

The Oregonian

Published at Portland, Oregon, Postoffice as Second-Class Matter. Subscriptions: Retail, 5c; in Advance, 15c per month. (BY MAIL) Daily, Sunday included, one year, \$4.00...

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Portland, Thursday, April 27, 1911.

NEARING DANGER LINE

It is a common opinion, based on long experience, that it is easier to borrow than to pay. Seattle has just been warned that it is also hard to borrow and Portland needs to take warning by Seattle's experience.

Portland is gaining in population and wealth so rapidly that there is naturally a demand for public improvements to keep pace with the city's growth. Many of these are essential if progress is to continue and are of such a nature that they cannot be paid for out of current revenue.

An Eastern firm of bond-buyers has recently informed the city of Seattle that it will not bid on a proposed new issue of bonds to raise money to pay the bonded debt of the city.

Study of the financial status of Portland shows that this city is approaching the safe limit as to ratio of debt to assessed value. The valuation in 1911 is in round numbers \$262,900,000; the bonded debt of all kinds already issued or authorized is \$11,925,500.

Under these circumstances the voters would do well to consider carefully whether the proposed new bond issues is necessary before casting his vote for it. He should also consider whether the city will get an adequate return on the money invested and whether the investment will not melt away before the bonds mature.

A bond issue is a mortgage which all of us must help to pay. A man should be as cautious about mortgaging his city as he would be about mortgaging his home.

OUR DECLINING EXPORTS.

The political economists who profess to see in a big balance of trade in our favor evidence of prosperity will note in the March figures on imports a very satisfactory showing. Not only do the figures for the month show a heavy decrease from the imports for the corresponding month of last year, but the totals for the nine months ending with March are far enough below those of the previous season to please the most exacting believer in the theory that a balance of trade in our favor is the surest sign of prosperity.

As our exports for March and for the season to date were much larger than for the preceding season, that "balance of trade," as we term the difference in the amounts that we buy and sell, is steadily increasing. There still, however, remains a difference of opinion as to whether heavy imports are as detrimental to our prosperity as some of our friends in the States and Alaska importers think was a decrease of more than \$3,000,000 in March. For the nine months the decrease has been more than \$38,000,000.

In unmanufactured fibers there has been a decrease of \$4,000,000. In crude India rubber the decrease for March was more than \$10,000,000. Part of the decrease in the figures on rubber was due to much lower prices than prevailed a year ago, but in nearly all other commodities the lower figures are accounted for almost entirely by the falling off in the demand. In these items all the benefits accruing from the big balance of trade in our favor are neutralized because these lessening imports of articles which are used in our factories in the production of other articles mean a corresponding reduction in the demand for American labor and an attendant diminishing of the purchasing power of our own people. The preliminary report of the Department of Commerce and Labor, from which these figures are taken, shows heavy decreases in two items which do not portend any serious effect on the general trade situation. The imports of diamonds dropped from \$32,100,000 for the first nine months of the season a year ago to \$25,200,000 for the same period this season. There was also a decrease of more than \$3,000,000 in the imports of chemicals. Laces decreased about \$1,900,000, and art work im-

ported was of \$1,000,000 less valuation than for the same period in the previous season. The details of our imports thus show that there is a distinct advantage in heavy importations of some articles and also an advantage in lessening importations of others.

THE NEW CANADIANS.

The coronation programme in London, which was to have included a highly spectacular representation of the defeat, through strategy, of the invading American force in 1812 by a handful of Canadians, will be changed by the elimination of this suggestive number. The reason given for the abandonment of this feature, according to a London cable, is a fear that "the pageant might wound the susceptibilities of American visitors to the coronation and might endanger the conclusion of the proposed Anglo-American arbitration treaty."

It is reported that the cattle mangle has entered Oregon from Northern California. This is a feature that also calls for rigid investigation and action. Oregon must not bear the brunt of fatality in other states.

DOE'S DEBTS.

There are thousands of people in the world who will read with pleasure that the debts of the late Alexander Dowie have been paid in full. In spite of appearances, he was solvent when he died, and the financial troubles which embittered his later years were caused by the meddlesomeness of others and not by his own failings. Dowie's fame as a prophet was as he approached the grave, but it did not disappear by any means. Many of his followers trusted him to the last and many still believe that he possessed supernatural gifts. It must be admitted candidly that his faith is not entirely unreasonable. Let any ordinary human being attempt to do what Dowie did and he will quickly learn that he lacks some essential quality.

