[Published by Authority.] COMMERCIAL STATISTICS.

Report on the Harbor and Shipping of the port of Astoria-Facts Important to the Public.

At a meeting of the Astoria Chamber of Commerce, held in May last, a committee was appointed to prepare statistics of the harbor and shipjing of the port of Astoria, for use at the Farmer's Convention. Following is the report in full.

Your committee to whom was referred the matter of harbor, and shipping intelligence, beg leave to offer the following:

The water front of Astoria, varying from a quarter of a mile to a mile in width affords over six miles of secure anchorage for the largest classed vessels, in from six to twelve fathoms of water. No storms have yet visited the harbor that effected any damage to shipping riding at anchor in the bay, or lying at the wharf.

Should the demands of commerce require, about five consecutive miles of dockage may be cheaply constructed from the river bank to the edge of the channel, piling being necessary but a short dis-

Ince at any given point.

The central portion of the harbor is just twelve miles inside the Columbia river bar, on which there is twenty-four feet of water at extreme low tide, and thirty-four at ordinary high tide. After crossing the bar, the depth holds still greater all the way to Astoria, so that any vessel able to cross can safely venture to our docks. About six miles above Astoria, at the commencement of Cathlament bay is the hog's "back, a bar some quarter of a mile in length, with ten feet of water at low and eighteen feet at high tide. This is the most dangerous point on the river, and the most skillful pilots never attempt its passage in the night, either with sail or steam. It is formed of shifting sands, deposited by the meeting of the tide with the annual freshets of the river, as Cathlamet bay is ten miles long up and down the river, and from seven to fourteen in width. Thus the waters of the river are so spread out that they lose their force, and the incoming tide washes the loose sand into irregular bars that change their position from year to year, and make dredging useless. Stramers are nearly always detained at Astoria, for tide to cross this bar, and should one arrive here, say at 12 M. when high water occurred at 10 o'clock A. M. she would have to wait until 11 A. M. the next day, as she could not proceed on the high tide of the night. This bar has been known for years, but as the draft of steamers and vessels now coming into the river is greater than formerly, the difficulties are becoming more and more apparent.

There is the following named depths of water at the points mentioned at high

Walker's Island, 19 ft.for 1/2 mile below Rainier Carr's Woodyard "above above "kalama "" 1/4 " St. Helen...... 17 Mouth Wallamet Post Office....... 18 Swan Island... 17

The channel is often crooked, and difficult of navigation, and the bar at the mouth of the Willamette river is subject to annual deposts of sediment from back water of the Columbia.

We find that the carrying trade of Oregon is now chiefly done by vessels of light draft and small capacity.

That these are subject to a tax of \$8 per foot draft as pilotage; from four to ten days delay, and \$300 to \$400 towage, over and above what they would have to pay, did they receive and take in cargo at Astoria. A fair average would be, say six hundred tons capacity. Expenses would then be as follows:

Pilotage 16 feet @ \$4 up......down...... Six days demurrage @ 860..... Towage up..... down Total

on the cargo of 600 tons outward bound. This is but a fraction of the expense to the State growing out of present arrangement approximate very closely, and set the of the arrivals and depatures by sea.

and 1,200 tons, to be 201/2 feet, and the average of all larger ones but 21% feet. While a thousand ton ship is full larger than can reach Portland, or any point above &c., on or about the bar. Astoria, loaded, on account of depth of water, a vessel of 3,000 tons can always come to Astoria, whatever the stage of water. Thus, with a point higher up on the river, the export trade must forever be carried on in small vessels, while from here the shipping of the world may compete for freights.

A ship of 3,000 tons can carry wheat from Astora to Liverpeel for twenty cents a bushel less than a 1,000 ton vessel can do from Portland, as the following figures | four miles inside.

fully demonstrate:	Surce
A ship of 3,000 tons is worth	20,000
Interest, at 10 F cent. for four months	
(average passage)	4,000
Insurance at 12 7 cent	4,800
Depreciation at 10 % cent	4,000
Captain, three mates, steward, and cok	
\$150, \$75, \$60, \$50, \$40, \$40 W month	1,6-0
Twenty-four seamen @ \$25 7 month	2,400
Stores for voyage, 30 men at 50c # day,	1,800
PORT CHARGES IN ASTORIA.	
Pilotage and towage, 25 feet @ \$10	206
Stevedores' bill, 3,050 tons @ 40c	1,200
Dunnage	200
Port stores, etc	200
LIVERPOOL CHARGES.	
Pilotage and towage, 23 feet @ \$10	230
Stevedore's bill, 3,000 tons @ 25c	7.50
Harbor fees, tonnage dues and dockage	SO
Pert stores	200
Total expense	22,46 .

