

THE OBSERVER
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SUBSCRIPTION RATES.

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AN ABLE WAGE ARGUMENT.

Fully as strong an argument as the railroads of the east are putting up to back their request for an increase of 5 per cent in freight rates, is being advanced by the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy railroad employes in support of their demand for an increased wage.

The railroad employes have presented figures showing that the purchasing power of the dollar is now only about one-half of what it was in 1902. On the basis of the market for 15 articles of food they attempt to show that the value of the American dollar has dwindled from 100 to 51.4 cents in 11 years.

The 15 articles of food, on the cost of which the figures are based are sirloin steak, round steak, rib roast, pork chops, smoked bacon, smoked ham, lard, hens, wheat flour, corn meal, eggs, creamery butter, potatoes, granulated sugar and fresh milk. The figures showing the relative purchasing power of the dollar are taken from studies of the high cost of living made by the government and issued officially by the federal bureau of labor statistics.

The employes of the Burlington presented a table showing the steady decline of the purchasing power of a dollar from 1902 to August 1913. It shows the dollar was worth its full value in 1902 and went up very slightly in 1903, when it was worth 101 per cent. In 1904 it went down to 99.4 per cent, which rate it maintained through 1905, but from that year the decline in value has been steady. In 1906 according to the table, the dollar was worth 95.8 cents. By 1910 it had dropped to 72.5 cents. Following this it took a spurt in 1911, when it went up to 74.9 but it dropped again in 1912 to 63.9. In August this year it had fallen to 51.4.

Basing their argument on these figures, the employes allege that the annual approximate cost of the average workingman's family for food in 1902 was \$339. By 1912 the cost had advanced to \$463 a year, an in-

crease of \$124 a year, or 36.5 per cent, more for food in 1912 than in 1902.

On the other hand the employes show that the freight traffic increased on the Burlington railroad from 1902 to 1912 was 93.34 per cent and that the passenger traffic increase was 84.98 per cent. Their further argument was this:

"Not only did the average car capacity of each car increase, but the number of cars to a freight train also greatly increased. The productive efficiency of each freight train man increased 40.53 per cent in the decade under consideration. Their productive efficiency in terms of ton miles is greater than that of the freight train man of any other western road except two.

"The efficiency of each passenger conductor increased 3.53 per cent and passenger train man 5.66 per cent.

"The effect on the men's earning power is no less significant. Although each conductor and trainman handled more freight and passengers per man in 1912 than in 1902, owing to the greater trainloads and the increased arduousness and duration of labor performed, the earning power of each man actually declined in the face of a greater output per man."

It is such strong cases as this which the Burlington employes have put up that wins wage increases with more speed than strikes and boycotts.

HOW RUMORS GROW.

There is an old proverb which goes that "people believe what they want to believe." Nothing multiplies with the same rapidity as a rumor. Whether it is the besmirching of the good name of another or the telling a story that is absurd on its face, makes no difference. Perhaps there is something in the statement that the teller of a "whopper" is somehow heightened in the estimation of the hearer of the story, and makes the details of the tale as vivid as his powers will permit. A good story teller is a favorite everywhere. Sometimes he has had time to digest the substance of his story and is therefore in a position to tell the tale with some semblance of probability. In most cases the story comes from one who has heard it from another, and by the time it goes the rounds and comes out of the churn of various imaginations it hardly resembles the original tale.

An instance in point was the happening on the O.-W. last Sunday. All the cars of No. 10 had left the track, no one was hurt and the equipment suffered little damage. That was the whole story. But busy minds in the city began to speculate what could happen when a train left the track. Some one related the story of the happening; this person put a few finishing touches to it. A third embellished it with new details, a fourth knew there must have been a terrible loss of life, and the last man, with the words "loss of life" still ringing

in his or her ears, put numbers to it. Surely, the fireman and engineer had to get killed. There could be no accident without the loss of life to these men, right at the head of the train. A neighbor had the story related to him and was told that the number of injured and killed was 30.

By this time of course some one interested in the engineer's family must break the news to the sorrowing widow. She gets it straight from so-and-so, and it must be true. Thinking such an accident might befall these men a little faith is given to the story and worry commences. In the end comes the real story: "Everybody is safe. No damage done. Train is off the track."

