

THE RIVER PRESS.

Vol. I.

Fort Benton, Montana, Wednesday, April 13 1881.

No. 25.

THE RIVER PRESS.

WILLIAMS, WRIGHT & STEVENS,
PUBLISHERS AND PROPRIETORS.
H. C. WILLIAMS, EDITOR.

The Senate has before it a dismal future. Collector Merritt has a petition signed by New York merchants for his retention which has reached the length of 55 feet.

The Indiana House on Friday passed a joint resolution by a vote of 62 to 24, amending constitution so as to give women the right to vote at all State elections.

The Cambridge and Oxford boat race, over the usual course from Putney to Mort Lake, was won by Oxford by four lengths, in 21 minutes and 51 seconds. It was the most hotly contested race known for years, the difference between them not amounting to more than 5 seconds.

The Canadian Pacific syndicate will commence work at an early date. They have already purchased 500,000 feet of lumber at Minneapolis, and will shortly engage one thousand horses and drivers to proceed to the northwest. A large number of navvies from Europe will, it is expected, arrive out very shortly.

The April elections in various parts of the country show varying results, and seem in a great measure devoid of partisan significance, owing to the extent which local issues have usurped the party influence. St. Louis shows heavy Republican gains, but the result, looked at from a party standpoint, has only a nominal significance.

It has just been discovered that the new charter for Deadwood, D. T., makes the city thirty-two miles in length in one direction, but excludes the most populous portion of the town. The legislature didn't "get the Deadwood" on the boys, for once. By the way, Montana has a "municipal corporation act" she would sell "dirt cheap."—*Avant Courier*.

From what we can gather from the agents in Benton relative to the effect of the gorge and flood on the upper river boats, the damage sustained by most of them is not so great as was first reported, consisting mainly of slight injuries which can be repaired in a few days. They are not so great as to seriously effect transportation interests, and at most will only cause a delay of a few days.

A SENATE which has withstood every public interest, and neglected every public duty, which tired out the patience of fifty millions of people who are quiet sufferers by its existence; a body which labored strenuously for several weeks to do nothing, and has done it, was at last compelled to give in, tired to death, and energy exhausted. John A. Logan has been making a speech.

TELEGRAPHIC dispatches indicate that the Nihilists are tired of war, or have become satisfied by concession and a change of policy, having offered to lay down arms, in consideration of amnesty. Should this prove correct, it will indicate that the thing was more of the nature of a cabal for court intrigue than social revolution. The name of the present czar has been frequently mentioned in connection with Nihilist plots—and it has even been hinted that he was a prime mover in them.

THE NEW YORK TIMES, one of Conkling's numerous organs, advises Garfield to acknowledge he has made a blunder. In the face of the almost unanimous support which the country at large has expressed for the President, this advice savors somewhat of being interested, and should the President follow it he will make a blunder which will bury him as deep as James Buchanan, and from which he can never recover. If Conkling should ally himself with the Democratic party, in order to defeat the confirmation of Robertson, he should certainly be allowed to do so. He would gain his point and lose every particle of his influence. The Senate is a body that the American polity would be better off without, and if it is to remain what it is and has been for the last 40 years, the sooner it is destroyed the better. It has gradually usurped all the functions of government, and has become a mere oligarchy on which the people have no influence.

Poor Scio, for so many centuries the field Ionic portico, and the scene of Phrygian plunder; one of the connecting links between a past buried up in old Egypt and born anew in the later Greek, whose glory was always allied with misfortune even in her best, as if to fulfill the doctrines of ultimate compensation,—poor Scio has again been stricken. Her last misfortune was to incur Turkish hatred for her affiliation with the war of 1822, when the island was ravaged and 85,000 people massacred or sold into slavery, and now, as if not satisfied with relentless

destruction by human hands, nature has conspired to finish what was left. A terrible earthquake has shaken and destroyed the towns of the island and buried vast numbers of people in the ruins, the number killed being variously estimated as high as fifty thousand. This figure is obviously too high, but at best the picture is a sad one. Its wine, oil and mastic have been sung for ages, and still form the principal industries of the island.