\$45,000

\$ 22,518

.. 22,490

- CONTRA:

By 8,000 tons @ \$15.

penses deducted.

7777	A ship of 1,000 tons is worth	60,000
	Interest at 10 % cent., and Insurance @ 12 % cent., four worths	4,400 2,000
	mates \$155, ste ward \$50, and 12 seamen at \$25 each	2,546 960
,	Pilotage and towage, IP feet & \$10 Part stores and dumage Stevedore's bill, 1,000 tons & 50c	196 200 500
	LIVERPOOL CHARGES. Pilotage and towage, 19 feet @ \$10 Stevedore's bill @ 2 m, harbor dues, ton-	190
	Port stores	650 100
	Total expenses	11,753
	By 1,000 tons at \$15	

Or, a dividend of 19 per cent, on cost of the larger ship as against 5 per cent. on that of the smaller. Or, to reduce both to 5 per cent., the 3,000 ton ship will carry wheat to Liverpool for over a third less than the 1,000 ton vessel; that is, 29 cents against 45 cents per bushel. Add to this the cost as above figured, incidental to delays and river expenses of 4 cents per bushel, and it gives a net gain of 20 cents per bushel in favor of Astoria as an exporting harbor, and the employment of such vessels as can safely cross the bar, over the present arrangement of Portland and small vessels. Twenty cents per bushel on the estimated crop of the State for 1873, viz: 5,000,000 bushels, gives the snug little sum of \$1,000,000 that the farmer should have for his labor. The above figures are all substantially correct, and

tell their own story.

It may be said that several large vessels have loaded at Portland, but the Custom House records show that of the twenty vessels named below, comprising all the vessels of any size that have sailed from the river with wheat, from a fourth to over one-half of the cargo was brought tlown to Astoria in steamboats and here put on board. And yet these records are more favorable to the city of Portland than the facts justify, for the reason that in a number of instances, two or three hundred tons was cleared from the Portland Custom House as being on board when in fact it was in lighters and steamers alongside of the ship, and towed down to Astoria before being placed on the ves-

List of vessels exporting wheat from Oregon, showing amount of bushels taken

CROP OF 1872,					
1872	Ships.	No. Bush. at Astoria	No. Bush. Portland.		
0et. 11 " 14 " 14 Nov. 7 " 14 " 21 " 30 Dec. 11 " 17 1873, Jan. 16	Annie M. Smullo Manilla Navigator Electra Lock Dee Siam Forward, (bbls of flour), Red Deer Grasmere Zouave Naworth Channel Light	15,229 7,359 7,734 3,794 7,175 1,768 10,177 20,052 34,097 2,505 8,435 9,625	20,622 22,177 36,353 26,667 3,200 26,501 21,575 22,400 17,176 21,756 44,800		
** 8	Whittington ^o Felix Mendelsohn ^o Sarah Seott	11,000	31,654 38,60 30,000		
March	Bioswell Spragueo Billione Carribou Victoria Cross	8,312 9,095 7,705	35,680 30,038 32,68 24,34;		

Again, deep sea vessels never like to leave the salt water. Coasters are willing to steamboat it, but large vessels avoid steamboat grounds. In fact, the underwriters do not allow deep sea vessels to venture from their natural element at

The striking of a vessel on any of the hars of the river, even if no immediate damage is discovered, is sufficient cause to render null and void the policy of insurance, should she take in cargo and proceed to sea without being put on the dry dock and having her bottom examined. Should a ship be lost under such circum-

stances, not a dollar of insurance could be collected on the vessel, and if the owners were responsible, the underwriters upon the cargo would hold them for the value thereof. Hence large vessels will never be induced to undertake the navigation of the bars of the Columbia above Astoria.

