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COLUMBIA STEEL COMPANY WOOLEN MILLS GREAT INDUSTRY NEW CEMENT BRICK WORKS

Interesting Data Concerning Its New Plant to Be Erected Near Linnton This Fall

McNaughton, Raymond & Lawrence, architects and engineers, are now engaged in preparing the plans for the new plant of the Columbia Steel Company, formerly known as the Columbia Engineering Works. This company recently purchased a tract of 188 acres at Linnton, adjoining the sawmill plant of the Clark-Wilson Lumber Company, for \$40,000. This has a waterfrontage of 900 feet. In round numbers, the company will expend approximately \$80,000 on its big plant. To accommodate shipping, ample docks will be constructed, which will be increased according to demands in the future. The present plant at the northeast corner of Tenth and Johnson has already been sold. The purchasers and consideration are not at present divulged. The business of the company has outgrown the present quarters and a site large enough to permit of immediate and future expansions became a matter of paramount necessity. The officers of the company are: Samuel M. Mears, president; Richard R. Hogue, vice-president; Taylor Goodrich, secretary and treasurer; Charles M. Gunn, manager.

According to present plans the new plant will include five buildings. The pattern storage building will have a height of two stories, and be 50x100. The pattern shop, 50x80, will also be two stories high. The term "one-story," as applied to the big foundry, with a dimension of 250x116, is misleading, as perpendicularly it will be greatly in excess of any ordinary one-story building. Here, among other things, will be installed two surface blown converters, through whose agency molten iron will be transformed into steel. The machine shop will be 60x100, and the pattern shop will have a height of one story. The Columbia Steel Company, even at present, has the only steel foundry in the Pacific Northwest. To facilitate rail shipments two spurs will connect the plant with the Northern Pacific tracks.

The architects are now asking for bids for piling, which will be necessary for a portion of the work, as it is imperative that construction shall begin as speedily as possible. In addition to the preparation of the plans, McNaughton, Raymond & Lawrence will supervise the installation of all machinery and mechanical appliances. Manager Gunn is of the opinion that while the construction work will proceed as speedily as possible, the plant cannot be gotten into working shape under six months. This would fix the date for occupation at about February 1, 1908. Manager Gunn considers that the architects will be ready for general figures on construction in from two to three weeks.

While the material generally to be used in the construction of the plant has not been definitely settled upon, much concrete will be used, as well as brick, entering into the construction of the furnaces.

The Columbia Steel Company now employs 140 hands, but with increased facilities will require additional help.

The above clipping from the Portland Daily Abstract will be of special interest to our Linnton readers, and, even though St. Johns does not "own the Watt tract," our people entertain a keen interest in any movement bringing business down the river on either side.

Description of this Important Plant, Which is One of St. Johns Largest Labor Employing Enterprises

While the Portland Woolen Mills have been in operation here for two or three years, there are really very few who can tell you anything about the plant. All the information we could gather from the citizens was "It is a big plant"—"Turns out lots of work"—"Makes a fine class of goods." While these are good words for any kind of a manufacturing plant, we wished to know more particularly as to the inside of the big building which houses the plant, and, taking advantage of an invitation extended by Mr. C. G. Roberts, an old Hood River friend connected with the institution, we visited that hive of industry Saturday.

We received a genial reception by the office force and our chaperone was instructed to show us the entire works. We first inspected the method of firing the boilers, three large fellows, which furnish steam and hot water for the washing process, dyeing, etc. The fuel used is sawdust from the saw mills, which is brought in cars and unloaded into a receptacle from which it is carried to the storage house, and from there to the furnaces by endless chains. There the fireman feeds the fires by working the dust through an opening on top with a steel bar, thus reducing the labor to a minimum. The same economical system has been used in the construction and equipment of the entire plant; many operations which a few years since required laborious hand work are now done automatically by imported machines.

From the boiler room and engine house, where a fine steam pumping engine supplies the necessary water for the plant and lifts it about 100 feet to a large tank—thereby giving the necessary pressure for fire protection to the entire works, we went to the receiving room, where we found an immense quantity of wool of all grades and a number of employes sorting it into the grades as required for the product. From there it goes to the washing and drying room—here it goes through three or four baths which remove all the dirt that can be taken out by means of water. From the washer it goes to the dryer, and it comes out within a few feet of where it enters the washer dry as a powder house.

The wool is then taken up on the second floor, where it is put into carding machines. There are two sets of these carding machines, four in each set. Into the first machine it goes in tangled, matted bunches and is fed automatically to the second, from which it comes in rolls similar to those which were turned out by the factories 25 or 30 years ago for the hand spinning wheels then in use. From this second machine it is turned out in bolts by a little machine at the back, and these bolts are put by an attendant into the third machine of the set, which feeds the rolls in such a manner as to make an even distribution across the entire face of the machine. The product of this machine is fed automatically to the last one of the set, from which it comes in a fine, soft, even thread, untwisted, but wound on bobbins for the spinning jennies.

