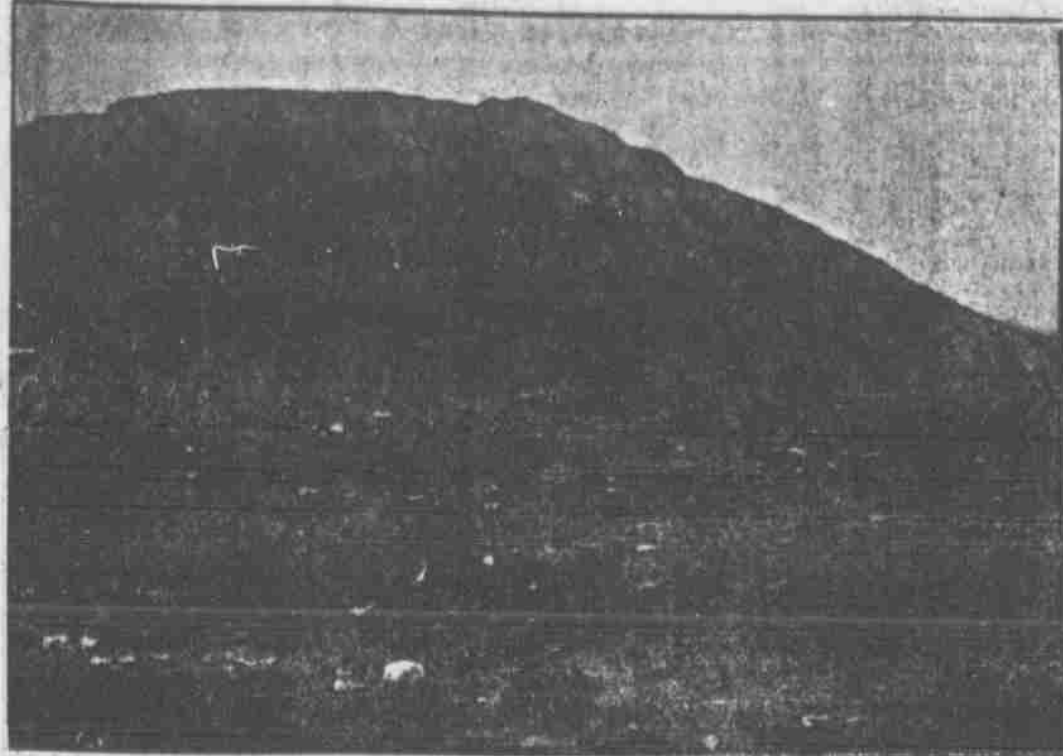


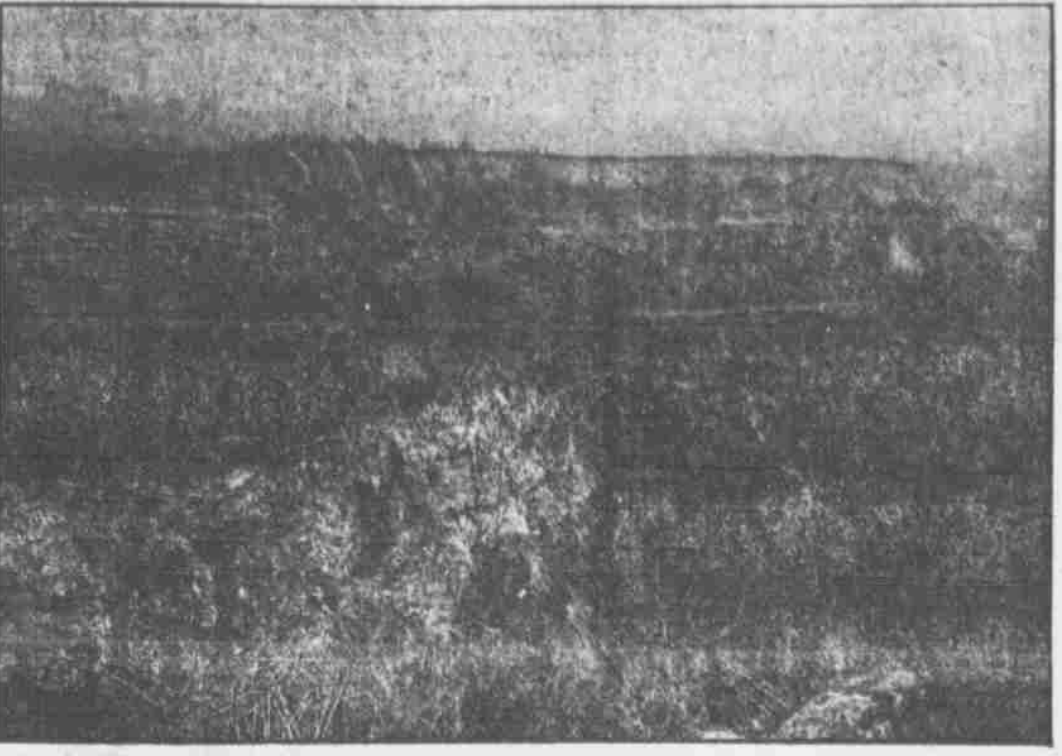
# "Wildest Omaha" Disappearing Before the Demands of City Growth