Now as to the safety of the Columbia river. Exact data is wanting of the whole Equivalent to over four cents per bushel number of vessels that have crossed the bar, but from certain periods during which number down at an average of five hun-By careful inspection of the shipping dred a year for the last twenty-one years, registers, we find the average draft of all or since 1852. The following is a comvessels now in use, ranging between 1,000 plete list of all the losses or wrecks that have occurred on the bar since 1852, which year may be considered the beginning of wisdom as regards the channels, currents,

Barks Mendora, and Merrithew, lost January 12th, 1853, came in without pilots, wind failed after getting in, and they drifted ashore.

Bark Oriole, lost September 19th, 1853. Brig Detroit, lost Dec. 22, 1855, on outer

spit. Going out at night.

Bark Desdemona, lost Dec. 31st, 1856.

Came in without a pilot, ran on sands six

miles inside. Schooner Woodpeckerlost May 10, 1861,

Bark Industry, lost March 16, 1865, coming in without a pilot. Bark W. B. Scranton, lost May 5th,

Only eight vessels in twenty-one years. Eight out of 10,500. One out of 1,312, or one-thirteenth of one per cent. of the shipping coming into the river.

Of this number, four were coming in without pilots. It futher appears that nearly every loss during the time under reveiw, was the result, not of a rough bar, but of the wind failing after the vessel had crossed thus leaving her to drift on the sands. It also seems that each loss of vessels coming in occurred when they were sailing against the tide, instead of with it.

There being no tug to go to their relief,

Vessels marked thus (*) are known to have lightered more than the amount credited above.

of course there could be no rescue. It is safe to say that, had there been a tug at hand, every vessel thus far lost on the bar might have beed saved. Since the placing of the tug Astoria upon the bar, or pilot grounds in 1869, there has been no loss, and with proper care on the part of tug, and pilots, there need be none for many years to come. These facts warrant us in making the bold assertion, that there is no barred harbor known to commerce, where the percentage of loss is so small; and few, if any, open harbors that can show so fair a record. The currents and prevailing winds are such, and the land marks so well defined, that at a time when it is un-safe to cross the bar, vessels outside can readily keep off, and wait a suitable time to enter. And there is good holding grounds but a few hundred rods inside for vessels bound out to anchor, and select from the spot their own time to pass out, Less trouble is experienced from fogs at the Columbia, than either to the north or south, as they are not frequent, and are much less dense, owing, no doubt, to the presence of arial currents, resulting from peculiar physical conformations. The channel is distinctly bouyed out, and lighted by a first class light-house on Cape Disappointment, where is established a life saving station by Government, with all the necessary facilities for rendering aid in case of accident on the bar. Government has also made an appropriation for a light house at Point Adams, and preparations are going forward for commencing the work at once.

The commerce of Oregon has hereto-fore been taxed by underwriters far above the proper and reasonable rate. But, as the rate of insurance is made up from a knowledge of the actual pro rata of loss incident to a given harbor, when such data is to be had, or guessed at from general impressions, in the absence of reliable information, there seems no good reason why, if the above facts are laid before the various marine underwriters of the land, the discrimination against the Columbia river bar should not be removed, and our insurance had at a fair rate, much less than is now imposed.

Another important point gained by making Astoria the exporting harbor, would be the employment of home capital in the river transportation, instead of foreign, or outside, as is now done. The question is now never raised about Sandy Hook bar, at the entrance of New York harbor, being too shallow and rough for the extensive and profitable employment of all classes of vessels, yet there is five feet more water on the Columbia river bar at high tide, than there is on Sandy Hook at a corresponding stage of water. But, to conclude, it is evident that the class of vessels required to carry the surplus products of Oregon to a foreign market, at a price consistent with the cost of production, must stop at the mouth of the Columbia river. Therefore, it is a simple problem of whether Oregon will build up and maintain a seaport town worthy of a great State, within her own borders, or whether such a place will be sustained on Pugut Sound, or California, at an annual cost of one-fourth the agricultural wealth of the

The committee are under obligations to Mr. VanDusen, Mr. Hare, Collector of Customs, and the Pilots, for valuable information. Respectfully submitted, J. H. D. GRAY, A. S. MERCER, W. W. PARKER, Committee. ASTORIA, May 31, 1873.

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