These spinning jennies, which are called "mules" in the mill, carry 300 spindles and are operated automatically in the most ingenious manner. All the operator has to do is to keep the bobbins replaced as they become emptied, and when a thread breaks to tie it. There are eight of the mules in operation all the time, and from these the yarn is taken to the warping machine in the south end of the room, where it is reeled and warped onto the loom beams which carry from 250 to 300 pounds of yarn. These are placed in the big looms, of which there are 40 in the weaving department. Some of them are making flannels, and one of the lassies can attend to two machines at this work, while in the weaving of blankets it requires one operator to each loom.

The weaving is almost automatically done, the attendant only keeping the bobbins filled in the shuttle and making the necessary changes required to give the right colors for the stripes at the ends of the blanket, and seeing that the ends of the warp are tied when they happen to break. There are about 30 of these lady operators, ranging from sweet sixteen to sober sixty, and all seem to be in the best of spirits, indicating that they are well treated and satisfied with their employment. Mr. Armstrong, the genial head of the weaving department, assured us that he had the best body of helpers under him there that he had ever handled in his life and that the work was in the best of condition. During the five months ending with June they had woven 25,000 pairs of blankets and during the month of May the factory put out 44,000 yards of flannel.

From the looms the blankets and flannel are taken to the "p. rch.," an ingenious contrivance for measuring the products of the mill. The bolt of blankets or cloth is passed under a roller and over another which is sanded and again under another wooden roller, making the product go about 2-3 of the way around the sanded roller. This makes it impossible for the cloth to slip, and when it is pulled through the number of yards in the bolt is registered by means of a gear wheel working on a reciprocating screw. The cloth is then carefully weighed and records of both transactions are kept by the man in charge.

The product of the weaving room is again taken to the lower floor, where it is put through the different processes. The blankets must go through the carbonizer, where all the cotton and other foreign substances which may happen to get into the product are bugied out without in any way damaging the woolen portion of the goods. From this machine it goes to the nappers, where the nap is raised on the cloth or blankets. "Quality and exactness" is the motto of the mill, apparently, because every blanket is gone over by hand and with hand cards the nap of the goods is combed out, removing therefrom any superfluous material, foreign substance or other matter undesirable. The flannel goes through the pressing machine, the fulling machine, the centrifugal machines for the purpose of throwing off the water after dyeing and fulling, etc., and when it has gone through all the different processes the last machine to handle it is the folder and bolter, which folds it exactly in the middle of the web and reels it upon a bolt—the finished product. The cloth and blankets are then put into the hands of the packers and prepared for shipment.

The entire process is most interesting from start to finish and the institution is a fine thing for St. Johns, as it gives a nice little payroll for the support of the city business through the employes of the mill. It has been rumored that the company is soon to erect another large two story brick annex on the north side of its tract. This we have not yet been able to verify, but feel assured that it is a fact, from what we have been able to learn from all sources.

W. P. Olds is president and Mr. E. L. Thompson, room 2, Chamber of Commerce building, is manager and treasurer of the company. Mr. Rudolph Koerner is superintendent of the works, and is a very genial gentleman, thoroughly enthusiastic in the work of his mills—and placed us under many obligations for information given.

CUT DOWN THE WEEDS QUITE A HANDY DEVICE SOMETHING DOING SOON

Citizen Makes Some Timely Remarks About Same.

It is absolutely disgraceful that the weeds are allowed to rankly grow in many portions of this city, when but little effort would be required to fix things right. For instance there are lots one, two and three, block two Braasch Addition. On those lots the weeds have grown to such an extent that the ten-foot sidewalk is almost entirely covered with the exception of a foot in the centre. After a shower a pedestrian who essays to make his way down Chicago street will be wet to the waist—unless he adopts the middle-of-the-road platform. Not only are there weeds there but thistles as well. At the southwest corner of Jersey and Chicago there are several lots whose area is covered with thistles of enormous size—and this property must be passed by everyone who comes to the city by trolley. A while ago three different realty dealers had signs there asking people to buy—but if those signs are there now or not no one knows. The boards should be raised about fifteen feet to be above the weeds. It seems to me that the owners of these properties should be ordered to cut the weeds and burn the rubbish. The owners of the properties can be easily ascertained by consulting the recorder's books. It is well understood that the sight of a luxurious growth of weeds is not an inducement to purchase—nor a sign of prosperity. Cannot something be done to wipe out the disgrace now seen in so many parts of the city?
W. L. THORNDYKE.

Something to Interest the Up-to-date Housewife.

