

PORTLAND MERCHANTS TELL WHAT SHOULD BE DONE TO SECURE THE ALASKA, ORIENTAL, AND COAST TRADE

Great Opportunities Are to Be Had in the Coos Bay Region. Portland Should Be the Chief Depot for Alaska Supplies, as She Has All Material Advantages Necessary.

"Westward the course of Empire takes its way."—Bishop Berkeley.

Of all the possibilities that Portland has there is no doubt that one of the best, if not the best, lies in the development of the Coos Bay country, its consequent magnitude of trade, and the procuring of it for Portland. There is probably no district in the State of Oregon which offers more attractions for development than this. It is fabulously rich in timber, coal and minerals, yet is of very little benefit to Portland for the reason that the hand of capital hardly touches it and there are no regular lines of transportation to connect it with the leading city of the Pacific Northwest, except one little steamer which stops there occasionally.

What is the Coos Bay country and what are its relations with Portland? Some may ask. The answer is simple and plain; the Coos Bay country is the richest timber country in the world and has a growing trade, yet has absolutely no connection with Portland, consequently trade that rightfully belongs to this city goes to San Francisco. The question arises, why should not Portland get this trade? There is still one answer. The only time that trade from this district will come to Portland is when it will be connected with Portland either by railroad or steamship lines. When the connection is made, the Portland merchants can afford to let San Francisco keep what Coos Bay trade it has, for Portland at that time will get more than twenty times as much.

DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTRY.
It is a well known fact that when a railroad penetrates the heart of any undeveloped wild country or a steamship line connects it with the outside world, there is bound to be a sudden influx of capital, brains, enterprise and labor. When these elements once get a foothold there is a rapid development of the country, which enriches those who grasp their opportunities, enriches the country itself and enriches the nearest commercial center. This applies directly to the Coos Bay country. If it would be connected with Portland either by railroad or steamship line, vast opportunities would be had for trade for the Portland merchants, jobbers and manufacturers.

One of the best features about the Coos Bay country is Coos Bay, which is the principal seaport of Coos County. It is located about the center of the country and at low tide has a depth of 28 feet—a depth amply sufficient for an ocean steamer. Much money has been spent by the United States government for the improvement of the harbor and the river and harbor bill passed by the last Congress are appropriations for further improvements here.

TRAVELING MEN THERE.
A few, a very few, Portland firms are represented in this district by traveling men, and they are so rare that they may be counted on the fingers of one hand. These few firms overcome the obstacles that lie in the way of getting to this country, and by dint of true Western grit have built up a profitable trade there. What is wanted is that all the Portland firms should be represented there and that transportation facilities should be so arranged that the Coos Bay country should be a next door neighbor to Portland and should be tributary to it.

The cry for the past 400 years has been "Westward ho," and this should remind those who may forget that there is still a part of the West that is still what might be termed a rich wilderness, which only needs a "hoist" in the way of connecting links consisting of railroad and steamship lines, when the thorns will fall off, and the bud will develop into a beautiful rose, which will fill itself with fragrance that those who come near it may pluck it.

THE LACK OF FACILITIES

Responsible for Small Coos Bay Trade.

Dom J. Zan Wants to See a Steamer Line Established.

The lack of sufficient transportation facilities between Portland and Coos Bay is accountable chiefly for the small trade now existing between these two points. It is true that there is one steamer plying between Portland and San Francisco, stopping at Marshfield on both up and down trips, but these trips are too infrequent to induce the Coos Bay merchants to trade with Portland. They cannot get their goods quickly enough, and consequently do all their trading with San Francisco, between which points there are a number of small steam schooners and light draft steamers plying. Many of Portland's jobbing houses in the East have sent representatives to the Coos Bay territory to establish trade, but with a few exceptions have been obliged to abandon the project owing to the lack of inadequate transportation. The steamer which is now touching only at Marshfield, carries a full cargo both ways.

HOW TO GET TRADE.
To obtain a good share of this trade, which is properly Portland's, it would be necessary to secure a light draft ocean-going steamer, which could make all the small ports between Portland and Coos Bay. It would be but a short time before it would be found that one steamer would be hardly sufficient to handle the volume of business, for as soon as a frequent and regular service was once established, every Portland jobbing concern would have a representative in the territory to secure a share of the trade. These small steamers could secure good cargoes both ways. This market consumes a great deal of white cedar, which is used for finishing, also considerable quantities of match wood and broom squaws. On return trips, groceries, provisions and flour would be flat materially in making a cargo. As the development of the Coos Bay country is only in its infancy it is to be hoped that ere long a permanent steamship line will be in operation between it and Portland.

