

BIG STEALING UNEARTHED

Alleged Conspiracy to Rob Telegraph Company Discovered.

Secret service men in the employ of the Western Union Telegraph company have unearthed an alleged conspiracy among operators of railroad offices in the northwest and California, whereby, they declare, stealings have been made within the past 18 months amounting to many thousands of dollars.

Regular Western Union operators are not involved in the conspiracy. The stealing is charged by the detectives entirely against operators in isolated railroad offices where there was no check upon their work.

At least one arrest has been made, that of an operator at Ritzville, Wash. It is alleged that this operator has made confession implicating a dozen others. There is reason to believe other arrests also have been made, or soon will be made.

According to the report of the detectives the small group of which the Ritzville operator was a member was but a link in the chain of the conspiracy, which extended from Helena to San Francisco.

Superintendent Reid Investigates.

News of the discovery of the conspiracy came to light yesterday when R. T. Reid, Western Union superintendent for the northwestern district, with headquarters at Seattle, stopped off in Portland on his way home from a trip south. Simultaneously with Mr. Reid's visit a story was sent out from Portland by the Associated Press that a conspiracy had been unearthed, that its ramifications were wide, that a vast sum of money had been stolen by railroad telegraph operators and that a number of arrests had been made.

The source of its information was carefully guarded by the Associated Press, but that Mr. Reid had given it was seen in the Associated Press offices by the Oregonian reporters.

Later in the day, I. N. Miller, Jr., Western Union superintendent at San Francisco, gave out a statement calculated to minimize the Portland story. Mr. Miller's statement was that only one arrest had been made and that the operations of the alleged thieves had been confined to the lines of the Northern Pacific railroad.

Investigations made last night show it to be a practical certainty that the alleged conspiracy is of wider scope than is indicated by the statement of the San Francisco official, but whether the charges made by the detectives can be substantiated or not does not appear.

How They Operated.

The mode of operation of the alleged conspirators was simple. An operator at a small station where there was no checking system would receive a message for another similar point, take payment for the company, transmit the message and pocket the money, which was subsequently divided with the operator at the receiving office. Neither operator, it is charged, kept any record of the message, so the company had no way of checking such transactions.

It is alleged the discovery of the conspiracy came about through the greediness of certain of the operators, who finally became so bold that they would receive a message, take payment and then destroy the copy, without transmitting it, in order to avoid dividing the spoil with receiving operators. This course led to so many complaints that suspicion became aroused and an investigation was started.

Secret service men were sent to about 100 small railroad stations to send paid messages to other similar points. It is alleged that of the messages given and paid for by these detectives, 85 per cent were sent and delivered without record being made or accounting returned, and several were withheld and not sent at all.

Large Number Involved.

When the investigation commenced it was known to the company that the number of operators involved in the petty graft was large, but the officials had no idea of the extent of the organization, nor did they realize that the understanding prevailed over such an extensive territory. The arrest or arrests in the state of Washington brought the entire scheme to light.

Some time before the development of the telegraphers' strike a year ago last summer a similar graft was unearthed by the company, but with its discovery and the summary discharge of the operators involved it came to an end. However, the present system discovered is alleged to have

been one of the most gigantic schemes ever formed by employees of a corporation.

Such an extensive system of graft could not have occurred in a regular Western Union Telegraph office because of the checking system involved in these offices, as well as the fact that in most instances the messages when received are handled by clerks and not by the operators.

AT BUTTE FALLS.

B. H. Harris Gives Excellent Report of Conditions There.

B. H. Harris of Butte Falls is spending holiday week in Medford. A Morning Mail representative engaged Mr. Harris in conversation yesterday and from him he learned that the most important bit of news from that section was the fact that a good wagon road is being built to the Falls—one with a grade no greater than 5 per cent. This, Mr. Harris says, will make it easy "going" for automobiles all the way between Medford and Butte Falls, and will be ready for use in early spring.