The difference between such men as Dowie and the common run of humanity is not one merely of degree. He is not a faculty of the intellect, but he is a faculty of the soul. We do not undertake to say that this faculty was higher or lower than the ordinary abilities of mankind, but it was certainly different. In its highest degree it has appeared very rarely. Mohammed had it, and so did Buddha, and to mention such names as Abdul Baha. Very likely none of them had this mysterious gift in such superabundance as Confucius.

But it is manifested in an inferior degree by many men who do not dream of founding a religion. Dowie had so much of the faculty that he was able to attract thousands around him and build a new city. But such men as "Get Rich Quick Wallingford" possess it to an extent by no means negligible. It is this faculty which enables them to become millionaires. The same inexplicable arts which drew the wandering and martial Arab tribes around the standard of Mohammed make the canny farmer a victim to the wiles of the gold brick seller. A person with Dowie's faculty can bend other men to his will in a moment. He can convince them in the face of the plainest facts and lead them to do what they know will be ruinous.

It is the secret of the power of the "born orator." Even when he talks nonsense he holds an audience better than the most rational speaker who lacks the peculiar gift. This does not prove that the audience are fools, but it does prove that they are human.

MORE TAX DECEPTION.

The last Legislative Assembly in Oregon voted to submit to the people at the next general election a constitutional amendment designed to repeal the local option law and support the Fels single tax organization foisted upon the people through deception in 1910. This repealing amendment presents an issue that should be met squarely and honestly by the single tax association. Yet, as The Oregonian understands the situation, only a minority faction of the association in Oregon desires to present its views openly and above board, or feels that honest defeat is better than dishonest victory. Another faction, which undoubtedly has gauged public sentiment accurately and foresees adoption of the Legislature's amendment, prefers an underhanded method. Hence the split in the single tax organization.

Some days ago an attempt was started to build up sentiment for a \$3000 exemption on personal property and improvements. The plan as now formulated is to use the single tax clause as a vote-catcher in the manner that the poll tax inhibition was employed in the single tax amendment in the last election. The new amendment is to be worded so that if it obtains a preponderance of votes over the Legislature's amendment, it will prevail and nullify the other. In brief, Mr. Fels' employees foresee the inevitable approval of an amendment voiding their former successes and plan by trickery to subvert the will of the people.

The instruction caused in the ranks of the single-taxers by such unscrupulous methods apparently has not resulted in abandonment of the plan. Elsewhere today The Oregonian prints a communication, dated at McMinnville and bearing the signature of S. W. Babcock. Another communication, dated at Portland and signed by Alfred D. Cridge, is also published. The two were unquestionably written on the same typewriter in Portland. "Mr. Babcock" asks if a sort of step-rate exemption on improvements of twenty-five per cent each year for four years might not be applied in Oregon. It would not, if presented so the people know what they are voting on.

This correspondent has made an unhappy choice in locating his letter-writing in McMinnville. Yamhill County was one of the settled portions of Oregon and is a typical farming community. Its decisions in matters of taxation may therefore be taken as good indications of what the farmers want. Yamhill County has spoken four times on radical changes in the tax system. In 1898 Yamhill voted against single tax to the tune of 2343 to 763. In 1910 it gave substantial majorities against each of the two Grange amendments, either of which, if adopted, would have permitted personal property exemptions. In 1910 it also voted against the single-tax local option measure. In view of actual election returns it is futile for Portland agitators to assert that the farmers of Yamhill County want a radical change in tax methods. Such misrepresentation will not help the cause of single tax nor

will deceptive wording of amendment texts win more than once when originating in the same source.

The State Board of Forestry, in dealing with the forest fire problem, seems to have adopted the old rule that "an ounce of prevention is better than a pound of cure." In pursuance of that policy they have decided to enact very stringent rules which aim to prevent fire rather than provide for fighting it after it has started. Preliminaries have been arranged for co-operation with the State Board of Fish and Game Commissioners, by which it is hoped to have two deputy fish and game wardens in each county act with the fire wardens. The board is also engaged in a campaign of education in which literature is being sent all over the state warning people of the necessity for precaution against starting dangerous forest fires. The property loss by forest fires annually runs into millions, and most of it is the result of carelessness. The infliction of drastic punishment on a few of the careless hunters or campers early in the season will have a wholesome effect, and with an adequate number of wardens it will not be difficult to round up the offenders.

