

The Willamette Valley, the Greatest Hop Section of World

Following is a Reliable Article, Prepared by An Expert, On the Hop Industry of Oregon, Past, Present and Future.

Although Continental Europe gives the world about half of its hops, whose value at 20 cents per pound is eighteen million dollars, its hopyards are mere gardens of an acre or so in extent, while the dry houses, etc., are the property of the dealers, located in the nearby cities, who buy the uncurd hops from the growers, and cart them to town for curing.

About three hundred years ago the hop plant was brought to England and has ever since been one of her leading agricultural industries. Her average crop is about 225,000 bales, or the same as the present normal crop of the entire United States, while in 1905 she raised 400,000 bales.

About 100 years ago hops became an industry of New York, and at one time the state crop reached 250,000 bales. Her 1911 crop, however, was but about one-tenth that amount. In appearance "State" hops, as they are called, compare favorably only with our poorest qualities; however, they have certain peculiarities, which appeal to a great many brewers.

About 1858, the hop was introduced into Wisconsin, and the industry grew so rapidly there that in ten years her crop was 176,000 bales, which is 16,000 bales more than Oregon's largest crop. That year, however, prices dropped from 20c to practically nothing, and the 1858 growth was not entirely bought up until some nine years later. From this on her yield dropped off rapidly until today there are but few yards left in that state.

Some time in the early seventies Mr. Wells of Buena Vista planted Oregon's first hop yard. He was followed by the Kirkwoods of Wheatland, Doves of Eola, Thornsbury of Gervais, Ike Yoakum of Eugene and a good many others in time to reap the harvest of 1882 when hops soared to over a dollar a pound, and almost as quickly dropped back to the 20c level. In fact the story is still well known in the hop trade how Ralph Geer of the Waldo Hills refused \$1.10 for his crop which he later sold for 10c per pound. Up until the early nineties vermin was unknown in Oregon, and the hops were allowed to hang on the vines until fully matured, and being cleanly picked by Indians, the average Oregon hop was a strictly fancy article, and soon became a favorite of the English exporters.

All during the eighties the industry grew, and though an important one for Oregon, it was not until 1890 that our production became large enough to be a factor in the world's market. At that time shortage of crops abroad forced prices to 42c at one time during the season, though they later dropped to a 25c level. Following this year, not only the butcher, the baker and candlestick maker, but the doctor, the lawyer and merchant as well saw visions of great wealth to be made in hops and thousands of acres were planted, with the inevitable result that as soon as they came into bearing prices slumped so that for several years a 5c or 6c sale was a good one.

The great loss this entailed to the growers caused a gradual decreased acreage, and proportionate rise in values, until in 1902, prices were again at 25c. This again started the hop planting, which received a further impetus the next year when 27c was paid, and reached its climax in 1904 when a new record of 32c was made, and then all caution was thrown to the winds and new yards planted by the hundreds, and in September, 1905, the growers who refused 30c for their hops, sold them for 5c per pound.

In 1904 we raised 90,000 bales and in 1905 115,000 bales, while the full acreage came into bearing in 1906 with a yield of 160,000 bales. 'Twas in this latter year that, underestimating the crop, one firm attempted to corner the market, and bought up 40,000 bales, at a probable cost of one million dollars. Stocks, however, were too large for the success of the undertaking, and it was not until five years later that the firm was able to sell the hops without an enormous loss.

The 1907 crop was smaller, only 138,000 bales, but the panic appearing in the midst of the hop season, forced prices down to five and six cents.

In 1908 the effect of the adverse prices were shown in the state yield, and only 110,000 bales were raised, but the surpluses from the former years were sufficient to keep prices below 7c.

These bad years induced many growers to contract their crops for a number of years at ten cents a pound which at that time was indeed a large price, but looked very small the next year, 1909, when with a short English crop, and our own at but \$2,000 bales, prices went to 25c, in November of that year. Many growers, however, felt that conditions warranted much higher prices, while on the other hand prices continued falling until some were sold as low as 5c.

The 1910 crop was 92,000 bales, which with the old stocks carried over, was sufficient for our needs, if evenly distributed, however, the large Middle Western brewers were very heavy buyers and practically the entire crop went to them and to exporters at about 12c per pound, and our Atlantic seaboard brewers awoke in January to find storehouses empty and but a few thousand bales of 1910 hops available. Prices rose until 20c was reached, at which price practically every bale was bought up. Then the demand dropped back on the old 1909 crop, until the last of it was also bought at about 20c. In fact the one last lot in the state sold for 28c, just before the 1911 crop was harvested.