HAUNT OF THE "BANDIT" NOW GONE.

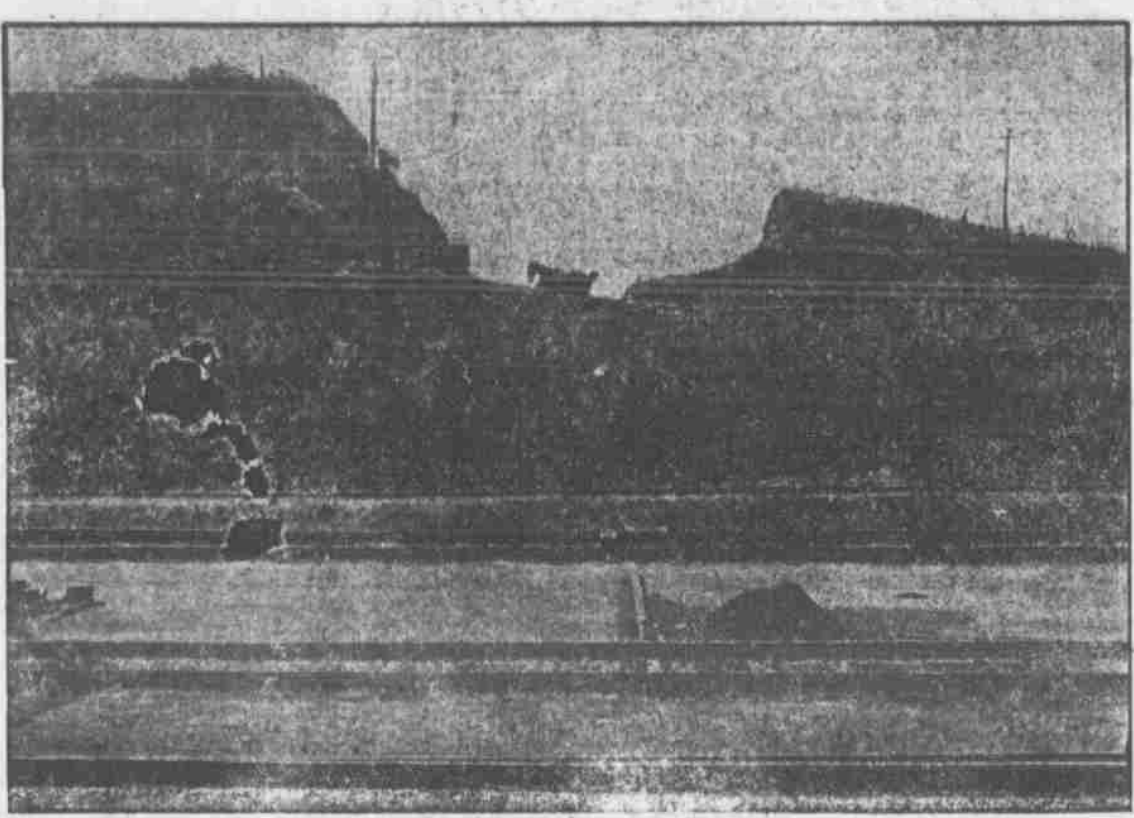


NEAR THE LINCOLN SCHOOL.

