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# DESERET EVENING NEWS.

Many of those who are advertising in the classified columns today for the first time will develop, in the course of a year, into regular and successful advertisers.

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## Real Estate Review Shows Steady Business

THE wheel has turned around again, and here we are at another Christmas. Again we have to "size up the situation" and evolve conclusions on what the past year has done for us, and what the outlook is for the future in the local realty field.

Well, as far as real estate is concerned it is doing pretty well, thank you! A few fellows who for some years back have been laboring under the delusion that they could go out and pick things up at their own figure, have had the breath taken from them in trying to carry out the performance. It didn't come off just exactly as advertised. There are two kinds of individuals always with us: First, the fellow who is mighty anxious to buy but wants to give about half what any ordinary citizen would pay for property. Second, the fellow who is almighty anxious to sell, but wants just about twice as much as any man in town would take for the same property. Both these men are known to every real estate agent in town. Then, of course, there is that other very interesting and well known character—generally a woman—who is dying to get rid of her property, but always backing out when someone comes along who is willing to buy. However, that's another story. This article, while given a wide range in latitude, isn't supposed to describe a real estate man's museum of curiosities. If it were, a much larger and more variegated list of curios could be put on exhibition.

To return to the market: It goes without saying that being presidential year, when business by common consent is supposed to be "off," the real estate pot couldn't be expected to bubble over. Yet it has so far surpassed what its most intimate friends in Salt Lake predicted for it, as to surprise all. Better than the fact of a healthy, aggressive market has been the other fact that it has not been a speculative or "boom" order of things. Business property and residence property has changed hands so rapidly that probably not one dealer has been able to keep track of half of it. Yet precious little of this property, after the first sale, has been upon the market again. It has been "retired from circulation." In other words, it has been bought for use. Nor is evidence of this use lacking. Business houses and homes have taken the place of weedy lots. Ugly bill boards which defaced the fronts of central locations have been pulled down to make room for cut stone, pressed brick and plate glass. Indeed the advertising agencies are complaining that some of their choicest locations have been fished from them by selfless citizens who had no higher motive than to erect buildings that would return seven or eight per cent interest. And how the poster man does hate to see the vacant lots occupied by permanent improvements! On the other hand, how much better it is, from a public point of view, to see a piece of ground yielding an interest return than furnishing two or three free passes each week to some theater. That's the difference between the improved lot and the bill-board lot.

**BUILDING IN 1904.**

It is no rash hazard of opinion to say that more building has taken place during the year 1904 in Salt Lake City than in any year of its existence. It has come without any spur, without any newspaper burrah, without that fuss and feathers which accompany a speculative movement. If one lets his mind revert to another notable year in building—the year of 1890—he would see at a glance the difference between the two. Then improvements were undertaken, not for their own end, but to help boost somebody's scheme. A syndicate would take options on ground on two sides of a block. Then, to boom prices, a hotel would be projected, excavations made and foundations laid. By that time the syndicate would have sold its optioned land at a big advance, the hotel would be stopped and another scheme launched somewhere else. But the present year has seen big block after big block erected without ripples in the waters of speculation. Salt Lake would have been a different place in 1890 if a big government block, a structure like the Utah Independent Telephone building, a luxurious apartment hotel like the new Emery-Holmes flats, a massive Y. M. C. A. building, and a magnificent library home like the Packard had been in progress at one time. But

those great and handsome improvements, though conspicuous and showy, are not a circumstance to the hundreds upon hundreds of private dwellings that have gone up unostentatiously in every section of the city. Nineteen hundred and four has been distinctively a year of homes. From the three and four room modest little laborer's home to the ten, twenty or thirty thousand dollar mansion, this construction has gone steadily forward and shows no indication of ceasing. There is and always will be property in Salt Lake City for sale; but if anyone fancies that good property goes begging for customers, let him try to buy an eligible location at "a bargain." The corner lots, residence and business, have been snapped up here until it is impossible to secure such a location except at fancy figures.