In talking with Mr. Harris regarding railroad matters, he stated that Mr. Dewing was simply waiting until he had either gotten possession of the Eagle Point line or his mortgage had been paid off. In the event of his getting possession of the road he will at once extend the line to Butte Falls and into the vast merchantable timber belt which surrounds the Falls. On the other hand, if he does not get possession of this line he will construct one of his own, to extend from Medford to Butte Falls and into the timber, as above stated.

As a matter of fact, there can be developed by the falls at Butte Falls, 15,000-horsepower. Mr. Harris and his company, including Mr. Dewing, own this power, and they do not propose to allow all this natural energy to go unused, and to the end that it be utilized Mr. Dewing proposes to not only electrify this proposed road, but to as well electrify the entire valley—and why not? The power is there, and why not utilize it? This valley and surrounding foothills are too big and too vast in productiveness to be permitted to go undeveloped, and this to its greatest possible extent. The resources of all this country are beyond comprehension. No person can picture the future with all its resources undeveloped.

Aside from all the possibilities for the valley, there are back of this fully 100,000 acres of good fruit land as there is in Oregon, but this land is now densely covered with timber, which timber will be manufactured into millions of dollars' worth of lumber, when this proposed Dewing railroad is built to it.

GRILL CHANGES HANDS.

Lambert & Brown Dispose of Their Eating Establishment.

Although the Mission Grill, situated on South Central avenue, has been conducted in splendid shape since it was opened a few months ago and has been doing a good trade yet for some reason the proprietors, for reasons best known to themselves, have seen fit to sell out the business.

The transfer of the restaurant was made yesterday from Lambert & Brown to Ernest Hefler, who took possession of the place last evening and immediately started to carry out plans for enlarging the place and bettering the service. He has engaged as chef Charles Davis, who has been in the employ of Captain Short for some time and has the reputation of being one of the best men in the business in this part of the county. Mr. Hefler, who has purchased the business of the Mission Grill, is a hustler and is determined to give first-class service to all his patrons. It is his intention to have the restaurant open both day and night, so as to serve the patrons any time during the 24 hours. And the service at night will be just as good as that during the day.

HONOR OF MISS STREETS.

The pleasant home of Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Streets in West Medford was the scene Monday evening of a happy assemblage of young people in honor of Miss Alice Streets, who is attending the University of California and who is spending the holiday vacation at home.

Artistic arrangement of cedar boughs and Oregon grape with touches of red, added to the attractiveness of the pretty home and gave a festive air. Dancing and music were enjoyed till a late hour, when ice cream and cake were served. The affair was in the nature of a reunion of a crowd of young people who have spent many pleasant evenings together and have been separated for several months owing to the absence of many of the number at the University of Oregon and the University of California.

ORATORY WAS GREAT SUCCESS

Splendid Numbers on Program at Contest Tuesday Night.

The oratorical contest for a silver medal for the first prize was held at the Christian tabernacle last night. There was a good attendance and every number on the program was much enjoyed and heartily applauded. The winner of the contest was Marie Seeley, the daughter of Dr. Seeley, who was presented with the silver medal at the close of the entertainment.

The first oration dealt with the subject of "What Will We Do With the Saloon?" and the speaker went on to show that the consumption of liquor was greater now than ever before in the history of the country. The second was entitled, "The Story of a Sunbeam." The speaker related the story of the struggles of a widow mother in the bringing up of her son, who in after life was ruined by the liquor habit, which so affected his mother that she died of a broken heart.

The third oration was entitled, "A Modern Tyranny," which portrayed the cruel nature of "king rum," and called attention to the fact that this tyranny is licensed and made respectable by the sanction of law. The fourth on the program was "The Defense of Alamo." The fifth, "A Dream," which represented life in a vision of a moving procession of various shades of life, going to ruin.

The sixth oration was delivered by Marie Seeley and was entitled, "An Orphan's Prayer." It showed the changed condition of a once happy home through the influence of strong drink. This was the one which the judges decided was the best, and awarded to Miss Seeley the silver medal.

The seventh was a boy's idea of prohibition and what he thought of the bad results of the use of liquor. The eighth was a picture of a man who once dearly loved his family, but who lost that when he took to drink. The death of his child opened his eyes and was the means of bringing him back to his senses.