COOS COUNTY IS VERY RICH

The "Promised Land" for Timber Men.

Says J. W. Perkins, General Manager E. C. Atkins and Company.

(J. W. Perkins, General Manager E. C. Atkins & Co.)

So far as the lumber industry is concerned, the Coast Counties of Oregon offer a wonderful field for the investment of capital. As an example, Coos County, located on Coos Bay, has an estimated 18,000,000,000 to 20,000,000,000 feet of standing timber, practically virgin timber, which vast amount can be more readily grasped when we consider that the present rate of cutting timber in the State of Oregon is approximately at 1,000,000,000 feet annually. Is there any other section of this state which affords so bright promise for future development as this vast Southwestern portion?

It is generally acknowledged among lumber men and men competent to judge on these matters, that by virtue of the vast and numerous varieties of standing timber in the Coos Bay district, Coos Bay is the "Promised Land" for the timber men in the State of Oregon, as probably no other section of the state has such vast quantities of standing timber, which up to the present time have not been touched by saw or axe.

With all this promise for the future, Coos Bay at present practically lies dormant. This great natural wealth remains in the same condition as it has been for years.

There is no denying the one great need in this otherwise promising territory.

DEVELOPMENT NECESSARY.
Transportation both for freight and passengers is sadly lacking at the present time and is all that holds back and retards the development of a territory that will ultimately, on account of its natural resources, be realized by the State of Oregon, the most resourceful in the State of Oregon.

The first step necessary for its development is to provide means whereby capital and energy can be applied in this territory and its resources brought to the front. With a regular and reliable means of entrance and exit, Coos Bay will prove the Gray's Harbor of Oregon.

Large numbers of saw mills will spring into immediate existence; lumbering plants of all descriptions and sizes will be erected, varying in size from the little "pony mill," putting off 5,000 to 10,000 feet of finished lumber daily, to the immense "company" mill operating the modern double band and producing its 200,000 to 300,000 feet of finished lumber each day, employing thousands of men, surrounded with its "individual community" of laborers and employees, and creating wealth with every day of its existence.

Produce adequate transportation facilities and thousands and even millions of dollars are ready and waiting for investment in this territory of generally acknowledged possibilities, where all that is needed is an outlet for this product and an inlet for its requirements.

Not a railway at present connects Coos Bay with the outside world and especially Portland. Only one small steamer from Portland touches there on its occasional trip to and from San Francisco, making Coos Bay every two or three weeks.

Is it to be wondered that this district has remained in its present dormant condition and has been for years of very little value to itself, to the City of Portland or to the State of Oregon.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.
With the establishment of suitable transportation facilities and the corresponding development and hence output from this district, what commercial center would naturally be drawn upon and who would reap the benefits therefrom? It would hardly be San Francisco, as distance, which usually determines the question of patronage, speaks loudly in favor of Portland. Not only distance is in favor of Portland, but "state loyalty," which on the Pacific Coast is such a noticeable factor, with the several competitive centers, would bring all of this trade to Portland merchants, as the Coos Bay territory is naturally contingent to and belongs to the City of Portland as its financial and commercial center. This trade should be realized by the commercial interests of Portland, whose merchants should awaken to the great opportunities that exist for them in the future development of Coos Bay.

HOW TO GET TRADE.
The City of Seattle does not give Seattle her wealth and prestige. It is the territory that she draws on; it is Alaska; it is the Sound country; it is Gray's Harbor; it is the length and breadth of the entire Coast that her enterprises and aggression draws upon. The enterprise of Seattle merchants and the undying energy of her capital and her business houses has put her in close touch by rail and boat with all of these wealthy districts and has eliminated the need of any transportation service that they have been able to establish between the City of Seattle and all of these outlying wealth producing territories.

This is due almost entirely to the tireless and persistent energy of that thriving and prosperous "Chicago of the Northwest."

The State of Oregon has equal fields to draw from; territories of equal and even greater wealth, which at the present time are lying idle and useless, needing only development to become producing centers. It but needs the combined and individual effort of the merchants of Portland to tap into these territories with suitable means of transportation to produce returns on investment that will be ten-fold; and furthermore will place our state and city in the foremost ranks of the Pacific Coast group and make us envied by all of our less fortunate neighbors.

A question of very great importance is how to get Alaska trade for Portland. That this trade is worth getting is beyond a doubt, as the latest statistics show that Alaska offers the producers and manufacturers of the United States over \$1,000,000 a month. The only means of getting this is by establishing a direct steamer line from Portland to Alaska, the steamer on this line to touch at the principal commercial points of that Northern country.