**ABOUT LOCATIONS.**

Of course there are locations and locations. Not every man and woman in Salt Lake can have their fireside planted on Brigham street, nor can every business man own a store facing on Main. But there are several good places for homes outside Brigham, and

merchants there are who thrive, though not fortunate enough to look upon Main through their front windows. Indeed, as far as Brigham street is concerned, it has been in the throes of agony over the paving problem for several years past, with evidences of exasperation just now. A surgical operation consisting of some very deep cuts does not seem to ease the patient. That the paving of this aristocratic thoroughfare marks a distinct epoch of improvement in the town cannot be gainsaid. Yet it is questionable whether the building of this roadbed is not of as much advantage to the side-streets as to the property situated directly upon its side.

An impetus has been given the past season to the "bench" properties by the numerous fine residences that have been built above Sixth street. The promise of an early extension of the street railway along Ninth street will give further movement to land tributary to that street. The advantage of this high land is the beautiful view of the city and valley, its abundance of sunshine, its freedom from fog and

smelter smoke and its superb drainage. The east bench is also gaining in favor, as the high southeastern section of the city. Next to Brigham street, however, the two side streets—First street and east Fifth South street—rank as the most desirable residence streets, together with the "cross" streets from First to First South. Corners on any of these streets are hard to obtain. In real estate parlance, two feet of ground on a corner lot is equivalent in value to three feet of an inside lot; though fortunately for the taxpayer, the assessor does not make so heavy a distinction.

**ELECTION DID NOT DISTURB.**

Election during the past fall was less of a disturbing factor than usual in presidential campaigns. The Republicans felt pretty sure of their ground, and the Democrats promised no radical changes in case they were intrusted with power. Consequently enterprises were held in abeyance, and a healthy movement in realty continued in spite of campaign excitement. Public opinion in Salt Lake is the factor upon which the city can safely depend. Too many men have too many dollars an-

chored here to permit wild extravagances or to see the city defamed by sensationalists. Indeed it is this very conservatism, this determination to sit down effectually upon the men who breed dissensions, that is the most hopeful sign in the community. Every man who has a home and family here knows that to countenance attacks upon Salt Lake is to depreciate his own property and render conditions harder for his own family.

**THEN AND NOW.**

Business property, as it was known 10 years ago, and business property as it is known in Salt Lake today, are two separate and distinct propositions. But today, as 10 years ago, Salt Lake business property is not only chiefly, but almost entirely, owned by her own citizens. Kansas City, Omaha and Denver are largely owned by eastern insurance companies, syndicates and capitalists. Salt Lake has few foreign land owners. The Burlington syndicate and Mr. Phelps are almost the only large non-resident owners of property. Senator Clark of Wyoming has made a few purchases here, but far from buy-

ing it for speculation he has announced the policy of placing on it the finest, most modern kind of improvements. Home institutions and home men, however, have title to 95 per cent of Salt Lake realty. There is, moreover, a whose interest is identified with Salt Lake rather than with rival institutions from other sections. Salt Lake has probably profited in a measure by the misfortunes of our sister state of Colorado. The labor disturbances and unsettled conditions there have driven many to this state, which has been so singularly free from labor troubles. Salt Lake is becoming the home of everyone whose fruits of enterprise enable him to come here to live. The state university, the excellent private colleges and the splendid public schools are a standing invitation to every man in Utah who values a good education for his children. A common expression one hears in traveling through Utah, Idaho and Wyoming is, "I expect to take my family to Salt Lake, that the children can go to school, as soon as I can shape up a bit." That in itself is sufficient evidence of the value of good schools, simply as a money investment.

ment, to Salt Lake City. Hundreds and thousands of men have their families in Salt Lake for educational advantages while their business interests are situated in other sections of the state.

