

brick Courthouse, costing about \$15,000 complete, which is the equal of any similar building in the state, cost considered. The new schoolhouse, a brick bank building, two brick business blocks, one substantial stone building, 12 frame dwellings and more than 50 frame dwellings, mostly of a substantial character and handsome design, are among the improvements of the past season. Some one has said that "God made the country, but man makes the town," but as a matter of fact, the country makes the towns and it may be said that every dollar of wealth which is represented in Condon improvements and business enterprises today is directly traceable to the surrounding fertile wheat fields and rich pasture lands.

Not in this era of substantial improvement confined to Condon. All portions of the county are going ahead. New houses and barns have been built, thousands of acres of virgin soil are being brought under cultivation, domestic animals are being improved by judicious breeding and new and improved varieties of wheat are being propagated. Gilliam County farmers are coming to the front.

The assessment roll shows an increase of taxable property in the county to the amount of \$1,000,000 since 1902. A National bank has just been opened in Condon in answer to a general demand for increased facilities for handling the growing business of the county. The country is full of strangers—homesteaders, investors, business men and commercial travelers. Travel is so heavy that the stage lines can hardly handle the traffic, so great are the demands made upon them.

Railroad and Canal Needed.

The effect of all this activity has been to attract attention from the outside world as never before, and the crying need of better transportation facilities being so obvious, that matter is now receiving the attention it has merited for so many years; the result is that three different railroad companies are now in the field making surveys between Arlington and Condon with a view to beginning active construction as soon as the weather is favorable. It is not probable that all these companies will build, but Gilliam County people regard it as settled that some one of them will win out in the three-cornered fight and that we shall have a railroad within the next year.

But one thing is needed to make the prosperity of Gilliam County, in common with all of the vast domain known as the Inland Empire, complete and permanent, and that is an open river from Celilo to the sea. We want the portage road completed next summer as a means of temporary relief and a Government canal as soon as it can possibly be constructed. This improvement Eastern Oregon must have. We have a right to demand it and we expect to get it. We need it in our business and we need it badly.

S. A. FATTISON.

WASCO IS PROSPEROUS.

Abundant Crops and Good Prices Furnish the Explanation.

UNUSUAL prosperity has blessed Wasco County in 1903. It three principal products—wheat, livestock and fruit—have shown a marked advance over former years. Abundant crops of grain, hay, fruit and vegetables have been harvested and marketed at fair prices. In consequence, the producers have enjoyed a season of prosperity. As an evidence of this the records show the 25 per cent more mortgages were canceled in 1903 than during any former year. And it may now be truthfully said that the property-owners are virtually out of debt. The county government, too, has made a good showing, the delinquent taxes being reduced about \$22,000, and today less than \$3000 delinquent taxes are owing, which is indeed a fair showing for the thrift of the taxpayers.

Wasco County produced and shipped abroad in 1903, products as follows:

Wheat, bushels	500,000
Cattle, head	1,500
Horses, head	1,500
Sheep, head	25,000
Swine, head	25,000
Apples, boxes	25,000
Pears, boxes	25,000
Peaches, boxes	25,000
Strawberries, tons	1,000
Plums, tons	1,000
Lumber, feet	1,000,000
Wool, pounds	1,000,000

Besides these products shipped abroad about \$20,000 worth of salmon and \$20,000 worth of vegetables and small fruits. The income from these products has brought into the county has been estimated at \$2,000,000. In addition the flouring mills of The Dalles have exported over 150,000 barrels of flour.

The assessment roll for the year 1903, based on valuations on March 1, and about 60 per cent of real cash values, shows:

Acres tillable land	115,444
Acres non-tillable land	43,288
Horses and mules	6,853
Cattle	127,750
Sheep	125,900
Swine	125,900
Improvements on land	2,300,000
Town lots	322,000
Improvements on town lots	54,000
Improvements on undeveloped land	1,500,000
Gross value of property	\$1,440,000

This is an increase of \$38,250 over the total taxable property shown on the tax roll of 1902.

