

"'Alabama' dealt with the sectional differences of the common country—it was the theatrical presentation of a national family quarrel. It depended for its success upon a fair comprehension of the conditions precedent as well as present."

"What would you say are the elements that go to make up a distinctively American play?"

"An American play might be thoroughly American and at the same time universal. I believe that a play could be written with such a sure seizure of primal and eternal relationships as to make it go in Japan as well as in America. The things that so distinguish American plays as a class from the plays of other countries is the absence of the morbid consideration of the sex question and the absence of recognition and admission of stratified social ranks. To amplify that, a

very strong French play may be written and succeed with the central idea only the morbid consideration from its several sides and angles of some sex question, even perverted. A successful English play can be written having for its central consideration the attempt of the individual to overcome the question of social caste."

"What should you say is the one quality that makes a play popular in this country?"

"There is no particular quality," he replied, "that has the field to itself. Any play will succeed in America which hopefully entertains; and, if I were to be called upon to name the most valuable quality in a play, I should say its expression of an ideal sufficiently above the level of its audience to attract them and not so far above that level as to be considered apocryphal or discouraging."

THE BATTLE OF THE RAILROADS

HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR NEW MAIN LINES, BUT SCANTY FUNDS FOR BRANCHES—THE MEANING OF THE MILWAUKEE ROAD—MR. HILL'S STRONG WEAPONS—THE CALL OF THE BIG BACK-COUNTRY FOR A CHANCE IN TRANSPORTATION

BY

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THE Northwest was fairly railroad-mad when I saw it in May and June.

From strings of construction camps along the "old N. P." in Montana, clear west to the little harbors of the coast beyond Portland and the Sound cities, the air was electric with rumors of railroad building. Even the sanest of business men in the big cities are confident that not only are all the old lines strengthening their positions, but at least one, and possibly two, new trunk lines will reach the Pacific within five years.

Five years ago, Seattle had the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, and a connection with the Canadian Pacific. To-day, she has these three, and the Milwaukee; and the Union Pacific is on its way. Tacoma was a one-road city, dependent on the Northern Pacific. Now the Great Northern comes in, and the Milwaukee and Union Pacific have terminals all ready for use. Portland was a terminus of the Harriman lines, and the Northern Pacific reached it by a branch. Now it has

also the new "North Bank" railroad, one of the wonders of the day.

It is hardly too much to say that the potential rail-shipping capacity of all these ports has doubled in the five-year period. Neither is it reckless to guess that it will double again in the next five years.

For this is a battle-ground of the giants. The Hill railroad along the north bank of the Columbia is an attack on the long-entrenched Harriman forces at Portland. The only consolation they get out of it seems to be that it hurts the Northern Pacific more than it hurts the Oregon Railroad and Navigation, their railroad. The Harriman reply to this attack, a line into Seattle and Tacoma, cost almost \$20,000,000 for terminals alone. Now a treaty seems to have been made, and Harriman trains will reach the Hill citadels over Hill tracks—until the next whim takes the magnates.

Meantime, while the two great powers of the West fought their local battles, a deter-

mined board of directors in New York was pushing a great railway through from the Missouri River to Puget Sound. The Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul fell upon the territory of the Northern Pacific, and paralleled that road as no great trunk line was ever paralleled in history. You may travel nearly three hundred miles through Montana, and then on into Idaho and Washington, and almost any time a rifleman on a Northern Pacific observation platform could reach the Milwaukee right-of-way. Through the valley of the Yellowstone, and on through Butte, Garrison, Missoula, the two great roads lie side by side. Sometimes for miles on end you could toss a biscuit from one track to the other.

Of course, the building of this new and splendid railroad has forced competition. To meet this new antagonist right on its own ground, the Northern Pacific has spent close upon \$100,000,000 in changing its alignment, building steel bridges, making gigantic fills in eastern Montana, and long tunnels and cuts between Garrison and Missoula, where, in a distance of seventy miles, a big river has been diverted, the old line has been abandoned, and a new, double-track, high-speed line has been laid down. In Washington, too, enormous amounts of money have been spent — and more must follow.