At present, who gets the benefit of the Alaska trade? Seattle, Portland is almost as near to Alaska as Seattle, so why should not her merchants reap the harvest? A steamer line is an absolute necessity. When a Portland merchant is approached as to the advisability of getting this Northern trade, he answers that he wants it. When asked about the advisability of establishing a steamer line connecting Portland with Alaska, the answer invariably is, that "we've had them before—but they burst!" Yet the only way to get this trade is by a direct steamer line connecting the two points.

A STEAMSHIP LINE.
Alaska is not inaccessible. It takes only a few days to get there. The trouble is that when a steamer line is established, the Coast Counties of Oregon offer a wonderful field for the investment of capital. As an example, Coos County, located on Coos Bay, has an estimated 18,000,000,000 to 20,000,000,000 feet of standing timber, practically virgin timber, which vast amount can be more readily grasped when we consider that the present rate of cutting timber in the State of Oregon is approximately at 1,000,000,000 feet annually. Is there any other section of this state which affords so bright promise for future development as this vast Southwestern portion?

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PORTLAND CAN GET THE TRADE

Of Alaska—Hustling Is Needed.

W. A. Mears Thinks the Citizens Should Subscribe for Steamers.

W. A. Mears, secretary of the Transportation Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, said:

"As far as Portland is concerned, the Alaska trade is divided into two parts, viz., that which enters by her southeastern ports and that which goes to Nome. In the former districts we are so seriously handicapped in the difference in distance and time as compared with Sound cities that we should only look upon that portion of the trade as incidental and an aid toward procuring the latter."

"In the very beginning, Portland had all the trade of Alaska, because she was the only city north of San Francisco that was of any size or had men with capital enough to swing it; but this was allowed to die off before the riches of the Yukon were discovered. Since their discovery, two distinct efforts to capture our share of the trade have been made, but both were abandoned without a really very fair trial in my opinion."

SOME HISTORY.
The merchants and bankers subsidized a steam schooner line, which after plying to and fro, showed a small loss—less than \$10,000—and was abandoned.

"The other was the line put on by the O. R. & N. Co., which I think showed a fair profit, certainly no loss, but was abandoned by the O. R. & N. Co. because the first grand rush was over, a few of the pioneer stores failed, hard times seemed to have set in up there, many believed the whole story of fabulous riches a myth, our jobbing houses becoming alarmed withdrew their travelers and shut down on credits, and the company was ahead of loss, its then traffic manager never believing in Portland's ability to get enough of the trade to warrant a steamship line, was very timid on the subject generally, and was mighty glad to abandon the enterprise, as he believed the bottom had dropped out of the whole business."

ALASKA IS RICH.
Gold, fish and furs are the principal industries of Alaska at the present time, and Alaska sends to the United States \$15,000,000 worth of these. The total value of the products of Alaska brought to the United States since its purchase is \$150,000,000. Of the American capital invested in Alaska there is \$50,000,000. With the influx of capital, the establishment of transportation lines and the growth of population, there will be a consequent increase in trade.

There are great agricultural possibilities in Alaska also, especially in the southern and southeastern parts, where the climate is modified by the Japan current. The grasses for the support of cattle are abundant, and this will very likely cause stock farms to be established in the South. In the North, vast areas are covered with moss, similar to that upon which the reindeer thrives in other parts of the Arctic regions, and in view of this fact the introduction of reindeer from Siberia has begun a few years ago, and now there are 3,000. There is no doubt that the reindeer will be used for both transportation and food purposes in Northern and Northwestern Alaska.

Taking a summary of all that has been said on the subject, only one conclusion may be reached, and that is that Alaska is rich; that its trade is worth getting; and that this can only be done by establishing a steamer line connecting Alaska with Portland.

EHRMAN IS IN EARNEST

His Firm Would Keep a Representative

(Edward Ehrman, of Mason, Ehrman & Co.)
I have always expressed myself as being strongly in favor of a direct line of steamers to all points in Alaska and have also stated that if the same was once established on a permanent footing, that my house would gladly keep a representative in that territory at all times to solicit business, but we have positively declined to do so, as we have no money for the purpose of establishing a line of steamships as we do not consider it the duty of a merchant to be a common carrier at the same time as being a merchant. This is a separate and distinct business and should be taken hold of by people or a company who make it a study and enter into the same for the purpose of making money, or in other words, make a regular business out of it, the same as a merchant does when he embarks in any particular line of business.

