

ST. JOHNS REVIEW

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NOTES AND OBSERVATIONS

Various Topics of Local and General Interest Briefly and Tersely Treated.

Timely Matters Dealt With and Interspersed with Timely Suggestions on Local Affairs.

Sometimes we hear the real estate man—we mean those who deal in real estate, buy and sell—spoken of lightly, and occasionally with scorn. This is generally done by the thoughtless, or the “knocker,” or the “smart aleck,” or some one who belongs in this category of useless appendages to the community. Occasionally, however, people who are regarded as being good, progressive citizens, some insinuating remark is dropped about the real estate man. The former speak with an innate desire to be “knocking”; the latter speak without thinking. If one would just stop for a moment and consider how necessary to the progress and thrift of any and all communities the legitimate real estate dealer is, the good citizen would not utter a single derogatory word. The real live, legitimate real estate dealer is just as important, just as necessary an adjunct to the business community as the butcher, the grocer, or any other line of business. More so, in fact, for through the efforts put forth by him it is made possible for other branches of business to be carried on. Without him there would be few cities on this continent. The real estate man is the pioneer of all great towns and through his labor and energies great business and industrial enterprises are made possible. Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland, and our own city of St. Johns, each and every one owe their greatness and development directly, not indirectly, but directly, to the exploitation and pushing to the front by the ever alert dealer in real estate. Give the devil his due, and all fair-minded people do, and tell us why this class of business men, composed as it is of some of the brightest and most progressive minds of the age, be referred to in terms other than of the most respectful.

Take St. Johns as an example. The location, the natural advantages, the favorable water-front conditions, in fact all the resources which is now possessed, have been here from far beyond the time New York City was mere country village. The real natural condition is no better today than it was then. Yet they lay dormant while cities were being built all around us. Through what agency do our resources brought to the attention of the industrial world? Not the tolling men who occupied this district for farming and other domestic purposes. Not a bit of it. It was the real estate men who first discovered these natural advantages, and through their energy and alertness are they being heralded broadcast through the land, and men of means have been and are now being attracted to this point, and note the result. Those who deride the legitimate and honorable real estate men are babbling infants, and know not thereof they speak.

The writer happened to be on a street car the other day. Sitting beside him was an elderly gentleman, who it developed in course of conversation, owned four lots up the peninsula. In course of conversation, the efforts made by a number of wide-awake and progressive men to secure the location of the Lewis and Clark Exposition grounds on the peninsula came up. The writer remarked that the efforts put forth by these gentlemen had been successful, great and lasting benefits would have accrued to the whole peninsula. “Benefits,” both the grim visaged gentleman, yes, the man who had these brush piles to sell would be benefitted, but the home-owners in the district would not. If the fair was held here it would mean street improvements, sidewalks and sewers. No, no, it was a scheme of real estate men, and I op-

posed it.” We were somewhat amazed but as our moss back friend alighted at his unimproved and muddy street, we had no chance to reply. The reader can estimate what it takes to satisfy men of this stamp. If the peninsula was composed entirely of a like population, what would be its present status. Let the reader reason out the result.

When one citizen meets another citizen on the streets of Portland these days, the first question is: In what department of the city government has robbery and corruption been found today? It's getting very odorous up the river these days.

A prisoner, who was arrested for some petty misdemeanor, and locked up in the Portland bastille over night, alleges that he was robbed while in durance vile of his pocketbook, which contained \$42. Robberies and hold-ups are quite common in “The City of Roses,” since the sheriff stopped gambling, and shut off the political “grafters.” The chief of police denies the charge of his unwilling guest.

The city officials who attended divine services last Sunday, put a good deal of earnest in the words when they joined in singing that beautiful sacred song: “Who'll Be the Next?” But such is Portland official life.

If you haven't read the proposed new charter, Mr. Citizen, you had better get a copy of The Review of last week and peruse it carefully. Don't jump at conclusions, but study the document. It is important, easy to correct now, but a very expensive operation after the legislature passes upon it.

The little interest manifested in fire protection is certainly to be wondered at. Men who are engaged in business pursuits would not dare show such neglect of their affairs. If they did their business would soon “go to pot.” Then why will men who own business blocks, liable to be wiped out without a moment's warning, neglect so important a matter? It is neglect bordering on the criminal. It is dangerous to themselves and manifestly unfair to their tenants. If the council won't do anything, they are your servants and you can force them to act. A big fire is almost a certainty, and has been the fate of almost every new city on the coast. A fire in the business center means its total destruction, and total destruction means a dire calamity and a serious set back for the city. Men, act, and act at once. Unless you do, make up your minds to reap the inevitable. It's coming, sure. (Since the above was put in type the people have moved and the council responded favorably).