THE NEW YORK Chamber of Commerce, through its special committee, gives Stanford's railroad letter a rough overhauling, going over all the grounds raised by those who are opposed to the great influence of these corporations. The report is too long for publication in full in this issue, but the following paragraph shows the nature of the railroad issue: "In response to the plea that railroads should be left alone to manage their business in their own way, and to decide what is a reasonable charge for services rendered, the committee quote from Congressman Daggett's speech that all the money ever invested by the stockholders toward constructing the Central Pacific was \$12,500, and that the officially reported value of the road in 1877 over liabilities was \$186,556,008, represented in part by \$54,000,000 of watered stock of the Central Pacific and \$36,000,000 of Southern Pacific, being an aggregate of \$90,000,000 in stock, which cost them only the price of printing, and upon which they are compelling the public to pay them eighteen per cent. yearly in dividends. The Southern Pacific has been constructed and paid for from the earnings of the Central Pacific, yet the owners issue \$50,000 in stock and \$40,000 in bonds per mile and charge such rates as will enable them to collect annually eight per cent, on the stock and six per cent. on the bonds."

We present on another page a brief history of the Northern Pacific road, and the routes now projected or held in view. Among them the following are held the most favorable by the management:

First—Up Shields river and Cottonwood creek, across to the head of Sixteen Mile creek, down that stream to the Mission, thence by way of Helena to the mouth of the Little Blackfoot.

Second—Up the Yellowstone, across to Bozeman, down the Gallatin valley to the Three Forks, thence by way of Helena to the mouth of the Little Blackfoot.

Third—Same as second route to the Three Forks, thence up the Jefferson and south fork of Boulder across to the head of Dry Cottonwood creek, down the latter named creek to Deer Lodge valley and on to the end of the division.

Fourth—To Three Forks as before, up Jefferson, across Pipestone pass and down Deer Lodge valley.

Fifth—To Three Forks as before, up Jefferson, across Deer Lodge pass and down Deer Lodge valley.

The Cadotte pass has also been mentioned but for obvious reasons will not probably enter into the calculations.

Of these passes all but the Deer Lodge are liable to the objection of a tunnel near to the summits, and leaving that pass out, the question resolves itself into which of the other passes have the lowest altitudes and most approachable summits.

The most northerly routes are the best, other things being equal, and the country traversed is better and more open. What the "obvious" reason may be that Cadotte pass will not enter into the calculations of the management we do not know, and perhaps is not yet determined. We have heard it objected that the Cadotte pass was impracticable because a road would, coming from Miles City by way of Smith river, descend two or three thousand feet as it reached the Missouri, and then climb to the same altitude in a distance comparatively short, and that the Eastern approach to the mountains was so sudden that a long tunnel would be necessary in order to make the levels.

There are some good grounds for this objection, although precisely the same objection exists with every other route designated above, with the exception of the fifth, by way of the Deer Lodge pass; and the amount of tunneling that would be required would be nearly equal in all four cases, and we do not think would be any more in the more Northern route by way of Cadotte's pass.

The Eastern approach to the Cadotte pass along the top of the divide that separates the Dearborn from the South Fork of Sun River, is by a slow and easy grade, that will carry one nearly to the summit, and there is no obstacle to speak of in the whole route except the tunnel, and that obstacle would be encountered if any of the routes by Helena are chosen, or the Pipestone, or the Boulder. The Cadotte pass has not been so thoroughly explored as the others have, and the difficulties of that pass seem to have been somewhat exaggerated. There are several "passes" in the region of the Dearborn and Sun River, which those using them report equal to any except the Deer Lodge pass, and we feel confident that a thorough survey

would disclose that this route as is practicable as any, in so far as engineering difficulties are concerned, and considerably shorter, and having a richer country on its line.