The ninth oration told how a little girl emptied a jug on her way home and what the result was. This, as well as all the other numbers on the program, was well received.

The following were the names of the contestants: Misses Audrey Harvey, Mary Orr, Hazel Cox, Eunice Iva, Iva Martin, Ora Duncan, Marie Seeley, Bernice Carder, Master Arnold Taylor.

In addition to the orations, the following program was rendered: Instrumental trio (selected), Miss Hamilton and Olin brothers; hymn, "America," No. 127, audience; Scripture reading, "The Crusade Psalm," 146 Psalm, Rev. Reuter; prayer, Rev. Horn; hymn, "Throw Out the Lifeline," No. 11; quartet, "Have Courage, My Boy, to Say No," Mrs. F. S. Day, Miss Bertha Pierce, Miss Lottie Wiley, Mrs. Dr. Butler, Messrs. F. S. Day, J. E. Day, Earl Olin and Mr. Hutchason; soprano solo, "Woman's Cause Shall Win" (C. B. Hawley), Mrs. Myra Miller-Stauffer (Pennsylvania); instrumental trio (selected), Miss Hamilton and Olin brothers; hymn, "Bringing in the Sheaves," No. 149.

Titles and authors of orations: "The Defense of the Alamo," Mrs. Nellie Burger; "A Dream," Mrs. Clara C. Hoffman; "The Stray Sunbeam," anonymous; "A Boy on Prohibition," adapted; "A Modern Tyranny," anonymous; "The Orphan's Prayer," anonymous; "What Will We Do With the Saloon?" Mrs. Mary T. Lathrop; "How a Little Girl Emptied the Jug," anonymous; "Good-Night, Papa," American Messenger. The judges of the contest were: Mrs. Carlo, Professor Stern and Mrs. Miller-Stauffer. At the conclusion, Mrs. Miller-Stauffer, on behalf of the local W. C. T. U., presented each one of the contestants with a silver pin and the winner, Marie Seeley, with the silver medal.

WILL INVEST HERE

Alaska Mining Man Likes Outlook Around Medford.

W. G. Vint, a wealthy Alaska mining man, was in Medford over Sunday, accompanied by J. R. Harvey, a hydraulic engineer. Yesterday they left for Galice, Or., where it is expected Mr. Vint will close a deal for some mining property which he has options on in the vicinity of that place.

Sunday Mr. Vint spent in driving around the country here, and stated before he left that he would return shortly and invest in a considerable quantity of fruit land. He also stated that it was his intention to make

his home here. On being asked by a Morning Mail reporter if he found things as good as he expected to see them, he said:

"I am more than surprised, in fact, I am simply astonished, with what I have seen both in the city and the country. The trouble is that you are not telling the outside world one-half that you should. Many people are coming from the north and any number of them with money could be induced to come here. And if they come they would certainly remain. That is what I intend to do."

It is Mr. Vint's intention to put in a waterpower plant at the mines near Galice and to work them on a large scale. He says that the mines when properly worked will be great producers.

SCHOOL PUZZLE.

Much of the City Population Not in the District.

When C. C. Taylor made a recent school enumeration he discovered that not nearly all of East Medford is in the Medford school district.

The boundaries of the district, as laid out, extend east to the Eagle Point road, then north to and including Mrs. Phipps' residence, thence west to Bear creek.

On the south side of Seventh street there are only about three acres of land in the district, and this a narrow strip running from the Bear creek bridge to about where Mr. Smith lives. None of the residents south of this narrow strip have even been in the district, neither are those people in the district who live on Knob Hill, or in the Queen Ann or Carr additions—in fact, no land east of the Eagle Point road or north of Seventh street, east of the intersection of the Eagle Point road, is in the district; and the same is true of all the land south of Seventh street and east of Mr. Smith's residence.

A good part of the land referred to above is quite thickly settled and children from all these homes have been attending school in the Medford district. There is a state law which permits the inclusion of localities in a school district where they are within the incorporate limits—this without the circulation of a petition asking to come into the district.

