

The Daily Astorian.

ASTORIA, OREGON:

FRIDAY, APRIL 8, 1887

THE MODERN TENDENCY TO CENTRALIZATION.

The railroad has done much toward bringing about a centralization of business. This is seen in the number of small towns which half a century ago were of much more importance than they are today. It is also seen in the new states where towns twenty years ago were centers of business and are now no longer such. There are two influences always active in railroad transportation. One is the distribution of business, and the other is a concentration of it at some particular points. Thus, the temporary terminus of a railroad is both a place for the concentration and the distribution of business. The centers that were created by stage lines and by small agricultural districts lose much of their importance when the railroad creates equal or better facilities at some other point. Thus when a considerable district has been tributary to a town or railroad station, a considerable business is built up. There are stores, warehouses, hotels and all the appurtenances of a thriving town. But when the railroad goes beyond and extends equal facilities to other points, it is seen that a strong decentralizing influence has set in. The old order of things is disturbed. The new law of distribution takes effect. Some towns are almost killed by the advent of a railroad, while others are built up. The towns thus reduced in importance were those which for a time had become centers of business by means of stage facilities and wagon transportation. They supplied an area of territory which at a later date has been abridged. Another and more important center draws from the same territory. This process is constantly going on. The results have already been worked out in the older states where most of the railroads have already been constructed.

This law of centralization is at work upon the railroads as well. A few years ago such a circumstance as the consolidation of a number of railroads under one directory was not known. Even so late as ten years ago the largest railroad corporation was not controlling more than 1,500 miles of railroad. Now there are railroad corporations controlling from 3,000 to 4,000 miles of road. The dispatches regarding the sale of the Baltimore & Ohio railroad, indicate that by the close of '87, one corporation will control 10,000 miles of road. This centralization of capital in railways is one of the remarkable events of the last twenty years. There is also a reduction of the number of managing directors. One man is at the head of the great combination, and there are five or six men working under him. Of course, there are many subordinates working under these men. But the small stockholders have no influence. In short, little is heard now about the work of more than three or four individuals in connection with any great railway combination. Thus we hear of Huntington as the head of a great railway combination reaching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, which, with branches, covers about 4,000 miles. If fifty years ago any one had predicted that one man would be practically at the head of a railway combination stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and covering, with branches, 4,000 miles, he would have been set down as a visionary man. This work of consolidation is still going on. It has assumed already immense proportions.

Of course there is a limit, because the time may come when there will be no more railroads to bring into half a dozen great combinations. At present we hear of one or more grand schemes for new continental railway combinations. Sometimes it is given out that the Chicago & Northwestern

Railway company will pick up the missing links and push along to the Oregon Pacific and Yaquina. Then the rumor assumes shape that some narrow-gauge railroad in Colorado is coming this way and will not stop until it has struck the Pacific shore. The transfer of the O. & C. to the Southern Pacific will coin a dozen more predictions of probable movements. The combination fever is still working. Now and then a little road is left to pursue its local business quietly. It accommodates the farmers and the small towns on the line, and every year increases its business, providing it does not depend upon mining speculations. Very little is heard about dividends from these local roads. But they manage to pull through from year to year, and now and then extend the road a few miles further into important agricultural or timber districts. These local roads will be all that is left out of the great combinations, and even some of these may finally be picked up as links of the larger ones.

This centralizing influence has a great many ramifications. It kills towns and makes them to some extent. There must be other resources. No large town could be built upon the desert. There must be some natural wealth to be developed. When once a town has attained capital, business and population reaching up say to a hundred thousand people, or half that number, it is not much affected by the decentralizing influences of a railroad. It will have local facilities for transportation which cannot be destroyed. But the present tendency is to concentrate capital at a few points. This was recently noted in regard to the whaling business. The ten or fifteen prominent points are reduced to two. It is also seen in the manufacture of boots and shoes in the Atlantic states, where, at present, only two towns seem to have much prominence as centers of this manufacturing interest, viz., Lynn and Haverhill. And in these places the small manufacturing interests of the Atlantic states. Thus, a Boston paper notes that twenty years ago the great cotton manufacturing establishments of Lowell were in the hands of eight corporations. There were then 4,000 spindles. Now there are 8,000 spindles under the control of seven corporations. Capital for great commercial and banking operations is concentrated at a few points. A few years ago a flour mill which made a hundred barrels of flour in a day was considered a very extensive affair. Now there is such a group of flour mills at Minneapolis, in the very heart of this country, as were never known before.

