

West Shore

PUBLISHED EVERY SATURDAY.

L. SAMUEL, Publisher.

PORTLAND, OREGON, N. W. Cor. Second & Yamhill Sts. SPOKANE FALLS, WASH., Corner Main & Stevens Streets.

Entered in the Post Office in Portland, Oregon, for transmission through the mails at a second class rate.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES---Strictly in Advance.

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|-----------------------|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| One Year, | \$4.00 | Three Months, | \$1.25 |
| Six Months, | 2.25 | Single Copies, | 10 |

100 Copies will in no case be sent to subscribers beyond the term paid for.

The WEST SHORE offers the Best Medium for Advertisers of any publication on the Pacific Coast.

Saturday, January 18, 1890.

A STRONG effort is being made in South Dakota by the single tax men to prevent the sale of school lands, as provided for in the constitution, and adopt the policy of leasing. This is based upon the single tax idea that the rental value of land belongs to the people, as represented by the government, a theory which a great many people are not yet willing to adopt, still the suggestion is a good one. The lands now belong to the state as a gift from the nation in trust for the benefit of public education, and the only question that should be considered is: How can the trust be managed to best secure the object for which it was made? If the lands be sold, the original purchase price represents all the benefit the schools will receive, and any increase in their value will inure to the holders of the title, who will pocket the increased rental value. Will it not be better for the school fund if the lands be rented than if they be sold? There seems to be no question about it. Of course if it be proposed to use the purchase money itself, instead of the interest received from its investment, there will be a larger sum immediately available for school purposes, at the expense of the future. But such a proceeding would be so improvident and unbusinesslike that to do so would be a betrayal of the trust. Why not, then, lease the lands, the rental increasing as the land becomes more valuable? Undoubtedly some portions of it will become of enormous value, and it is better that the public school fund should receive the increase, rather than the pockets of private individuals. These remarks apply as well to Washington and Montana as to the Dakotas. Washington already has a practical example of this in the school section near Tacoma, which should be an object lesson that ought not to go unheeded. If the school lands are properly handled they will in time yield a revenue that will support a system of public education superior to any in the older

states and such a thing as levying a state tax upon the people for school purposes will be unknown. Oregon's great mistake in the matter of school lands should be a warning to all new states.

A most impracticable bill has been introduced in the senate at Olympia seeking to punish people who are careless with firearms. The object sought is right enough, but the form of punishment borders on the ridiculous. It proposes as a penalty that the careless individual who injures another be debarred of the privilege of carrying arms in future, and if he simply discharges a gun prematurely he must deny himself the luxury of being a perambulating arsenal for five years. The utter impossibility of enforcing such a penalty while the person is at liberty to go wherever he chooses ought to be apparent to any man of sense. This is an effort to cure the least harmful phase of the weapon habit. It is the weapon in the hands of the man who uses it intentionally, though often without great deliberation, that does the most deadly work. There is no reason why men pursuing the peaceful walks of civil life should carry weapons at all, and the privilege of doing so simply permits those who make crime a business and those who needlessly carry weapons and use them in the heat of passion or in a causeless fright, to constantly menace the lives of others, and fills our jails with criminals. The privilege of bearing arms guaranteed by the constitution never included or intended such a state of affairs as exists to-day. What we need is a statute denying this privilege to every one not specially authorized; and its rigid enforcement would not only cure the mild malady of a careless handling of weapons, but the more fatal one of their use with murderous intent.

Those adherents to the belief of the direct management of the details of mundane affairs by the Almighty, and who can see his hand in every accident that occurs to persons violating their ideas of Sunday propriety or to every saloon or ungodly theatre, may be able to explain why the Catholic church at Sierra City, Cal., was destroyed by a snow slide and the Presbyterian church in Brooklyn, N. Y., by a wind storm a few days ago. Either denomination may be able to account for the disaster to the other, but how about both of them?

Roseburg has taken hold of the project of a railroad to Coos bay in earnest. At a public meeting held there on the ninth a committee was appointed to solicit stock for the Roseburg & Coos Bay railroad and to take general charge of the project. It is confidently expected that actual construction on the road will be commenced this year. Steps were also taken to organize a board of trade.