Mr. Unger, the cigar man, showed us Tuesday a most useful implement for the culinary department of a well-regulated household. It was an egg breaker. Some people would not give a dollar, the price of the machine, for an egg breaker. They would rather take a good healthy hickory club or a likely brick-bat. But if you wish to be neat and cleanly about preparing your hen fruit for meals, this machine is an indispensable adjunct to your cuisine. You stand the egg on end in a little receptacle, squeeze the handles slightly, and the contents of the egg are dropped into a pan or other vessel without being soiled by the touch of your dirty fingers, or the fingers soiled by contact with the egg. A further squeeze on the handles will deposit the shells in a tray and the operation is complete. They are manufactured at McMinnville, but they should be made here in St. Johns. Wonder if our Commercial club could land the enterprise here? It is worth the trying.

But the Question is, However, What Shall It Be?

All eyes have been turned upon the tract of land just above the government mooring opposite St. Johns. Much interest has been raised in this location by numerous suspicious movements of certain parties with reference to this tract. All sorts of rumors have been bruited abroad relative to extensive operations to be opened up there. Hill road terminals, shipyards, manufacturing, in fact, almost everything has been located there in the nimble imaginations of the numerous beholders. One thing is apparent to all and that is that something of importance will soon be located there. Last week a launch bearing some 20 or 25 individuals came down from Portland and made a thorough survey of the location on the river front, spending several hours there. It is just one more sure indication of the trend of heavy mercantile and manufacturing interests in St. Johns' direction, the only legitimate way out of the congested district of Portland. Let 'er come.

A Hood River Hero.

Willie Huggins of Hood River, a member of the Berean club, organized by the writer several months ago, has proven a hero. He saw a young man 15 years of age fall into the water beside the track where he was walking, and, running back, pulled him out and worked with him some 15 minutes before he was able to resuscitate him. Willie is but 11 years old but he is a "husky" lad.

Building Permits Issued.

No. 67, July 9, residence on Tioga street between Seneca street and Portland boulevard, lots 3 and 4, block 1, Point View to R. Wilcox for \$250.
No. 68, residence on Alma Street, Bone's addition between Hudson St. and Willis boulevard, lots 3 and 4, block 1, to H. G. Thing, \$75.
No. 69, residence on Ivanhoe street between Trumbull and Fessenden streets, lot 6, block 4 Chipman addition, Chas. Goodman, \$800.

An Institution Recently Located Here That Turns Out a Product Much in Demand

Accepting the invitation of one of our old Hood River friends, G. D. EATINGER, we made a trip down to the brick yard to see the new cement brick made by the St. Johns Cement Product Co. The machine was being overhauled and made ready for a hard campaign which these gentlemen are anticipating, so we had no chance to see it operate. They were shipping a fine lot of their brick to Forest Grove, however, and Mr. EATINGER took time while they were changing cars to tell us all about the process.

They have quite an extensive plant, covering a space of about 75x150 feet next adjoining the brick yard plant, from whence they get their sand. This is a fine, sharp river sand, brought up from a pit by the brick yard people, who own three acres of the sand—which goes to a depth of 80 feet. This is brought up by machinery and screened ready for the cement workers and delivered in a bin on the second floor of their building. From there it goes into their mechanical mixer where the right proportions of sand, cement and water are mixed together thoroughly. This mixture is fed to the brick-making machine through spouts through the floor to the lower room. This machine has a capacity of 5,000 brick per day, each brick being submitted to a pressure of 160 tons to the square inch, which makes the green brick so solid that it can be readily handled and piled to cure. After some three weeks of the curing process they are ready to put into a building.

These brick have a peculiar characteristic: instead of becoming softened by exposure to the weather and deteriorating, they become harder, and it is said that after 50 years' exposure to the weather they will be solid and the wall firmer than when first built.

This firm makes brick of any desired color by simply adding the coloring matter to the material in the mixer. They have red, blue, drab, gray, black and, by adding a porcelain coating, white brick. A most striking and beautiful effect can be made by using different colored brick in a wall—either by making the solid wall of one color and trimming it up with different colors at the corners, windows, cornices, etc., or by alternate bricks of different colors. As these brick are everlasting and do not absorb moisture there is never any necessity for painting a wall to preserve it; hence there is a great saving to the property owner when the building is made of this material—and the colors never change.

The brick are made in different shapes for finishing, trimming a building, etc.—round corners, either on the end or side, so that the corner of an entrance may be built up round, thus preventing the chipping so often seen where a sharp corner is presented. The edge of the brick may be made round in the same manner for finishing the opening about a window or door, above and below. This is a new industry in St. Johns, and as soon as it is generally known that such brick is being made here there is no doubt but that this firm will have all they can do to supply the trade. So sure are they of this that they have another pit ready where they can add another machine as soon as needed.

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