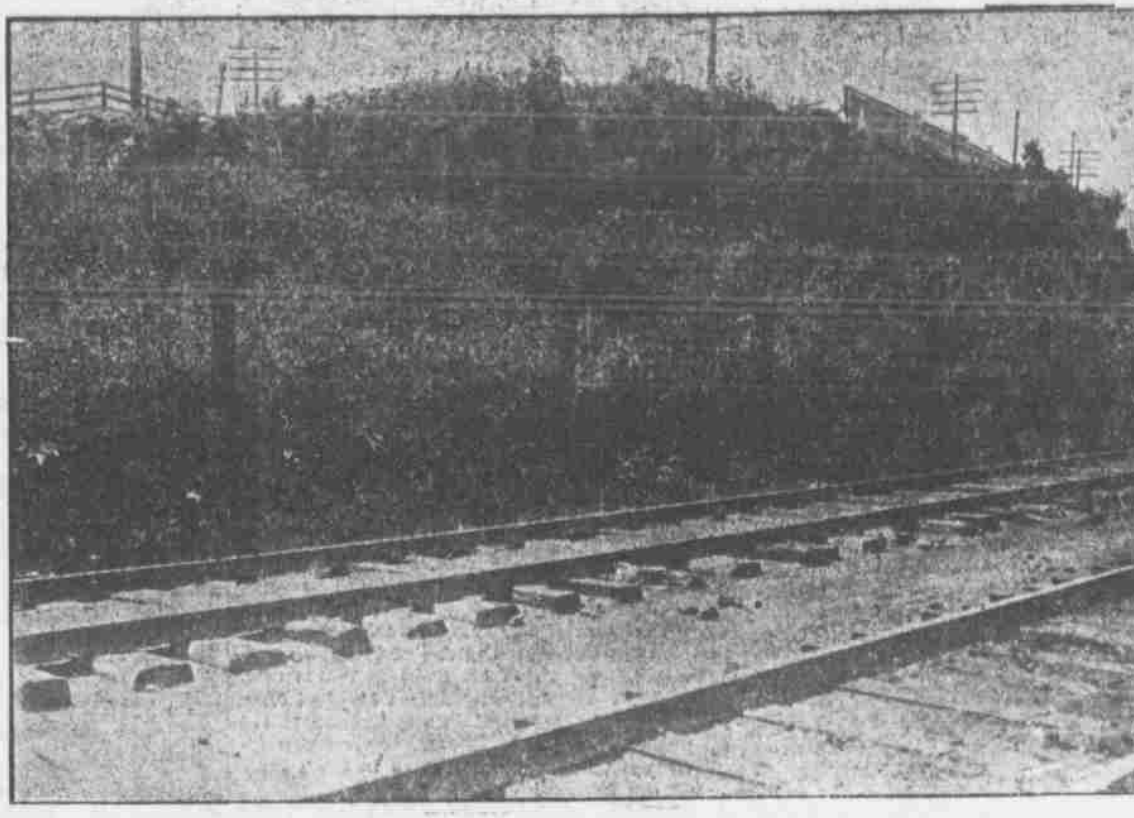


BILLY GOATS REVEALED HERE.

**W**HATEVER may have been the motive that inspired the founders of Omaha, they certainly chose a commanding site. The hills that surrounded the original location of the city have been at once the delight and the despair of its builders. For fifty years man has been digging away at these huge bluffs and banks of clay and gumbo, and while he has succeeded in making many changes in the topography of the country, he has not been able to obliterate the handiwork of nature, who here had displayed some of the most marvelous of carving. Creeks have been swallowed up, water courses have disappeared and hill and vale have met on a common level since man began to rearrange the prospect to suit his convenience and his needs. Citizens who are yet young can easily recall the time when Omaha resembled nothing so strongly as a brooding prairie dog town, being a succession of hills and hummocks, one topping the other, until the last seemed all but insurmountable. Man said these must be moved, and moved they have been. Gradients that once were prodigious have become easy and facile; heights that once towered all but cloud high have been brought down low, and in some cases the tops of the business blocks that now surmount the spot scarcely reach as high into the air as once did the bill that has vanished. Embankments from the old city, the signal smoke or blazed the council fire of the aborigine have sunk beneath the influence of expanding city life, and valleys wherein the tepee nestled or where the wild beast made his lair in safety have been lost in the general effort at remodeling the townsite.



