

PROGRESS ON THE GRAY'S HARBOR ROADS.

Sixteen miles of track have been laid by the Northern Pacific on its line between Centralia and Black river junction, and as this part of the work is now up to the graders, track laying will have to stop a short time. Side tracks are to be put in at the junction, and as soon as these are completed it is the intention to put the forces on the grade between there and Olympia. It is also probable that track will be laid from Tacoma to Olympia so that trains can be started at once. Beyond Black river, and between that point and Gray's Harbor, 1,500 men and the necessary teams are at work. Ballasting is being done on the portions of track already completed, and will be prosecuted as fast as the track layers finish their work, thus putting the line in readiness for operation as soon as the last rail is placed.

Work has been commenced by the Hunt forces on the bridge across the Skookumchuck river. Scatter creek and Black river will be the next points of operation by the bridge builders. The right of way is being slashed and cleared four miles beyond Oakville preparatory to moving the graders, who have completed their work nearly to that point—a distance of twenty miles from Centralia. Two saw mills are kept busy getting out ties and bridge timbers for this line.

Since mining is absorbing all the time of Idaho people, little attention is being paid to the timber resources. A correspondent of the *Weiser Leader* says it is probably unknown generally that on the headwaters of the Weiser river and its many tributaries are vast forests of pine, fir and tamarack, and on the branches of the Little Weiser, flowing from the east through Indian valley, there are extensive tracts of timber comparatively untouched. Extending north, and nearly surrounding Council valley, a distance of about thirty miles, is a wide belt of excellent timber on the mountain sides, and in utilizing it logs would not have to be hauled more than a mile and a half to the river, all the way down grade. Along East fork excellent timber grows to the water's edge. Up the West branch to Lost valley and beyond, and the main river to Price valley, and over the ridge between these parallel streams, is an unbroken wilderness. All this timber can be floated down the Weiser, as much has been, and manufactured into lumber, sash, doors, shingles and rustic, and all that is not needed at home would find a ready market in the numerous towns along the railroad. There is not a day passes but numerous carloads of lumber pass Weiser going east, and Weiser people are purchasing sash and doors from Portland Seattle and various other points in the Blue mountains.

A bulletin has been issued by the census bureau relative to the quicksilver industry. The business seems to have reached its height in 1887, since which time it has steadily declined. In that year 79,396 flasks were produced; in 1888 the number had been reduced to 33,250, which in turn had dwindled to 26,464 in 1889. A flask holds seventy-six pounds and six ounces of metal, and the average cost of production is \$33 per flask. Nearly all the quicksilver produced in this country comes from California. The metal is obtained by mining cinnabar ore and extracting the mercury by roasting. It is a very unhealthful business, as the fumes arising from the reduction process are poisonous, and continued working where they can be inhaled invariably ends in a breaking down of the systems of its operatives. Oregon's production amounted to twenty flasks, less than \$1,000 in value, which was insignificant as compared to the total output. The uses to which this metal is put are varied and extensive, though its most important function is the extraction of gold and silver from their ores by the process of amalgamation. Spain and Austria are the principal producers of the world, with California ranking third. The entire product of this country is stated to have been 407,675 flasks in the decade just closed.

In some fields of wheat near Pullman, Washington, a blight of some kind appeared on the grain recently. Patches of it would appear burnt and the tips of the heads turned white as though they had been frosted. A close examination, however, revealed the presence of a puncture in the joints, made by some insect. Specimens of the affected grain were gathered and sent to the department of agriculture, at Washington, D. C., where the entomologist pronounced it to be *isotoma tritici riley*, or joint worms. The remedy suggested for ridding fields of the pest is to burn the stubble. Where weeds have been allowed to grow up after harvest a mowing machine should be run over the ground, and after the weeds have dried sufficiently the burning can be thoroughly done. Rotation of crops is also suggested as being advantageous, and, should the matter become serious, the straw and all screenings should be burned also. Such pests multiply with astonishing rapidity when not taken in hand promptly, and the farmers of the infested section owe it to the entire grain-producing section of the northwest to take prompt measures for the extermination of the evil.