The question which naturally arises is: In what school district have these property-owners been paying school taxes for the past several years?

The incorporate limits of the city does not include Knob Hill, or the Queen Ann and Carr additions.

ORCHARD SOLD.

A. P. Talent Disposes of 480 Acre Tract.

The sum of \$20,000 was paid over yesterday for 480 acres in San's valley. The land belonged to A. P. Talent of this city, and the transfer was made to J. R. Bradshaw of Colfax, Wash. It is the intention of the new owner to put out several hundred more fruit trees just as soon as the same can be procured.

After looking over land in different parts of Oregon and Washington, Mr. Bradshaw came to the conclusion that the Rogue River valley offered the best inducements and was willing to back his judgment with the sum of money mentioned.

Part of the tract purchased by Mr. Bradshaw has been planted with fruit trees which will soon be in bearing; in fact, some of them are bearing now. After putting out some more trees the balance of the land will be planted to alfalfa. Those who are acquainted with the land are of the opinion that Mr. Bradshaw has made a good deal in acquiring the property.

The sale was made through the Cusick, Myers, Eads company, real estate dealers, of this city.

PARDONED CHRISTMAS DAY.

A Kansas Man Accused of Killing His Father Will Be Set Free.

LAWRENCE, Kan., Dec. 22.—J. Collings, who is serving a life sentence in the Kansas penitentiary for the murder of his father, a well-to-do real estate man of this city, ten years ago, will be free Christmas day. The Governor believes Collings innocent. Collings was convicted on the testimony of three negroes, all of it being circumstantial.

At the time the state set up the plea that Collings was in love with Miss Florence Babcock, a wealthy young woman of Kansas City, and assigned as the motive a desire to get the father's insurance money in order to secure funds to marry her.

One of the negroes has since written a book in which he confessed that his testimony was part of a plan of the enemies of Collings to ruin him.

The elder Collings was found dead one morning after a visit to his son at Lawrence.

MAIL WANT ADS BRING RESULTS

TICKET NAMED BY SOCIALISTS

First Party in the Field for the Coming City Election.

CITY TICKET OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY.

Mayor—Ernest Wolters.
Councilmen:
First ward—Joseph L. Wonderley.
Second Ward—To be filled by the committee.
Third Ward—D. B. Reame.

The Socialists of Medford met last night in convention and nominated a ticket for the city election, with the exception of a councilman for the second ward, which will be filled by a committee appointed for that purpose. At the meeting the following resolutions were adopted:

"We, the Socialists of Medford, in convention assembled, again endorse the principles of international socialism. We call the attention of the people of Medford to the fact that all governments are essentially class governments, and that all legislation is primarily class legislation. Taking this for a starting point, it is unreasonable to expect the profit taking employing class to legislate against their own interest and in the interest of the wage-earner.

"If the producing class are to receive any benefits from legislation they must organize politically in order that they may elect their own representatives to city, county or state legislative bodies. This is the essence of class consciousness which our president so much deplores.

"Realizing this truth, we come before the voters of this city in the interest of the working class. And if it should be our good fortune to be elected to any office we shall be found working for the interest of the working class.

"As measures to the immediate interest of the workers, we offer the following:

"First—The abolition of all private contracts on public work. Men to be hired direct by the city, thereby doing away with the large profits to wealthy contractors, which should go to the wage-earner in increased wages.

"Second—We demand the eight-hour workday on all public work, and that union wages be paid.

"Third—We demand that the city establish a public bathroom, gymnasium and billiard room, so that men will have a place to go other than the saloon.

"Fourth—We demand that the property clauses in the city charter be stricken out. It is unconstitutional for property to be made the basis for the holding of office. It is also class legislation.

"Fifth—We favor the establishing of a city electric and power plant, and furnish consumers with light, heat and power at cost of production. But we call your attention that public ownership can only be a success when its friends are behind it.

"Sixth—We demand that all street crossings on the Southern Pacific track be thrown open.

