

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON COOS BAY HARBOR

Communication Regarding the Much Talked Of Water Front and Railroad Question.

(By H. C. Diers.)

If we all pull together, make a better harbor, sell cheaper fuel, make cheaper power and lights, get more pure water, build more new industries, more pleasant homes and electric roads, including railroad terminals, which all roads can use on equal footing, with wharves to which can come ships over the pathless deep from every port in the world, than our neighbors do to the north and south of us, surely every railroad, big, small, steam or electric, long or short, will build to our commercial doors.

Railroad builders always build to such harbors, and such only, where there are fewest obstacles to overcome, where tributary resources are unlimited and markets unrestricted.

Today few people of Coos Bay realize their vast resources and the strategic value of their position, and many have no conception of it yet. The Coos Bay country was long known for its virgin forests, vast soils, splendid summers and mild winters, but its commercial possibilities were not understood.

Now the awakening has begun. Every railway system of importance that is heading for the Pacific is bending its efforts to reach Coos Bay. Statesmen and empire builders of this country are predicting that Coos Bay will be one of the principal doorways between the developed east and the riches of the Orient. The far reaching events which are stirring oriental countries have turned the eyes of the world in that direction, and commerce is flooding through the gates of the Pacific coast.

First the Mediterranean, then the Atlantic, but now the Pacific. The gentle Pacific has beaten out only seven of these gateways worthy to be called harbors: San Pedro, Bay of San Francisco, Humbolt Bay, mouth of the Columbia river, Grays Harbor and Puget Sound, with Coos Bay located centerly; three to the north and the same number to the south of it.

Between these seven ports will be divided the expanding commerce of

the western side of the continent; the wealth which drains from the Rocky mountains toward the coast must seek these outlets to the Orient. With Coos Bay central in position, with her wealth of forest, vast coal fields, minerals, agriculture lands, unlimited water powers, and pleasant climate makes her greater, then simply in being nature's rendezvous for ships and locomotives, for she lies, as no port south or north of her does lie, on the international highway of traffic, where the east and the west the shortest possible distance in exchanging products. This business belt, along which traffic flows, following the line of least resistance, extends between Liverpool, New York, Chicago, Coos Bay and Yokohama. To deflect from this course and go south is to add miles to the crossing of each degree of longitude, for each degree at the equator is 60 miles from the next, while at the poles they touch. To deflect and go north from this course is to strike the hard winters and the summer flooding districts of the continent, and fierce storm centers of the Pacific ocean.

The long distance to the ports south, nature's obstacles handicapping the ports to the north, makes Coos Bay's shortness of distance an inalienable advantage, which will play an ever increasing part in the history of its development.

In the ingredients which are to be used in building a large city on Coos Bay the source of resources and the reliability of the supply and proximity and capacity of markets must be considered. In addition to these the method of transportation between them must be taken into account. Commerce is production, transportation is distribution. The laws of production and distribution now days are made a science. Ralph Waldo Emerson defies commerce as carrying things from where they are plentiful to where they are needed. Transportation companies competing for these things between the two points, for self preservation, will seek the lines of least resistance

struck between these points, and whenever that line falls into the network of an absolute monopoly, that moment the place where things are plentiful and the place where they are needed will irresistibly gravitate into the full control of this same monopoly, which means that the price, cost of manufacturing, of carrying and of purchase will be dictated by this one concern.

A study of the great seaports of the world shows that the commercial, financial and social center is always on the shores of the inner harbor and that the western side of the port is the side of natural growth. In the inner harbor on the western side of Coos Bay has existed through all these centuries, a spot combining the ideal qualification for a great city.

Into the basin at its feet drain rivers and inlets, each a self appointed roadway to deliver the endless lumber, agriculture and mineral wealth stored in the vast tributary country. But although the matchless harbor is here, ready to be fed from the fertile valleys that interlace through miles of richest territory, although the ports of the world are ready to secure the wealth with which this land is teeming, one element is lacking in the building of a great city, and that is the meeting of the sails and the rails. When that is accomplished we will then see ardent enthusiasm go into the building of a modern twentieth century city on the shores of Coos Bay. But we must be careful and not permit any one powerful railroad corporation use its grasping claws and strangle this infant city while yet in the cradle, and being nursed by those who have the foresight to see that in the very near future this infant will develop into a giant. So the question before the people of Coos Bay today is; shall we let one railroad corporation control this harbor against all its competitors? Did anyone ever stop to figure in money the value of a harbor? Seattle, Tacoma, Portland, San Francisco and Atlantic seaport cities have property the value of which runs into hundreds of millions of dollars and some run into a billion.

Let some accident befall any one of these ports that would close the harbor entrance to navigation and value in those tall skyscrapers would slump so sudden that it would even daze the most pessimistic bear on the stock exchange. Let some on railroad corporation control the shipping in any of these ports and it would own all the property in that city.

Let one railroad control Coos Bay and it will own all the vast forests, immense coal fields, precious metal mines and farms that are tributary to this port.

The values that we can figure up on the vast resources which are tributary to Coos Bay, which can be run far into the hundreds of million dollars are not in those resources, but in the Coos Bay harbor, therefore Coos Bay is just as rich in its harbor as any other harbor on the Pacific or Atlantic coast. On account of it being free to all we give a harbor no financial reckoning for the reason that the sea is the one great highway where the cities on these harbors all stand on an equal footing. So long as these harbors are not monopolized they are all at the one dead level of competition. The harbors that are not monopolized are never way stations on this great highway. Each one is a terminal and each enjoys equal transportation facilities with the other. This axiom holds good as far as ocean freights are concerned. So long as Coos Bay is not controlled by one railroad corporation, so long it will not be an isolated seaport. But let it be bottled by one railroad, and we will have an isolated seaport.

The moment we permit one railroad to absolutely control the waterfront of Coos Bay that same moment we become powerless and will be forced to hand over to this monopoly our vast resources which are tributary to this port. To be more explicit the Coos Bay country has over fifty billion feet of timber, which must pass through this port while going to its destination, the ports of the world, at one million feet to the vessel it will require 50,000 vessels a day would take forty years to transport this timber. Five vessels a day would take forty years to transport it. Then we have the coal, the mineral and farm products and merchandise to be transported, all this, will practically be owned by the one railroad if permitted to control the water front of Coos Bay.

So the question for the people of Coos Bay to decide is: are they going to let one railroad control the water front and through it control all the vast resources tributary to it?

Leases.

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Richard Thrush to Johnson Lumber company, right of way lease to right of way in section 3, Township 28, S. R. 14 W.

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