Dr. Lurbe's idea of larger blocks and fewer streets in the suburbs is one that suburban dwellers ought to approve. Had the residence district been laid out upon the basis thus recommended for its suburbs, with serving alleys where needed for the accommodation of purveyors of household supplies, an enormous sum of money that has been spent upon the improvement of streets would have been saved to property owners, without in the least detracting from their convenience. The plan would have enhanced the beauty and cleanliness of these sections. But residents wanted the streets and still want them. So the streets must be made and paid for and paving companies in collusion will continue to wax fat of purse and arrogant in their demands. Simply stated, the streets cost money, but we have got to have them.

There is a decided difference of opinion in regard to the value of the Federal grant of \$1,000,000 in the Southern Pacific in Oregon. According to one estimate, that of Attorney Penton, for the railroad company, the major portion of this land is not suitable for homes. On the other hand, the attorney for the Government contends that much of the land is arable. Neither opinion in this case can be said to be unbiased, but there is some logic in the contention that since the even-numbered sections of land which have been entered and occupied under the homestead law are supported by the Federal Government, there is no reason to suppose that the odd-numbered sections, which are in controversy, would not be similarly useful if settlers were allowed to occupy them.

According to Washington advices, there has been a unanimous adoption of the local option law in the central reserve cities. Money is more plentiful in these reserve cities and in the banking institutions in New York than it has been for many years. Much of this accumulation of cash is due to the hesitancy of the Government in permitting investment until the financial atmosphere has been clarified by the Supreme Court decisions in the trust cases. Another reason is the preparation for crop-moving that is always a source of money in the bank for the farmer. The farmer seldom profits to its owners, we may expect a loosening of this supply as soon as the unfavorable influences are removed.

Mrs. Carrie Kersh, sobbing and protesting her innocence of complicity in the murder of her husband, was sentenced to the penitentiary to begin a term of fifteen years' incarceration. Since, from the evidence adduced, she is guilty of the crime charged, there is little call for sympathy for this woman, especially since she is now provided, at the expense of the taxpayers of the state, with the most comfortable and leisurely to that of the ordinary honest woman of the working class. Moreover, since society needs all the protection it can or is likely to get from women of her kind, there would seem to be no call for weeping at the plight in which Mrs. Kersh finds herself.

The almost weekly coal mine disaster is reported this time from West Virginia. The only new feature of this latest incident is a great industry as that the entire mine was almost without exception Americans. Naturally it may be supposed, the distress incident to abject poverty in the families of the unfortunate men is less than in the case of improvident foreigners who live constantly up to the small edge of the under-ground, and who are left by the death of the earner without bread for the morrow.

The City Attorney of Medford has advised electricity consumers they need not pay rent for the meters and offers to conduct test cases. The reason for all this is that a man is compelled to pay such charge. The butcher and grocer can as conveniently collect for use of the scales.

Forty thousand settlers, mostly Scots, is the record of immigration into Canada through all of this year. It is too bad they did not get the right steer.

Only two per cent of the co-eds at Chicago University plan to marry, the others scorn the idea. But man proposes and the fates settle the question.

California's petroleum product this year amounts to over \$32,000,000, but wait until the Malheur drillers make a strike to see the Oregon yield equal it.

To an ordinary observer it looks as if State Printer Dunway is not part of the state machinery, hence he must move out of the Capitol. Enforcing the curfew law is proper, if the parents co-operate. Not all the burden should rest on the police.

Let the timber be whanged! Attorney Dunway has found another object of objection. Sending the landlord of a disorderly house to jail for a month is one good way. Oiling the streets has begun and Summer is at hand.

SINGLE TAX IN SMALL DOSES

Mr. Cridge Says Plan to Feed it to Oregon Gradually. PORTLAND, April 25.—(To the Editor.)—In The Oregonian of today R. H. Blossom asks eight questions about the single tax, all of which, as he says, are embodied in the eighth, "A certain amount of money is required to run our Government. Then why not everybody pay for its maintenance?"