No doubt these vast combinations in many instances cheapen production. There are other questions suggested by this revolution which cannot be discussed here. This tendency to vast combinations of the kind here noted is a recent one, or, rather, there is a new stage of development. Such vast organizing influences are working out results which can hardly be measured to-day. Even if most of the results are to be beneficial, there is a strong undercurrent of doubt or uneasiness lest a great combination of capitalists shall overstep legitimate bounds and undertake to control the administrative policy of the country.

NEW TO-DAY.

Department Notice.

ALL MEMBERS OF THE ASTORIA FIRE Department are hereby called to meet at their respective Engine Houses in full uniform at 1:30 P. M. sharp, on Monday, April the 11th, 1887, for the purpose of department inspection and parade.

By order of B. S. WOSLEY, Chief Engineer, C. J. TRENCHARD, Foreman No. 1, W. J. BARRY, Foreman B. E. No. 2, L. W. HOLT, Foreman Alert H. & L. Co.

Sunny Furnished Front Rooms. OVER THOMPSON & ROSS' STORE. IN Salt or Blagie.

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This Day at 3 P. M.

By Order of Lieut. M. F. Harmon A. A. Q. M.

Blacksmiths and Carpenters Tools, Garden Tools, also Spades, Shovels and Five Barrack Chairs. E. C. HOLDEN, Auctioneer.

GRAND

Department Ball

OF THE

Astoria Fire Department, For the Benefit of the STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION, TOURNAMENT FUND at

Ross' Opera House.

On Monday Evening, April 11th, 1887.

Under the management of the Board of Foremen of the Astoria Fire Department. Committee of Arrangements: C. J. Trenchard, W. J. Barry, L. W. Holt, B. S. Worsley. Reception Committee: Ed Hallock, C. Brown, W. G. Ross, C. W. Fulton, C. Adler, Dr. J. Tuttle. Floor Managers: W. E. Warren, F. Suprenant, A. E. Shaw, F. L. Parker, P. M. Earhart, T. S. Jewett.

The Western Amateur Brass Band has kindly donated the music for the parade of the department during the day, and for the ball in the evening. Tickets \$1.00. By order of the Board of Foremen. By E. Z. FRIGUSON, Sec'y. Supper by the Woman's Relief Corps at Liberty Hall.

Rooms and Board.

Nicely Furnished Rooms and Good Board at Mrs. Tucker's, over Murray & Co.'s Store.

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Two more Carloads of those famous SUPERIOR Stoves and Ranges just arrived from the Factory. These goods are what their name indicates, none SUPERIOR in the Market. Firebacks to these Stoves are Guaranteed 15 Years. Every Stove Warranted—Call and inspect them at

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To save time and guess at nothing, our patrons, the Fisheries, will oblige us, to send samples of twine when possible, and in the case of odd lots, like Dredges, Trawls and the like, to send a diagram. In ordering anything, name all particulars. Will be glad when one has any new ideas about nets to sit down and write us. We purpose to study up minutely, the Fisheries of the Pacific, so we can send the best style for catch and profit. All letters promptly answered. GLOUCESTER NET & TWINE CO., Gloucester, Boston Office 95 Commercial St.

Fisheries Dispatch.

Fishermen, that require netting for immediate, unlooked-for use, with dispatch, can be accommodated with telegraphic orders, with full description of every item, to save delay of further information. Can make a Purse Seine, 250 faths, long 40 faths, deep, for deep sea fishing, for salmon, that will take but 1,700 lbs. twine to make, and can be worked by 20 men. Can send a model of one. GLOUCESTER NET & TWINE CO., Gloucester, Mass. Boston Office 95 Commercial St.

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