The council should placard the pools and mud-holes of unexplored depth along some of the streets, with large signs bearing the words, “Danger, steer clear.”

Rarely, if ever, has there been a more inviting and promising field for the investor than is presented on the peninsula at the present time. Values are low compared with any other locality we know of, that presents one-half as good prospects for future industrial development as exist here at the present time. It is no mild flight of fancy or the expression of an over zealous optimist, to predict a city of ten thousand people and a continuous line of industrial concerns extending for several miles along the river front. See what has been done inside of four years! The man who invests in St. Johns now, and does not get “cold feet,” will in a very short time receive a big return. The croakers and

doubting Thomases can't stop it. The development stage is beyond their depth, and the other fish in the puddle are too large to permit them to live; they are being crowded out. They must migrate to where conditions are more fitting for their size.

The trade-at-home sentiment is growing in St. Johns. This is as it should be. People who, by the aid of the progressive spirit shown by a number of our citizens, find it possible to get employment in the factories and mills, are beginning to realize the importance of patronizing and supporting home tradesmen. Our merchants, too, are waking up to the importance of carrying better stocks to select from, and as their expenses of doing business is less than in larger cities, are making the prices right. If the goods and the prices are as they should be, the “bundle brigade” which may be seen alighting from the street cars daily, will soon be conspicuous by its diminitiveness. When this is accomplished you will see a different condition among local business men.

The question of a childrens' court is being agitated in Portland. Splendid idea! excellent. A childrens' court would fit the conditions right now. It would be a “sphere of usefulness,” and the juvenile actions which have marked the conduct of certain attorneys in the circuit court recently could find a place in such a court, unless the children would regard the aforesaid attorneys too childish to tolerate.

There are a few citizens who think the new charter should provide for the election of chief of police. The idea is decidedly provincial and but few cities of any importance, but what have long since discarded the practice, and the peace officers are appointed by the mayor and council or a commission. The reason for this is obvious. Most of the official corruption, blackmailing and malfeasance in office first finds its way in and through the police departments, and experience has taught municipalities that these things can best be controlled by the mayor and council having the police officers under direct control. It is much easier to get rid of a corrupt and inefficient official so appointed than it is of one elected by the people. The practice of electing city marshals and chiefs of police is now almost obsolete, except in some of the smaller towns. The same is true of fire department chiefs, and several other of the minor offices.

If the Civic Improvement League would resolve to discourage the “bundle brigade” which comes off the street cars daily, and create a habit among its members to do their trading, and all shopping possible with our enterprising home tradesmen, they could help build up the city amazingly.

One of the aims of the Commercial Association is to encourage home industry. We wonder if any of the members of the association set a bad example by buying goods away from home that they could get of St. Johns merchants? It is hoped not.

Some of the Portland jobbers sell goods direct to some of the St. Johns consumers at wholesale prices and then expect to do business with our retailers. In days past this practice was regarded as illegitimate. The Review is compiling a list of the jobbing houses who do this tricky business, and will furnish a list of same to the dealers through the paper. Some of the big grocery firms of Portland are particularly guilty of this petty practice. It is an underhanded system.

While you are casting about for a Christmas present to send to a distant friend, don't forget that The Review would prove an acceptable one. It only costs one dollar to have it mailed regularly for one year. Come in and see us about it. A newspaper published “away out west” would suit some eastern friend exactly.

PERSONAL AND OTHERWISE

About People Who are Going and Coming to and From St. Johns.

And Gossip of a Lively Nature of Happenings In and Around Our Prosperous City.

O. R. Downs, of Forest Grove, Or., was in the city Wednesday.

John Horton left this week for California, where he will spend the winter.

B. F. and Frank Midler, of Wasco, Sherman county, Or., were in the city Wednesday.

Geo. Weiss, of Portland, has bought the Rev. Cole residence and has moved here with his family.

Judge and Mrs. E. F. Wicker, of Kalama, Wash., spent Saturday and Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Allen Blackburn.

Mrs. Nancy Caples, and her daughter Miss E. Caples, left Wednesday for Los Angeles, Cal., where they will spend the winter.

City Treasurer Frank Livermore, having sold his home in St. Johns, has taken up his residence at Goddard station temporarily.

Hon. Lee A. Johnson, of Sunnyside, member of the Washington legislature, visited St. Johns Saturday. He predicts a great future for our town.

Geo. A. Dyson, of Eugene, Or., was in the city Wednesday returning from a three weeks' trip to Spokane and Rosland, B. C. He was on his way home.

F. C. Crego, of Mt. Pleasant, Mich., was in the city Tuesday, the guest of J. H. Pond. Mr. Crego is working in the interest of the Gold Reserve Life Association.

Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Smith, of Bridal Veil, Or., were in St. Johns Saturday, and purchased a home and three lots. They expect to become permanent residents soon.

Col. John Ridpath, of Puget Sound, an old acquaintance of the editor, was a visitor in the city Monday. The colonel was favorably impressed with the prospects and growth of St. Johns.

A. S. Shaddock returned from Pendleton, Or., Monday. He reports quite an interest being manifest in regard to St. Johns, and that a number of people in Eastern Oregon contemplate coming here soon.

Mr. and Mrs. G. A. Knox, of Ellensburg, Wash., were in the city Saturday, with the view of locating. Mr. Knox received his first impressions of St. Johns by reading The Review, a copy of which was sent him by a friend.

Councilman Guy Beebe and wife left Sunday for Castle Rock, Wash., to visit their sick daughter Mrs. Hubbers. The oldest daughter of Mr. Beebe has also been at home having her eyes treated, also returned home to Castle Rock, her eyes very much improved.

H. A. Thompson, a former treasurer of Sherman county, visited our city Tuesday. He expressed himself as very favorably impressed with the future of St. Johns. Mr. Thompson was on his way home to Moro from San Francisco, whither he had been to visit his father and mother.

A. B. Wooley, of Wasco, Or., was in the city Wednesday and made the Review a call. Mr. Wooley is enthusiastic over the prospects of St. Johns. He will come back in the spring to reside permanently. He will be a most desirable addition to the community, and men like him will be welcomed.

J. L. Hannon, who has been in the Santiam mountains for the last eighteen months, prospecting, returned to St. Johns Saturday. He brought with him some excellent specimens of gold and silver ore. He will return to the mountains about April first. Mr. Hannon is the guest of W. J. Bailey, who is also interested in mining in the Santiam district.

Mrs. L. F. Chase gave a progressive whist party at her home, corner Edison and Hartman streets, Thursday evening of last week. Those present were: Miss Parker, Miss Lara Pennington, Mrs. Hilderbrand, Mrs. Ada Pennington, Mr. and Mrs. Tallman, Messrs. Sober, Chaffee, and Parkers. A most enjoyable evening was spent. Refreshments were served in tasty style. Miss Lara Pennington was awarded the honors of the evening, having won the most points in progressive whist.

Fire Meeting.
A public meeting will be held in Peterson's hall next Tuesday evening, Dec. 13, for the purpose of organizing a volunteer fire company. The council will purchase hose, reel, etc., and it is hoped a good live company will be organized to use the equipment, if necessary.

BIG DEAL CLOSED

The Electric Mill Property Leased for Twenty Years.

The Review is informed on the most reliable authority, that the electric sawmill property, embracing the water front, has been leased by a ship building company, and will be used as a ship yard soon after January first. The parties interested in this deal are men of ample means, and figure on investing \$300,000 in buildings and equipment. Plans are being arranged for the amalgamation of two companies, and the business conducted by the new company. About two hundred men will be employed in the yards. Further details of the enterprise are not to be given out until next month.

Another Big Enterprise.

The following from the last issue of the Vancouver, Wash., Columbian, is of interest:

“The Weyerhaeuser Timber company has announced that a large ship building yard will be constructed at St. Johns by that corporation in the near future. At first it was intended to build the yard at Vancouver, but the authorities at St. Johns gave more advantageous offers as regards a site. The timber to be used will, however, all come from Clarke county, and the company will continue to operate its immense logging camps along the Lewis river in order to get a supply of logs.”

St. Johns Prices Cheap.

Statements have been made to the effect some of our merchants charge from 10 to 25 per cent more for goods than prevails in Portland, reference being made to the matter of meat, particularly. In order to get at the facts, The Review called on three meat dealers in Portland and got their prices at which they sell to the consumer, and found that instead of prices higher in St. Johns, they are lower, by from 5 to 20 per cent. The prices charged by St. Johns butchers, and Portland, are given below:
St. Johns selling prices: Porterhouse and loin steaks 15c per lb; beef roasts 10c; boiling beef 8c; leg of mutton 10c; mutton chops 10c to 12½c; veal 10 to 15c.

Portland prices: Porterhouse and loin steaks 18 to 20c; roasts 11 to 20c; boiling beef 8 to 10c; leg of mutton 12½c; mutton chops 10 to 15c; veal 12½ to 15c. Other meats and cuts are the same price as here. In no case was it found that St. Johns prices are higher. The prices were obtained from reputable dealers, who do many times over more business in a single day than is done by both our dealers here. The same rule applies to all staple lines carried by our home dealers.