The steamer *Greyhound*, recently built at Steffen's ship yard, in North Portland, has been chartered by the Union Pacific and placed on the Tacoma-Seattle route on the sound. The design of the owners in building the

Greyhound was to attain the highest possible speed, and that they have accomplished their purpose is abundantly proved by the performance of the boat since her arrival in the sound waters. The run from Tacoma to Seattle has formerly occupied two hours and fifteen minutes by the boats heretofore employed on that route, while the new steamer covers the distance in the remarkable time of one hour and thirty-five minutes. Twelve to fourteen miles an hour is considered good work for the usual run of steamers, and is considerably more than the average boat can maintain, and when it is considered that this boat makes an average of over twenty miles an hour, the prestige it gives to Portland ship building is apparent. The *Greyhound* is 140 feet long, 18.7 feet beam, 6.6 feet depth of hold and draws 4 feet.

For some months past the question of providing Whatcom county, Washington, with a system of public highways has been discussed, and the matter has now assumed definite shape in a monster petition to the commissioners which sets forth the number of miles of road required in each part of the county and gives an estimate of the probable cost of construction. The commissioners have ordered a special election to be held on the thirteenth of October to determine the question. The proposition is to issue county bonds in the sum of \$490,500, to bear six per cent interest, and to be redeemable in five, ten, fifteen and twenty years. The proposed amount of bonds is equal to three and one-half per cent. of the present valuation of taxable property. A number of the largest property holders have signified their willingness to assist in carrying out the scheme.

A deposit of fire opals has been discovered four miles northwest of Moscow, Idaho. This discovery is a very important one, as the stones are very valuable, and are found in but two other places on the American continent—Mexico having one mine, and the state of Georgia the other. The opals were thrown out with the dirt drawn up from a well which was being dug, and were noticed by a jeweler of Moscow who chanced to be hunting in that vicinity. All the country adjacent to the farm on which the discovery was made has been staked out into claims and prospecting is going on at a rapid pace. A company has been organized and is now pushing the work of development.

The large dock and terminal wharf of the Port Townsend Southern Railroad Company has been finished at Port Townsend, and a large warehouse, sufficient to accommodate all the business of the road, is now being built. Other terminal buildings, such as roundhouses, offices, etc., are also being erected. The depot will be connected with the principal streets of the city by means of an electric car line. Of the road thirty-five miles have been completed and are in operation.

The grist mill at Palouse City, Washington, was burned last week, entailing a loss of \$10,000, only partially covered by insurance. A subscription list was immediately started and substantial contributions were made to such an extent that the rebuilding of the mill is now an assured fact. Palouse City is the trade center for a large section of the richest portion of Eastern Washington—the large Palouse valley—and the loss of such an enterprise would be very serious.

The Livingston Land and Improvement Company was incorporated last week at Livingston, Montana. The objects of the corporation are to build flumes and dig ditches for water power and irrigation purposes, to deal in lands and townsites and subdivisions of any town or city in the state. Also to build and operate street railways. The capital stock is \$50,000.

The demand for laborers on railroad work in the northwest so far exceeds the available supply that contractors on the various lines now building have been compelled to send east for help. It is estimated that not less than 7,000 men are employed in construction work alone in this section at present, and many hundreds more could be employed were they here.

The Oregon Paint Company has finally decided to locate its works in the town of Scio. The inducement offered was a donation of seven lots on which to erect the mill and ore sheds, and a first-class water power.

The principal business portion of Puyallup, Washington, burned Tuesday night, causing a loss of \$30,000, with \$15,000 insurance. The burned frame structures will be replaced immediately by substantial brick buildings.

The contract for grading the extension of the Oregonian railroad from Coburg to a connection with the main line of the Southern Pacific at Jasper, Lane county, has been awarded, and work was commenced last week.