During the past year every branch of business has enjoyed a season of prosperity. Farmers, merchants, bankers, manufacturers and business men have all been successful, and when balance sheets are struck the first of the year, good results will be shown.

J. A. DOUTHITT.

HAS ROOM FOR MORE.

Morrow County Has Wealth, and Chiefly Lacks People.

MORROW COUNTY can well be classed as one of the most prosperous counties in Oregon. The greatest need is more people. Sixty-five miles in length, and 25 miles in width, and containing 1,300,000 acres of land, this vast territory has only a little more than 5000 population. With only a few people the resources remain undeveloped, and the county is but little known, except by the people who reside in it.

The climate is mild and agreeable, the soil is very productive and good opportunities are here for industrious people who want to get homes.

Formerly Morrow County's wealth was produced by stockraising. It was thought that the land would not produce anything but grain, but this theory was soon abandoned when agriculture was commenced. Wheat-growing is now a prominent industry, and the stockmen are being crowded back by prosperous farmers. Notwithstanding the fact that the county is sparsely settled, 1,000,000 bushels of wheat is not an unusual yield. This wheat nearly all goes to Portland for export.

Sheep Industry Leads.

While Morrow County makes a good showing among the wheat-growing counties of Oregon, stockraising is still an important feature in the production of wealth. The sheep industry leads owing to the natural advantages. The southeastern portion of the county is skirted by a spur of the Blue Mountains, which furnishes a large amount of summer range, and, as the mountain land is rough and unfit for cultivation, this territory will be used by the stockmen for years to come. Wool shipments in the aggregate amount to about 4,000,000 pounds annually.

Morrow County's grain, fruits and vegetables wherever exhibited have always been prize-winners for excellent quality. Along the creek bottoms, where water can be obtained for irrigating purposes, alfalfa is grown extensively. Two and

three crops are cut each year, yielding from two to six tons to the acre, which is a very profitable crop, especially this year, when hay is selling in the stack at from \$8 to \$10 a ton.

Within the last three years land values have increased from \$5 to \$10 per acre, and still good farming lands can be purchased at from \$5 to \$10 an acre. No better wheat land in adjoining counties is now worth from \$20 to \$40 per acre.

Inviting to Homesteaders.

For people who want homes and desire to engage in agriculture good inducements are offered here. Land is cheap, and to purchase it now is a good and safe investment. Owing to the character of the soil, farming is easy in this compared with other districts. The land is loose

vicinity of Milton is something enormous for the area used for this purpose, and the creek bottoms produce alfalfa hay in abundance.

The stock industries are great. The Assessor's returns for this year show we have 153,000 sheep, about 15,000 more than in 1902; 24,000 cattle, 10,000 more than in 1902; about 4000 hogs, 700 more than in 1902; 11,000 horses and mules, 1500 more than in 1902. The southeastern portion of the county is well adapted for dairying, and this industry is growing rapidly.

Manufacturing is not extensive, but there are seven large flouring mills which are run at full capacity the whole year, and the securing and woolen mills of Pendleton are important factors and of great benefit to the woolgrowers. Land values range from about \$3 per

and there is every assurance of continued prosperity through the coming 15 months.

J. M. LAWRENCE.
Bend, December 15.

YOUNGEST OF COUNTIES.

Wheeler Waits for Railroad to Develop Rich Farm Land.

PROBABLY nowhere on God's green earth is there to be found a happier, more contented people than the inhabitants of Wheeler County, Oregon. So many newcomers from the East and elsewhere, attracted by our mild climate and limitless resources, have migrated into