MAKING A SITE FOR A FACTORY.



THIS BLUFF DISAPPEARED FOR A COAL YARD.

Millions of cubic yards of dirt have been moved during the working out of the process. Modern engineers have pointed out in what way a great deal of effort might have been avoided by taking more advantage of the natural contour of the country and furnishing Omaha with a flat that conformed more closely to its topography. But the men who laid out the city dealt only with the cardinal points of the compass, and in their simple devotion to elemental things gave no thought to the possible whims of future residents. Capitol hill was to them an eminence fit to be crowned by the dome of the state, and so it was built, without regard to the fact that Dodge street, Capitol avenue, Farnam street, Douglas street, in fact, every avenue of approach, presented such an accessibility as to suggest alpenstocks as a necessary part of the equipment of the legislators and officers who made the headquarters in the structure that was perched airily at the highest point in the county. And so in conforming to the four-square idea of the founders, and endeavoring to provide for a constantly growing city, Omaha has been compelled to remove verticality from its topography, and either into the valleys or into the Missouri river, whichever was most convenient. Nor has the process been finished. All about the town for months huge operations have been in progress. In some parts of the city a stranger might easily fancy that some such work as the Panama canal and the digging is under way. Steam shovels and railroad dump cars are in use, one firm



ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS THAT HAVE VANISHED.

grinds up the excavated clay and mixes it with water, sending the compound merrily down the sewer to the river, and elsewhere the old-fashioned plow and scraper and wagons are in service, but all are busy cutting away hills and filling up gullies and making changes in the landscape, that Omaha may be even more beautiful than it is.



ONE OF THE MOUNTAINS THAT HAVE VANISHED.

This large tract south of Williams street contains twenty acres of land that, from its appearance, gave the impression of being a part of the "Bad lands" of South Dakota transplanted to the heart of a great city. It was a bit of the wildest landscape to be found in an extensive search for sites in any direction from Omaha and was a land unto itself, peopled by a heterogeneous population of ducks, chickens, geese, goats and milk animals. Valleys were there in profusion, with brackish

streams, winding their tortuous ways from above the street line for many feet, rough and uncomprehending in appearance, and bluffs of unslightly clay reared their heads seemingly defiant of the hand of man in their destruction, which is now being rapidly accomplished. Crags, promontories and precipices abound in these "bad lands" of Omaha; everywhere the saffron hue of the landscape outlined against the pure color scheme of Nature and with only the most rank of vegetation to partially mitigate the hateful exposures of this peculiar section of the city's life.

In protected spots, where the sun's fierce rays in summer have been spent, some little grass plots attempt to eke out a precarious existence, but the greater part of the large tract was given to the dominion of the hardy sunflower, which flourishes in proportions surpassing the imagination. The miniature mountains and valleys of clay were covered with this variety of vegetation, which was sometimes gathered for use as fuel by the poor citizens of the neighborhood. Here was the free range of the hardy sunflower, which flourishes in proportions surpassing the imagination. The miniature mountains and valleys of clay were covered with this variety of vegetation, which was sometimes gathered for use as fuel by the poor citizens of the neighborhood. Here was the free range of the hardy sunflower, which flourishes in proportions surpassing the imagination. The miniature mountains and valleys of clay were covered with this variety of vegetation, which was sometimes gathered for use as fuel by the poor citizens of the neighborhood. Here was the free range of the hardy sunflower, which flourishes in proportions surpassing the imagination.

and their battles for possession rivaled those of human origin. Standing on the crest of one of the high bluffs in these "bad lands," a wide expanse of the surrounding country could be seen, but the large tract had long been an eyesore to the community at large and was shunned by all except in broad daylight and avoided even then.