"If you favor these measures there is only one way to get them—that is by voting for Socialist candidates."

FELL THROUGH OPENING.

Blind Man Drops Into Basement of a Bank.

P. J. Head, the blind piano tuner, fell from the sidewalk into the basement of the Jackson County bank building about 11 o'clock yesterday and came near being seriously injured.

He was going north on Central avenue and was being led by his little son. The lad's attention was called to something behind him and he turned around, forgetting for a moment that his father was in danger, and, unfortunately, the janitor of the building had left the iron doors in the sidewalk standing half open, and Mr. Head walked, unconsciously, up to the opening, and striking his foot against the half-open door, was thrown off his balance and he fell headlong onto the steps leading to the basement, and from there rolled to the hard cement floor below. Mr. Head was picked up and taken to his home, where Dr. Hargrave made an examination of his injuries. No bones were broken, but his body was badly bruised and some flesh wounds were made.

The sidewalk along the west side

of the Jackson County bank, between Seventh street and the postoffice, is used more than any other in the city. The walk is only eight feet wide and when these basement doors are open there is scarcely room for one person to pass. The walk should be widened to at least 12 feet and those doors, at least during the busy part of the day, should be kept closed.

WEST TO TRY ANOTHER.

Will Wrestle With a Dalles Man on Christmas Day.

W. H. West, the Medford wrestler, is not smiling much since yesterday noon, when he met William Scholtes, of The Dalles, in the office of The Morning Mail and agreed to a match to be pulled off at the Medford Opera house Christmas afternoon.

West had tried to get Strangler Smith here from Portland, but he was unable to come at least for several weeks yet. However, he arranged to have Scholtes, his wrestling partner, come here, and is of the opinion that he will be all that West will want. He has promised that if the local man should win this match that he will come and show West that he is not entitled to claim the wrestling championship of Oregon, or even of the southern part thereof.

One of The Morning Mail employees has seen Scholtes wrestle three times and West twice, and he is of the opinion that West will have to do about his best if he wins this match, as Scholtes is certainly a splendid man at the business. At present he is the instructor and manager of The Dalles Athletic club, an dis a great favorite in that city. So far he has never been beaten.

One reason the Medford fans would like to have West win would be that Strangler Smith will have to come to Medford and give West a match. He has guaranteed to do this, but is of the opinion that Scholtes will be able to handle him without much trouble. West's friends are mostly from Missouri and will have to be shown.

When the two wrestlers met yesterday to arrange the match the only thing which stood in the way was the matter of the amount to be put up outside of the receipts. This was finally arranged for, and although the exact amount cannot be stated at present it will be something over \$150. West absolutely refused to sign for the match until this was arranged for.

Although the local man is the heavier, weighing 168 pounds, Scholtes is the quicker and weighs 160 pounds. Quite a large attendance is expected here for the match from outside points. The referee will be Jack Welsh.

AFTER LOAN SHARKS.

Legislature Will Be Asked to Make Changes.

PORTLAND, Dec. 18.—"Loan sharks" are to be given a little "heroic treatment" at the coming session of the legislature if the credit men have their way. Some drastic legislation, for instance may be applied. This is not altogether new idea was suggested and dwelt upon considerably at the regular monthly dinner of the Portland Association of Credit Men held at the Commercial club.

The form the proposed regulation of these usurers will take will be to make it unlawful for any employee to assign his salary or wages to any other person until such stipend has actually been earned. In other words, the credit men hope to secure a law which will prevent improvident people from spending money they haven't earned.

Several other legislative matters were discussed, among them being a bill to require the filing and keeping a record of all persons forming partnerships, and another to cope with extraordinary holiday seasons like the one during the flurry last fall. The suggested measure to make it a misdemeanor for any person to draw a check on a bank in which the author had no funds was turned down by the legislative committee on the ground that existing statutes afford ample protection along other lines.

