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FRIDAY - - - MAY, 17 1895

OLD WASCO COUNTY.

A FEW BRIEF FACTS CONCERNING ITS RESOURCES.

Fruits, Fish, Farm and Forests--She Has Them All, and Unlimited Water Power.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES.

One of the most vital questions to every community is its transportation facilities. Wasco county has settled that. Up to three years ago the only transportation company was the Oregon Railway & Navigation Company, operating a line down the south bank of the Columbia. Forty four miles below The Dalles this great river is obstructed by impassable rapids, there being a fall of 26 feet in a quarter of a mile. As the O. R. & N. had no opposition, both freight and passenger rates were high. Owing to this, a corporation was formed know as The Dalles, Portland and Astoria Navigation Company, which put a fine steamer on the middle Columbia, plying in connection with the Dalles City, a fine boat on the lower river. Of course there was a transfer to be made, but the state generously stepped in and constructed a portage railroad about three-quarters of a mile long, so that freight could be transferred cheaply and quickly. As a result, freight rates were reduced one-half and passenger rates almost as much.

The government several years ago began the construction of a canal and locks to overcome the obstructions. Two years ago the completion of the work was let by contract, and in less than a year this grand work will be completed so that steamers from the lower river can reach us. These works have cost $3,500,000. and are pronounced by engineers the finest piece of work of the kind in the United States. The completion of this work will make The Dalles a "terminal point," giving us the benefit of through rates from the East, and will thus put our city in a position to compete with Portland for the wholesale trade of a large territory. At the same time it will give us very low rates on our wheat and other products to the seaboard. As it is, The Dalles is now the best market of any place in Eastern Oregon. Wheat brings ten cents more a bushel, simply because the freight rates are that much lower, and they are that much lower owing to the opposition line of boats. They will be lower still when the canal and locks are finished and cargoes can be shipped without the expense of re-handling at the portage.

WATER POWER.

Wasco county has unlimited water power, not to speak of the rapids of the Columbia, which has a fall of 70 feet in nine miles ending, three miles east of us, but which would require considerable capital to control. Deschutes, a fine river 200 miles long, which drains the eastern slope of the Cascades, has a rapid fall, and Hood river, a stream rising in the glaciers of Mount Hood, falls 6,000 feet in thirty miles, and for the last twelve miles of its course falls seventy-five feet to the mile, and is of volume sufficient to furnish 2,500 horse power for each twenty feet fall. These streams will eventually be used to bring the timber from the mountains, and at the same time will furnish the power to manufacture it into lumber. And while speaking of the timber it may not be out of place to add that the immense forests of hemlock on the heads of these streams will furnish unlimited quantities of bark for tanning purposes.

MANUFACTORIES.

The immense amount of wool received here naturally suggests that it would be a fine place for a scouring mill, which it undoubtedly would; and this is an industry that will soon be established here, as the opportunity is too good to long remain open. There is, besides, room for numerous other factories. A woolen mill ought to have been running long ago, and only the great difference in wages between the Pacific and Atlantic coasts has prevented it. As wages are gradually equalizing themselves throughout the country, this objection is not now tenable. We already have a fine roller mill, producing 100 barrels of flour daily, if run to its full capacity; but there is room for more, as the supply of wheat is unlimited and the local market utilizes the bran and shorts. A cannery is another necessity, to use up the surplus fruits and vegetables; and a soap factory would find plenty of material and a good market. We have a fine packing establishment, its products ranking high and not beginning to supply the demand.

A flume from the mountains brings a large portion of the wood supply and lumber for the local market. At its head are vast forests of hemlock, the bark of which is the very finest for tanning purposes; and as there are hundreds of dry hides shipped from here East and brought back again in the shape of manufactured products, it is evident that a tannery, and with it a shoe and harness factory, would be profitable investments. Indeed, the field is a promising one, and the above are only suggestions in the line of what might be done here.

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES.

Our educational facilities are good, the public schools ranking with those of any city in the state. We have in The Dalles 1,240 children of school age, and an average attendance of about 800, and sixteen teachers are employed. The city owns two fine brick school houses and three wooden ones. Besides these the Catholics have here a fine boarding school for girls.

The religious denominations are well represented. The Congregationalists, Methodists, Episcopalians, Catholics and Lutherans all have fine church buildings, and the Baptists two. In these lines the city is ahead rather than behind the great majority of cities of its size.

CLIMATE.

The climate is delightful, the seasons being distinctly marked, but running neither to the extremes of heat nor cold. The west wind, sweeping down over the Cascades, reaches us laden with the odor of cedar and pine, making it of peculiar benefit to those who are troubled with weak lungs. Generally the climate is considered a remarkably healthful one. It is not true that we had to import a corpse to start a graveyard, but it is true that persons do not die often—not more than once. Many who find life unbearable in the wet climate of the coast, find relief at once on coming to the dry climate of Eastern Oregon. Another peculiarity is that diseases absolutely refuse to become epidemic. Diphtheria comes; it is an isolated case. Scarlet fever—it claims seldom more than two subjects, and neither is often fatal. Several times within the past thirty years smallpox has found its way here, but in nearly every case it was confined to the person who brought it, or, at the worst, to those who were in the house with him. The death rate shows that the percentage is as small here as any where in the United States. The nights are always, as elsewhere on the coast, cool and conducive to refreshing sleep.

TEMPERATURE.

The climate is equable for the latitude, the thermometer seldom going below zero or above 94. In either case the extremes are very short. Our extreme cold weather seldom lasts more than three or four days, and the same may be said of the heat. The reason for this is the prevailing west winds coming from the warm Japan gulf current, and familiarly known here as "Chinook winds." In the summer this wind is moist and cool, and blows almost steadily a gentle breeze full of moisture, and beneficial to all vegetation, almost taking the place of rain. In winter it is comparatively a warm wind, cutting the snow rapidly, preventing any long period of cold. There is little or no rainfall after the 1st of June, and consequently there is no rush in harvesting. The grain is stacked unprotected in the fields until such times as it is convenient to thresh it. Light rains in the fall start the grass, and stock generally find plenty of good pasturage until Christmas, and many years go through the entire winter without being fed, but depending entirely on what can be found on the range.

CONCLUSION.

What we have presented are the simple facts, told in simple language. We ask you, if you are a home-seeker, to consider them, and consider them well, and in the light of their application to you. We ask you to cast your lot with us; and here on the banks of the grand Columbia, in the shadow of snow-capped Hood, to make your home. The time is propitious, the opportunity ripe. There is yet abundance of unimproved land to be had almost for the asking. The west wind yet waves the bunch-grass on the hills, where ere many years busy hands will have made happy homes. Let yours be of them. In a short time it will be too late. Soon our fields and our hillsides will in the spring be masses of orchard bloom, and the air, now spicy with the healthful odor of cedar and pine, will be redolent of blossom, and in the fall fragant with the odor of ripened fruit. Embowered cottages, the homes of a happy, prosperous and contented people, will be on every side; while white-winged Peace and golden-robed Plenty shall be our tutelary goddess.

Jos. T. Peters & Co. have cord wood, which is desirable in all respects, and respectfully solicit your orders.

Fifteen Day's Extension.

ROSEBURG, Or., May 16.—The county court, after being in session all the week, adjourned tonight. The time for paying taxes has been extended from May 15 until June 1, 1895, after which time the sheriff is ordered to make out the delinquent roll, and 2 per cent will be charged on all unpaid taxes. No warrants will be accepted in payment from this date.

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