The question really lies between the comparative ease of the Deer Lodge pass and the comparative shortness of the direct routes across the mountains, in which, it appears to us, the latter, unless totally unpracticable from the cost of construction, should influence the company. In four years there will be at least five trans-continental lines in competition for the Asiatic and Pacific trade, and in this competition a very few miles will add the deciding weight of relative cheapness, and the question of shortening lines is one that no railroad of the magnitude of the Northern Pacific can ignore. So patent has this fact become that the Union and Central Pacific are spending millions in the work of shortening and straightening, and it is so obviously in the interest of economy and business prudence that this should be done at the commencement, that we may expect to see all the routes, including the Cadotte pass route, thoroughly and comparatively examined.

Anyway it appears that Benton is to have an extension of this road, and, as we have stated before in these columns, the advantage of having a connection with the head of navigation amounts to a necessity which affects not only this road, but every other that enters the Territory.

The project to consolidate the two hotel enterprises into one has about been completed, and as soon as a proper location can be selected the work of building will be begun. This is a most desirable consummation, and one that indicates a closer spirit of harmony and unity among our principal business men than has before been exhibited, and one that augurs well for the future of the town and its business growth. We have five houses here, each of them a power in itself, and which by themselves have accomplished wonders. But unfortunately there has not existed that unity of action that would have produced the best results, and improvement has proceeded in a disjointed and jealous manner. But this policy of separate extension had really grown so serious that it was unmanageable, and there was danger that things of general necessity would either be overdone or left undone, through sheer impossibility of supporting dual enterprises requiring great capital to inaugurate. We are glad to see this new spirit taking root, and believe that in the limited compass of this town, or any that it is likely to assume for many years to come, whatever of public enterprise or private thrift that may be exhibited by one will benefit the whole to a nearly equal degree. Mr. William H. Todd has been a zealous co-worker in the project to consolidate this double enterprise into one magnificent scheme, and he deserves every praise for the public spirit and business tact he has displayed in aiding so materially to bring about this result—a result that not only will make of this enterprise a paying investment, but open the way for a close union of interests that really are identical, and cannot much longer be kept separate without either utter stagnation, or a feverish excitement and ruinous competition fully as destructive to the solid and enduring interests of Benton.

PURELY PERSONAL.

—Jno. Leply left on a visit to his ranch on Friday last.

—Joshua Nathan, of New Orleans, came in from Assinaboin on Saturday and is stopping at the Overland.

—Col. W. W. DeLacey is in town, stopping at the Chateau house. He is going to the Barker on a surveying expedition.

—Jos. Ellis, of Arrow creek, is in town, and rumor has it that his purpose here is even to sever his connection with bachelorhood.

—Paul A. Leach arrived on Sunday from Butte, where he had been employed on the *Index*. He comes to Benton to assume a position on the *Record* as foreman.

—Geo. Warren and Joe Watts, owners of the Oxide mine, arrived from the Barker district Monday. They report weather fine and only one foot of snow in the camp.

—Mr. Steeven Spitzler, mine host of the Assinaboin restaurant, made us a pleasant call Tuesday. Mr. S. will take in city life for a week before returning to the monarchy.

—D. Wells came in on Friday's coach from Wickes. He intends purchasing a piece of property and building a residence. His family, at present, are living in Michigan.

—Paris Gibson and Jas. Matkin paid a visit to the ranch of Mr. Gibson on Thursday last and both have returned therefrom, confirming the general report of a luxuriant growth of grass and improving condition of stock.

—Mr. Crooks, a gentleman who came in from Barker sometime ago, and was immediately afterward taken sick with inflammation of the lungs, died on Sunday at the Centennial Hotel. The disease changed into an abscess on the lungs, from which a great

quantity of mucous matter was drawn with the aspirator, and the man lingered along for several weeks until he was finally released by death. He did not suffer much after the inflammatory stage had passed away, as the parts affected seemed dead to all sensation, in fact they were dead, and the gangrene was in a part too vital to admit of a recovery.

