

THE OBSERVER
BRUCE DENNIS
Editor and Owner.

Entered at the postoffice at La Grande as second-class matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Daily, single copy 5c
Daily, per week 35c
Daily, per month 95c

This paper will not publish an article appearing over a nom de plume. Signed articles will be revised subject to the discretion of the editor. Please sign your articles and save disappointment.

FEBRUARY 1911						
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THE GOVERNOR'S BOUNDEN DUTY

There never was a time in Oregon when the veto power of a governor was so essential as at present, and it is his duty to use that veto on a large number of bills passed by the recent legislature. Increase in taxes in this state is so great that it threatens the very commercial foundation. One of the drawbacks to obtaining new settlers is high taxation. The first thing asked by a man who contemplates investment in a strange state is regarding the tax levy, and with conditions in Oregon as they are today it is a safe guess that many good prospective citizens will pass the state by because of taxation.

Our state expense is criminally large. Extravagance marks almost every department and heads of commis-

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sions and departments think nothing whatever of having a deficiency to be put up to the next session of the legislature. This was a notable year for such extravagance and unfortunately the legislature had a whitewash brush out for every official charged with poor business methods. It was whitewash from start to finish and the legislature as a whole was a nest of rabbits afraid to take a stand and draw officials up with a jerk.

Therefore, the eyes of the taxpaying public are now on Governor West in the hope that he may use his veto powers on increased expenses in such a way that a great deal of the last session's work will be undone.

WATCH LA GRANDE THIS YEAR

The Baker Herald, under its new management is making the usual fight for home and urging everyone to line up and make Baker a bigger and better place to live in. This line of work is always commendable and La Grande rejoices to know that Baker keeps pegging away. But we are also mindful of the fact that La Grande is gradually passing Baker on the commercial highway and this year promises to settle the question for all time to come as to which city is to be the Spokane of Eastern Oregon. Watch La Grande forge to the front in the next twelve months. Added to the many resources so often described this city is going to benefit greatly from the gold strike at Joseph and from the mining to be done up the Grande Ronde river. Put mining money into La Grande along with what she has and she will be the best town of her size in the whole nation—none excepted.

Senator Pierce recently returned from a business trip to California. When asked how he liked the country, he said: "Oh, that state is one great big playground. I like to play a little bit and while I play I should like to be there. But as a steady diet give me the Northwest where we have a snowstorm occasionally and a little wind to break the monotony." This was very well said for the most energetic man on earth would become a drone in a place where flowers bloom continually and the scent of orange blossoms was ever present.

Portland is talking of spring while La Grande has several inches of snow and indications of more to come. That is not very strange when you consider the fact that over on the Grande Ronde river there is a section where spring remains the whole year round and settlers grow tobacco and cotton at will. Great is this Oregon state, and the most fastidious can find the climate of his choice.

It is but natural for the railroads to curtail expenses. That was evident when the Interstate Commerce Commission decided against the transportation lines. But perhaps this will open the great railroad question for re-adjustment, and while the time of re-adjusting may bring some calamity things may be much better afterward both for the companies and for the people.

Death Valley Scotty has showed up again with plenty of gold. But there is no direct evidence to show that Scot-

ty has not been making a quiet visit to Joseph, and it is possible that he obtained his bag of treasure from the Lew mining camp at the lake.

The ladies have decided no more Paris for them when millinery styles are to be coined. Fine and dandy, but will the American style originators be as expensive as the French artists?

Baker county killed over 2,000 coyotes and a hundred bob cats, according to the scalp bounties paid. But do these include the scalps brought over from Idaho?

Everything points to a mining year for Eastern Oregon.

THE GOLD WAS THERE.

But Mark Twain Missed It by Just One Pail of Water.

With Steve Gillis, a printer of whom he was fond, Mark Twain went up into Calaveras county to a cabin on Jackass hill, where Steve's brother Jim, a lovable, picturesque character (the "Truthful James" of Bret Harte), owned mining claims. Mark decided to spend his vacation in pocket mining and soon added that science to his store of knowledge. It was a halcyon, happy three months that he lingered there. One day with Jim Gillis he was following the specks of gold that led to a pocket somewhere up the hill when a chill, dreary rain set in. Jim was washing and Clemens was carrying water. The "color" became better and better as they ascended, and Gillis, possessed with the mining passion, would have gone on regardless of the rain. Clemens, however, protested and declared that each pail of water was his last. Finally he said in his deliberate, drawing fashion:

"Jim, I won't carry any more water. This work is too disagreeable. Let's go to the house and wait till it clears up."

Gillis had just taken out a pan of earth.

"Bring one more pail, Sam," he pleaded.

"I won't do it, Jim! Not a drop! Not if I knew there was a million dollars in that pan!"

They left the pan standing there and went over to Angel's camp, which was nearer than their own cabin. The rain kept on, and they sat around the grocery and barroom smoking and telling stories to pass the time.

Meanwhile the rain had washed away the top of the pan of earth, left standing on the slope of Jackass hill and exposed a handful of nuggets—pure gold. Two strangers had come along and, observing it, had sat down to wait until the thirty day claim notice posted by Jim Gillis should expire. They did not mind the rain—not with that gold in sight—and the minute the thirty days were up they followed the lead a few paces farther and took out \$20,000 in all. It was a good pocket. Mark Twain missed it by one pail of water.—Chicago Post.

INSURANCE MAPS.

Handy Guides For Underwriters In Fixing Premium Rates.

Many persons must have noticed when making application for fire insurance that it is the practice of the underwriter to examine certain maps before he will fix the rate of premium or accept a risk on the property offered. His lithographic surveys marked off in diagrams of red and yellow and other colors are always in evidence, sometimes bound securely in dozens of large volumes, on other occasions laid conveniently in piles of loose sheets for handy reference.

Few persons realize, however, that these maps contain all the information which the underwriter desires to know about the building he is asked to insure and that in most instances matters are explained to him by single glance than the applicant can make even though he be the owner of the property.

As a matter of fact the details set forth are most explicit. The map-maker has managed by colors, characters and signs to give a full description of the construction, equipment and occupation of the building, everything which over fifty years of this sort of surveying has proved to be of any possible interest to the insurance man. It is so complete, for instance, that an agent in New York city can readily form a good idea of the character of a risk situated in some town in Missouri or California, or, vice versa, agents in towns in these western states can likewise tell the character of a risk in New York city.—Cassier's Magazine.

Banked Rails.

In rounding a curve the tendency of the weight of a train is invariably to shift to the outside wheels. To counteract this tendency the outer rail of a curve is raised on a higher level than the inside, the elevation being in an exact proportion to the sharpness of the curve as determined by the principles of engineering. If both rails of a curved track were of exactly the same elevation a train would not dare round it at high speed.



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ATTORNEYS AT LAW.

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D. W. C. NELSON—Mining Engineer Baker City, Oregon.

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