For the Milwaukee is much more than a new railroad. Everyone who knows the way it has been operated and administered in its own well-settled country of Wisconsin, Minnesota, South Dakota, and Iowa, knows that it is a good railroad, a powerful railroad. With the possible exception of the Chicago and Northwestern, there is no other Western railroad that has better methods of settlement, colonization, and industrial development. The same men who have spent their lives studying how best to make industries and agriculture grow in these Middle Western states, are now traveling in Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

All this means very much more than the mere coming of a new railroad. It means powerful capital stimulating agriculture and industry and commerce by every means known to the most skilful and practical commercial and industrial experts on the continent. Few people in these Western states know what intensive commercial development means as applied to a state or a community. For traffic and wealth have come easily to the old

railroads. The long main lines, half across the continent, fed by a few — a very few — small local branches, were one problem — a sort of wholesale railroad business, as it were, selling transportation to big business. The career of the Milwaukee and the Northwestern, peddling and distributing railroads, has been a retail business in transportation. It remains to be seen how well the wonderful intensive traffic system of the new road will work in the Northwestern field, so slap-dash in its ways.

Practically, the Milwaukee does not open a single mile of new territory. Its growth, then, must mean one of two things — that it will take freight from the Hill roads and the Oregon Railroad and Navigation, or else an extraordinary development of local business. Its chief cities are Miles City, Butte, Missoula, North Yakima, Tacoma, and Seattle. Every one of them is a Northern Pacific point. Even in local territories like the Palouse in eastern Washington and the Yakima Valley in central Washington, the lines converge.

Of course, through traffic is another matter. In this, undoubtedly, the main loss of traffic will be by the Harriman system. To-day the Milwaukee turns over a large proportion of its Pacific Coast trade to the Union Pacific at the Missouri River. When its own line is in full order — this year — it will carry its own freight to Puget Sound. A big Japanese fleet is building to meet the Milwaukee trains on the docks of Tacoma.

The Milwaukee is a rival in the open; but there are many others who are not out in the open as yet. At Spokane lives Mr. Robert Strahorn, a silent, mysterious man. Four years ago, a New York reporter picked him up at the Waldorf, and published a long interview in which Mr. Strahorn announced his intention of building a new railroad from Spokane to Seattle, Tacoma, and Portland. It sounded and looked like a mere promotion scheme; and as such the financial world regarded it.

Not so the West. This mystery of Spokane, Mr. Strahorn, has spent several millions of dollars — certainly not his own — has bought and paid for a very expensive right of way into Spokane, has graded many miles of track, laid some rails, and arranged for Western terminals. Guesses about where the money comes from range from Canadian Pacific to Union Pacific, with the Milwaukee road and the Northwestern in between. Nobody knows

who wants that line, but it is taken for granted that some one of the big railroads is behind it. Certainly Spokane is building much upon it, and the mystery must dissolve before very long. So far the road has been financed in New York by a banking house that might represent any one of the big systems.

Every possible pass through the Rocky Mountains and the Cascades is being taken up by the railroad forces. The eastern border of Idaho is a huge range of mountains that can be threaded only at two or three points. The Lolo Pass, which lies pretty directly in the line of march from Montana points to Washington, is just now the stamping ground of numerous engineering outfits, Northern Pacific, Milwaukee, and some mysterious stranger — supposed to be Harriman — all seeking the best right of way. It is a hard pass, and one that has so far defied the railroad builders. Farther south, the Nez Perces and Lemhi rifts are practically neglected, because it is taken for granted that they are impassable; but even they may be pressed into service.

A new railroad, locally supposed to be the Chicago and Northwestern, is grading a line from St. Anthony, down in the southern part of Idaho, up a river valley toward the Salmon River. Once the Salmon is reached, a very rich and powerful railway could reach the Pacific by a water-grade, down the Salmon, the Snake, and the Columbia rivers. It would be, however, about the most expensive railroad in the Western States. It would lie for several hundred miles in a deep cañon, practically impossible for local traffic in large volume — little more than a through railroad route — a "bridge," as they say in the railroad offices.

But men have ceased to marvel when ambitious magnates spend money in dozens of millions to get a modern railroad in hard country. When Mr. Hill spent building the "North Bank" road, more than \$30,000,000, men called him crazy. Now they call him a prophet, a man who sees so far into the future that he dares to build a railroad like an Eastern trunk line through a mountain region of light traffic in order to dominate the trunk-line traffic from Spokane and all the East to the Portland gateway — and back again. Mr. Hill, meantime, seems willing to let the other railroads do the worrying. His new pet is getting freight and passengers — and that is what he built it for.

This road is really the railroad wonder of

the West; and it is watched by all the other railroads with a great deal of anxiety. It travels from Spokane to the bridge across the Columbia at Pasco as the crow flies, cutting long tangents through desert and basaltic rock piles, skirting the rich Palouse and the dusty Big Bend country on a grade that is downhill from Spokane to the river bank. It leaps to the north bank of the great river on a long steel span, then follows it along on a water grade into Portland.

