

FORT BENTON RECORD

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IMMIGRATION.

The Territorial press have awakened to the necessity of providing suitable means for increasing the population of Montana. The "Independent" has taken heart at the spirit at present displayed in the different sections of the Territory, and suggests the propriety of establishing an Immigrant Bureau by the Territorial Legislature. The "Courier" also advocates the same, and in the course of an article on immigration says:

"The legislature, at its several sessions, has been importuned by the press of the Territory to provide means for the encouragement of immigration, but it has invariably adjourned without making any provisions in the premises. At the last session a delegation visited the Capital in the interest of this subject, but failed to induce the legislature to do anything. Had that Legislature performed its duty in this important matter, instead of wrangling over local issues, Montana would have caught several thousand of those emigrants that went to California and a majority settling down in the sage brush of Nevada and Utah. Besides getting her share of emigrants to other Territories. But a narrow short-sighted and mistaken view of economy restrained the members from expending a few thousand dollars, whereby hundreds of thousands would have been realized from it by the people in a short while."

That is a bad record for our former legislators to leave behind them. The economy of not appropriating a paltry sum for advancing the working interests, and preparing a way for the future development of our immense hidden wealth, is indeed short sighted, when through proper application the slightest result would in a short time have more than liquidated any expenditure that might have been made.

The prospects of the Territory would be materially advanced by the direct gain from the increase of population and the future of Montana investments would no longer be a matter of speculation, as they are to-day in the absence of capital and labor.

We trust that the coming session of the legislature will be marked by a substantial effort towards the recognition of the existing advantages and inducements of this Territory by all classes. A Bureau having for its object the direction of capital to our midst, and the speedy settlement of our immense agricultural fields, is what is needed, and we are confident that the representative of Choteau County will on his part endeavor to secure the establishment of a Territorial Immigrant Bureau.

TELEGRAPH.

It now appears that the telegraph line between Benton and Fort Shaw will not be repaired. We are unable to understand why it will not be, or why any distinction should be made in the matter between Benton and Helena. This is undoubtedly the case, for nearly all the insulators along this end of the line have been removed, to be used between Helena and Shaw.

The War Department, through the commander of this military division, entered into an agreement in writing with the Western Union Telegraph Company to keep the line between Helena and Benton in working order in return for certain considerations, among which was a special rate for Government telegrams. The line has been out of repair for a long time, owing to the depleted condition of the military companies at Shaw and at this place, and also owing to the improper distribution of troops during the summer months. Several companies have been strengthened by recruits, and part of the necessary work in progress is the repair of the telegraph line. But why should this very evident prejudice be entertained. Is the military force of Montana the property of any particular section or locality? It does seem as if the troops now in this Territory were stationed here for the sole purpose of strengthening sectional animosities, by the way in which some of their officers are catering to the wishes of a few residents of the Territory and ignoring the interests and necessities of entire settlements. Benton and

vicinity seems to be peculiarly unfortunate in exciting the prejudice of civil and military officials, but if there is any virtue in protest, we are determined that unjust discrimination against this community shall cease.

NAVIGATION.

Railroad seems to be the all absorbing topic with some of our leading journals at present. It is a very good theme and a very proper one, being so closely connected with the grand future of this Territory. But the desire to command lines of railroad seems for the moment to have shut out from thought the fact that nature has already provided a means of transportation, an avenue which will wear with any of the proposed railroads, and remain in use as long as it is practicable to float a craft upon its waters, and which at present requires the attention of the well-wishers of Territorial progress. The improvement of the Upper Missouri will prove of immense importance to the people of Montana. A regular season for the shipment of freight will be a boon to the merchants of this Territory. The strongest possibility exists that an appropriation will be granted, sufficient to cover all the necessary expenses attending the project. The result of this season's freighting, the very fact of a heavily laden steamer arriving and landing her cargo at a point on the river only distant two-hundred miles below Benton, during the lowest stage of water, towards the end of the month of October, should be an incentive to push the question of river improvement to immediate issue. It certainly will be a favorable point to advance, and one which will be instantly recognized, at the proper quarter, as a promising inducement towards completing a work which has always been favorably considered by the United States Engineers. The matter can be settled this winter, for, as we understand, the Engineers' office at Washington is already in possession of all the necessary information concerning the obstacles to be encountered and the difficulties in the way of free navigation that require removal, so that a formal official survey of the required improvements on the Upper Missouri can be avoided. In that event, the only thing necessary is an appropriation from Congress. We are assured that Delegate Maginnis will make every effort to obtain

the appropriation, and that he will be aided by the leading merchants of Montana in this laudable undertaking. It is time, then, that the leading journals of the Territory were engaged on this subject. We are close on to the meeting of Congress and the project in question is one of general importance, the successful result of which will be a noticeable and immediate gain in Montana markets.

YELLOWSTONE.

The Bozeman "Courier" again takes us to task for our remarks concerning the projected opening of the Yellowstone river, and in a long editorial on the subject propounds a few questions to which we here make answer. So far as the reports of distinguished officers are concerned, we care not whether they are true, false, or imaginative. No doubt those officials enjoyed themselves greatly during their trip up the river, and in return could hardly do less than say something to please the Bozeman people. This was all right and proper, but our neighbors of Eastern Montana should not have been silly enough to accept the reports as unquestionable evidence of the navigability of a river that, except during an unusual freshet, will hardly float a peanut shell. We clip the following from Gen. Forsyth's report:

"I feel justified in saying that for three months of each year the Yellowstone is navigable from its mouth to the mouth of the Big Horn, and if reports are true, it is much better than the Upper Missouri for the same period."

Now instead of this justifiable report on reliable information of some interested steamboat clerk or pilot, had Gen. Forsyth expressed himself in plain words, he would have said, "In return for hospitalities extended to me on my excursion up the Yellowstone, it is expected that I shall make favorable mention of the practicability of navigating the Yellowstone River within safe transporting distance from Bozeman. This I cannot conscientiously do, but I feel justified from my own observation and from information received from the crew of the Josephine, in stating that the Yellowstone is navigable for about three months of each year from its mouth to, say the mouth of Big Horn, a distance of several hundred miles from Pompey's Pillar, which itself is distant from Bozeman over two hundred miles, and, further, as I am reliably informed by a roustabout on the steamer Josephine, it is as good as the Upper Missouri for the above mentioned period." That is the plain, matter of fact understanding to be derived from the accomplished

gentleman's report. Our cotem. asks us if we think Gen. Forsyth would lie without a purpose. No, we do not think the Gen. would deceive anybody without a purpose.

"Does the RECORD claim that it would be more to the interests of the business men of Eastern and Southern Montana to pay two or three cents more per pound for their freight and have it delayed several weeks on account of its round-about transit, just for the sake of shipping by way of Benton."

We ask nothing for Benton that is in conflict with the interests of the business men of Montana. Our rates are open, and if lower rates can be found, or more rapid transit accomplished on other routes, we see nothing to prevent the merchants of Montana from trying them. They have already experimented in that respect and the result is that the Benton route this season commanded nearly the entire freight business of the Territory. It is impossible for us to argue against mythical rates. The Yellowstone rate is a myth; the Benton rate is clearly defined, a matter of dollars and cents in the pockets of the merchants who have practically tested its relative value with other routes. We know the distance from Benton to Bozeman, we would have to wait at least a year even if the Yellowstone navigation Company were a reality, before we could fine out the point at which freight could be laden on the Yellowstone River. We are confident that at any season of the year it will be above the mouth of the Big Horn, and how far below that it would be practical to land freight we are unable to determine, of course, until the "Courier" imaginary navigation company determines it for us by practical illustration.

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