

## CORRESPONDENCE.

Written for this Paper  
**IDAHO'S PRODUCTIVENESS.**

BLACKFOOT, Idaho, Feb. 9.—With about one-tenth of the wealth and one-third of the population of Utah, Idaho has nearly the same area, three times as much congressional representation and five times as many land offices; these latter are situated respectively at Blackfoot, Hailey, Lewiston, Boise and Coeur d'Alene. The necessity for these is made to appear when the reader knows that but two lines of railway traverse any considerable portion of the state—the Union Pacific entering the southern border at Cannon, well along toward the eastern edge and due northwest a few miles from Logan City, continuing in as straight a line as possible to Montana; and the Oregon Short Line, which strikes in near the southwestern corner and hugs the southern border closely till it emerges into Oregon at Huntington. From the latter a branch takes off at Shoshone, running to Galena via Hailey and several other smaller towns; and from Nampa in Ada county, another branch a few miles long, connects Boise City by rail with the rest of the world. But the Union Pacific and Northern Pacific cross the "Panhandle," a long, narrow strip of territory extending to the British possessions and seeming on the map to have been designed especially for the purpose of keeping Montana and Washington apart; and Coeur d'Alene has a little rail line unknown to fame if not to fortune. With comparatively so little railway (and none at all where there are the greatest stretches of land subject to entry under government laws) and considerably less than 100,000 people scattered over so vast a domain, it is necessary to make the work of taking possession of and obtaining title to lands as light as possible. If the Idahonians had but one land office—like Utah—located in a matter where millions of acres of splendid soil would not only be uninhabited but perhaps untrouled for many long years to come. Railroads do not do the pioneering nowadays, inducing the people to follow in their wake; they prefer to penetrate districts already populated if not prosperous, and even with the stimulus of several land offices judiciously distributed it will be a considerable of a span in the direction of eternity before Idaho's map will even remotely resemble a gridiron so far as railways are concerned; with but one place where the government deals directly with its subjects in the matter of parceling out homes, of course the time would be ever so much longer.

I will here take occasion to reiterate what has been said before regarding the productiveness of Idaho's soil, especially the eastern part of the state. In any part of Bannock, Bingham or Fremont counties east of the mountain ranges, the growth of some of the staples of life are so wonderful that a recital of some instances does but subject the reciter to disbelief if the listener has had no other evidence. I hate to place myself in such a position as that, with a political campaign recently over and

one shortly to begin; and yet such things ought to be told, not only because they are true but because they are of general interest. Major Wall, of Blackfoot, is a land office attorney, but raises most of his own vegetable or family use; among other things last season he put one-sixth of an acre in potatoes, the only preparation the ground received being an ordinary plowing. The planting was by dropping the pieces of potato here and there as it is ordinarily done, and they were left where they fell, receiving no further attention until dug for—they were not hoed or irrigated once. He got over 100 bushels of potatoes from the piece, the yield being at the rate of about 650 bushels to the acre. And the average weight of the individual "murbles" was about four pounds, a few of them going to nearly ten pounds in weight. Does not this sound like a Munchausenism? If it didn't it wouldn't be worth repeating, for if the figures were very much lower our own Utah could duplicate the incident many times over and thus deprive it of that special interest which its hugeness gives it; it is true, however, and is rather the rule than otherwise in this part of the country. I told you once before how a Fremont county farmer had harvested 120 bushels of wheat from one acre of ground, and have repeated it orally a few times only to be looked at, as though I had had something to do with the late election for Constitutional Convention delegate; this is very unjust to me, for the story, like the other, is merely the recital of what actually occurred. It is truly magnificent soil and besides having great streams coursing through it is supplied in places by a vast network of subterranean conduits of varying distances from the surface, in some places breaking through and forming sloughs, in others too remote to be of practical benefit without artificial means being employed.

The country referred to was once the home of more kinds of wild animals than are set down in most of our vocabularies. In a house of entertainment at Blackfoot are a number of stuffed specimens and fossil remains representing in some instances monsters long since extinct and beneath around which curiosity is clustering and accumulating because, while no one at all unknown to most of us in this western country, they are more or less advanced in the process of extinction. In the former class are huge bones and a tooth three feet long, undoubtedly in the early forenoon of archeology the possession of a mammoth or mastodon. This particular animal must have been eighteen or twenty feet high, correspondingly longer and have weighed several tons when in good health and not harassed too much by our prehistoric ancestors. (It thus seems that immensity is or was a feature of the animal as well as the vegetable kingdom in this part of our sister state.) I believe you were previously informed of a trout being taken out of an estuary of the Snake river weighing twenty-eight pounds—the fish, not the estuary. But perhaps this is enough of

this sort of thing for the present. In the place spoken of is the skull of a mountain sheep one horn of which is partially imbedded in the trunk of a pine tree; those who have examined them know that those horns make two distal curves after leaving the skull, being shaped like an irregular letter S, the point inclining outward and being sharp as a needle, thus making it a weapon of offense or defense as the occasion may be. It seems that about two hundred and fifty years ago this particular animal, spoiling for a fight or perhaps waiting to keep his hands—or horns—in, made one butt too many and inserted his weapon so far in the wood that when he wanted to let go he couldn't; so he stayed where he was and ignobly perished. In the course of events the other portions of the body fell away, leaving the part immediately connected with the horns and the horns themselves standing in bold relief against their wooden setting, a striking reminder to his own race and ours that too much combativeness is worse in the long run than too little. Then a few years more were reeled off time's endless bobbin and the tree succumbed to the leveling forces of decay and gravitation. A great lapse, as previously suggested, occurred here, at this end of which some hunters in the adjacent mountains found the remains and brought them into Blackfoot, where the enterprising curio collector bought and placed them among his other exhibits. A ram's horns are constructed something like a brick or stone wall—a layer of mortar alternating with the more solid substance; the "mortar" or filling between the osseous rings is nearly all gone, and but little remains but the rings themselves, which will of course drop off one or more at a time when the destructive tendencies of age have fully completed their work. This really interesting relic and several others from the same place were on exhibition at the World's Fair, but this is the first mention of them I have yet seen.

While the people hereabouts are not unconcerned regarding the senatorial struggle going on at Boise, they ask fewer questions about it than many of those at a distance are doing. The way they figure it out is that whoever is chosen will undoubtedly do the best he can for the state at large, and speculation is therefore unprofitable. This relates to Republicans as well as to Democrats, the latter having but two members of the legislature and therefore being out of it entirely. It is observable, however, that these two vote for Senator Shoup right along, and he seems to be as much a favorite in Democratic circles as any Republican can be with party lines strictly drawn.

It is colder here than in Salt Lake, and there is more snow on the ground; also coal is higher. It is doubtless a regular oasis of a place in summer; there is an abundance of trees with not a little shrubbery, most of the residences are commodious and well appearing—even elegant in some instances—and the streets are laid out with some pretension to regularity. The legislature has appropriated \$55,000 for the insane asylum here, already one of the finest institutions of the kind in the West and containing something over 100 patients.