The north bank, from Lyle to Vancouver, Wash., is a series of titanic cliffs, broken by mountain torrents pouring into the Columbia, with occasional stretches of shifting river sand. Along the bank Mr. Hill's engineers have built a road that surmounts almost every known engineering difficulty. Tunnel after tunnel pierces the cliffs, ledge after ledge follows the bend of the stream around a towering bluff, fill after fill carries the road across the mountain gullies. The drifting sand, strange to say, is the hardest enemy of all. It probably never will be wholly conquered, but for commercial purposes, particularly the carrying of freight, it is controlled.

The new road crossing into Portland by a long bridge, shortens the main line of the Hill system from the East to the coast; but its most important function is something different. It makes the haul from Spokane to Portland without climbing a hill. It eliminates the Cascade Range from the transcontinental haul. It gives Mr. Hill the cheapest, and therefore the most powerful, railroad line from the inland to the sea.

So much for trunk lines; then, what of the local lines? If one lay down, side by side, a map of the Rock Island-'Frisco system, and a map of all the northwestern roads put together, it comes home to the mind at once that the Northwest has never seen real railroad development. It has been a terrific battle of direct lines, huge main arteries of traffic, draining through tonnage from centre to centre. The intensive development of a railroad has never been tried in the Northwest. Few branches leave the main line of the Great Northern, the Northern Pacific, or the new Milwaukee road west of Montana. As a matter of fact, the narrow strip of country along the main lines has received about all the development that the roads could afford; and outlying regions must wait.

Here and there, as local capital grows strong,

men build local lines into new country, usually to carry logs or lumber. Such, for instance, is the Idaho and Washington Northern, built by Mr. Blackwell from Spokane up into a river valley rich in possibilities, but utterly raw for lack of transportation. Such was, and is, the old "Pin" road, from Weiser, Idaho, into the timber belt. To-day they talk of pushing it farther. Such was the Tacoma and Eastern, now bought by the Milwaukee, and the Columbia and Puget Sound, also gathered to the breast of one of the giants. Even in hapless Oregon, men started the Columbia Southern to tap the hinterland, but it fell into the hands of the Harriman system when it reached Shaniko, the heart of the sheep-ranges; and men say it came very cheap.

The fact is that neither Washington, Oregon, nor Idaho has local money in large enough lots to build any very considerable railroads, particularly as the dependence of such lines on the big systems is almost pitiful. Life, for the little independent, hangs by a thread, and the thread may be cut any minute by an order from people in New York, who never saw the little road.

The Weyerhaeuser syndicate, of course, can build lumber roads — and does. There is a host of them; but most of them do not amount to very much as agents of diversified commerce.

And so one comes to the reasons why Central Idaho and Eastern Oregon remain two of the biggest areas unserved by railroads in this country. Local capital is not strong enough to build and protect railroads in those areas. The big companies have been forced to use all their power in the battle for main-line supremacy. Therefore these again, being expensive in development, and not too promising in traffic, must await the whim and the wisdom of the greater capital that lies in the East.

People fret and fume, and even threaten to amend state constitutions to permit the state to build — but nothing can come of it all. These two great areas, and many smaller areas, will wait until the preponderance of trunk-lines compels the making of feeding systems. Perhaps there must arise, in this western world, a railroad magnate who has been a traffic-man, before a real revolution in development methods can come about. To-day, all the railroad powers on the coast come from the engineering and operating departments — and traffic-nursing is a lost art. Perhaps the

Milwaukee, in time, will bring a revolution; but it will need its strength for years to come for the greater task of winning its spurs as a transcontinental.

Therefore, if we leave the tourist-paths and go wandering around in Idaho, Washington, or Oregon, we may find much of an almost forgotten age in transportation. Here a million bushels of grain a year slide down a cable to reach a spur of railroad, paying for its cable-ride a dollar a ton — about what an Eastern trunk line will charge for carrying the same ton, "at and east of Buffalo," two hundred miles by rail.

Or, up the Columbia River, one may meet a flat-bottomed steamer, with a big paddle-wheel astern, carrying all sorts of produce half a hundred miles at the nice modest rate of ten dollars a ton; or similar boats on half a dozen similar streams, running on a loose sort of schedule, poking noses into dockless hamlets, carrying the nation's mails to the nation's pioneers.