Everybody does, only many pay more than their share, and a few pay almost all, shifting their burdens upon those who bear their bread by the sweat of their face. Everybody uses land, however, and in proportion to the value of the land they derive from it the taxes levied on it. Labor (of hand and brain) produces all wealth and pays all taxes. It also pays all the vast sums received by franchise holders, and holders for getting out of the way of labor and allowing it access to the earth. This tax levied by private parties is the result of the use of the earth in many times more than that levied for and by our local, state and general governments. The governments derive something in return, but the land speculator, landlord and landowner do nothing whatever but get out of the way and let other people work the land. The holding out of five-ninths of the land creates an artificial scarcity and value for the remainder, which is exacted in other people's pockets. The holder of another, from the user whether he is a tenant or an owner. The worker goes to market with the burden of land values paid to the holder of the land. The burden of Government on the other hand, the land value paid to private parties could just as well be paid to the Government, saving labor that makes up his product.

A tax on land values cannot be shifted, for the landowner collects all he can now. If land values and privileges in franchises are taxed more and products of labor less the result is more land thrown upon the market and a reduction of price or value. The tax cannot be shifted to the worker.

These facts have been demonstrated in actual practice, so that they are outside of the theory in Vancouver and several other cities in British Columbia, New Zealand and Australia, Germany and other places, where the single tax is partly applied. There is no proposal to apply the full single tax all at once or at any time in the future by date or number in Oregon. The result of such measures as proposed would be gradual and no doubt for several years would cause some increase in land values by reason of the rush of population to the natural opportunities of Oregon; but such increase would be less than would otherwise be the case because governments would take more of it than they do now, leaving less margin for the speculator and more for the producer. Mr. H. Blossom can obtain in several of the book stores full information on the subject, and if he wishes a conference and the demonstration of eight or ten answers to his questions, he can secure it by setting a date and making his whereabouts known. ALFRED D. CRIDGE.

Marriage Proposal by Signet Code.

London Tit-Bits. It was an unconventional manner in which Lord Kelvin "popped the question," and in the doing so won his wife. The question of simplifying the method of signaling at sea was then occupying his attention. His plan seemed simple to him, but to ordinary folk it was rather puzzling. He was staying in Madeira at the time, and one day the subject was under discussion at the dinner table, but the only person that seemed able to grasp the subject was his daughter, a woman he greatly admired. "I quite understand, Sir William," she said. "Are you sure?" he questioned, half doubtfully. "If I sent you a signal from my yacht, do you think you could read it, and answer me?" "I believe I should understand in making it out," was the reply. The signal was sent, and she did succeed in making it out, and transmitting the reply. The question was "Will you marry me?" and the answer was "Yes."

Steps Toward Single Tax.

McMINNVILLE, Or., April 23.—(To the Editor.)—I do not wish to occupy too much space in consideration of matters that may not be estimated to be of importance, but desire to call your attention to the fact that the Legislature of Oregon has passed a law which recently allowing cities and towns to take taxes from improvements in a sort of step-rate method, exempting 25 per cent of each year for four years. It might not something of this sort be applied in Oregon? Farmers from that section of the continent tell me that owing to the exemption very few are being allowed agricultural tax on a farmer there of \$17 would be increased to ten times that in Yamhill County with about the same amount of land. Of course, we have need for more road expenditures than they have, but the farmers of this part of the country seem to see some change must be had in our tax methods. S. W. BABCOCK.

Calling the "Colonels' Blues."

Housekeeper. During the Spanish-American War, soon after Andy Burr was made Colonel of the Twenty-fifth colored regiment, he informed his men, then at Chickamauga, that they must play ball half an hour every day in order to get hardened up. "And while we are playing," he said, "remember that I am not Colonel Burr, but simply Andy Burr." The first game the regiment lined out what was a sure home run. "Run, Andy, run, you tallow-faced, knock-kneed galeot," yelled a black soldier at the coaching line. The Colonel stopped at first base, got another player to take his place, put on his uniform and announced: "I am Colonel Burr until further orders."

Names of Ministers Abroad.

