

Rocky Mountain Husbandman.

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To EVERY rich placer mining country there necessarily comes a season of prosperity which cannot hold up—a flood of population, business, etc., which must, in course of a few years, fall away. Montana has seen that day. These mountains were once crowded with fortune hunters; business went with a rush, and money was plenty. A man thought no more of five dollars than he does of one, to-day. Year by year this state of things gradually died away. Our population has fallen off and business has gone down—down! But reaction in its time has set in; we have again begun to prosper. This time, our prosperity is a permanent one. The true value of our agricultural facilities has been demonstrated. Our vast pastoral privileges are becoming more and more appreciated, and our quartz interests are being developed; and we are marching on to a degree of prosperity from which there will be no decline.

That region of country along the line of the Union and Central Pacific railroads, have passed through a like ordeal. The building of the road was to them what our rich gulches were to Montana. But when the road was completed there was nothing to sustain the business, and then came a crisis—a season of dulness more terrible than that which existed prior to the commencement of the roads. But, at last this section has begun to prosper, again machine shops, coaleries, and stock-raising have conspired to create a lively trade, but it has required time to do it. Every one who has experienced one of these seasons of dulness which follows so close on the heels of one of these periods of unwarranted prosperity, must admit that it were far better if that rapid and unhealthy growth never existed, than that a people should have to endure its falling off again.

In discussing the subject of a railroad to Montana, we often hear the remark that it would make times brisk while it was being built, which would enable present owners to sell at big figures, but in a few years dirth of business, etc., must necessarily follow its completion. Now if this is the effect to be produced, it would be unwise to spend any money to bring about such a state of affairs. We don't want any more temporary greatness. We are prospering now. There is no better poor man's country in America, and it will only be a few years until emigrants attracted hither by our shipment of wool, beef and ores, will begin to track the plains between this and the States, by hundreds. This will bring railroads and all the kindred benefits of civilization. Now the question to be determined, is whether it is better to wait for the steady progress of events to bring us these things; whether we should wait for business demands to build a railroad, or whether we shall build one to make the business? This is a progressive age, and the latter course to a wide-awake go-ahead people, seems by far the most like business, yet the former is surest and usually attended with best results. We do not thirst for any season of prosperous times that will not be permanent. We are not here for a term of years, buoyed up by the hope of making a fortune out of some visionary enterprise, and depart to some sunnier clime. We are here to build a home—have cast our destiny with the Territory and expect to spend the remainder of our days here, and finally find a last resting place among her picturesque hills; and consequently are only in favor of such measures as may insure steady and permanent good.

The winter is proving unusually severe, both west and east. In western Nebraska, the plains are so covered by deep snow as to seriously threaten to reduce to starvation the vast herds of cattle that roam that region. Ordinarily, when snow falls there, it drifts and leaves large areas of nutritious dried grass bare; but now the snow has fallen evenly, and a crust has formed, and the grass is not available for grazing purposes. In the east there is a very serious water famine prevailing which retards manufacturing, and makes the getting of water for stock, and for ordinary domestic operations, a difficulty.—*Prairie Farmer.*

Here in Montana, we have had good weather the entire winter. Once the mercury went down as low as 18° below zero,

but it has not remained below zero for forty-eight hours at any one time the whole winter. Business has not been impeded in the least. The farmers have been threshing their grain and hauling it to market, getting out wood, fencing, etc., from the mountains without interruption. There have been no severe storms and but little snow. There are but few sections that have enjoyed the luxury of a good sleigh ride the whole winter. Our flocks and herds, both of horses and cattle, were never in finer condition. What little snow that has fallen in the valleys has been swept away by the wind, and stock have had feed without interruption, and our mutton and beef is rolling fat. Poor old dairy cows, which have seen hard usage all summer, are also in a thriving condition. And it is not at all probable that stock will suffer, or even have to make an extra exertion to obtain plenty of food during the month and a half of winter yet before us.

These facts may sound marvelous to our eastern friends, but they are true nevertheless. Let them come and examine for themselves, and if they are not delighted with the country, it will be because a genial, and healthy climate, and opportunities to establish a lucrative and prosperous business has no charms for them.

