

Rocky Mountain Husbandman.

R. N. SUTHERLIN, Editor.

THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1877.

LAST week's dailies brought us exciting news from the Yellowstone. Five hundred Sioux warriors were reported to be advancing upon the Crow Agency, and fears were entertained that they would attack the settlements.

This is but a repetition of the old story familiar to us all. Every spring since the settlement of the country, there have been more or less alarming reports about Indians attacking our frontier. This time it is much earlier in the season than usual, and the number of the hostiles is far more formidable than has been reported heretofore. Like former alarms, it is perhaps greatly exaggerated, but the evil effect upon the country will be none the less serious. It gives great uneasiness to men who have families. Women and children are frightened almost out of their wits, and although the enemy may never come, this living in constant dread is, to say the least of it, very unpleasant, and causes our settlers to involuntarily cry out, "How long, oh! how long must this state of things exist?"

We have heard of promise after promise being made by the Government to the effect that the much-vexed Indian question would be settled at once. We were told that last summer would end it, but the campaign closed, leaving the Indians victorious. Then it was asserted that the proper time to capture the Sioux was in winter, and that a winter campaign would bring them to terms. But spring has now come, and the wild, undaunted savage is still supreme monarch of his realm, and his war-whoop is still the terror of the pioneer.

One account has it that they are in a half-starved and destitute condition. So much the worse for the people of Montana if this is true, for, with plenty of horses, ammunition and supplies, they are likely to remain on their own hunting ground, but if destitute, a raid upon the settlements may be expected at any time. We have been told so often that they were to be brought to terms, and that in another year the immigrant could travel with his wife and little ones in perfect safety from the States to Montana, directly through the Indian country, and have been enabled to see so little to indicate a state of affairs of this character that we are beginning to have serious doubts that the Government will ever accomplish this until there is an entire change of policy.

NO INDUSTRY has been more neglected in Montana than fruit-growing. There has ever been a feverish and unsettled feeling pervading the minds of the farmers. Their homes being so isolated from the rest of the world, that but few have calculated to remain long, and have therefore made no attempt to provide these conveniences and luxuries that go so far toward making home happy. There is not a better small fruit country anywhere than Montana. A great variety of berries grow wild everywhere along our mountain slopes, and there is no good reason why every farmer should not grow fruit in great abundance. It matters not whether he come here to make a temporary home or for life. It is a duty every tiller of the soil owes to the country, to his children, to plant out a fruit garden. Gooseberries, raspberries and currants will bear the second year after being set out, if properly cared for. The cost of obtaining a start in such fruit is merely nominal. Roots and cuttings can be sent through the mails at a small cost, and those who have experimented with bushes and trees shipped in this manner pronounce it perfectly safe. The small sum of \$25 expended this spring for fruit trees and bushes, would enable anyone to plant out a nice little orchard, and next summer the farmer could begin to get a return for his labor. On the Bitter Root valley nearly every farmer is getting a start of fruit, and Mr. Bass' orchards would do credit to any country. The chief reason why Bitter Root is so far ahead of our other valleys is that this particular valley is so far from the mines that their products have only brought a small price, and they have been forced to live as much as possible on their own products. If the people in our other valleys would learn this, and set to work to grow such fruit as is adapted to our climate,

they would not only live cheaper, but better. Montana grown fruit cannot be excelled in flavor, and every housewife may easily put up enough to abundantly supply the culinary department the entire year. There are several responsible firms advertising in our columns who are prepared to furnish customers with hardy varieties, suitable for this climate, and we hope there will be no further delay in making a beginning. Money and labor cannot be more profitably expended. Fine horses, fine cattle, fine barns and fine dwellings are all very nice, but a good orchard of small fruits insures a table well supplied with luxuries, which is better than all. Do not wait another year, but commence to make preparations without delay.

THERE is apparently a very wide difference of opinion among the different papers of the Territory as to the time fixed for the completion of the Northern Pacific railroad. In verification of its statements, the *Independent* publishes the act of Congress extending the time, which is as follows:

Be it resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That section eight of an Act entitled "An act granting lands to aid in the construction of a railroad and telegraph line from Lake Superior to Puget Sound, on the Pacific coast," is hereby amended to read as follows:

That each and every grant, right, and privilege herein are so made and given to, and accepted by said North Pacific Railroad Company, to and upon the following conditions, namely: That the said company shall commence the work on said road within two years from and after the second day of July, 1868, and shall complete the whole road by the fourth day of July, Anno Domini, 1877.

Approved July, 1st, 1868.

Thus it would seem that after all the Northern Pacific will lose their immense land grant unless their time is extended between this and July 4th, which is not at all probable.

