

The Oregonian

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of another journal of Tokio, the Hochi—thus: At no period in her history has the financial condition of Japan been so deprect as it is at present...

exporting before the European consumers will be in danger of a bread famine. While the billboard ordinance, introduced by Councilman Ellis, might not do everything toward ridding Portland of the nuisance which now defaces the city, it might do something...

WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE COMET New South of the Zenith, Soon Near Planet Mars. FOREST GROVE, Or., Jan. 7.—(To the Editor.)—In The Oregonian there appeared recently a dispatch from New York to the effect that Halley's comet was visible. It was stated that "Professor Eastman of Columbia University has been studying the comet without the use of a telescope. It is in the northeast, 20 degrees in length. For two weeks it will be visible and will plainly be seen for several nights."

HERE IS YOUR WORKINGMAN'S IDEAL! New Zealand, Plunged Headlong Into Debt, Is Being Steadily Abandoned For Better Fields by All Who Can Get Away—Work Scarcer, Wages Poor, Living High.

acquiring land. All the best and available land has been taken. What is left is either native land, and therefore (so far) imalienable, private lands for sale at a price far in advance of their real value, or government land for selection in places so far removed from a market, so inaccessible, and of so poor a quality generally, as to be practically useless. I expect, of course, the little patches of land bought periodically by the government from private owners, and leased or sold under the ballot system. These are generally of good quality. But their area, in comparison with the demand as indicated by the ballot system, is almost negligible. Change of acquiring a section is almost unappreciable. For 30 sections lately put up by the government under the ballot system from Auckland there were 1130 applicants.

Following upon a severe depression, during which the late Premier (Sir James Dickson) placed the finances of the colony on a sound basis, came an unprecedented boom. The late Premier, Richard John Seddon, was head, and his great opportunity of continuing Sir Harry Atkinson's policy of careful financing. Instead it plunged into wild borrowing. It boomed up land values to such an extent that it was impossible to get to obtain money. The amount of money borrowed was so large that it was necessary to develop the resources of the country. The result was that the brick postoffice replaced wooden structures which would have for years served every purpose. Costly railway stations and railroads were erected, and the result was less of expense. Railways were made to respond to political pressure which could never hope to pay working expenses. Officers were created and given salaries. Civil servants have been lately re-trenched by the Ward administration. The estimates for the current year (November 11, 1909) by Sir Joseph Ward, Minister of Finance, bears on the face of it the reason for the depression. It is the scarcity of employment, and the deplorable needs of the government for the year is £4,848,000. The public debt increased from £28,339,300 to no less than £70,000,000, an increase of £41,660,700, or 145 per cent! True, the Premier estimates the increase of the value of private and public lands at £148,312,267, or an increase in the same period of £22,362,567. But this is a purely speculative value, depending entirely upon the recent exceptional prices for our produce, much of which has been paid for by the government. It is any wonder, then, that with the country in this condition, its eyes, its freholds parked with, or practically sold, and the great bulk of the revenue which is raised through the customs and there-fore, and also the New Zealanders required to pay interest on the national debt, that the Premier should be so bold as to propose a new tax? That it has come to the point where only the most careful finance can hope to avert a clear bankruptcy, is a fact which is difficult to see apparent to all.

PORTLAND, SATURDAY, JAN. 8, 1910.

PRESIDENT TAFT MUST DECIDE.

Mr. Gifford Pinchot poses before the country as the sycophant of all who desire to preserve the natural resources of the country for the good of all the people. His ambition has been to bring it about, so that the combat would rage around himself and contribute to his glory. His "conservation" of the public interests—for the public. No man is to have use of lands or waters or minerals henceforth, without payment of perpetual tax to the United States—the money paid in to go to the support of a great bureau in Washington, and his horde of officials all over the United States—yet not indeed all over the United States, but over those parts where there are still public lands and waters and minerals. In the old parts these were appropriated long ago and are left in undisturbed possession of those who occupied them. This sort of thing has made Mr. Gifford Pinchot very rich. He rests on the wealth of his ancestors, and has become "a reformer." He is a whale, as Burke said, sporting in the ocean of bounty, and from his spracles he blows out a torrent of brine against his origin.

THE SPECIAL MESSAGE.

The recommendations of prime importance in President Taft's special message relate to the proposed commerce court and the Federal incorporation act, which he recommends. The minor recommendations, pertaining to the routine work of the Interstate Commerce Commission, are manifestly excellent. It would be better, for example, to give the Commission authority to act upon exorbitant rates without waiting for complaint from shippers. Nor can any reasonable objection be made to the plan of modifications under its supervision since classification is in reality rate-making. Mr. Taft argues soundly, also, in favor of giving shippers the right to select through routes for their goods which are to or more available. This ought not to be left to the arbitrary dictation of the carriers.

FUNK SOLDIERS.

Those New York soldiers who mutilated, because they were ordered to march 15 miles with beautiful specimens of the military caste. Doubtless their idea of warfare is to sit by a warm stove and play seven-up. They would perish with indigestion unless they had a ten-course dinner every day and a mattress which they do not sleep without feather beds. Their soft and pampered frames could never endure to lie on the bare ground at night as the Scotch Highlanders do. Those hardy heroes sleep sweetly and dream blissful dreams of home and mother with nothing over their heads but their plaid when the mercury is at zero and brush the frost crystals off their legs in the gray dawn with no thought that they have suffered any hardship.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF JURY COMMISSIONER.

It is somewhat surprising to find good coming out of Chicago, but the Jury Commissioner of that city recently obtained the drawing of certain classes of citizens for jury duty. The original list prepared by the Commissioner is as follows: Actors, because they have no fixed abode; laborers and foreign sailors, because of their nomadic habits; bootmakers, because of defective hearing; saloonkeepers and bartenders, because of their occupation; tradesmen and lower signal men, because they are doing a greater service to the community than they receive; medical and theological students, because they are engaged in a study of the law; peddlers, dealers and scavengers for obvious reasons.