Where it was possible, a few years ago, to pick up a favorable business location at almost any time, buyers are continually on the alert at the present for anything offered, even on the outskirts of the business district. The genuine business section of Salt Lake can be defined as all that region between South Temple and Fourth South, north and south, and between State and West Temple, east and west. There is some overflow on either side on Second South street, but the district mentioned is essentially business. It is stated on good authority that \$3,000 per front foot was offered the past summer for one business corner, and refused. That is clearly the high water mark in Salt Lake realty prices. In residence lots as much as \$3,000 per rod has been paid during the past year. From these to the hundred dollar suburban lot, with its \$300 cottage, there has been every variety of property transferred during the season just passed. Yet, as before stated, a close analysis of the buying and selling during the year reveals but little speculation. This, too, is evidenced by the fact that the small real estate dealer has had close picking while old established and large institutions with influential connections, have done a large business. As in previous years the expensive business and residence sites have chiefly fallen into the hands of men connected with Utah mines. The Bingham and Park City contingents have been the largest investors, and when any of this crowd acquire property it may be regarded as out of the market permanently. It is estimated that over one-half of the choicest Salt Lake business property is now owned by mining men.

What has the Salt Lake Real Estate association accomplished during the year past? Have the promises and expectations of a year ago been realized? Is it a permanent institution, or will it go the way of its predecessors? These are questions that naturally arise in connection with a review of the real estate market. In answer to these questions it may be asserted that the association has done far more than even its most sanguine friends could have hoped. It has stopped a goodly share of "knocking," has disseminated honest and reliable information about values, has stopped several abuses which prevailed, has established harmony in the fraternity and has promoted uniform usage. That it would correct every shortcoming or make angels out of very materialistic men no one expected. During the summer, when real estate is invariably most quiet, the association got up the largest and most successful excursion to Saltair that Utah has ever known. Instead of applying the profits to a fine building for itself or for settling corporation debts, the association opened a bureau of information for the collection of statistics, gathering of exhibits and exploitation of Utah's resources. Manifestly, this is for the benefit of the property owner rather than the agent, yet the bulk of the expense from the start fell to the Real Estate association.

**PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.**

Another direction in which the association has made itself felt has been in the promotion of public improvements. To the initiative of its members do we owe the large extension of the sidewalk districts, the paving of business streets, and the movement started for increasing the water supply. While the Commercial club has looked more directly to the material interests, the Real Estate association has applied itself to the problems connected with taxation, public improvements, the granting of franchises and the regulation of public utilities. In this connection not a small part of the association's success has been due to its cool-headed, progressive, energetic president, J. W. Houston. It is an association which in its very nature needs careful management and intelligent direction. This its president and directors have furnished. A number of the members, working together, have consummated several large deals which individuals alone would have been unable to handle successfully.

As to the coming year, all indications point to increased activity, higher prices and continued improvement. If Denver, Kansas City or Omaha were on the eve of the completion of a new transcontinental railroad it would be in a frenzy of excitement, and the possibilities of new business from such a source would be proclaimed every day in the year. Salt Lake is as ignorant of the way it is growing as a 12-year-old boy is of his growth. We don't wonder at our new business blocks and our scores upon scores of new residences, and our superb new public buildings—they are just a part of the great development. Just think of the great federal building, the spacious Y. M. C. A. building, the costly Lafayette school and the Packard library all in one year—and a community that don't enthrone over it, but expects as much more or better to come along next year! Truly, we don't comprehend what a big, just, thriving, growing community we are—not even

GLEN MILLER.