We have looked with great anxiety to this road, but it now appears that it must stop in the midst of a vast unsettled waste. Could the road have reached the settlements of Montana, the increase of business, etc., would have enabled it to make way, slowly but surely, to the Pacific. But it would be idle to hope to see it revive and cross the vast plains between Bismarck and the frontier of Montana without Government aid.

THERE are some who are short-sighted enough to regard the grasshopper plague as a blessing in disguise to the Montana farmer. Nothing could be more erroneous than this conclusion. It would be far better to sell a large amount at a fair profit, than a small quantity at a large one. When the tiller of the soil gets an abundant return for his labor he is cheerful, his teams are fat and strong, and capable of doing good work; his table is well-supplied; he grows his own pork, keeps a good stock of fowls, and has eggs and chickens in abundance. On the other hand, when the grasshoppers demolish his crops, and he raises only a few bushels instead of hundreds, his teams must subsist, for the most part on hay and grass. His hogs are killed before they are fat to save feed; his poultry are half fed and become unprofitable; his table is poorly supplied and his brow is shaded with care. What matters it if the few bushels raised bring a fabulous sum, it is barely enough to keep the wolf from the door. Occasionally there is one who escapes the calamity and does well, but for the general prosperity of the country, it would be far better if farmers could raise good crops every season.

Agent Mitchell, of Ft. Peck, reports that there need be no apprehensions in driving stock to Bismarck the coming summer, if the proper route be selected. He says that drovers should keep on the north side of the Missouri all the way. This certainly will be good news to our stock men, as it will open an avenue to market that will not only be cheaper, but much shorter than any other route. It is estimated that the distance from Helena to Bismarck is about 800 miles. At Bismarck stock can be shipped to eastern cities much cheaper than from Corinne, and we do not doubt that many hundred head will be driven over this route the ensuing summer, as there are vast number of beef cattle in the Territory, while the demand is very small and prices very low. It must also be a good and safe route for immigrants from the northern States to take to reach Montana.—*Independent*.

We have always looked upon this route as a practicable one for our stock-men. The feed is good, and the country easy to drive over. The only trouble likely to be experi-

enced, except from Indians, is the frequent large herds of buffalo which often throng this region, yet this would not deter its general adoption if the Indian question was settled in a manner that would guarantee safety to life and property. But we want greater assurance than the bare assertion of the agent at Ft. Peck. He may be perfectly reliable, but we have no assurance that the road, if open and free from hostile Indians now, would be so a month hence, and stockmen cannot afford to take such chances.

Neither will the immigrant peril the life of his wife and little ones until the Indian troubles are more definitely settled. But there is no question but this would prove a valuable route if the general Government offered the required protection.

MR. J. V. BOGERT, the spicy correspondent of the *New North-West*, and former editor of the *Bozeman Times*, has assumed editorial charge of the *Avant Courier*.

THE Minnesota Senate has just passed a bill appropriating \$100,000 for the destruction of grasshopper eggs. The Legislature of Montana refused to provide sufficiently for the protection of the feathered tribe, the natural enemy of the locust.

If you want a good family journal replete with agricultural, live-stock, and choice household reading, subscribe for the *Rocky Mountain Husbandman*.

MR. EDITOR: The Helena Congress, at its late session, passed an act to aid in the construction of a railroad, and voted \$1,700,000 worth of bonds to build it, and ask the dear people to ratify their action on the 10th day of April, provided our very liberal offer is accepted, which undoubtedly will be the case, for there is a chance for a magnificent steal in it.

Now, had we not better look before we leap? Some one that is good in figures take a pencil and reckon up the problem. We will say there is a population of 20,000 in Montana, one-third of whom are taxpayers, (which is a safe estimate, as a good share of our transient population are never in one place long enough to pay any taxes), and there are 7,000 taxpayers—mostly farmers.

The road is to be built in three years from next July. Allowing one hundred miles to be built per year, how many mills on the dollar will our taxes have to be increased the first year to pay the interest on \$500,000 worth of bonds at 7 3-10 per cent. per annum? Then, at the end of the second year how many mills will have to be added to pay tax on \$500,000 more, or, as our debt has increased to \$1,000,000, and the road one hundred miles away, values gradually lessening on account of our burdensome indebtedness and excessive taxation? At the end of the third year the road reaches the "Hub," with an indebtedness of \$1,700,000, a load heavy enough to swamp a half dozen such Territories as ours. Several more mills on the dollar for taxes will have to be added for the last \$700,000. Very little wealth has been added to the Territory in the meantime except the road-bed and stock. Emigrants will shun us on account of high taxes; capitalists will give us a wide berth because they can invest in other places where taxes are lighter; mining machinery cannot be shipped here as it would be eaten up by taxes; the "Hub" will be bankrupt, and farmers will be closed out for taxes, and those who do survive the storm will have the privilege of being owned, body and soul, and paying enormous taxes to a soulless corporation for the next fifty years.