ASSINABOIN.

The Finest Post in the Entire West, Under Command of Col. Black.

Fort Assinaboin, as seen by a traveler going from Benton, first comes in sight about six miles distant, not in full view, but only the towers and the flag that waves over the post. Soon even these are lost sight of as we proceed along the bottom lands, and five miles are passed before it is seen again. Suddenly, as we ascend upon a gentle rise of ground, the entire scene bursts upon us without warning, and in its perspective presents an air of grandeur from its startling contrast with anything we see in the far west. Its magnitude, really conspicuous, makes upon an unprepared mind a threefold impression, which is only in a small degree lessened as we approach closer.

The post, as laid off, is an oblong, a little over a half a mile long and perhaps one-third as wide. The massive buildings with the high and ornamented towers add a feature that lends a peculiar charm to the whole. Within this parallelogram are all the quarters, each facing inward toward the parade ground, to be separated from it by neat picket fences next the buildings, and a row of trees, leaving between them a pleasant roadway.

The road enters at the sutler's store, with the company quarters on the left; on the right are the officers' quarters, and they each take up an entire side of the parallelogram. The hospital is at the end, and the whole presents a handsome appearance from the beauty and regularity of the architecture and the perfect neatness displayed everywhere.

The post is under the command of Col. Black, a splendid soldier and agreeable gentleman and one who has spent thirty-eight years in the service of the government. He is well liked by the command.

Col. W. H. Brown is second in command, but he has recently been promoted and will leave in a short time for Texas, where he has been assigned to the command of an important post. Colonel Brown has a splendid war record, is an accomplished and a very agreeable gentleman, and we dislike to see an officer of his calibre and worth taken from this department.

We also had the pleasure of meeting Gen. James S. Brislin, who will be remembered as commanding Fort Ellis so long. The General has probably done more than any other military man in directing the attention of Eastern people to the natural resources of Minnesota, Dakota and Montana. Being a fluent, forcible and graceful writer, his articles at once attract and interest the masses of the East. He is now writing a series of letters on our resources for the *New York Herald*, which will appear in that journal at an early day.

Lieut. R. F. Bates is post adjutant, signal and acting ordnance officer.

Lieut. George S. Hoyt is the quartermaster and post treasurer, and is evidently the right man in the right place. He has reduced the immense business under his supervision to a science, and appears to be thoroughly familiar with even the minutest detail of his office. He is social and pleasant to all, and decidedly the most popular officer at the post, which is certainly a high compliment to him.

Some idea of the magnitude of the post may be had from the following dimensions, obtained through the courtesy of Capt. Hoyt:

On the right of the parade ground, and nearly in the center of the garrison, are the quarters of the commandant and two field officers—a group of three really handsome houses, each the exact counterpart of the other. They are 41x36 feet with a wing 17x23, with a one-story brick wall, capped by a mansard roof, and a nice wide veranda embellishing the whole. The interior is well-planned, leaving a wide, roomy, stairway and large, pleasant, well-lighted and thoroughly ventilated apartments, replete with modern improvements.

On either side of the above are arranged five double houses, built in the same style of architecture as those already mentioned, with the exception of being built for two families. They are necessarily much larger, being 49x34-6 with a wing 35x34-6, making large and comfortable quarters for company officers.

There are also two large and magnificent blocks, one at either end of the officer's row. These blocks are each 150x36 feet, with three wings extending directly back, each addition being 29-6x34-8. These buildings are two-stories, with flat tin roofs, and are each designed for six company officers. They are surmounted by ornamented towers and present a strikingly handsome appearance.

The barracks, number 5, each being 208½x

25, two stories high and are embellished by a nice wide veranda the entire length of the building. In each one of the buildings are quartered two companies with ample room. The first floor is used for a camp, offices, dining rooms, kitchens and store-rooms. The rooms have good, high ceilings, are well lighted, thoroughly ventilated and are kept scrupulously clean and nice.