## WHAT THE COMMERCIAL CLUB IS DOING FOR A LARGER CITY.

THE Commercial club, whose place of business is Salt Lake City, but whose mission is the advancement of the interests of the whole state of Utah, is just closing the third year of its existence. In February, 1902, when Mr. Charles Read, representing the committee appointed for the purpose, filed the articles of incorporation in the office of the secretary of state, the membership roster bore the names of 55 of our public-spirited citizens. These gentlemen, recognizing the great need for some organization charged with the duty of preserving and conserving the public welfare in those important questions not readily touched by municipal or state legislation, determined to create a Commercial club along the lines so successful in other cities. From this small beginning of 55 the membership has increased until at this writing it numbers 370 resident and 70 non-resi-

dent members. This membership represents practically every one of the state's business, social and professional interests. The influence of the organization has grown with its increased support, and the field of its usefulness is continually widening. During the period of its existence the organization has taken an effective part in almost every question of general interest that has arisen, and now no matter of vital concern to the community is considered closed until the club has spoken. Its position on subjects of grave public import is usually proved in the end to be conservative and correct, and I believe I am amply justified in saying that it possesses, as no similar body has ever possessed, the confidence and respect of the people of Utah. However, in estimating the usefulness of the club, and its part in the economic and social development in the community, sight

should not be lost of the fact that it has no power for the accomplishment of its purposes save public sentiment. It cannot enforce its decrees by process of law, and depends for its actual and material support and for the success of its policies upon the affection and approval of the public, in whose interest it was created, and for which it has conscientiously labored. Nor must it be required to depend for the gratitude and commendation of the people upon the tangible and visible results of its work. The fact that it is here, fully and intelligently organized, ready for such part in the affairs of the state as it may properly play, is like a "demonstration in force" made by the ships of a great naval power.

It is a notification to the predatory that we are on guard and that no scheme of public moment can be successful until it has passed through the fires of legitimate criticism and discussion. Besides the general fact con-

veyed in the above suggestion there are innumerable ways in which the club justifies its existence without the blowing of trumpets or exploitation in the public press. The correspondence with enquirers concerning the resources of the state is growing more voluminous every day and is constantly requiring greater care in its conduct. The entertainment of visitors by the club and by the club's members; the many social functions given by the organization, in consequence of which our people are brought more closely together, are things which ultimately redound to the benefit of all the people, though the actual good is not readily seen by the casual or careless observer.

It is not really necessary to particularize concerning the work of the club. Those good people who read the newspapers know about the great and creditable part it has taken in public matters and what the other people who do not read the newspapers think, is

of small consequence in this connection. But, lest some of those who do read, should have forgotten, let me mention a few things done by the club about the good results of which no man may honestly raise a question. I would place first here the great work done by the club's committee of 50 on the improvement of the city's water supply. That work, though apparently futile when finished, is now bearing fruit, as shown by the plan of the city council, the merits of which will be passed on by the voters of the municipality next month. Under the able leadership of the president, Col. E. F. Holmes, the club insisted in season and out of season that something should be done at once to solve this most important of municipal problems. As a consequence the serious menace to our local prosperity presented by an inadequate water supply will soon cease to trouble us.

Again, when the board of education,

for good and sufficient reasons, decided to close the public schools some five weeks in advance of the regular time, the club came to the rescue. The consummation of this decision would have meant a serious blow to the public school system of which we are so justly proud, and something like 13,000 children would have been turned into the streets—schoolless. By and with the special aid of its treasurer, Mr. Simon Bamberger, the club kept the schools open, and the records of the secretary's office are filled with letters from grateful and appreciative parents.

Since the beginning of the club's active life it has taken a live interest in the extension of the irrigable area of the state and through its various committees, has spent much time and money in an effort to secure for the use and benefit of the state, a part of the great sum made available by the national irrigation law. This work resulted directly in the establishment in

this city of the headquarters of the reclamation service of the interior department and indirectly in more good for the entire state than can be readily computed in dollars and cents. It will be remembered that some time ago the coal producers of the state raised the price of that necessity 75 cents a ton. There was no interest in the state so high nor none so low as to be unaffected by this action. Fortunately, the club, being here and organized for just such purposes, succeeded in having this raise rescinded. There are dozens of other instances of the club's good offices in the public welfare that might be mentioned, but it seems to me that enough has been said to justify the claim that it has already become a necessity and a powerful factor in upbuilding the great state whose resources and merits are just becoming known and appreciated.

FISHER HARRIS.