JAY GOULD, Oliver Ames, Sidney Dillon, and others have submitted a proposition to the Legislature of Montana to build a narrow gauge railroad from Franklin, Idaho, to a point as far north as the mouth of the Big Hole river in this Territory, a distance of 300 miles, for a subsidy of \$1,500,000 (or \$5,000 per mile), in Territorial bonds, bearing eight per cent. per annum, the road to be built at the rate of one hundred miles a year, and bonds to be issued for every twenty miles of road as soon as completed. We had anticipated a proposition from this source, but had hoped it would be more acceptable than this one. As we have previously intimated, we believe a large majority of the people of this Territory are rampant for a railroad, and will vote for almost any measure that promises one, however dangerous the experiment may be, hence we had hoped that some proposition would be submitted which would be fair and equitable, that subsidy, though a "bitter pill" to us, might have been rendered a little more palatable. But we must say we are sadly disappointed. The proposition is far from what we anticipated; not what the people expected; not what they desired, and not, in our opinion, such as they are prepared to accept—not such as they can, in justice to themselves, accept. In the first place, it is subsidizing a road fully five-sixths of which lies beyond the limits of our Territory, and from which the Territory could have no revenue, nor be profited in the least by the settling up and development of the country along the line of the road. Second, it is a narrow gauge, and the line of which it is to be an extension has proven to be a failure, not being able to contend with the snow upon the mountain ranges; and last but not least, \$5,000 per mile would be a large subsidy to give to a standard gauge main trunk line, even if every foot of the road lay within the boundary of our Territory, much less to make such an enormous gift to a branch line on the narrow gauge order, wholly inadequate for winter use in the region through which it is to be built, and for one too which reaches not further than fifty miles into the Territory. It has been estimated that a road of this description can be constructed and equipped for \$9,000 per mile. If this be true—and it seems to come from good authority—certainly the demand is unreasonable. We had hoped that they would do better.

Our Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction, Cornelius Hedges, advocates, in a recent communication to the *Helena Herald*, the passage by the Legislature of an act providing that no common school district shall be entitled to an apportionment of public money unless they have six months' school during each year, instead of three months as the law now stands. This is altogether premature, and would work a positive injury to our sparsely settled districts. We regret that a lack of space precludes our entering into the spirit of the question at length. But we trust there is too much good, hard sense existing in our legislature to entertain such a proposition for an instant,

and we hope the matter may not be brought before them at all. We are an ardent supporter of a thorough public school system, and shall be but too happy to do all in our power to advance the cause. We will hail with delight any amendment calculated to improve it, but certainly think the measure proposed is premature and unjust.

LEGISLATIVE.

HELENA, January 23, 1876.

Since my last there has been a lull in and about the Capital, which may be attributable to the absence of office-seekers, and the Legislature has turned into line, and instead of adjourning as was proposed by some prominent members last week, have assumed a business-like appearance. Instead of lounging around the bars, most of them have apparently decided upon a more economical plan by giving their elbows a rest and taking their home-like, soothing comfort from their favorite companion and solacer—the pipe.

Their deliberation in organizing may be taken as a criterion for their future work, which, if continued throughout the term, will be careful and characterized by prudence and economy.

Taking a glance at them while seated at their desks, one must admit that they possess an average of the intelligence of the country, and if guided in the future by the same coolness and caution which has been exhibited by their past actions, we may yet expect some good to come of their deliberations.

In the House the progress has been slow, save in the work of introducing bills. It would be useless to undertake to furnish a description of the bills, as they will doubtless be materially changed before they reach the Council. Up to this date none of the House bills have reached the Council.

In the Council, the progress has been better, eight or nine bills having been passed by that body and gone to the House for approval. Among these bills is one giving the Governor power to appoint a Commissioner of Deeds; also, a bill giving the County Commissioners the power to reject any or all bids for the care and maintenance of county sick; and also, a bill allowing interest on county warrants. A bill allowing swine to run at large during the winter season, has also passed the Council. An act compelling owners of water ditches and floods to keep them in repair, and prevent the waste of water which often damages roads, etc., was passed. A bill in regard to the election of county Assessors, making an Assessor ineligible for a second term, was also passed by this body, but will probably be killed in the House. Among the bills introduced, is a school law which is so voluminous that I cannot give even a synopsis. No railroad bills have yet made their appearance, except the bill giving counties adjoining Lewis and Clarke the right to vote whether or not they will aid in the construction of the Benton road. I learn that on Monday Mitchell will introduce a bill asking a subsidy for the building of a north and south narrow gauge railroad. The provisions of the bill require that the road shall be completed within three years, to the Big Hole river, the payments to be in seven per cent. bonds upon the completion of and supplying each twenty miles of the road with rolling stock, at \$3,500 per mile. The bill asking a subsidy to construct a wide gauge road from the head of navigation on the Yellowstone to the eastern boundary of Deer Lodge county, has not yet been drawn up, but will be out very soon. A bill consolidating the offices of Meagher county is favorably spoken of, and Mr. Brainard will doubtless get it through. A bill will be introduced next week to allow Gallatin county to vote \$15,000 for the building of a school-house in Bozeman. The bill to authorize the construction of a Territorial insane asylum will doubtless pass, but will be improved very materially before it becomes a law. Another one of the important bills to be introduced is one granting an exemption from tax for ten years to the first woolen mill which may be built in the Territory. The special provisions of the bill have not yet been made known. When the bill is printed I will give a more perfect account of it.

