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MORRISON STREET BRIDGE.

The collapse of a section of the Morrison street bridge last Friday afternoon, and the letting down of 150 people, and the serious injury of half that number cannot be fairly charged against the people, as carelessness or thoughtlessness on their part. That the bridge was unsafe is proven by the decayed timber that caused the disaster; and that the people thought the bridge was safe is proven by the fact that so many women and children were crowded upon the section that fell. Women are not prone to congregate upon dangerous ground if it is known. And to credit them with their own wounds is little short of heartlessness.

The Morrison street bridge was a poor affair at best, but it met the requirements twenty-three years ago. For years it has been inadequate for the pressure of traffic imposed upon it. It has not been safe for several years, and competent engineers have made public statements to that effect, which later was denied by the street car company's engineer, who was paid to defend the company's cheap and exclusive franchise over the bridge.

Several bridge builders have predicted that some day the Morrison street bridge would be the scene of a great catastrophe, and it is little less than a miracle that many who fell last Friday afternoon were not killed outright.

The proof of the bridge's insecurity can be seen any day that a heavy load is drawn across it. There is a lateral swing to it that all bridge experts denominate as dangerous. A wooden bridge that vibrates up and down is considered safe, but where a lateral swing occurs the wrenching process wears the timbers upon the abutments and weakens the whole structure.

The bridge was unsafe at the time of the accident and it is not safe now. It may be sufficiently strong to carry the passing traffic safely for awhile, but it is not competent to withstand a great strain.

It was indeed a distressing and unfortunate accident, and that some one is at fault there is no question. Had the bridge been properly inspected the accident would not have occurred. A sound timber could easily have borne the weight. It is a shame that Portland must be connected with such old rattletraps. Thirty-five mills tax in the city is sufficient to put five bridges across the Willamette as good as the Burnside street bridge, and pave substantially every street in the business district. As it is there is not a decent bridge on any of the roadways leading into Portland, and last winter most of them were condemned. The streets are damnable, and the filching of the taxpayers goes on unarrested. Yes, some one is to blame for the Morrison street disaster, and it can be no other than the agents hired by the people to guard their interests and safety.

The officials having jurisdiction should secure the service of competent men to inspect all places where the safety of the public is doubtful, and a report of the findings should be publicly made regardless of any special privileges a corporation may have across the highway.

This hold-up business has not been confined to the streets of Portland on dark nights. It has been going along for almost an indefinite period, and the culprits have been playing their nefarious trade without the use of masks. It cannot be charged to the present administration any more than those of the past, but it is a notorious fact that corruption has stalked about in our public places for years, while our city has practically rotted down.

The people may be blamed for not

guarding their interests better than has been done, but the public is long suffering as a rule, and is largely dependent upon those they select to represent them.

The Morrison street bridge is a sad reminder of our derelictions, but it may have the effect of awakening public responsibility, and the prevention of a greater calamity. The people had already elected that a new bridge be built across the river at Morrison, and voted to tax themselves to do it, but its progress was held up by a company's franchise, and had the falling of the bridge section not occurred, and the people remained passive as they were, there is no telling but that some day the old bridge would have literally fallen into the stream from old age, franchise and all.

CHEAP LABOR.

The Federal law restricting the immigration of Chinese labor is beginning to chafe many of our large employers. There is a little stringency in the labor market at present and they are compelled to pay more for brawn and muscle than pleases them. Their contention is based now upon the scarcity of labor for clearing land, and servants. They say that white men will not clear land, and it is imperative that Coolie labor be admitted; that is, enough to meet the present requirements, or our great Northwestern country will in the main remain a wilderness.

Too bad about our isolation in the great forests of the West. It's a pity that the Chinese are not permitted to swarm into our ports and snatch us from the bounds of the wilderness. We would like to have our Chinese friends tell us what per cent of the Celestials on this coast that have shown a hankerin' for clearing land for other people. There is occasionally a gang sent out of the coast cities for this purpose, but compared to the number already here it is not enough to speak about.

A Chinaman is not a pioneer in any sense, and is not given to land clearing, nor has he a liking for that sort of occupation.

If a million Chinamen were landed on our shores tomorrow and turned loose the last thing they would take up would be clearing land. Chinamen are imitators. They choose an occupation already chosen by someone else, and thus they enter into immediate competition with our own workmen. There is nothing to imitate in clearing away brush and logs. The only way to get them to do such work, is to herd them at it, and it would be impossible to secure a law confining them to this kind of labor.

As to the need of servants for the quasi-aristocrats of our country, the restriction law can well remain.

There is no doubt that the Western country needs more land cleared, and there is neither any doubt that there will be plenty to clear it when times begin to squeeze.

It is not that we need so many land clearers, but we need more homeseekers who can afford to buy little homes and clear their own land. If this country would place a little more restriction upon the inferior immigration from Southern Europe and hold out great inducements for their northern industrious neighbors, a material difference would soon be seen.

The cry for Chinese labor for clearing land comes from the corporations who seek to gobble up all lands fit for the market, and the large employers of labor, who have become alarmed at the progress of organized labor.