FOREST GROVE, April 25.—(To the Editor.)—What are the names of the ministers from the United States to the following foreign governments: England, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, China, Japan, Mexico? CARL O. PETERSON.

Great Britain, Whitelaw Reid; France, Robert Bacon; Germany, David J. Hill (recently resigned); Italy, John Rockhill; China, William J. Calhoun; Japan, Thomas J. O'Brien; Mexico, Henry L. Wilson.

Spokane ex-Policeman Arrested.

SEATTLE, Wash., April 25.—Dan Kallen, former policeman of Spokane, indicted by a grand jury in that city for violation of the white slave law, was arrested in Port Townsend today and is to be taken tonight to Spokane for trial.

Bohemian Cattle Half-Plowing.

London Tit-Bits. The foot-and-mouth disease among the cattle in all parts of Bohemia, many of the farmers were not able to finish their fall plowing as these animals are used largely in place of horses.

The Stone Age in 1911.

London Telegraph. The natives of New Guinea have been found living in it in the stone age.

Timely Tales of the Day

Gregory Heighes has a commuter who always believes in looking out for himself and he takes particular delight in venturing his opinion on the streetcar men operating on his line. After he had made numerous reports about the alleged misconduct and lack of courtesy on the part of the boys and had complained that he had been forced to wait for his car, the streetcar company began to investigate, and with more fruitful results than was expected. One day he happened into the main office with the statement that he had waited 45 minutes for a car the night before.

"Yes," said General Superintendent Franklin, "the boys are not to be blamed to get your car late just as you have a report on it from the inspectors right here. It says that you reached the corner of Fifth and Washington at 6:05. Then after waiting three minutes you went over across to a saloon and you met a man you knew and you drank two hours highballs and staid there seven minutes."

"Then you went out to the corner and the car had gone. Three minutes later you had to wait for the same saloon and you had three more highballs. You bought one yourself, the other fellow bought one and the house bought the third. That took you 11 minutes."

"You came out again for your car had gone. That time you waited five minutes and at 6:34 you went into another saloon on the other corner and you drank two more hours highballs and when you came out again the third car was half way to Fourth Washington street and you had to wait seven minutes for the car to get to the report, look it over for yourself."

"Not a complaint has originated from that source since then and that was fully three weeks ago."

That even a Councilman likes to be galled was aptly illustrated as a result of a complaint made to Mr. Baker when a pretty young woman entered the room and engaged Councilman Baker in conversation. She asked him whether he was interested in the loaned her a nice, new pencil to make some notes. Mr. Baker was not a member of the committee on the other side. She sat at the table around which the members of the committee were gathered and when her notes were completed she went over to Mr. Baker. She left the pencil on the table.

Councilman Menefee, a handsome and impressive man, thought he saw an opportunity to do a gentlemanly act. He arose, picked up the pencil, took it to the young woman and said, "Here, madame, is your pencil." In his most winning smile he said, "Just hand it to Mr. Baker—it's his."

Whereat, there was a general laugh, in which Councilman Menefee and the young woman joined.

Colonel Theodore Roosevelt, when making the trip from Sacramento, Cal., to Portland expressed great interest in the hunting possibilities of Oregon and had the pleasure of the Shasta Limited. When President Campbell of the State University greeted him and made known his connection with the state's interests in the Shasta game preserve, "Do you know a man by the name of Finley?" "Finley? Finley? Seems to me that I have heard of him," was the educator's reply.

"He is a bird man," said the Colonel. "Oh, you mean John Finley, president of the Oregon Audubon Society?" "Yes, he's the man. Now I must see him when I get to Portland and I wish you would hunt him up and tell him I want to see him."

"I will be glad to do it. I know him well," was Mr. Campbell's reply. "I have taken a great interest in his article on the Shasta game preserve. I am deeply interested in this bird and would like to hear more about it. I do hope that they will be protected and that they will grow in your country. You could have no better game bird in your forest than the wild pheasant."

Advertising Talks

By William C. Freeman. Somebody said, once upon a time—"It is easy for a man to resist temptation who has never encountered it." Applied to advertising, this means that we must not be too critical of the merchants who have yielded to the temptation of exaggeration in their printed announcements.