WILL

GENERAL NEWS.

A horrible ice gorge occurred on the Monongahela, at Pittsburg, on the 16th inst., causing great destruction to the dry docks, barges, etc.—It is reported from military headquarters that Gen. Miles had an engagement with Sitting Bull, Dec. 18, defeating him, capturing 60 head of ponies and some camp equipage.—A storm occurred in Memphis, Tenn., in which many thousand small snakes came down with the rain. Some of them were a foot long.—Five hundred Sioux warriors and their families, are said to be encamped at Wood Mountain.—The President recognizes the Packard government.—It is estimated that the damage done at Cincinnati by the recent break-up of ice and overflow of the river, will reach \$100,000.—A fearful snow storm occurred in New York on the 15th inst. Railroad were blockaded and trains delayed over forty-eight hours. In portions of the State the snow is said to be deeper than was ever known before.—Edinburg, Pa., had a fire on the 14th inst. Loss, \$65,000.—Rear Admiral Joseph Smith, the oldest officer in the U. S. Navy, died at Washington on the 17th inst.—The *World's* Washington special says the House has caused the arrest of Wells and Anderson, members of the Louisiana returning board.—The cashier of the Union Trust Co., New York, has discovered a forged check, \$64,000.—The hat manufactory of Orrin, Benedict & Co., New York, has suspended. Liabilities, \$150,000.—The Democrats have nominated Dan'l. Marcy for Governor of New Hampshire.—Gen. Diaz failed to effect a compromise with Iglesias. He attacked the forces of Iglesias on Guanojua, commanded by Antillon on the 3d inst., and Antillon was defeated; he surrendered his artillery and all material of war to Gen. Igueta at Martinez. Iglesias has asked to be allowed to retire to private life. Gen. Quirogo supported Lerdo until November 30th, then surrendered over 5,000 men and a large amount of war material, and retired to his rancho. He was afterwards arrested, tried and condemned to be shot on the 12th inst.

The Indians made a raid on the ranchmen near Chugwater station, Wyo., running off fifty head of horses.—Fred May has arrived in New York City, unhurt.—Alb. Sanders has been elected U. S. Senator from Nebraska.—The snow blockade at Poughkeepsie, N. Y., has been raised.—The Senate committee have completed the work at New Orleans.—James E. Bailey has been elected U. S. Senator from Tennessee, for the short term.—Geo. F. Horn has been elected U. S. Senator from Massachusetts.—A riot occurred at Carthage Mo. on the 15th inst. Two persons were badly wounded, and several horses killed.—The new canvass of the vote of Florida, ordered by the new Governor, resulted in 54 majority for Tilden.—An ice gorge, on the Potomac, broke on the 19th inst., doing immense damage to the shipping and warms at Washington.

A dispatch of the 20th inst., states that the electoral bill continues to challenge a great diversity of opinion in New York City. The *Herald* predicts its passage, and characterizes the opposing argument as weak. The *Tribune* protests. The *World* is rather serene. The *Sun* is ominously silent. The *Times* criticizes the bill for not more clearly defining the powers of the proposed commission; denounces as unconstitutional an attempt to go behind any lawful declaration of the electoral votes, and claims that supposed tribunals cannot be in partial judicial, for even the judges are chosen according to their supposed party sympathies, leaving much to chance in the selection of the fifth judge, whose decision must settle the whole case. The bill also gives this board the right to interpret the powers Congress, in cases where these powers are confessedly undetermined in the declaration or precedents of Congress itself, and that more extraordinary legislation has never fallen to our lot to examine. The respectable legislative body acting under a written constitution, or by a clear and necessary inference from that instrument, should be asked to clothe an arbitrary, accidental commission, with all the powers any possessed by itself in the premises, we believe, unheard of. We may add, it ought also to be intolerable. Nor can we see how the Supreme Court judges, if any proper conception of the dignity of office can consent to take part in such a sordid skelter method of stuffing a great public question. The conditions are called upon to act are fatal to any like judicial thoroughness which is essential to judicial impartiality.