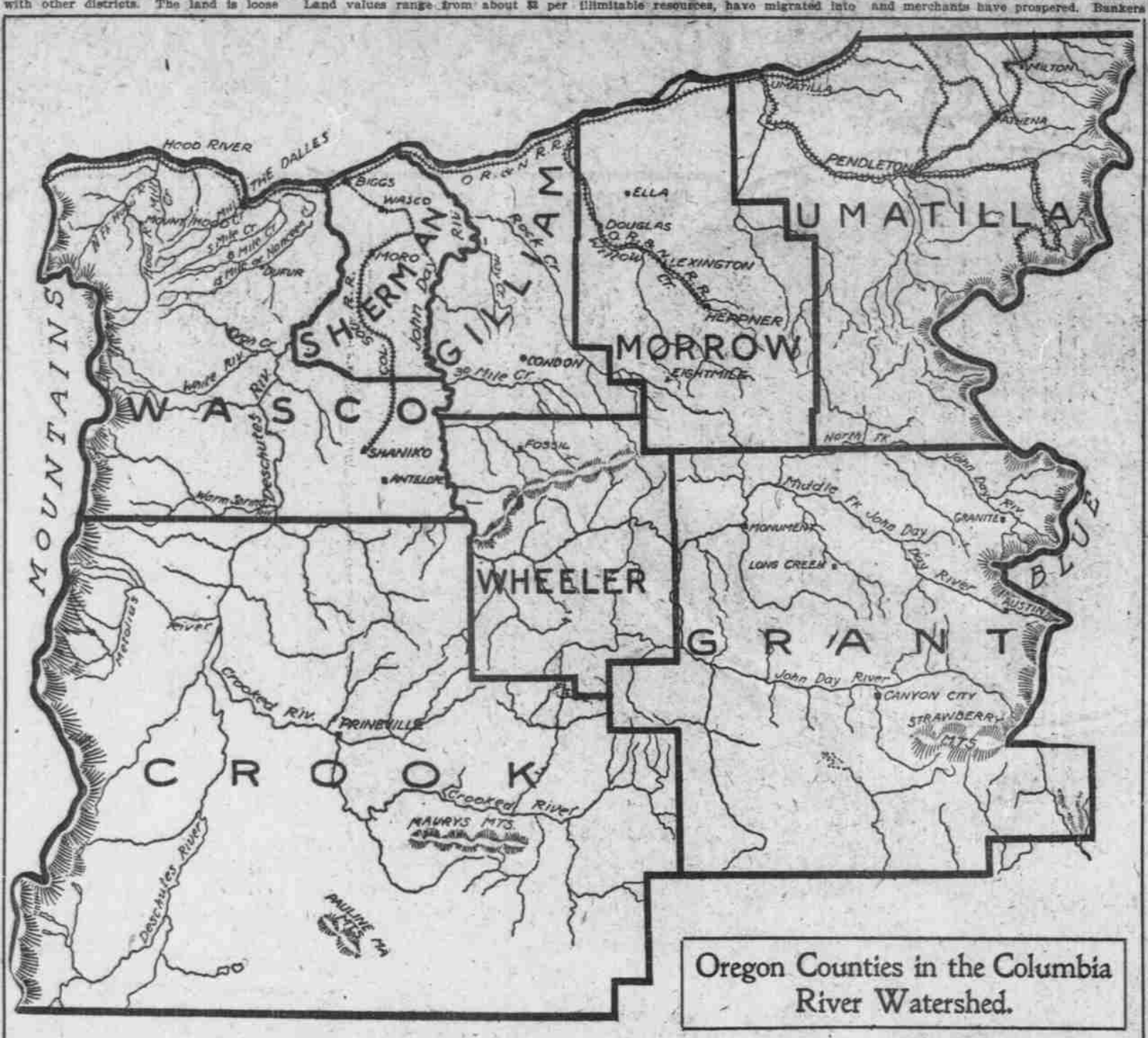
passengers and freight to Mitchell and Fossil, and almost every postoffice in the county has long-distance telephone connection with the outside world.

JAS. S. STEWART.
Fossil, Or., Dec. 15.

IN JOHN DAY VALLEY.

Rich Resources of Grant County Await Coming of Railroad.

SOURCES of progress in Grant County during the past year were more concerned with future assets than present balances. Yet farmers, stockmen, miners and merchants have prospered. Bankers



Oregon Counties in the Columbia River Watershed.

and easy to plow, and one hand can take care of a large acreage. Another advantage is a long working season.

