Morning Oregonian

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HOPEFUL SIGNS AT GENOA.

Other nations find an advantage after all in meeting the bolshevist statesmen face to face at conference and talking with them. When Mr. Tchitcherin utters some fiction, which has already been extensively used for propaganda purposes, he receives the retort direct, and both go out to the world together. Such discussions hitherto have been carried on by notes, and the soviet took care that its fulminations against the allies were widely circulated where they might help its cause, while the allies' side of the case could not gain entrance to communist circles.

The blunt frankness which marks the early debates seem to threaten that the Genoa conference will break up in a row. On the contrary, it may be just what is wanted to clear the air and to bring the nations to an understanding. It is refreshing departure from the old diplomacy, in which so-called statesmen indulge in much polite palaver and evade settlement of most serious disputes by making compromise agreements couched in ambiguous language that leads to new disputes, then exchange compliments which neither party believes. Intervals between such conferences are occupied by written arguments at long range, which settles nothing except that another conference shall be held. When nations thresh out their differences in open meeting, there is a real possibility of agreement. If they take up the most sharply controverted points first and get together on them, harmony will grow as they progress, and they may end their deliberations with a lovefeast at which their expressions of good will may not be mere hypocritical diplomatic amenities.

That seems to be something of the spirit in which Lloyd George brought about the Genoa assembly. His opinion evidently is that any men can settle any quarrel, no matter how bitter, if they meet and talk it over with a desire on both sides to end it. He has good cause for that opinion in his own experience. Almost from the beginning of the war he has been reaching bases of co-operation with political opponents in coalition cabinets, with other nations in peace conferences. He achieved the supposedly impossible by inducing his unionist colleagues to join him in making a treaty with the Sinn Fein Irish and in obtaining the signatures of the Sinn Fein delegates to the free state treaty. It has been said with intent to praise him that he has no principles; he is ready to compromise with anybody on anything in order to keep the world moving back to normalcy.

Important points have already been gained, which put a thin silver lining on the cloud of gloomy forebodings that hung over the opening of the conference. Though there is danger of a break-up in the probability that discussion of reparations, recognition of Russia, the no-aggression pledge and disarmament may be attempted and forced against objections from France or Russia, dire necessity is driving the nations into agreement. Even the fanatical communists of Russia begin to talk reasonably. France has learned, from the criticism to which its delegates at Washington were subject in this country, to be careful not to set the opinion of the world against it. Germany, when confronted with the whole body of former enemy and neutral nations, may be led to see violation of treaties and financial juggling as others see them and to realize that the good opinion of the world is an asset that cannot be gained by such methods. Deep distress has sobered the old world and has taught it the awful cost of being ruled by hate and passion instead of by good will, good faith and reason. It has before it the example of what these influences accomplished at Washington. It is in the chastened mood which may permit a master hand to bring it into harmony.

THE VALUATION BASIS FOR THE TARIFF.

When so many provisos are made to protect the American tariff system against the effects of unstable foreign currency on foreign value of goods, they serve to strengthen the case for American valuation as the basis of duties. The power which the senate committee proposes to give the president to change valuation, duty or classification is so wide that he would practically be able to revise the tariff throughout. Though he, through the tariff commission, should have certain latitude to raise or lower duties for the purpose of either reciprocity or retaliation, as the house proposes, that body is not likely to entrust the entire work of tariff-making to him subject only to general rules made by congress.

Both the prevalent wide variation in value of foreign money and more permanent economic conditions render foreign value of goods an unstable basis for duties and an ineffective means of applying the protective policy. By depreciating their currency exporting nations could automatically reduce the duties to be collected in this country, and the only true measure of value would be the market price in this country reckoned in dollars. It would be equitable also as between different exporting nations, for the dollar is now the world's measure of value.

The importer may object that he would not know when he bought goods abroad what would be their value on arrival in this country, therefore he could not know how much duty he must pay on American valuation, but he cannot foresee the American price in any case a month or two after purchase abroad. American valuation would simply add the variation in duty to this element of doubt. As currency becomes stable, prices are likely to become stable also, and this variation will be reduced to a minimum.