The tract is typical of the growth of new cities and prodigious has been the waste for many years of land which could have brought in a comfortable income to its owner by the expenditure of money for which there was better use. The ramifications of modern civic life have made it necessary to conserve such tracts of wild land and improvements costing many thousands of dollars will be made. The gulches and valleys of the immense tract will be filled with the crags and mountains, which are ruthlessly eaten away by modern machinery. Ten grading gangs are now at work and the craves of the young bluffs have been given over to storage room for forage; the base ball grounds are used as sites for barns and outbuildings to house the horses of the grading gangs and machinery. The Vestive billy-goat and fowls have fringed away to quieter standing grounds and the march of progress is unhindered.

It is not only in the south part of the city that these conditions have prevailed. Out west and northwest much similar work has been performed that building lots might be provided. In the growing suburb of Dundee some of the heaviest grading ever accomplished hereabouts has just been finished that a new addition might be sold to home builders. But the demand for home sites has not occasioned all of this work. The business district of Omaha has been greatly modified in appearance in the course of its building up. All the old original hills have been lowered and hollows have been filled to the end that Omaha might be made more beautiful and the business district hereabouts just as they should have been for the accommodation of the city's great and growing commerce. In one of the illustrations is shown the work that is in progress for the preparation of a factory site, and in another the ground is being prepared for the location of a coal and lumber yard at a desirable place on a railroad track.

Such operations have been so common in Omaha for many years that they no longer excite special comment, but if the amount of grading that has been done in Omaha proper during the last few years had been extended on a new line of railroad somewhere it would have caused a newspaper comment. The variation of the program by the Union Pacific, which is dredging the Missouri to fill a large tract of low-lying bottom land, was a procedure sufficiently novel to attract attention for the moment but the grading away of an area similar in size has passed practically unnoticed. "Wildest Omaha" is disappearing.

# Omaha and Portland Linked in Inevitable Development of Commerce

**U**NCERTAINTY about western values, not only of land but of other properties, has caused many millions of our citizens to lose opportunities of wealth, and many of them to sacrifice property needlessly. Those who could least afford to lose have been among the first to suffer. Corporations have lost opportunities of acquiring valuable lines of railway. They have surrendered properties soon to become valuable. They have failed to build to meet the needs of the country, and have failed to make betterments in advance of needs. These evil results have been due largely to lack of a clear comprehension of the form and direction of past growth, and to lack of confidence as to future growth.

The location and amount of probable growth are intricate problems, but anything tending to systematic information regarding growth has value. It is worth to nearly every one some time and trouble to make a gain in correctness of valuating. Booms have arisen because the people have stumbled about in the dark, knowing that genuine growth was probable, but knowing little about its laws or probabilities. Corporations, as well as individuals, have been blind in their decisions. Great systems of railway failed to take hold of Union Pacific when it went begging—failed to stand by Northern Pacific when its stock was down to fifteen—surrendered a lease of Oregon River and Navigation company, and later built a competing line on the opposite bank of the Columbia river at double cost. In 1852 proposed and surveyed betterments of the Oregon River and Navigation company were postponed, being considered in advance of needs, and taken up in 1893, long after the needs had congested the road. Such cases are numerous, almost the rule. In past years a few, or possibly many hours of patient study of growth and reasons for it might have meant profit or saving of property to many of us. There are few of us in the middle or far west who have not many regrets to suppress.

A great stride or sons of wealth is creeping westward in the northern hemisphere. Occupation of advance may occasionally seem to occur, but even in the worst years its advance has been real and persistent. The \$7,000,000,000 of value of agricultural products of 1907 in the United States is merely an incident in the growing growth. Stock prices and prices cannot stop its advance.

