



As local transportation facilities reach these various undeveloped fields, as the immense tracts of land are irrigated through government aid, is it too much to predict for Billings, the natural commercial center of this vast region, a future population of 50,000 souls? Many cities have grown larger with much fewer possibilities.

Already we have fourteen daily passenger trains. The Billings freight yards of the Northern Pacific

and Burlington railroads have the largest trackage of any city between St. Paul and Portland.

There are branch lines to Red Lodge, to Bridger and to Cody, Wyoming.

The Billings-Great Falls branch of the Burlington route has made final survey, and the prospects for an extension of the Bridger branch of the Northern Pacific railway to the Bear Creek coal fields and to the Cooke City mining district are good.



The wholesale business that has grown up in Billings was an inevitable result of these conditions. Already one jobbing house pays about \$50,000 in annual freights, while the others are handling goods in almost equal amounts. The same great area of consumers that has developed the wholesale trade of Billings makes the retail trade conditions equally effective, so that all classes of products, in increasing quantities, are constantly passing from producer or merchant to consumer.

Correspondingly the Billings markets are open to the products of these neighboring enterprises.

Nearly 15,000,000 pounds of wool pass through the immense warehouses of the two railroads every year, making this city the greatest primary wool market in the world. Six thousand head of horses were shipped from here during the year 1904. Cattle and sheep marketed here and at Yellowstone county points last year aggregate several hundred thousand head.

The large stock yards of the Northern Pacific and Burlington are often crowded to their full capacity by these heavy shipments, and not infrequently are they unable to furnish sufficient accommodations for all.



POSTOFFICE STATISTICS.

The postoffice at Billings ranks higher in importance among the postoffices in the state than the population of the city and the class of the office indicate. It is the headquarters of eleven postal clerks who are paid out of the revenues of the office. It is the distributing office for twenty fourth-class offices located on star routes, and is the headquarters of one of the best equipped and best maintained rural routes in the service. This route is twenty-six miles long and delivers mail daily to over 600 patrons living on farms in the Yellowstone valley. Because it is located at an important junction point and the terminal of several postal routes the Billings office handles over 30,000 transit registers annually. Butte, an office in the first class and with a splendid equipment, is the only office in the state handling more transit registers than Billings.

The following will indicate the amount of business transacted in the postoffice at Billings during the year ending December 31, 1904:

Postal receipts	\$ 15,183.65
Domestic money orders issued.....	88,696.03
Foreign money orders issued.....	8,070.52
Fees on money orders.....	703.52
Domestic money orders paid.....	56,966.58
Foreign money orders paid.....	477.60

Total volume of money order business.\$154,914.22

Articles received at window for registration...	4,449
Registered articles received for local distribution	4,860
Special delivery letters dispatched.....	325
Special delivery letters received for local delivery	536