

ment, on the second of March, 1849. The following day Governor Lane issued his proclamation and assumed the reins of government, being but one day before the expiration of President Polk's term of office.

Other officers of the new territory did not arrive until a few months later. These were Kintzing Pritchett, secretary; William C. Bryant, chief justice; and O. C. Pratt and P. H. Burnett, associate justices. Some of these gentlemen became quite prominent in the subsequent history of the coast. Peter H. Burnett, who had come to Oregon several years before, soon went to California, and, in 1850, was elected the first governor of the Golden state. He still resides in San Francisco, honored and respected in his old age. O. C. Pratt was a central figure in Oregon politics for many years, being the acknowledged leader of the democratic party in the state. General Lane's history is well known to all, his personal participation in the Indian wars, his services at Washington, both as delegate and senator, his candidacy for the vice-presidency on the pro-slavery ticket with General Breckenridge, in 1860, and his subsequent retirement to private life. He died at his home in Douglas county in 1880. Joe Meek discharged the duties of marshal with the vigor and fearlessness that marked his conduct throughout his entire career, and, after retiring from office, lived in the state until his death, in 1875.

Oregon remained in a territorial state for ten years, suffering all the evils of a partisan government and intense political strife. The people early aspired to the rights and dignity of statehood, and the question of framing a constitution was ever present in politics. The adjoining state of California was admitted into the Union the very next year, under phenomenal conditions, without passing through the territorial stage, and this did much to render the people of Oregon discontented with a territorial form of government. The most prolific cause of discontent was the length of time required to communicate with the seat of government at Washington. All laws passed by the legislature were subject to the disapproval of congress, and it took several months to learn whether or not an act had been thus rendered void. There was the same delay in filling the frequent vacancies in the ap-

pointive offices, in imparting instructions for the guidance of officials, and, in fact, in the transaction of all business requiring communication with the departments. It was a most unwieldy and cumbersome

form of government, and was very irksome and repulsive to the people. Added to this, was the great and almost constant struggle with the Indians, which aided to keep them continually discontented with governmental tutelage. In 1853 Washington Territory was cut off from Oregon, and in June, 1854, the remainder of Oregon voted adversely on the question of a constitutional convention. Twice again, in 1855 and 1856, the people voted not to frame a constitution; but in 1857, by an overwhelming majority, they voted to frame a constitution to be submitted to congress. The convention met at Salem, on the seventeenth of August, 1857, and was presided over by Hon. M. P. Deady, our present United States district judge. The question of slavery was especially avoided in the convention, and was made a special article, upon which the people could vote separately. The constitution was opposed by some because it did not especially prohibit slavery, and by others because it did not establish it; but a large majority were in favor of



its adoption, as appeared in the election in November, when seven thousand one hundred and ninety-five votes were cast for it, and only three thousand two hundred and fifteen against. The special slavery clause was rejected by an even greater majority, seven thousand seven hundred and twenty-seven voting against it, and only two thousand six hundred and forty-five in its favor. A full set of officers was elected, and General Lane and Delazon Smith were sent to Washington as senators; but congress adjourned without passing an enabling act, and Oregon was blessed with a double set of officers. The state officials remained quiet until news was received, early in 1859, that after a long and bitter struggle in the house of representatives, the enabling act had been passed on the twelfth of February, had been signed by President Buchanan, and that Oregon Territory was a thing of the past.