Laboring people are well paid in Morrow County, and, as a rule, hands are scarce, especially in the harvest season. Sheepherders are paid from \$20 to \$30 a month; harvest hands from \$2 to \$4 a day.

Morrow County's progress during the past year has shown considerable improvement in the towns and a great many real estate transactions with gradually increasing land values.

The recent discovery of a good quality of bituminous coal in the Blue Mountains will do more to develop the county than anything that has ever occurred here. The mines are 20 miles south of Heppner, and have been prospected and worked for about two years. It is now an established fact that there is a great coal field. Three seams have been penetrated with tunnels. The measures run from 4 to 8 feet in thickness. The mines are owned by the Oregon Railroad & Coal Company, composed of Heppner people. Between \$75,000 and \$80,000 has been spent in buying and developing the coal lands. The cost has been tested in both locomotives and stationary engines, and has proven to be valuable steam-producing fuel.

The county has many advantages, and invites more people to come here.

FRED WARNOCK.

Heppner, December 15.

FERTILE WHEAT COUNTY.

Umatilla a Land Where Plenty and Contentment Reign.

UMATILLA County is justly regarded as one of the greatest counties of Oregon. Its surface area of 216 square miles embraces lands grading from the arid to the most fertile. Its topography presents a perspective of mountains and valleys, streams and rolling plains. To the east and north of Pendleton, the county seat, and surrounding the prosperous towns of Helix, Adams, Athena, Weston and Milton is the famous wheat belt of Eastern Oregon; to the south and west lies one of the principal stock sections of the state, while along the extreme eastern portion of the county are the Blue Mountains, covered with pine, fir and tamarack, and affording an abundance of grass for summer range.

In 1902 the tillable lands of the county were reckoned at 224,706 acres, and the non-tillable at 512,534 acres, but this year the tillable lands are reckoned at 261,517 acres, and the non-tillable at 490,971 acres. The assessed valuation of land in the county for 1903 was \$2,368,346 and this year it is \$2,785,465. This shows that land before this year to the amount of about \$5,000,000 was regarded as non-tillable, but is now classed as tillable. It is true that much land is being brought into cultivation each year which has been regarded as unfit for agricultural purposes, and it is confidently hoped that in the near future the surplus waters of the Snake River will be distributed over the arid region, thereby reclaiming many thousands of acres otherwise too dry for agriculture.

Water Stored in Soil.

The only difficulty is that the precipitation by natural rainfall and snow is insufficient to equal the evaporation. It has been determined beyond any doubt that, where the soil is deep, which is true of most of the land in the county, the soil itself will hold sufficient water for any productive purpose. This has been proved by many who live adjacent to the streams and depend entirely upon the natural precipitation and the flooding of the lands during the wet season. Lands which would produce nothing without this flooding process, by it have been made to produce annually two good crops of alfalfa and any kind of cereals. This character of irrigation is worthy of adoption to the use of all the surplus waters of the Snake River.

Wheat is the principal product, 4,000,000 bushels being the average yearly yield. In addition, much barley and some corn are produced. The fruit production in this

acre for grazing lands, up to \$75 per acre for the choicest farm lands.

The assessable valuation of the taxable property of the county for this year is \$2,214,000, which is estimated to be about one-third of its real value. In addition to this there are over 100,000 acres of choice farm lands, was formed from parts of Crook, Gilliam and Grant Counties. In response to the urgent demand of the settlers. It assumed its share of the debt of the parent counties, amounting to \$25,000. To this was added a debt of about \$15,000 for a Courthouse, record books and furniture, making a total of \$40,000, besides that contracted the year for ordinary running expenses. In less than five years, with a smaller average tax levy than prevailed in the parent counties, Wheeler County has reduced its debt to \$12,000. Surely this speaks volumes for both the prosperous condition of the people and the economical management of the county officials.

The population when the county was created was about 200; at this time it is probably not quite 3000. Situated from 50 to 70 miles from a railroad, the increase in its population has been much smaller than in many other Oregon counties. There is now a good prospect of a railroad coming to the northern line within the next year or two, and then there will be a great rush for homes.