The purpose of protection is now to offset the difference between cost of production in this and other countries, in order that Americans may compete with foreign goods in American markets on even terms without lowering American standards of wages. When a uniform ad valorem duty is levied on the foreign value in all countries, this purpose is not gained. There is wide variation in cost of production in different countries, and the duty will naturally be lowest on the goods of the country that produces at the lowest cost, hence with the lowest wage scale. Then if the duty is high enough to equalize cost with that country, it will be too high to permit any trade with countries having a higher standard of cost. The same value as the basis of duty on any article, no matter where produced or at what cost, can alone give us a competitive tariff that puts all exporting countries on an equal footing in American markets, and American market prices, excluding duty, would be the best guide to that value.

ANYTHING THE MATTER?

Something may be the matter with Fire Chief Young; or may not be. But there is little question that there is much the matter with somebody, or several somebodies, in the fire department.

It will be well if the mysterious charges threatened against Chief Young are filed and sifted thoroughly, so that the truth as to his personal conduct and his official competency may be ascertained. There is a pretty general opinion that he is all right and that he is coping with a difficult situation, created by certain persons in and out of the department who are determined to meddle in its affairs, and to break down the authority of the chief. This may be all wrong. We hope it is. But the plain indications are that it is not. It is up to the men who have made war on Chief Young, and have more than hinted at grave accusations, to make good, or themselves to be investigated and dealt with according to their deserts.

Discipline—real discipline—is a necessity in a fire department, if it is to give the service it is paid to give. Can it be possible that Chief Young is too much of a disciplinarian? If so, he is a rare bird. Discipline counts, in times of fire, and fires—not politics—are the special business of a fire department.

It is the duty of Commissioner Bigelow to support the fire chief in his position as head of the department, and not to listen to whisperers, intriguers, and busybodies, unless and until they have something worth noting to present. If he does not now have a chief who will insist on a proper loyalty and obedience, it is time to get such a one. Here is an opportunity to find out.

BULGARIAN DIVORCE.

The fact that an ex-senator from New Hampshire can obtain in Bulgaria a divorce from his American wife, a resident of New Jersey, with so little publicity that the first information received by the abandoned spouse comes in the form of the news of the marriage of her former husband to another woman in still another foreign country points to a condition of which Americans cannot with justice complain until they have set their own divorce laws to rights. On the authority of Hollis' own attorney in this country, New Jersey itself permits divorce without service of summons on a non-resident defendant in person and so is in a situation not widely removed from that of Bulgaria, although there are differences between the laws of the two communities in other respects. But the whole affair, however unhappily it may result for the Hollises, is likely to serve a good purpose by calling attention to the patent expediency of obtaining a greater degree of uniformity of divorce laws of the states of the United States.

The fifty-two states and territories, including Alaska, the District of Columbia, Hawaii and Porto Rico, present a hodge-podge of requirements for legal severance of the marriage tie, including varying periods of "residence" and differing demands as to publicity. Service of summons by publication is a convenient vehicle for fraud, which to all intents and purposes seems to have been practiced in the Bulgarian affair, but as it is also allowed in New Jersey itself, nothing permanent is gained by the pot's calling the kettle black. The thing to do, if it can be done, is to make divorce, in whatever state and for whatever cause obtained, a matter of the widest publicity. Society's interest in the institution of the family is ample warrant for supervision in an issue of this kind, which is not solely one of private concern.

Having achieved something like uniformity at home we shall be in a position to refuse recognition of decrees obtained by American citizens temporarily sojourning in foreign lands. It is impossible, of course, that Hollis should ever have considered himself a Bulgarian, or that he ever intended to make his bona fide home in that far-off country. But the peculiar situation exists, according to lawyers on both sides, that some American courts may be inclined to recognize the Hollis decree, while others would repudiate it if it could be brought before them; but a great many technicalities are involved, which only make work for lawyers and serve to puzzle laymen.