They fell into the habit because everybody around them seemed to practice it, so they were tempted to try to get business in this manner and they yielded.

One of the hardest things in the world to do is to break away from habit, particularly if that habit is not regarded as harmful. That is why it is going to be hard to persuade many merchants to change their habit of conducting special sales, mentioning unusual values, and doing other things in their advertising announcements that custom has tolerated for so long.

Ask any merchant who makes a practice of advertising comparative prices and reduction sales, and 99 times out of 100 he will answer—"I don't know." "The people expect a sort of thing—they do not respond to advertising unless it offers unusual inducements." Ask him again why he persists in doing this kind of advertising when enlightened public opinion is against it—and then he will answer:

"I cannot afford to confine my advertising to a mere statement of facts; the people expect bargains, whether they get them or not."

One by one, however, merchants are changing their advertising methods, and the wisdom of avoiding the temptation of custom is impressing itself on their minds, because they find they get better returns from plain, homely, matter-of-fact advertising.

The find also that this kind of advertising builds a greater confidence in their store and in their merchandise. The new advertiser—the beginner—finds it easy to resist temptation in this matter, because he has never encountered it—so he starts right and reaches success by the quicker route. He sees before he starts the uselessness of exaggeration and misstatement.

Country Town Sayings by Ed Howe

"Her death," they say, when a woman dies "was a tragedy." That is true of every death. When a man has been away two or three days and has received all the papers during his absence, he finds on his return that there is a lot of news that he must hear out behind the barn.

A certain father admits that he has had four daughters get married, and that not one son-in-law asked his permission. The women are always telling of a man in their family so lazy he sits by the stove and lets the fire go out. "Getting married," the women say, "means no more a girl's intimating in a side-sweeping sort of way that it doesn't mean more to a man than getting shaved."

We have noticed that new things are constantly discovered that threaten to "revolutionize the world," but they never do. A critic does not hesitate to tell an untruth to make a good point. Nearly every man is dogged by a fierce appetite of some kind. Occasionally you meet a man who is very near an anarchist; but I never knew a man to go all the way. Every big man has a lot of little things left over from his little days. A man can't marry every woman who falls in love with him. There are people in the world who never work, and who just sort of absorb a living. You meet people, and think they are lovely; then they begin to develop their meanness, and you find it is the same old story.

At what age should parents cease taking care of their children? It makes no difference how great a country town is, a girl's intimate life is mighty insignificant when inquiring whether to take a blue or a green car when in a strange city. A rat is so worthless; it's a wonder it doesn't chew tobacco and drink whiskey. Of course, you are very popular, but occasionally there is an unappreciative person who doesn't like you. Let a peating child alone, and it will come back to the table. (And, by the way, a man is only a grownup baby.) Every hour in this big wide world some man is married who never said outright to the girl beside him, "Will you marry me?" Advice to bird dogs: When a bulldog has a bone, let him keep it.

Half a Century Ago

From The Oregonian, April 27, 1861. A letter from Tucson of April 2, to the San Francisco Bulletin, says that the proposed withdrawal of the Overland Mail has caused a complete stagnation in the country. It seems to think of remaining in the country longer than to settle up affairs. The present year opened auspiciously here, but a panic is instigated in the development of our resources, will visit the iron deposits and make a reconnaissance of the adjacent country, with a view to ascertain the practicability of working them.

Married.—In Portland, on the 18th inst., by Rev. Mr. Cornelius, Mr. John M. Murphy, editor Washington Standard, Olympia, to Miss Eliza Jane McGuire, of Portland.

Color Line in Gervais. Gervais Star. McKinley Mitchell has painted his warehouses a cream color, similar to that of the depot—a decided improvement.

Dry Air As An Insulator. The Pittsburgh Gazette-Times. So perfect an insulator is dry air, that it takes ten thousand volts of electricity to leak a gap of an inch.

Modern Child Protesters. Pele Mele. Mother—"When you come home from school bring a pound of sugar with you." Child—"Sorry, mother, but our union forbids us to carry anything else but our school satchels."

Harvard Graduate and Grocery Clerk. Boston Dispatch. Heir to a million dollars, and a Harvard graduate, Harold Clarke Durrell has gone to work as a grocery clerk at \$9 a week, to learn the business in which his father made his fortune.