In one instance much is hoped for from such a line of steamers. From Portland to Lewiston they talk of the "Open River," especially when a railroad man happens around. The river — Columbia and Snake — is pretty open most of the way. But, half-way up, the down-river steamers stop, and freight and passengers trans-ship to a portage railroad, built by Oregon in its innocence, to run a little way and trans-ship again to the up-river steamer. It is slow and expensive. Its total efficiency, so far this year, seems to be from 100 to 200 tons of freight a week. That is nearly as much as two big box cars or hopper cars can carry. Yet it is river competition; and it is a nice thing to talk about, when the Hill system covers the north bank and the Harriman system the south bank.

Stages, of course, both horse and automobile, carry the mails to inland points; and from such points the outbound freight either comes on four legs, or in wagons, or not at all; or floats as logs down the rivers. The passenger on the North Coast Limited may see, as he threads the approaches to the Stampede Pass, an army of river-drivers cleaning the upper streams of logs. These logs travel many miles, before they reach the mills, on the railroad sidings. An astonishingly large proportion of the total inland tonnage reaches the outside world by the simplest of all transportation routes.

The future of transportation is clear enough in the light of facts. The big trunk lines must continue their battle for years to come. Nobody imagines that the Canadian Pacific is to stop at Spokane; and nobody doubts that the Northwestern must reach the Coast, but whether at Tacoma, or Portland, or Seattle, nobody knows. It does not matter very much, except locally. The United States takes little more interest in local rivalry between these splendid cities than these cities take in the rivalry between Houston and New Orleans. The point is—the coast; and the coast will get at least two more transcontinental railroads before five years are gone.

Local development must be slow; but it, too, will come. Specifications for a railroad from the border of eastern Oregon to the western border are in existence, and a thousand graders would be at work there now but for the money

panic of 1907. There is not a rich agricultural valley in Washington, or Idaho, or Oregon that will not have its outlet in time.

In the meantime, thousands of "little people," sturdy, patient, full of courage, are holding acres in the wilderness, little sterile farms that will produce enough to live on now, and that will yield their forty or fifty bushels of wheat to the acre when men can sell the wheat. An Eastern Oregon ranchman put it tersely when he said:

"The land is good enough; but if we planted five acres apiece to wheat it would not bring us a cent a bushel. There is no use growing wheat until the railroad comes—nor anything else except what we need to eat."

It would, indeed, appear that the tail-end of the Wall Street story is told in the huts in the sage-brush deserts, and the broken lava wastes of Oregon and Idaho.

THE A.-Y.-P. EXPOSITION

EXHIBITORS WHO BELIEVE THAT "THE TRUTH IS GOOD ENOUGH"—A COMMERCIAL FAIR AMONG SCENIC WONDERS, THAT EXTENDS AN INTERNATIONAL INVITATION TO TRADE

THE fair at Seattle is beautiful; that goes without saying, for the best of man's art is fitted to the best of Nature's workmanship to make a balanced and blended picture never excelled in the long list of great exhibitions.

But better than that, the fair at Seattle is a definite commercial lesson—and lessons in commerce last forever.

Primarily, the fair is teaching the people of the United States to know the Pacific Coast; secondarily, it is teaching them a little of Alaska, a little of Japan, and a little of the Philippines. And the distinctive feature of this particular fair is the determined effort to make these lessons true, to stamp out exaggeration, and to insist that the exhibits be correct exhibits, not stained, nor colored, nor distorted from the truth. In the mining building, for instance, the most rigid censorship has been exercised, so that a man may be reasonably sure, as he looks at a pile of ore and reads that it came from a certain property, that it is an average sample, no more, no less.

It's a real sign of the times. It was not so long ago that the Northwest in particular, and

the West in general, delighted to parade itself under colors glittering and alluring. But to-day the sane and quiet men, the leaders of thought, the captains of commerce on the coast are not buccaneers nor get-rich-quick schemers. They tell the truth. One great county has adopted as its slogan the phrase: "The Truth Is Good Enough!"—and that, or its equivalent, finds currency not alone in that county but in nearly every centre of development along the coast.

And it runs all through the fair. To the Easterner, agog for things new, the one marvelous building of the beautiful group on the western shore of Lake Washington is the forestry building. It is a palace of logs, 320 feet long and 144 feet wide. Along its curved front stands a row of pillars, trunks of great trees, each 40 feet in height and about 5 feet in diameter at the base.

Now it was entirely possible to outdo these figures; and the temptation must have been great. For this forestry building will almost certainly leave a more lasting impression upon the mind of the average Easterner than any other single feature of the fair. But, instead