It is not a Chinaman's nature to take to the woods, and when he gets there, what is he good for? One good white man is equal to about three good Chinamen. They take readily enough to canneries, gardening, placer mining and various trades, but as land clearers they are a failure.

Some other argument will have to be used in seeking to get them admitted unrestrained. Those already here are proof sufficient that they do not take kindly to the timber.

The best land clearers are those who seek a home for themselves and families, and the best way to get the country cleared is to organize and promote a plan that will attract the better class of immigration; then place the land within their reach. This is the better argument than that made for the unrestricted admission of Chinese.

WHAT'S THE USE OF FUSSING?

The expected has happened. The fireboat has been awarded to a Seattle firm. Now let us forever hereafter hold our peace about Portland's superiority over that of the metropolis of Puget Sound. Our incapacity to construct a \$62,000 boat is indeed a humiliating admission, but the city officials in charge say so and they have ratified the statement by deeds. What a travesty upon a city of 125,000 people—if it was so. The public spirit expressed by our official ser-

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vants is indeed refreshing, and Seattle had ought to feel proud over it—if we don't. Besides a splendid precedent has been established. It is now in order to have all of our building done elsewhere. Let our shipbuilders move to Seattle. It's a good place to get work. Portland don't need it. She is rich enough; besides her mechanics would want perhaps \$3.50 per day to work which sum they would foolishly and extravagantly spend amongst the merchants for food and something to wear. But it is a lesson to our shipbuilders for not bidding a few hundred dollars lower. They should be prepared for such emergencies as are the Moran Bros., who were bounced into prosperity by Seattle citizens. They should have capital behind them and the facilities and capacity to do work, and if they haven't they should—go to Seattle where the people are generous enough to start them in business. And they should—but what's the use to quibble about a \$62,000 job? Why, the boat will be made out of iron!

The demands made by various classes of railway employees for more pay, shorter hours, etc., is being met by an effort on the part of the railroads of the country to organize for resistance. The movement started in the East and has reached the Northwest. Up to the present time the move has not been vigorously pushed, being yet in its preliminary stage and confined to correspondence. In the near future, however, there will probably be meetings of executives and managers to frame some mutual policy for the treatment of strikes. A prominent railroad official of St. Paul, when questioned as to the truth of the report said: "There is such a movement. It is still in a formative stage and is, I understand, still something of a suggestion, but we will come to it very quickly."

There are few civilized countries that give so little attention to the protection of life and limb of workmen as the United States, says Maxwell's Talisman. Statisticians reckon that 10,000,000 accidents occur in the United States each year, killing 60,000 persons. This number, says Dr. D. J. McMahon, of New York City, is greater than that of all the casualties of the seventeen years' Napoleonic wars. In all, 68,000 working people are annually disabled for life in our country, 55,000 for more than three months and 400,000 incapacitated for less than three months. We have been making some improvement toward remedying this evil, but there is room for much more improvement.

Judge Cavanaugh, of New York City, in a decision the other day, decided that labor unions have a right to place pickets about a plant where a strike is in progress, and he also declared that workmen have the right to persuade workmen to quit work. The jurist furthermore held that

sending men to jail upon affidavits that they have violated an injunction is illegal. It is said that Judge Cavanaugh's decision is directly opposite to decisions rendered in the Superior Court.

It is now thought at police headquarters that the hold-up thugs and murderers had left Portland for Spokane and other points. The citizens of Portland who escaped being robbed are much obliged to that gentry for their emigration, and those who were held up and scarred up would have been much obliged if they had went before. So far as is known the people are under no obligation to the police department for valuables the robbers did not get.

The clamor for harvest hands in Kansas came near proving the undoing of the college boys. Many of them flocked into the fields, and after several days' trial the farmers passed them up. Not a few of them went broke and had to beat their way back home, thoroughly disgusted. Some of them wept and said they were treated like tramps.

It is perhaps best that the convention of thief catchers should have been "held up" for a month, until the stick-up artists quit the town.

If you don't know what to do or where to go, go to Seattle. You might get a job on Portland's fireboat that is to be built there soon.

THE UNION LAUNDRY.

The Federated Trades laundry is gradually getting into shape for active operation. The building is being repaired and remodeled for occupancy, which will not be later than September 15. An agent is now East for the purpose of purchasing machinery, and by the time it arrives the building will be ready to receive it.

A little confusion as to stocks subscribed by unions is cleared by the following statement, made by the secretary of the corporation, as follows:

"There has been some misunderstanding in regard to how unions should hold stock in the Portland Federated Trades Laundry Company. For the benefit of the unions that do not fully understand the situation, we publish the following instructions: "The stock certificate will be made out in the name of the union.

"Unions must appoint one member as a trustee to represent them at stockholders' meetings.

"A. W. JONES,
"Secretary."

NOTICE.

The third payment on Portland Federated Trades Laundry Co. stock is now due. Make payment at Portland Labor Press office.

A. W. JONES, Secretary.

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