

12:00 Noon Portland Realty Board
94th Birthday Anniversary of Portland

Feb 9 -

Celebrating a birthday is always an auspicious occasion.

Celebrating the birthday of a growing youngster like Portland is an occasion ~~that is~~ far more than auspicious. We are gathered here today to pay our respects in a more or less humble way to Portland as a youngster who has just shed tattered swaddling clothes for long pants, corduroy shirt, number 8 hat and number 12 shoes. He is stepping out toward fame and fortune in manhood.

There was a day not so long ago when we held some doubt about the future of this youngster. We wondered, would he turn out soft and flabby - a gentleman of leisure and comfort content with the easier course - satisfied to drift and take what came letting the other more ambitious kids get ahead while he enjoyed his comforts and complacency. Or, would he develop into a he man, taking his place in a two fisted world and fighting for his share of the world's offerings. I think, as we view him today, we see the answer -- a he man -- big arms, big chest, deep voice, strong muscles and a mind of steel, a worker, a go getter, a thinker and a doer. He's chosen to fight his way with brawn, brain and muscle and get everything that belongs to a young man who sets his mind to making a name and place in life.

Personally I have had the honor and pleasure of watching this boy grow through a good part of his youth - not his babyhood but his teens. He was always a likeable sort of kid - friendly, amiable, considerate of friends and neighbors but at the same time proud, haughty and determined. His parents were, of course, of genuine western pioneer stock and they handed him a heritage of opportunity that would turn the head of any average boy. But not his. He seemed to grow up with a knowledge that he had to work for what he got and that his heritage was good only to the extent that he developed it by his own strength. Some of his brother and sister cities didn't like the boy. It may have been jealousy or just kidlike foolishness. They called him a spinster, a moss back, a web-foot, sleeping beauty and so on. It didn't seem to bother because he went right on and somehow seemed

to win friends and keep growing and developing. It seemed to me that during his teens, jealousy at what he possessed and the fame he began to achieve were the motives that caused the neighbor kids to keep on calling him names.

But the day arrived when all the youngsters grew up - Portland among the rest and then we saw our boy really show his stuff. He has become a leader among men. He has converted his resources into cash. He has built and prospered and grown until today he is a man to be reckoned with. There's no more neighborly kidding. He's their example now.

It seems often to happen this way in life. Our boy in whom others can see nothing of ability is very apt to be the one who comes out to the good in the race for fame and fortune. I think the majority of those who have been here over a long period of years have always appreciated that Portland had the makings of a great city and yet there was that constant disturbing question of how and when and to what extent it could be brought about. It was bound to come. Portland was destined to grow into a big, thriving city because there was everything present to make it such. But somehow this knowledge which we all realized so well did not seem to be known or to be shared or perhaps believed or appreciated by the rest of the world. It went against the grain that others should be so dumb and at times we boiled over and tried to tell them. Some of you here today can well remember back to the days of the Lewis and Clark Exposition when impatience with the lack of national appreciation for Portland's opportunities and advantages caused our civic spirited enthusiasts to set a goal. The slogan about which was built an elaborate program of exploitation and advertising was "Portland Great - Portland Fine - 500,000 in 1909." The boys, of course, stepped out a trifle fast in that but still, I believe, they thought through some form of magic it could or would be done. The census of 1910 - some five or six years later knocked the goal and the slogan into a cocked hat but it didn't mar the enthusiasm. More conservative goals were set after that and some of them came mighty near being reached. I wonder what really would have

happened if they had won their 500,000 goal by 1909. It would have meant a population increase of around 400,000 in a matter of three or four years. We went through an increase of 150,000 in about the same length of time, so you can all appreciate now what sort of a mess they were fooling with.

It remained for the war period of the late 30's and the early 40's to finally bring Portland into her own. This is current knowledge and no need to go into statistics. The rush came, the population came, industry came, prosperity came and riff raff came. Everything we had dreamed of for a generation came all in a heap along with a lot of things we didn't want to come. But we found the bitter must be taken with the sweet.

Portland will never be the same. We've all heard that a thousand times in the last few years and it is undoubtedly true, I hope. We dreamed of being a big prosperous city all our lives and now that we've arrived why grieve and crave to go back and start dreaming all over again.

It has disrupted our complacent ways of life to be sure. It has disturbed our slumbers. It has created inconveniences and has made life faster and harder to follow. It has placed us on our individual ingenuity to keep up and get our share. But on top of all it has brought prosperity and prosperity seems to be what we want most in life. To get prosperity means work. To keep prosperity means more work.

There is an end to the present boom. There is an end to the rush and bustle that has engulfed us and swamped us in the last four years. A time is coming when we must level off and catch our stride and take our place once more in the orderly, peaceful development of our wealth and resources and facilities. We want that to be a march forward toward continued prosperity. We don't want it to be backward toward the days of unemployment and hardship.

Personally I think the fellows who invented the slogan "500,000 in 1909" had the right spirit but the wrong technique. The job of selling Portland could not be done through advertising like our cigarette companies.

They overlooked that others could advertise too. Tacoma did and their slogan was "Watch Tacoma Grow." Seattle had a slogan and San Francisco and Los Angeles and all the rest. Now we have a little different idea on which to hang our hat. Thousands upon thousands of people have come to Portland to sample its weather, its people, its facilities, its working conditions, its living conditions, its attractions and its spirit. Living here as a part of Portland, these people have really been sold. Advertising didn't do it. Experience did. Among them are thousands upon thousands of very desirable citizens. They are skilled workers of the highest type. They are the kind of people who built Portland in the first place. They are the kind we want to keep here to build and grow and prosper. There are some, of course, who will not stay. There are some we will not want to stay. There are some we will invite to leave. But there are thousands upon thousands we will do everything within our power to keep.

Personally I have no doubt about the future. I can see the shape of permanent prosperity. I think we will go on from war work to peace/^{time}work. I think we will see our great industrial front swing from the manufacture of the implements and products of war to the implements and products of peace. I think we will find a place for those fine newcomers who wish to stay. I think we will provide a place for those who previously made Portland their home and of greatest importance of all for those who dropped their places in our community life to go forth to fight our war.

The resources are here - barely touched. The manpower, the management and the capital are here. Our blood has been stirred by the tonic of a great industrial experience. We've learned what industry is and what it does and how it does it. We've learned that all the resources that stood idle in our back yard through all the past years are gold needing only the touch of ambition to convert them to payrolls and dividends. Perhaps we may have to thank the gruesome war for opening our eyes to what we have and for opening the eyes of the world to what is here. We would

rather have had them opened in some other way but at whatever cost, they've been opened and will not be closed when war is out of the way.

This is not the time or occasion to become specific as to what the basis is for all this optimism but there is a basis and it is sound. The group who make up the membership of the Realty Board are perhaps in a better position to know the facts than most any other of our people. We know of the presence of ample labor of every kind. We know of the titanic flow of electric power that extends an inviting hand to post war development. We know of the 80 or more industrial firms that are ready to come and open up. We know of the ambitions and plans and intentions of scores of industrialists who are already here. Out of what we have plus what we have now signed up plus what is certain to come when the peace time boom begins, I don't think Portland has much to worry about.