All these years, since 1906, some of our growers had been holding their hops, some of them having as many as five different crops on hand, and as the 1909s were exhausted, the demand fell back on the older growths, which as far as Oregon was concerned, were mostly absorbed before the new crop came on. A few 1906s, however, are held today, which are worth about 18c a pound.

Early in 1911, when it was seen that all the surplus old hops would be used

before new hops were in, all attention was centered on the growing crop the world over, for should it be below normal consumption, with no old stocks to fall back upon, high prices would prevail.

Prices for contracts on 1911s, started at 12c in January and were 15c unfavorable then, a further advance to 20c was made by June. 23 July, however, extremely unfavorable reports from Continental Europe forced prices to 25c. Then daily as the reports of the extreme heat in Germany came in, prices rose steadily, reaching 41c, when a cessation of the heat in Germany caused slightly better reports, and caused the buyers to await developments, during which wait the prices sagged to about 32c. Continental Europe finally registered about two-thirds of a crop, and as soon as crop estimates were dropped from 32,000 bales to 70,000 bales, and when the actual count is made it will probably be found that we harvested less than that amount. Most growers were satisfied with the price, and sold readily. Soon, however, stocks were reduced to a few thousand bales, at which time prices rapidly went back to 40c, and more slowly on up to 45c.

It is well known that a great many brewers are delaying the inevitable, January, at which time without doubt nearly all the remaining lots of Oregon hops will be sold. For the Oregon hop grower it has been a great year. The best yards have netted their owners \$500 per acre, while even the poor neglected ones, yielding but a few hundred pounds to the acre, have shown a snug profit at these prices, and the Oregon crop as a whole, based at forty cents, is worth over six million dollars, which is over a million and a half dollars more than the value of any previous hop crop. As a rule, however, the value of the crop does not vary this much, as the price is nearly always in indirect proportion to the yield, with the total value at from two and one-half millions to three and one-half million dollars, except during the very low priced years.

To properly cultivate Oregon's hop crop requires the services of two thousand men, who are aided by at least one thousand women and children during the training season. At picking time, however, for an average Oregon crop, fifty thousand pickers are required, who earn eight hundred thousand dollars, and ten thousand day laborers who earn half that amount, and adding the value of the wood necessary to dry the hops, we have a total of one and one-quarter million dollars paid out direct for the harvesting labor of the crop, and allowing that one-fourth of this goes to those, to whom it is not absolutely necessary, we still have paid out the most popular million dollars in the world.

The factory, the railroad or the mine may have a pay roll of even greater amount, but it is the regular wage of the home and does not serve the purpose that the hop picking money does, earned and brought home by the wives and children of the workingman, and is in addition to all the regular incomes. The million from the factory goes to those who would have a million from some other source, were it not for the factory. The million from the hop fields goes to those who would otherwise have nothing. It means a new suit, new hat, gloves and shoes for the wife, who would otherwise have to draw on the regular income for her clothes, and not only winter clothes complete for the youngsters, but school books, and often enables them to secure some cherished luxury which they would otherwise be unable to have. No other million, probably, is so quickly and so wisely spent, nor for such a variety of purposes. Every tradesman gets his share, as well as the professions, the dentist his for work that would otherwise be neglected, the doctor his for a bill long past due, the preacher his for the marriage fee, while the washerwoman not only gets her winter's groceries and children's clothes from the million, but has been known to also use a portion of it to free herself from her recreant husband, in which way the lawyer gets his share.

Regardless of market conditions, this popular million is handed out each year. It was paid in 1908 when the crop itself was hardly worth that amount, it was paid this year, and it will be paid next year, and the next and each year fifteen thousand families are thereby able to obtain necessities, extras and perhaps luxuries that would otherwise be beyond their reach.

At the International Hop and Barley exposition, just closed at Chicago, Oregon took first prize on quality over California, Washington and New York which are the only other three states in the union producing hops. Oregon for many years has held the banner as the largest producer, and though with our crop 30 per cent short of all expectations in 1911, California took a temporary lead in quantity, with average conditions, Oregon will more than regain her position in quality, the superiority of our quality destined us to continue to be the greatest hop section in the world.