NEW YEAR'S EVE DEBAUCH.

Chicago Record-Herald. Reports from the newspapers indicate that the celebration of New Year's Eve resulted in a competition in drunkenness and in the violation of rules of conduct that are ordinarily considered binding on society. Questions of law enforcement are involved that could be determined only by the courts. It is reported that the celebration was a success, but we have no doubt whatever that society itself must give serious thought to its responsibility for the custom that has grown up of late and for the scourge of drunkenness. There are persons who have been led by curiosity to take part in or to witness the scenes and who have had their curiosity more than satisfied. A single experience has disgusted them for a lifetime. They vouch for the accuracy of the newspaper reports, feel a sense of pity for the victims, and would themselves forever from the competition.

HIGH-WATER MARK FOR IMPORTS.

American Market More Attractive Than Spring Trade For Foreign Producers. The country's foreign trade returns for November indicate that our business revival is in danger of being overdone. It is reported that the European recovery from trade depression is so advanced as to place the United States at a disadvantage in maintaining such a trade surplus. The actual balance of trade will appear from the following comparison of November merchandise exports and imports:

THE PLACE FOR WALNUTS.

It may be questioned whether Mr. M. A. Baker, of McMinnville, is well advised in preferring bottom land to a hillside for walnuts. The argument is that the tap root can penetrate the soil with more freedom where the formation is alluvial. No doubt this is often true, and since the vigor of the walnut tree depends greatly on the quality of the soil, the tap root, Mr. Baker's reasoning possesses much cogency. It would be conclusive if we could eliminate the difficulty of early and late frosts. Mr. Baker is a man of tried experience in the matter of horticulture, and his opinions, but he probably errs in ascribing the injury which walnut trees suffered last winter to the cold weather. The safer opinion is that it was caused by early and late frosts.

HARD CONDITIONS IN JAPAN.

It was known throughout the world that the peace between Japan and Russia, brought about by the intervention of President Roosevelt, did not come a day too soon for Japan. This gallant and rising nation had made an effort to bring about in all the history of the world. Her sacrifices had been prodigious; and though she had gained great advantages over an antagonist much greater than herself, she needed peace. No nation, perhaps, ever needed it more. Her great antagonism, which she believes, must have worn her out, had the war been continued much longer. Confirmation of this is supplied since the war by the difficulties of the industry and financial conditions existing in Japan.

GRANARY OF THE WORLD.

Wheat exports from the United States (flow included) for the first six months of the current cereal year show a decrease of 27,000,000 bushels as compared with the same period in the preceding season. That the foreign markets have not been suffering from a shortage of supplies, and that the decrease can be understood by reference to the statistics on Russian shipments. The new season in the land of the Czar opens August 1, and between that date and December 11, 1909, the Russian reports shipments of 105,385,000 bushels, a larger amount than has ever before been shipped in so brief a period by any country. These Russian shipments compare with 23,144,000 bushels for the same period in the preceding season, and 41,545,000 bushels for the corresponding period in 1907.

LIMITATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

Investigation by a coroner's jury of the fatal train wreck on the O. R. N. Wednesday was followed by the testimony of a child, the son of the engineer of one of the trains. Testimony showed that the first train was passing through a "block" at low speed, when a train running at high speed, and in defiance of the danger signal shown at the entrance to the block, followed it into the block and crashed into the caboose of the first train, killing two men and injuring a number of others. The tragedy again discloses the dependence which must still be placed in the train operator, and what an onerous responsibility is placed upon him. The accident-preventing equipment with which most of the roads are now provided.

THE SWEET USES OF ADVERSITY.

You can wear out your old clothes. You are not persecuted to stand upon alone. Begging letter writers will let you alone. Importers know it is useless to try and bleed you. You can practice temperance. You are not foolishly flattered. You save many a debt and many a headache. Finally, if you have a true friend you'll find it out.

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FINING LATE THEATROGOERS.

The Cleveland Ordinance "Mean Well," but It Probably Isn't "Good Law." From the Philadelphia Inquirer. Cleveland has passed an ordinance fining any theater manager \$100 who permits a patron to take a seat while the curtain is up. Those who arrive at the first act has begun must wait until the end of the act before taking their seats or the house will be prosecuted. We doubt if any substantial good will come from such an ordinance. The decisions of courts in the East have uniformly been against fining latecomers. It is a private enterprise and not a public institution and that the managers may make such regulations as they please for conducting their business. An ordinance will be thrown out by the courts, but the incident calls attention to a growing evil. Most persons are very careless in taking their seats. They forget how much their own conduct affects others. Those who come in late are usually those who are least considerate persons already seated to stand and give passage-way are guilty of social misdemeanors. It took a long time to establish the custom of seating women to remove their hats and it will probably take longer to make them prompt in attendance, but (as a consummation devoutly to be wished) in the theater we might revert to the old time "curtain raiser" to make the main play thoroughly enjoyable.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

A white Christmas msketh a glad coal man. A poor excuse is better than none—if it works. Too many eye-openers are apt to make a man eye-double. Great minds are often in the same channel frequently confused. The price of a woman's stunning gown may shock her husband. A woman who is fighting for a living chance and they'll do the rest. Some local celebrities are famous and some others are notorious.

DIVORCE IN CHICAGO.

Chicago Chicago. Just a little divorce. Just a little wife. Just a little husband. A wail of woe. Just a little evidence. Just a little courtroom. Just a little judge. Scratching of the judge's pen. And everything is fine.

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