There are a great many such steamship and railroad companies which I should think would be glad to make the venture especially if they have the hearty support of all the merchants in Portland, which I am sure they will have if the line is once established.

ALASKA A RICH COUNTRY.
From all that we can learn, there is a good business to be had in Alaska; not alone in the southeastern part of the territory, but also at Nome, Dawson and other points, and whose merchants are apparently anxious to trade with Portland. Statistics show that Alaska is an immensely rich country, therefore there must be much trade to be had there. That Alaska will have a settled population as soon as it will be more thoroughly explored, there is no doubt. In the next 10 years cities galore will spring up all over Alaska, as it is a vast country and rich in minerals and the goods of the world have been and are on this promised land.

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STRONG COMPANY WITH CAPITAL.

"Can we get any part of the Alaska trade at this late date? Most assuredly we can, but in my opinion, no line can be established by private enterprise that will pay at first, and unless a good, strong company were formed with at least \$300,000 paid up capital, the venture would prove a failure. No permanent trade can be obtained unless the buyers at the other end are certain the service will be regular, and no service can be regular between here and Nome without three good, large ocean vessels—hence the size of the capital necessary. With such a line as this established, and vessels making regular trips between here and Nome, making regular stops at all Southeastern Alaska points, either going or coming, Portland could divide equally with the Sound and Nome trade and get at least 33 per cent of the trade of Southeastern Alaska points. You must remember that Portland or other Oregon towns supply a large quantity of goods for Alaska, which, if not billed direct, are sold to Sound merchants, who add their profit and rebill."

LARGE TRANSPORTATION COMPANY.

"It strikes me that only a transportation company of the largest size would be likely to enter into so large an enterprise—a trans-continental railroad, for instance, could take the risk of a start far better than any other person or set of persons, because it has immense sums at its disposal for such investment, and for the added reason—a reason which would apply to no one else—that such a line would act as a feeder and would surely increase the traffic, both freight and passenger, over its route. Such a railroad could amply afford to operate such a steamer line, even if it lost a very large sum of money for the first year. But no trans-continental or other railroad would make such a venture, unless it was plainly shown that our own merchants would hold up the undertaking in every way possible—by sending traveling men to Alaska regularly, by quoting goods daily, by extending the usual line of credits and by doing everything possible to make the line pay."

"How could this evidence of good faith be given the railroad? By our citizens—first raising by subscription at least one half of the cost of the original investment necessary. So, to hold down all I have said, trade with Alaska can be successfully established. All that is necessary is for our citizens to subscribe at least one half of the sum necessary to establish a line—the other half will be forthcoming from a transportation company that will manage it successfully."

AN OPEN FIELD AT SINGAPORE

Americans Not Represented There.

A Good Market for Oregon Products—They Want Our Goods.

Notwithstanding all that has been published about the possibilities of trade in Singapore, nothing has as yet been done by Portland manufacturers to obtain at least part of it. The reason for this may be the very heavy idea that Singapore is in China or India, when the fact of the matter is that it is 1,000 miles from the nearest Chinese port and 2,000 miles from India.

Singapore is situated on a small island at the foot of the Malay Peninsula, and at the entrance of the Straits of Malacca. It is the transshipping point for the exports and imports of Siam, Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Celebes, Borneo and the Islands of Polynesia. All steamers from Europe or Atlantic ports for China, Japan and the Philippines must pass through Singapore, where they purchase coal and supplies. It has a population of 275,000, of which about 5,000 are Europeans and 20 are Americans.

At the present time the trade is mostly in the hands of English and German houses. Why can it not be in the hands of Americans and especially of Portlanders? The manufacturers can furnish much of the supplies necessary there, just food and other.

Most of the inhabitants are Chinese, and they are apparently very eager to purchase American goods, and have a growing respect for American ingenuity and progressiveness. But they respect "chop," that is, a certain brand. When they commence buying a certain brand of anything, they generally keep up, so that once a Portland manufacturer gets them to use his goods, he is assured of steady patronage from them. However, the Chinese are shrewd merchants and are keenly alive to quality of goods and to all discounts in invoices. Our manufacturers must enter to the Chinese tongue, and the manner in which they wish their goods put up and the brands that they may require. The Germans and English follow the rule out readily. Substitutions are fatal for when a Chinese merchant orders a particular size or grade of brand, and manufacturer ships something in the least particular difference, the goods are sure to be refused.

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530 Chamber of Commerce

PORTLAND, OREGON

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