Some of our prairie and hill land is not suitable for hops, and the yards set out in such places, under the over enthusiasm of such years as this, are doomed to failure, but the veteran foredoomed who carefully select their river bottom soil, build their yards with neat plants, and work their yards with the same thoroughness year after year, regardless of prices, are the backbone of the Oregon industry, and will carry it on in the future, as they have in the past, to Oregon's glory and profit. With our deep, rich, ever-estimating soil, our particularly favorable climate, and our proximity to pickers, it land with its hordes of pickers, it seems reasonable to predict that the

industry will not fade and die with the advent of low prices, as it did in Wisconsin, nor even fall into decline as it did in New York, but rather continue to supply the world with its fancy hops, continue to be our most valuable and most favored product, and continue to dispense not only our most popular million, but to bring in two to three extra millions yearly as well, and as Kent has supplied England for three centuries, so will Oregon be the "Kent" of America five, ten or perhaps twenty generations to come.

WILLIS S. DUNWAY--STATE PRINTER.

The splendid record made in the office of the state printer during the incumbency of Willis S. Dunway so thoroughly impressed the people of the state of Oregon that he was re-elected to that important office last November and will continue to effect a phenomenal saving to the taxpayers throughout his term. As compared with methods in vogue before Mr. Dunway took charge, the saving on all kinds of state printing averages more than \$1000 per month, a strong illustration of the absolute integrity of this popular official, as well as his marked ability in an executive capacity. Honest officials have long been demanded by the people, and they are not slow to recognize and reward those who fulfill expectations.

In the meantime Mr. Dunway continues to discharge his official duties as state printer in a manner highly pleasing to citizens of the state as a whole, and will further popularize himself thereby. The saving of more than \$1000 per month is actual, not theoretical, and the man who follows Willis S. Dunway as state printer will doubtless be forced to keep expenses of the office down to the low maximum established by this gentleman. Mr. Dunway enjoys a wide acquaintance throughout the state and is justly popular with all who know him. He is an enthusiastic and consistent worker for the further development of the vast resources of the state; a public-spirited and progressive citizen, and highly worthy of the high esteem in which he is held.

C. F. ROYAL--BRIDGE CONTRACTOR

The development of a new section of country naturally includes the building of a great many bridges over the various rivers and streams--and for a man skilled in the art, this country furnishes a fine field.

Mr. C. F. Royal, long a resident of this city, has built more bridges in the western part of Oregon than any other contractor. He has always been held in high esteem by his business associates and neighbors. His business connections are of the very highest.

The particular line of bridge building gives employment to a great number of workmen. They are one of the highest-paid class of workmen there is, so this combined with the fact that Mr. Royal hires Salem men almost exclusively, makes him one of the leading contractors in this part of Oregon.

Salem recently passed an ordinance to the effect that Salem workmen must be employed on public works. Mr. Royal has done this in all his work.

Mr. Royal is still in harness, and expects to build a good many bridges before the time comes for him to take the trip --- last long bridge.

There are very few men in Salem who have done more to advance its interests than Mr. Royal. He is always willing to put in time and money for its advancement.

The office of Mr. Royal is at 412 Twenty-first street North, where he resides.

SQUIRE FARRAR--POSTMASTER.

The postoffice at Salem is the second in importance in the state of Oregon, and it is highly essential therefore, that a man of executive ability, sound judgment and progressive ideas should be selected as postmaster. However, the past few years have demonstrated that Squire Farrar is the proper man to fill this very important office. The volume of business has increased enormously during the past ten years, which has come through the rapid growth of the city and contiguous territory.

Mr. Farrar is now serving his second term as postmaster, and he is directly responsible for the excellent mail service that we now enjoy. He is a pioneer of Salem, and his progressiveness has done a great deal to build up the city; and as he is a firm believer in the future of Salem, he can be depended upon to do his share of the necessary work to make it so.

All of Mr. Farrar's friends are very anxious that he shall be retained in his present position upon the expiration of his term of office--and so long as he is in office, the citizens can look forward to the very highest class of service.

TILLSON & CO., INC.

The prune packing industry of Salem is one of the city's main industries, and the firm of Tillson & Co., Inc., is one of the packers. They have houses at both Salem and Roseburg, the largest establishment being at Salem. They pack approximately six million pounds each year, and about half of their pack is shipped to Europe.

Their business is strictly commercial, and they buy their fruit, paying cash on delivery.

Mr. Tillson is manager, and is an up-to-date, progressive business man, always willing to do his share towards the upbuilding of the city and state.

The prune industry is one of the very valuable assets of Marion county, and it should be fostered. As generally speaking prune growing is more profitable than other fruits.



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