The idea of Montana building two or three hundred miles of railroad through the sands and sage-brush of Idaho—a country that is sterile and barren of resources—for \$5,000 per mile, while the Mormons would reap all the benefits while the road was being built, by following it up with their wares and produce, is just about as silly as Abe Lincoln boring a hole in the bottom of his flat-boat to let the water out.

The debt of the Territory is enormous now, and the people groaning under oppressive taxation, but how will it be if we become responsible for \$1,700,000 worth of bonds for a road through the wastes of Idaho, which will amount to \$200,000,000 before we receive a dollar's worth of benefit from it, and which is more than the valuation of all the real and personal property of all the farmers in the Territory to-day, or will be three years hence, and the interest semi-annually and costs of litigation, and

other incidental expenses, will amount to several millions more before the debt is liquidated. Will some one please tell us how many dollars on the dollar our taxes will be when this monstrous fraud is in good healthy operation.

Would it not be the most supreme folly for the farmers of this Territory to voluntarily incur this immense indebtedness, that would stick closer to them than the lice of Egypt, just for a little, narrow hand-tram-way that it is likely will not assume any importance other than as an excursion outfit for the Diamond R. National bank and Helena Mutual Mammoth Swindling company in the sweet summer time.

Then we must bear in mind it is more likely to become a monopoly every time the overland jerky runs short of oats; and for freights and heavy loads, well, the taxpayers are supposed to carry the load while the excursionists ride in the cars with a charmer, chew cassia buds and a slithermare around their necks, with their handkerchiefs a leadle out, philopena style. Tay-payers, reckon up the cost before you vote, and when you do vote, let it be North and South railroad aid—no. FARMER, Boulder Valley, March 2, 1877.

TERRITORIAL NEWS.

From the Helena Independent, March, 4.

MR. K. McNeil informed us yesterday that Mr. Taten had made a rich and important strike on the Park lode. For some time past work has been prosecuted in cutting through a fault in the vein some twenty feet in extent. When the lode was finally reached it was found fully four feet thick, and the whole body will mill \$50 per ton on an average. This strike will encourage others to persevere, and we confidently expect to see Park and Unionville thriving camps ere the closing of the coming summer. What renders the above strike of more than ordinary significance is the fact that it was found at a much greater depth than has heretofore been attained on the lode, proving that it is a true vein.

Henry M. Parchen, writing from Salt Lake to his partner, Harry A. D'Acien, says: Salt Lake is full of Montanians, and they are unanimous in declaring that if Montana gets the North and South Railroad they will all return to the Territory. They say that with a railroad Montana is the gem of the American continent; its climate, mineral wealth, and grazing and agricultural resources are unsurpassed; and with a railroad they want no better country than Montana. With a railroad, I agree with them in every particular.

From the Madisonian, March, 1.

Major Maginnis sends us the following special, which will be glad news to every citizen of Eastern Montana, and shows that our delegate is alive to every measure calculated to benefit the people he represents:

WASHINGTON, D. C., Feb. 26, 1877.

To the Editor of the Madisonian:

The Department has ordered a daily mail from Virginia City to Bozeman, also a daily service to Pony.

MARTIN MAGINNIS.

The Masquerade Ball at the Grange Hall, Madison Valley, on last Tuesday night, is reported by those who attend as a splendid party. The Madison Valley folks always make their parties such.

A stable belonging to R. P. Bateman, at Sheridan, was destroyed by fire last week. There were a number of horses in the stable at the time it was discovered to be on fire, all of which were got out, except a fine young stallion belonging to Mr. John Harrison, which was burned to death. The loss was considerable but we have not learned the amount.

From the Missoulian, Feb. 28.

At the fire meeting Wednesday night a by-law was adopted fixing a fine of fifty cents on every member who neglects to attend the fire meeting; and a fine of \$5.00 on every member who neglects to be present at a fire.

From the New North-West, March, 2.

Three hundred and seventy-five pounds of silver from the Dexter mill are in the Express office here.

D. L. McFarland, Surveyor, having completed his Beaverhead surveys, expects in about three weeks, with Frank Marsh, to commence a small contract on the Yellowstone about Shield's River. Meantime he may make some mineral surveys at Butte.