This development began in northern Europe and England, spread to the Atlantic coast of North America and now has reached the Pacific coast. The continent narrow fertile areas in the temperate zone. In the north temperate zone the continents widen broadly in fertile areas in Europe, in America and in Asia. Far north climate prevents more than a bare existence. In the torrid zone climate is arid and compels continuous energy and thrift which result in surplus wealth. This surplus wealth is power, acting to extend still further westward the zone of wealth. This surplus wealth cannot be restrained from extending its activities westward, bringing land into producing condition, bringing rugged territory into transportation condition. Most of us merely look on, not realizing the great laws that are compelling the extension of the zone. We wish we had, ten or twenty years ago, seen ahead and bought for \$5 per acre land now worth \$100. We wish we had realized the great coming development of communities and demand for manufactured goods. Or we pride ourselves on our safe conservatism, taking pride in lieu of cash and not realizing that truthfulness is better than conservatism; that to miss what is good by holding a universal negative is as much a lack of ability as to have done what was unwise. The great fortunes are not all due to trusts. Most of them are due to foresight and persistence, rightly interpreting the laws of climate, soil and transportation, and the direction of this new combination.

Our first impression is that this movement affects only the commercial man—the speculator. This is not the case. Every individual in every community is affected, whether money owner or investor.

The professional man located within a growing and wealthy community may make a success for himself and family. If the community is not growing he may, with the same ability, fail. The wage earner finds greater opportunity of employment, larger and more continuous wages, better choice of work. Investors find their property of steadily increasing value. Their permanence of residence under good conditions is better assured. Their home associations, friendships social and standing improve from generation to generation. If they can, by a brief peering of the laws of growth, satisfy themselves that they are properly located instead of relying merely on a guess or a hope, uncertainty of mind is removed, better work results. Improvement for the long future for themselves and their children's children may be safely undertaken.

Communities are even more interested than individuals in a proper gauging of amount and direction of probable growth of their own and of related communities, owing to the larger and more permanent character of their betterment, and the impossibility of changing their location as an individual.

It is reasonable to assume that the greatest development of wealth, of comfort, of convenience, of improvements will occur near the central line of this temperate and wealth-accumulating zone. This has been true from Europe to Chicago. Omaha is situated centrally.

Also west and north of Omaha is a territory which may be termed the Great Omaha Quadrant. Its south line runs nearly north from Omaha. Its east line runs nearly north from Omaha. No other great city now exists in or near this quadrant able to wrest control from Omaha, or can now grow rapidly enough, or secure enough lines of railway, to overtake and displace Omaha. Near Omaha this quadrant is agricultural. Farther out it is cattle producing. Still farther out it is a great mining territory. But control of this quadrant is far from Omaha, or any other city in the west.

Another law, additional to those of climate, soil and transportation, will place Omaha in the lead of other cities. Commerce tends to divide itself into stretches of distance. This law has been mentioned by investigators. At the terminus of each stretch of distance is an active focus of commerce. No one city can control an land territory of a thousand or two of miles. Each focus controls its territory, but aids, not rivals, similar cities at the end of these stretches of distance. It is a mutually helpful organization, not a set of rivals. A series or string of these great central cities does exist near the central line of the zone of wealth, helping each other to greater growth. They are Hamburg, London, New York and Chicago. As far as the zone of wealth grows westward, another central city appears, destined to hold similar supremacy in the chain for its locality. There are other cities, ultimately subordinate to the great central cities, situated near the northern or southern boundaries of the zone of wealth, but they are subordinate. Their territory is too much one-sided. Part of it lies either in the frozen, nonaccumulating north, or the esurient nonaccumulating south. Hamburg, London, New York and Chicago are already established in supremacy. Each city has helped its neighbor on the east. Each city has been helped by its neighbor on the west. Omaha has helped Chicago, has been vital to Chicago's supremacy. It is of importance now for Omaha to know what its helper city on the west is to be, where situated and how Omaha and this city can join hands for mutual growth. What is to be the supreme commercial city of the Pacific coast? If that coast city lies far south, then Denver or Salt Lake City may be the city gaining supremacy west of Chicago. If the great coast city lies well northward, the chain of cities of this country having supremacy will be New York, Chicago, Omaha and the coast city. Every interest in Omaha lies toward aiding and working with a northerly Pacific coast city in preference to San Francisco, assisting that northerly city in getting facilities of railroads, branches, ocean and harbor facilities, just as it is the interest of that city to aid Omaha in getting river facilities.