The hospital is a magnificent structure, being 141x37, two stories high, with kitchen and dining room in the rear, with two rooms 46x24, 1½ stories high. A very handsome veranda around the entire building gives it a unique appearance.

Headquarters is situated almost directly opposite the commanding officer's residence, and is 48x26-6, two stories high, with veranda across the entire building; and is a good, substantial structure.

The guard house, an essential and necessary structure at all posts, is located close to the sutler store and is very handy to run the boys in when they become belligerent.

Almost directly in the rear of the officers' rooms are two buildings, 90x30 feet each, in which the laundresses are located. These quarters are entirely too small, and others should be erected with more room and greater conveniences.

The telegraph office is immediately in the rear of the headquarters, and is 30x17 with two rooms. Here the urbane Wheaton presides at all times. But a short distance from this office is the magazine, 18x15 and one story high.

The quartermaster's store-house is perhaps 100 yards in the rear of the barracks, is 200 x25 in width, and is divided into offices, clothing rooms and a general storehouse.

The commissary storehouse is 200x25 feet in length, with an office, issuing or sales-room and two storerooms; under this is a cellar 50x23. This building is under the immediate supervision of Sergeant Smith, an able, fully competent and agreeable gentleman. There is also another large storeroom with basement, used jointly by the commissary and quartermaster departments.

There are also four large one-story stables, 180x30, with stabling capacity for 300 animals; two of these are used by the cavalry and the other two by the quartermaster. There is also an immense grainery 200x25 with a capacity of holding one million bushels of oats.

The quartermaster has a blacksmith, carpenter, wheelwright and saddler shop, in which he employs citizens entirely. The shops are all pleasantly situated, good large rooms, well lighted and ventilated.

There is also a splendid root cellar, 100x20, 7-foot deep and covered with 1½ foot of earth; although they have had an unusually hard winter, we were informed they had not lost anything by frost.

The buildings throughout are splendid structures, replete with every convenience, and those who were in charge of its construction cannot be complimented too highly on the efficient and able manner in which they discharged their duty.

C. A. Broadwater & Co. are the post sutlers, and carry a large and well assorted stock of merchandise. They have a splendid storeroom, two very large warehouses, an officers' club-room and a large saloon. They of course do a magnificent business. The business is under the supervision of Mr. McCulloch, a thorough business man and a pleasant gentleman, who is ably assisted by Mr. Dodd, Doc Letellier, Sam. Herron, Olie Oleson, and last, but by no means least, Kidd McCauley, all wholesome, pleasant and industrious gentlemen, to whom the writer is under obligations for many acts of courtesy while visiting the post.

A Moorish Coffee Stand.

Leaving the market-place, we passed through a crumbling old archway into a shady lane shut in by high walls. Here a Moorish coffee stand was established in a shanty run up against the inside of the arch, and benches were placed along the walls of the lane for customers. It was an amusing study to watch the keeper of that coffee stand at work preparing the cup of coffee ordered for me by Simon. He was a little gray wrinkled man with bent figure, clad in a complete suit of flame-color, which gave him a semi-diabolical aspect to eyes familiar with the opera make-up of Goethe's Mephistopheles. His oddly-shaped kettle, too, placed on a very small stove level with his chin, had something alchemical about it. Seen in the gloom of the shanty, the fancy easily transmuted it from a kettle into an alembic for the distillation of uncanny liquors; and the patient, keenly watchful face of the old Moor as he ground the portion of coffee for the cup and fanned the flame under this alembical kettle, would have made a very fair model for a Paracelsus. Men might come and men might go in the quiet lane passing from the dust and strife of the market, but this true artist went on intently grinding the berries and fanning the fire as if his earthly horizon had been bounded by the wall of his rickety workshop, and the whole duty of man had been the brewing of good coffee.