There are still hundreds of thousands of acres of Government land awaiting the homesteader, and thousands of acres of excellent pine timber lands not yet disposed of by the Government.

Farmers Will Supplant Stock.

Stockraising—Cattle, sheep and horses—is the chief industry of this county, very little farming being indulged in yet, owing to the lack of transportation facilities. Much of the land will be farmed, however, immediately following the advent of the railroad. Our farming lands are for the most part along the foothills, and are extremely rich, some of the products being such as to challenge belief. For instance, John H. Tully, on his homestead 15 miles southeast of Fossil, which he took up last year, this year had a squash vine over 100 feet long, which produced 15 squashes each weighed 1500 pounds, an average of 50 pounds each. The largest one of the 15 weighed 185 pounds, and was sent to the State Fair at Salem by the writer, where for several days it was viewed with amazement by many thousands of people. These immense squashes were raised on virgin soil, without an atom of fertilizer other than that the ground contained, and without irrigation. These seven and even eight feet high are not so uncommon as to excite special remark, and peaches weighing one pound each are raised almost every year in the fine orchard belt that extends for about ten miles down Pine Creek to the John Day River.

Not the least of Wheeler County's resources are the Spanish Gulch placer mines, whose output this year amounted to about \$25,000.

Wheeler County is finely watered by the John Day River, which flows through it from end to end, and the many springs and streams that empty into it. There are many indications of coal which will no doubt be developed when a railroad comes. Lumber is manufactured by seven or eight sawmills on the Blue Mountain slopes. Shaniko is the nearest railroad point for the big half of the county, and Arlington for the remainder.

There is not a pauper in Wheeler County, and almost every man owns his home. The taxable property of the county has increased in five years from \$300,000 to \$2,214,000.

Of towns the county has three, Fossil, the county seat, and Mitchell being incorporated, while Spray is a growing village and good-trade center. Mitchell has about 300 inhabitants, with a flouring mill, a good public school and large, well-kept stores. Fossil is an ideal county home town, in natural beauty and modern improvements, being far ahead of other towns of its size in this or other states. Among its advantages are a \$5000 brick schoolhouse, which has over 200 pupils; a beautiful brick and stone bank building; a \$15,000 gravity water system, a modern full roller process flouring mill and a splendid system of electric lights. The population, which has doubled in the last four years, is about 600.

A daily stage from the railroad conveys

the state since the issue of the last New Year's Oregonian that a brief sketch of the inception and history of this county may not be out of place here.

In the Spring of 1889, nearly five years ago, the County of Wheeler, consisting of a strip of territory 65 miles long and about 35 miles wide, was formed from parts of Crook, Gilliam and Grant Counties. In response to the urgent demand of the settlers. It assumed its share of the debt of the parent counties, amounting to \$25,000. To this was added a debt of about \$15,000 for a Courthouse, record books and furniture, making a total of \$40,000, besides that contracted the year for ordinary running expenses. In less than five years, with a smaller average tax levy than prevailed in the parent counties, Wheeler County has reduced its debt to \$12,000. Surely this speaks volumes for both the prosperous condition of the people and the economical management of the county officials.

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say that while there is more than the usual amount of stock in the county, there is the usual amount of money. The First National Bank, a substantial institution, went into business in Canyon City during the year, and the Grant County Bank, a strong financial concern, has the material on the ground for a branch bank building in John Day.

The livestock industry has suffered to some extent from the low prices of cattle. Only about 5000 head have been sold, out of 37,000 in the county. The sales did not nearly equal the increase. Neither were sheep sales satisfactory, not above 10,000 head being marketed from the 200,000 owned by Grant County sheepmen. The failure to sell more closely was due to closed trails and lack of transportation. Wool sold well, however, and about 1,500,000 pounds were disposed of, mostly to Eastern buyers, at good figures. The home market was also attractive, and about 3000 head were sold, this number exceeding the increase.

The yield of hay was good, and above 200,000 tons were grown. For obvious reasons the grain acreage was small, but the few scattered acres produced abundant crops. Wheat yielded 5 bushels, barley 60 bushels and oats 75 bushels per acre.