The rivals for the supreme position on the Pacific coast appear at present to be San Francisco and Portland. In the northerly territory, Portland is now in advance of any city on Puget sound. The sound cities are walled off by a great mountain range, with no river-made gap giving low gradient communication with the great agricultural areas. The Northern Pacific large measure to the Pacific coast, invention is bringing water powers into larger service by improving and extending electrical transmission and lessening loss in transmission. The world is getting ready to dispense with much of its soot and its underground work, and to live and work more in sunlight and cleanliness. The regions where this is possible, owing to great amounts of water power, will dispel the great industrial centers now

pending on coal. The mining and use of coal will be considered one of the crude phases of the world's development in industries.

Two great ocean currents carry moisture landward. One is the Gulf Stream in the Atlantic, reaching the shores of Europe. No great mountain chain exists there to chill the air, gather moisture, and hold it at high elevations until it can be used for power. Such moisture as is gathered from the air passing over the Gulf stream, comes down at once to low levels as rain. On the North Pacific coast the Japan current brings still greater volumes of moisture. A great mountain chain reaches up and extracts water from the air, and holds it at mountainous elevations, the total fall of the water and consequent power being immense, even for a small distance north of Portland. Portland is many times that of all the coal in the greatest coal districts. The power will be usable without costs of mining and transporting. The usable part of this great water-extracting range of mountains reaches from southerly Oregon to an equal distance north of Portland. Portland is the only large city combining a central position in this power district with a great river for cheap transportation. The North Pacific water power area has no counterpart anywhere else on the globe. In Asia no such great moisture-bearing currents exist. As population in North America moves westward, this power-producing region will be nearer to consumption and market, better able to compete in manufactured articles. Japan and China have cheap labor. Japan has no coal of importance. China has cheap coal. Oregon and Washington have not merely cheap, but free power, can compete with and supersede both labor and coal. When the water powers are put to service, the North Pacific coast will manufacture for the far west of this country and for Asia, in spite of cheap Asiatic labor. One machine driven by water power will equal hundreds of Asiatics.

The proximity of this great power to the ocean and cheap ocean transportation is remarkable. In Europe and the eastern United States it is the close proximity of power in the form of coal to cheap transportation on ocean and lake that has made coal valuable in industries. On the Pacific coast the Cascade range has practically tilted the land west of it, and by its

sluice will pour its manufacturing products almost into the holds of the ocean vessels with trifling cost for land transportation. Every commercial city having supreme control, Hamburg, London, New York, Chicago, has cheap water carriage to its controlled territory, either by river, canals or ocean. Omaha and Portland are the only two great cities west of Chicago, situated centrally in the wealth zone, that have river facilities. Portland has a large river traffic by boats of light draft, many of them so shallow that they can run to shore and land passengers and freight at almost any point. Hamburg has an immense tonnage by river and canal over waters only two or three feet deep. Omaha has neglected its river traffic, not realizing how the Missouri river could be quickly utilized. Close patrolling, constant detection of changed channels and removal of snags, ready information to vessels, will give a good usable channel for light draft vessels in spite of an unstable river. If a deep water channel could be secured from Omaha to the gulf, heavy tonnage would leap itself via Panama to the Pacific coast, this being still essentially an east and west movement. It would strengthen Omaha's central position in the wealth zone and its supremacy, being in effect a moving up of New Orleans to the central west so far as the western ocean tonnage is concerned.

San Francisco and the sound cities are at the mercy of one or more lines of railway. Portland has not only better railway facilities, but cheap river transportation for heavy materials. On its rivers an indefinite number of competitors will always be possible. Rate laws have made impossible the cutting of railway rates to fill off water transportation. Water transportation features stability of rates, something even more important than cheapness of rates. River transportation, instead of injuring the railways, aids them. Their traffic is relieved of the heavy, least profitable tonnage. This heavy tonnage is like foreign, poisonous matter clogging the human system. Circulation is impeded. Every line of railway in a densely populated country, running along a river, finds its traffic not only ultimately increased, but made much more profitable by river transportation. Apart from the direct benefit to the railway by relief from cheap tonnage and congestion, water transportation

(Continued on Page Five)