September the old court house which had been appropriately remodeled and made suitable for school purposes, was opened under the auspices of the Evangelical church as a college, with an efficient corps of professors. Already there are sixty-eight pupils in attendance. The public school house is a fine building. On the rolls there are at present the names of 112 pupils. There are situated here Methodist, Presbyterian, and Evangelical churches. The masons, odd fellows, and workmen have lodges. Lafayette has, also, a number of merchants who carry large stocks of goods, and a grist mill capable of producing forty barrels of flour per day.

G. BIRNIE.

The Union Pacific, Oregon Improvement Company and Northern Pacific have each proposed to Olympia to build a line of railroad to that city for a bonus, chiefly of right of way and terminal facilities; and that enterprising city is at work vigorously to secure the desired assistance. Olympia is destined soon to become something more than the capital of Washington.