

THE OBSERVER

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S	M	T	W	T	F	S		
							1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
16	17	18	19	20	21	22		
23	24	25	26	27	28	29		
30	31							

THE GOVERNOR AND PARDONS

Governor Oswald West, who up to the present time has not made nearly so poor a governor as some of us thought he would make, has the wrong idea of pardoning power. He is going to the extreme and results will prove it.

In this Oregon country it has been no small matter to convict men guilty of crimes. Technicalities, delays and a hundred other things have been stumbling blocks in the way of officers who were trying hard to make justice prevail. And now that the governor almost assures a pardon to a criminal the odium of trial and sentence is all that stands between men who would commit crime and the real act itself.

Ask Frank Childers, Ed. Rand or Marvin of Walla Walla county or Till Taylor of Unatilla, all of whom are sheriffs who spend a great deal of time hunting criminals, what it means for the state to spend several hundred dollars securing a criminal and trying him only to have a governor exercise his pardoning powers. The taxpayers are the ones who suffer the loss for it is their money all officials use from the governor down to the most remote constable.

Governor West may be of tender heart; he may want to do something for mankind, and it is presumed that he does. But what is the use of taking chances with the kind of criminals who get into an Oregon penitentiary? We presume the governor is familiar with the statistics which show but a very few innocent men ever get into prison and the majority of those who receive punishment seldom get what their crime justifies. This being true, it seems extravagance of charity to begin with pardons and keep constantly at it.

"ON FULL TIME AGAIN."

Probably the best piece of local news in the Evening Observer today is the statement that the railroad shops have posted a notice of full time again. This means everything to La Grande for the railroad boys are a very important part of this community. With them and the employees at Palmer's

mill, the Grande Ronde Lumber company and the Sugar refinery there is a pillar to La Grande's commercial existence formed which is impregnable and permits this city to stand in the front rank of all northwestern municipalities.

One of the happiest men over the new statement at the shops is Jack Watson. While dull times does not affect him directly, being one of the company's department heads, nevertheless he is always happy when his boys are doing well and when he can give them full time. A big check for his men is one of Watson's pleasures as well as a pleasure to the men.

It is hardly likely that there will be any depression felt in transportation circles for some time. The fiscal year has closed and the curtailment incident to that period has passed. The avenue is now opened for activity and a forward movement in all lines.

RESTRICTION OF THE SALE OF HABIT-FORMING DRUGS.

The Boylan bill to prohibit the sale of hypodermic syringes or needles at retail without an order from a physician or veterinary, which passed the New York legislature some time ago, has been signed by the governor and is now a law. This measure is an effort on the part of the state of New York to control the growing use of morphine and cocaine. Commenting on this evil the Outlook said editorially: "It seems incredible that there should be any objection on the part of any intelligent person to the passage of such a measure. . . . The is beyond doubt that the availability of the hypodermic syringe has been as much a factor in the widespread use of morphine, cocaine, etc., as the availability of the drugs themselves and that the vast majority of the hypodermic syringes and needles are used to give morphine and cocaine in a harmful way. The objection is made that drug fiends could easily obtain syringes and needles through the mails from druggists in another state. This is perfectly true and is, of course, the weak point in all state legislation designed to control the use of habit-forming drugs and instruments for their injection. If New York state will lead the way in this reform, however, there is little doubt that other states will follow so good an example. At all events, the lower grade of drug and department stores of New York and elsewhere would be deprived of one of their activities. . . . If the laity is buying hypodermic outfits we may, we think, rest assured that it is for the harmful injection of morphine and cocaine."