A. H. Dovers addressed the credit men on the subject, "The Objects and Aims of the National Association of Credit Men." Thomas G. Greens spoke on "Some Legislation Which We May Present to the Next Legislature." The following members of the legislature were guests at the dinner: Senators C. W. Nottingham, A. A. Bailey, Ben Selling, Dan Kellar and John B. Coffey; Representatives K. C. Couch, A. W. Orton, W. J. Clemons, J. D. Abbott, J. C. Bryan, L. D. Malone, C. J. McDonald, E. J. Jaeger, L. M. Davis and B. C. Aitman.

FOR FARMERS ONLY.

Send us your name and postoffice address and we will mail you free, on January 1, a beautiful calendar. HUBBARD BROS., Medford.

PETITIONS ARE REGISTERED

Rejected by the Council and Will be Submitted to People.

The city council met last night in special session. There were present Mayor Reddy, Councilmen Merrick, Trowbridge, Wortman and Hifert.

The matter of appropriating \$250 of city funds for the purpose of sending W. G. Steel, of the Crater Lake wagon road committee, to Washington to advocate the appropriation of funds by congress for the building of a good road between Medford and Crater Lake was discussed, and upon motion it was voted to make the appropriation. This \$250 is estimated to be but about half of the amount of money necessary to defray Mr. Steel's expenses to Washington, but the other half the county commissioners have agreed to pay out of the county funds.

W. I. Vawter was present at the council meeting and as representative of the bond house of John Nuveen & Co. of Chicago, he read a telegram from that company received yesterday, in which they authorized him to adjust matters between the company and the city, and to adjust matter of accrued interest on bonds as he thought equitable and right. Matter referred to Assistant City Attorney A. E. Reames.

Eight bids were opened and read for the painting of street signs and the contract was awarded to J. E. Tott for 7 cents a sign. Other bids were those of Stone & Robbins, 11 cents; John McLelland, 21 cents; Bob Taylor, 15 cents; A. Christolm, 23 cents; H. J. Everett, 40 cents; Charles Brockman, 10 cents; Klum & Morgan, 12 cents.

Petition for water and sewer in Crowell addition was referred to city engineer.

Bond of Jacobson-Bade Co. in the sum of \$20,000 was accepted.

City engineer was instructed to prepare plans and specifications for an extension of water mains on Tenth street, the pipe to be four inches.

The petition of Miller & Ewbank to erect a corrugated iron building at the rear of the harness shop on the south side of East Seventh street was referred to the building committee with power to act.

The matter of extending the incorporate lines of the city was referred to city attorney and engineer.

The bid of the Jackson County Abstract company for \$500 for preparing a present ownership map of the city and an abstract of all city property was accepted and the company was directed to prepare the maps and abstract.

Petition to construct a ten-foot cement sidewalk on east side of North Bartlett street was referred to street committee.

A resolution was presented directing that at the next city election there shall be given the voters of the city an opportunity to vote for or against the prohibition of the liquor traffic in Medford. The resolution was adopted.

The two petitions, one presented by the saloonmen and one by the anti-saloon men, were both rejected. These were both petitions for the amendment of the city charter. This, however, does not mean that those petitions shall not be placed upon the ballots to be voted upon if the petitioners insist, as the initiative and referendum law makes it obligatory that the petitions be given an opportunity to vote upon these or any other measures which they may petition for.

RAN AWAY TWICE.

J. D. Lewis of Central Point and a Lady Friend Have Narrow Escape.

Sunday night J. D. Lewis of Central Point, with a lady friend, while driving a single horse and buggy from Jacksonville to Medford, met with quite a bad accident. The animal became frightened and ran away, throwing both out and broke one of the shafts. After they had again got the animal they fixed up the rig as best they could and as Mr. Lewis got in the horse again started to run, and upset the buggy, but it soon righted itself and horse and buggy came down Seventh street in this city at a lively pace. In crossing the railroad tracks the rig was further demolished—so much so that on reaching Central avenue horse and buggy became separated and the horse started for Central Point, but failed to stop there, and yesterday morning it was found several miles north of that place.

Some time after the horse passed down the street Mr. Lewis and the lady came in on foot, each badly shaken up and bruised, but neither had received any serious injuries.