Sometimes people are wont to rail at the courts for the slowness of which trials are conducted. If they were conducted with the same haste in which many persons make such snap judgments, there would be more dissatisfaction than there is now.

A fond father once told his son to think three times before speaking. One day they started on a walk, the father in the lead and the boy bringing up the rear hunting stones to throw at birds. The parent had just concluded a cool smoke and put the pipe into his pocket, without shaking out the livid ashes. Presently the boy saw smoke coming from the pocket of his father.

In a loud voice he shouted: "Father I think." The father turned around but the boy said nothing. Again the lad shouted: "Father I think," and stopped short, watching the fond pater turning for an explanation of these peculiar outcries. At last the boy shout: "Father, I think your coat's on fire," when the head of the house discovered to his excitement that his coat was actually burning.

There are some explanations of the first advice about thinking three times before speaking, but that is not necessary here. There is a moral to this old tale and if people used their heads a little more instead of their tongues there would not be so much explaining. Wait until you know the facts before you attempt to tell a half baked story to one who will invariably stretch it.

LEW FERGUSON'S COURAGE.

Credit is due to Engineer Lou Ferguson for his presence of mind in the derailment of last Sunday near Haines. But for his cool nerve cars might have been piled upon each other and the loss of life might have been heavy. Instead of applying the emergency brakes which would have brought the train to an almost sudden stop he applied the air and brought his train to a gradual stop, preventing the jam that would have resulted from the momentum of a long string of cars. It is well to praise a man for years of faithful service during which time nothing out of the ordinary occurs. It is a sign that he is careful if he has no mishaps. But where the inevitable happens, requiring quick thought and cool nerve the man who shows in the emergency is worth more than the man who has never been tried.

Passengers on the train to the number of 70 sent a signed note of praise to President Farrel of the O.-W. at Portland, praising Engineer Ferguson for his courage and quick thought. It was well deserved.

Annual Meeting of Stockholders of Cove State Bank.

Notice is hereby given that the annual meeting of the Stockholders of the Cove State Bank, will be held at their banking house in Cove, Oregon, on Tuesday, January 13, 1914, be- o'clock, P. M. of said day. At this tween the hours of 2 o'clock and 4 meeting a board of directors will be elected to serve for ensuing year and until their successors are elected and qualify, and such other business will receive consideration, as may properly offer at said meeting.

HUGH McCALL,
Cashier.

Cove, Oregon.

You growl when your wood is green and won't cook hubby's dinner in time. You say uncomplimentary things about the wood dealer for sending sappy fuel to your home when you are away. Get dry wood and do away with the trouble. Snook Brothers have absolutely dry wood that makes some hot fire. Phone M 706. e.o.d.-3t.

JANUARY

Clearance Sale!

Our Entire Line of Men's, Women's and Children's

SHOES

all included in this great sale--nothing reserved.

No Job Lots Bought for this Sale. We are putting on this sale to reduce our stock before inventory. Nothing but our regular stock at Reduced Prices.

One lot of Misses' shoes, patents, kids and gun metals, in button and lace shoes, up to \$3.50, sizes up to 6, \$1.00 Pair.

One lot, Boys' shoes, gun metal and kid; good serviceable shoes for winter; sizes up to 5½; regular prices up to 3.00, at \$1.65

One lot of Ladies' patent kid and gun metal shoes; button and lace, all sizes; regular prices up to 3.50, at \$1.45.

One lot Ladies' button shoes in black and tans; all good lasts, some high tops; mostly 4.00 grades, Special \$2.75.

These are only a few of the BARGAINS you will find at our store during this SALE, which STARTS JANUARY 2nd. Don't fail to take advantage of this sale and SAVE MONEY.

10% Off on all Men's, Women's and Children's Hosiery.

NO SALE ON RUBBERS.

L. J. French Shoe Co.
La Grande's Exclusive Shoe Dealers

La Grande National Bank

Organized in 1887.

DESIGNATED DEPOSITORY OF UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT.
UNITED STATES POSTAL SAVINGS DEPOSITORY.

Capital	\$100,000.00
Surplus	\$130,000.00
Total Resources	\$1,000,000.00

For twenty-six years, in all kinds of financial weather, we have successfully catered to the monetary wants of the people of La Grande and the Grande Ronde Valley.

We respectfully solicit your business.

La Grande National Bank

La Grande, Oregon