The statement made by the Outlook, that hypodermic syringes and harmful drugs can be sent through the mails from other states, having no restrictive laws, can and should be met by appropriate federal legislation prohibiting interstate commerce in hypodermic syringes, needles and habit-forming drugs, except by responsible and properly authorized persons. The suppression of traffic in these drugs for vicious purposes will probably necessitate the adoption of some restrictions and regulations on the part of physicians. For instance, in the bill introduced two years ago in congress, by Mr. Mann, intended for the suppression of interstate commerce in morphine and cocaine it was provided that physicians ordering such drugs from pharmaceutical houses outside of their

own state must be registered with the federal authorities and must keep a record of the amount of such drugs ordered and the manner of their disposal. As was to be expected, this proposition brought out indignant protests from pharmaceutical mail order houses and others who asserted that it was an infringement on the rights of the dispensing physician. To this cry was added the usual stock argument that the proposed legislation was inspired by a drug syndicate for the purpose of preventing dispensing by physicians. As a matter of fact, Mr. Mann's bill was drafted in accordance with the recommendations of the International Opium conference held at The Hague and composed of representatives of the various nations interested in the suppression of the opium traffic.

Custom house records show that the importations of opium and cocaine into this country vastly exceed the amount required by physicians for legitimate purposes. Beyond question, the surplus is used for the gratification of drug habits and the creation of new victims. The repression of this horrible traffic can be accomplished only by rigid regulation of the legitimate trade, for which a careful record of all sales and purchases of such drugs is essential. If such regulation imposes some inconveniences on our profession, it must be accepted as a part of our duty to the state and to the public. We must recognize the fact that the right to use dangerous drugs for saving life as a corollary carries with it an obligation to prevent the improper or harmful use of such drugs and that it is quite as important a duty of physicians to see that no person secures morphine or cocaine who does not need it as it is to see that patients who are need of the beneficent effects of such a drug are given the benefit of it. We congratulate New York on having been the first to pass such a bill and hope that her example will be followed speedily by all other states. — Journal of the American Medical Association, July, 1911.

NEW COBLE SUSPECT.

Section Foreman Now Suspected of the Rainier Murder.

Olympia, July 21.—Sheriff Gaston, with J. H. Wilson, the newest suspect in the Coble double murder, is on his way to the scene of the murder today. Wilson first gave out the news of the disappearance of the Swan Peterson suspect, still held at Olympia. Wilson, a section foreman, will be confronted with the bloody room and the axe that brought death to the young couple. Gaston says Wilson has been acting strangely since the crime. Wilson is married, and has five children, and lived near the Coble home.

Explosion Kills Two.

Springfield, Ill., July 21.—Charles Baker and John Buck are dead and two other men are critically injured through the explosion of the engine in the power plant of the Illinois traction company at Riverton. Last night the engine had just been inspected and the power turned on for the first time. The cause of the explosion is as yet unknown.

Reward Out for Robbers.

St. Paul, July 21.—The Northern Pacific today offered a reward of \$7,500 for the capture and conviction of the three bandits who robbed the passengers on the limited yesterday in North Dakota. Several suspects are arrested at different stations.

Parades at Potlatch Today.

Seattle, July 21.—The army and navy parade, the illuminated pageant of progress and flights in a biplane by Eugene Ely, are the big features of today's Golden Potlatch celebration. The big effe will come to a close tomorrow night was a maskers' march to be held by the Elks.

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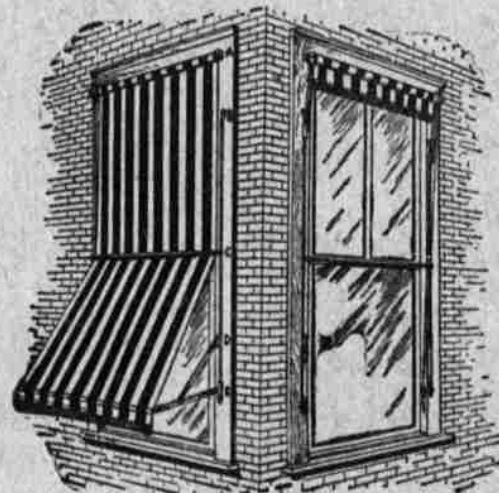
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