Miners, both quartz and placer, have enjoyed unusual prosperity. Much new ground has been opened up, the returns from which must be realized later. Many hundred thousand dollars' worth of machinery has been bought and installed for further work, while many times that sum in gold has been taken from the mines. The ores in the ledges of Grant County also carry good values in silver, copper and cobalt. Of still more importance to the state is the recent discovery of a vast coal field, more than 30 miles in length and five miles in width.

Excels in Fine Fruit.

In the production of fine fruit the John Day Valley is fast winning a wide and enviable reputation. The largest apple-grower in the county produced 10,000 bushels last season. This was, perhaps, one-tenth of the entire crop. From more than 100 miles on every side people came for fruit. Peaches, pears, plums and prunes

grew in abundance, while giant cherry trees, 30 feet high, were loaded from the bottom branches to the topmost twigs. All kinds of small fruit grew luxuriantly, and fresh strawberries were peddled through the towns for fully one-fourth of the year. In abundance, variety and quality of fruit no section of the state can excel the John Day Valley.

Potatoes yielded as high as 700 bushels per acre, and a Prairie City grower is said to have selected 500 potatoes that together weighed one ton. From the harder vegetables up to celery and tomatoes, all kinds were grown without a skip.

Immense tracts of fine timber land in the forest reserve withdrawals await development when the Interior Department decides its policy.

The work of storing the head waters of the John Day River for the development of its magnificent water power has already begun. Franchises, county and municipal, have been secured and an electric lighting system will be in operation in Prairie City by the time this reaches the public.

The locomotive on the Sumpter Valley Railroad stands patting on the threshold of the county. Also the right of way is being cleared for an electric road, which will be constructed next year.

But the actual achievements are but an insignificant part of the possibilities. Industries are languishing for want of an outlet for their products. Where one acre is producing now, hundreds might be made to do so, if there were markets. Much fruit perished where it grew, and one-fourth of the apple crop rotted on the ground. A cannery, located in the center of the fruit belt, would stimulate the industry and make good profits from the fruit.

But capital and transportation will come. The John Day Valley lies along the direct route of a transcontinental line to Portland and leads the way on water-level lines the iron horse of commerce will at no distant date tear through this quiet valley in his race against time. And, after the manner of Gilpin's admirer, "may I be there to see."

John Day, Dec. 15.

C. J. MINTOSH.

HOTEL METROPOLE.

The Golden Rule Hotel at Pendleton, to be known hereafter as the Hotel Metropole, has been transformed into a modern hotel, that compares with the first-class hotels of the state. Mr. T. K. Beard, the owner, has spared no expense in remodeling and refurbishing the house. All the modern conveniences have been installed, including steam heat, electric lights and baths. Fifty-two elegantly furnished apartments are now at the disposal of the public, either single or en suite, and with

or without bath. Mr. H. E. Bickens, who was formerly superintendent of the State Reform School, is the lessee and proprietor, and the growing popularity of the hotel is due to a great measure to the personal attention he gives to all the departments of the hotel. The dining-room is large and pleasant. All the delicacies of the market are served and the cuisine is always palatable. The lobby has been enlarged to double the size and is always crowded with commercial travelers and guests.

Under the management of Messrs. Van Dran Brothers, the Pendleton Hotel has become one of the leading hotels of the Northwest. The popularity attained is due in a large measure to the affability and geniality of the proprietors and to their desire to please the traveling public.

The hotel is lighted by electricity and heated by steam throughout, and lacks none of the modern conveniences which belong to the first-class hotel. The rooms, 53 in number, are large and are handsomely furnished, being en suite or single and with or without bath. Each room is in telephone communication with the office, the system having recently been installed.

A skilled chef is in charge of the culinary department and the cuisine is beyond criticism. For the accommodation of guests, a buffet is maintained in connection with the hotel, where the choicest and rarest wines, liquors and cigars are to be had. Mr. K. Van Dran has charge of the office, while his brother, Mr. George P. Van Dran, manages the buffet.

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