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**THE ASTORIAN PUBLISHING CO.,**  
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The Oregonian's story that the Northern Pacific is to push its line down the north bank of the Columbia river unquestionably has much foundation in fact. Everything points to a determination on the part of what is known as the northern combination—the Northern Pacific and Great Northern and Burlington—to find an outlet at the mouth of the Columbia. Those roads at present have terminals on the south, but the excessive grades leading into Seattle and Tacoma render competition with the lines having an outlet here utterly impossible. In the past the situation has not been fought, because of the harmonious agreement entered into between the companies interested.

It is asserted that the Northern Pacific has made overtures for the purchase of the Astoria road. Some months ago, it will be recalled, the statement was made that the Northern had offered a large figure for it—\$3,000,000. Of course, this statement was not authenticated, but it seemed to have been given credence in railroad circles. Whether or not the offer was made, the Northern would no doubt gladly buy the Astoria road were it for sale. But, falling in this, it will probably take the only course left open, and build down the north bank of the Columbia.

Whenever this is done the Harriman lines can be depended upon to confine their grain exporting operations to this port. Extension of terminal rates to Astoria will enable Harriman to do business at a much less figure than from any other coast port, and in the great fight for control of the Oriental traffic the cheapest port will be utilized. At present the Columbia bar is an impediment to extensive commerce here, but the plans of the engineers will provide ample depth and make it possible for the carriers to send out the greatest steamships that are built today. The developments of the past few months indicate very plainly that Harriman had assurance that the bar would be obliterated, and that in ordering his four big steamships he figured in using them out of this port.

It would seem, however, that Astoria will not be utilized for exporting purposes until such time as the two

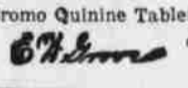
big transcontinental combinations begin their warfare for the trade of the Orient. So long as the managements remain harmonious, the existing state of affairs will be continued. But when the fight comes, the ocean port will be employed to its fullest extent.

It is interesting to note that the Oregonian confesses the new proposed order of things will not have a detrimental effect on the metropolis. Instead, it says, it will help build up the commercial center of the state, while helping all other sections at the same time. This is a point involved that was not conceded some few years ago, when the influence of the metropolis would have compelled the extension of equal rates to Astoria. It can be put down for certain that whatever will help Astoria will help Portland. The interests of the two cities are identical.

**THE NORTHWEST PRESS.**  
Post-Intelligencer: If the Harriman interests had succeeded in obtaining control of the Northern Pacific a couple of years ago, it is safe to assert that Seattle would not be striving to secure the transport business. It would have gone to San Francisco on its own terms. And there are people in Washington who are doing all in their power to hamper the Northern Pacific and Great Northern in their efforts to secure the transport service for Puget sound, as a basis for securing a large share of the rich traffic of the Orient. If the Harriman interests succeed in turning down the bid of the Boston Steamship company a serious blow will be struck at the prosperity of Puget sound. If this is followed by the election to the senate of a man whose interests are identified with those of the Harriman crowd, the people of Washington will have great cause for sorrow.

Portland Journal: "Public spirit is the safeguard of the Lewis and Clark fair appropriation." With some dangers arising from the initiative and referendum in this connection, there must be dependence to a great degree upon the great body of public spirit, that calls for liberality towards the most important project that ever engaged the attention of the people of this commonwealth.

Tacoma Ledger: When bears wander into the streets of Puyallup their presence is naturally regarded as a reflection on the town.

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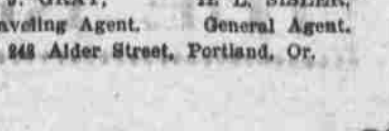
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