

NEW WHATCOM, WASHINGTON.

New Whatcom is the name of a town at the head of Bellingham bay that includes what was formerly the town of Sehome and territory entirely enclosing on the land side the city of Whatcom. The new city was incorporated about two months ago. Sehome had previously voted for incorporation, but it was found that the law under which the action was taken was invalid, so the work had to be done again. The question of consolidation of the towns on the bay came up for consideration at this time. The southernmost two towns on the bay decided to combine under the name of Fairhaven, and an understanding was had between the citizens of Sehome and Whatcom looking toward the consolidation of those two in one incorporation. The first step was for Sehome to re-incorporate. This was done under the name of New Whatcom. Now all that remains to be done is for the governing bodies of both cities to act to combine the two municipalities into one, which will bear the name of New Whatcom, as Whatcom was the largest and best known town on the bay and nothing is lost by preserving that name. They are practically one in all material interests, and in speaking of the advantages of that locality New Whatcom and Whatcom are considered together. The "new" has more reference to the inauguration of a new era of growth in the community than to marked political changes or the establishment of a new town.

This consolidation gives a city of about 7,000 inhabitants—the fifth city in the state in point of size. This fact alone is of considerable importance. Then it is a seaport and the strength which the resources of the adjacent country give it is greatly increased by the shipping facilities. Bellingham bay is in nearly a direct line with the Straits of Fuca, so its ports afford the shortest and safest route to the markets of the world from the great Puget sound basin. This fact was appreciated when a considerable commerce was carried on there years ago, but the building of railroads diverted attention from the coast trade which lost its relative importance, though it actually increased very materially in volume. Whatcom had no railways penetrating the interior. Those great avenues of commerce went farther south, and such cities as Seattle and Tacoma were the result. Lately railroads have been aiming for Bellingham bay in a way that points unmistakably to the building up of an extensive shipping business there and the development of the wealth that lies in the hills and valleys of the interior.

The Bellingham Bay & British Columbia Railway is now in operation a number of miles from New Whatcom, and most of the work is done to a junction with the Canadian Pacific at Mission. When this is completed New Whatcom will be the American terminus of the Canadian line and through traffic will constitute an important item of business for the new city. All freight designed for coast points can be much more quickly and safely transported from Bellingham bay than from the present western terminus of the Canadian Pacific, and as time is an important element in modern transportation New Whatcom will command an important advantage in this respect even if it were not a fact that navigation between that port and the ocean is less perilous. The section of mineral and timber land that the Bellingham Bay & British Columbia road will open insures it a large local business—more than enough to warrant its construction without transcontinental connections in view. The Nooksack valley also offers the best of advantages to farmers, and this railway taps it at a central point. Then the Fairhaven & Northern Railway is in course of construction up the coast to New Westminster, in British Columbia, where it will meet the Canadian road and form the third side of a triangle. This line will skirt the entire water front of New What-

com, thus directly reaching the wharves and affording rail transportation to the best manufacturing district of the city. On the south it connects with the Fairhaven & Southern, and it will meet the Canadian branch at Blaine, on the international boundary. With these railways in operation—and trains will be running on them before the end of the present year—New Whatcom will be independent, and the advantages it will command can be scarcely overestimated. The Cornwall road (B. B. & B. C.), it is calculated, will be in running order by October and the Fairhaven & Northern will be completed as early.

There have been settlements along the coast for many years, but there has never before been any well directed attempt to open the interior and to promote the development of its resources. There was no disposition to explore the hills and valleys of the inland country because of the lack of means for carrying on commerce at any distance from the coast. The construction of railways brings a new element to bear on the situation, and one need be no prophet to see that great changes will be wrought by the new agent. The mountains of coal and iron of the best quality will yield their stores to some purpose. The forests will be brought to the factories. The farms will be placed in communication with remunerative markets. Machinery will be introduced into the country and the comforts of civilization will be placed within the reach of the most obscure settler. There is great probability that the mining of the precious metals will develop into an important industry. Gold and silver have been found in sufficient quantities to encourage systematic prospecting, though but little actual work has been done, owing to the remoteness from transportation. The city will, of course, reap great benefit from the progress of the adjacent country; and the whole of that rich area stretching back to the summit of the Cascade mountains will pay tribute to Bellingham bay as naturally as it will produce. And any one who examines the nature of that region can not but admit that its producing powers are unsurpassed.

The safety of Bellingham bay for the deepest draft ocean ships at any stage of the tide contributes to the significance of the railway building now in progress north, south and east from the harbor. It is not difficult to see how much business that has hitherto gone to upper sound ports and to English bay should be controlled at this new candidate for commerce. A brief consultation of the map will determine this point. There is a free channel to the ocean—no narrow passages or dangerous rocks for vessels to pass. It is also the nearest seaport to a vast area of mining and farming country east of the Cascade mountains. One of the most accessible passes of the range lies almost due east of Bellingham bay.

New Whatcom is situated at the northeastern corner of the bay. That which was formerly Sehome has a very distinct slope to the water, while old Whatcom is more level. The streets of the latter, parallel with the water front, meet the similar streets of New Whatcom at right angles. A number of fine buildings appear to good advantage as the town is approached from the water. Some of these are shown in the supplement accompanying this number of WEST SHORE. The Whatcom county court house, not yet completed, will be a magnificent structure of gray sandstone procured almost within the city limits, and its cost will be \$65,000. It will be finished this season. The school buildings are models of their kind. The Sehome school has just been completed. The other two will be finished by October, at a cost of \$15,000 each. The Grand Central, the Sehome and the Bellingham supply better hotel accommodations than many larger cities possess, the first named having just been completed at a cost of \$30,000 and being designed especially for the entertainment of tourists.