For example, it is said by the attorneys for Mrs. Hollis that they intend to attack the validity of the Bulgarian divorce, and by attorneys for Mr. Hollis it is admitted that there might be grounds for attack if a way could be found to get the case into court. But it is contended that Mrs. Hollis cannot bring action in the state of New York, where Hollis and his new wife are likely to reside, because she is not a resident of New York, while they also predict that New Jersey will hold the Bulgarian decree valid because of a certain similarity between the Bulgarian laws and her own. Meanwhile no one in this country, not even excepting the members of the Bulgarian legation at Washington, appears to be quite certain as to Hollis' status under Bulgarian law. The government of Bulgaria does not itself grant divorce, but commits this function to certain recognized religious denominations for their own members. The first Hollis marriage was performed by a Methodist minister; no Methodist minister in Bulgaria has authority to grant divorce and the manner in which Hollis may have got around the Bulgarian law in this particular has not yet been explained.

Meanwhile a Paris correspondent of The Oregonian writes that "European divorces are becoming quite the rage" among Americans. Avoidance of publicity is one reason, but perhaps the controlling factor is that the plaintiff is able to obtain there the decree that would be denied him by the courts of his own country. Obviously the opportunities for fraud are numerous and are not much mitigated by the circumstance that the subterfuge is open only to those who can afford foreign travel. It is, however, but the manifestation of an evil which had its beginning here at home. The divorce habit feeds upon tolerance; we are in pretty bad straits when not even the laws of Nevada are lenient enough for us and we must go abroad. Yet we cannot justly complain against Bulgaria or any other foreign country until we have had a house-cleaning at home.

COMBATING SMUT IN WHEAT.

The end toward which the experts of the Oregon Agricultural college are working in their fight on smut in wheat is the production of a resistant plant, and here the new science of agriculture is seen at its best. Germicides are but palliatives at best and chemical preventives of one kind and another not only entail large costs, which must be deducted from the profits of an already overburdened industry, but they vastly increase the labor and the detail of farming. Besides, it is impracticable, as has been shown, to obtain complete efficiency. There are always losses despite the growers' pains, and the danger of parasitic ravages is added to the uncertainties of climate and weather which already make the farmer's calling the gamble that it is.

It is nearly always possible to obtain a more satisfactory result by indirection, as the plant wizards are now trying to do. The San Jose scale which infests certain trees and bushes of the family rosacae is an example of what nature has accomplished by its own slow processes in other lands. There, after centuries of neglect, trees survived here and there from which sprang a new and scale-resistant kind. A few individual plants which seem to be provided by an all-wise nature to guard against the extinction of her species spring up to set the destructive agencies at naught. It would be so with other plants beset by insect and fungus enemies, if we gave them time. But the natural process is slow and is attended by no consideration for the immediate and pressing wants of men.

But modern scientists propose to hasten the production of the fit and the extermination of the unfit. As we breed drought-resistant grains and vegetables, and as we adapt others to new and peculiar conditions of climate and soil, so we shall attain, with patience and intelligent persistence, the wheat which does not succumb to smut. The economic importance of this achievement can be measured by the statement of observers that losses in varying degrees from this cause occur in approximately all of Oregon wheat lands—close to a million acres annually.

Growers will continue of course to reduce their losses as much as possible by resort to accepted methods of control. The permanent remedy, however, is scientific breeding by selection, and the promise that this will be accomplished promptly is another justification for the maintenance of experiment stations. If they did no more than produce a smut-free variety of wheat, they would be worth all that they cost.

TOO WIDE POWER PROPOSED.

Public discussion of the shipping question has gone so far that we may take for granted that the American people desire to maintain a merchant marine, that they are opposed to government ownership and operation, and that they would approve laws under which individuals could be induced to buy the government fleet and operate it under the American flag. Now the shipping board has laid before congress with the endorsement of President Harding a bill providing for very liberal direct and indirect aid to ship-owners. If this plan should be wisely and impartially administered, it should end hesitation of the public to buy the good ships of the emergency fleet and should cause construction by private owners of those types of vessels in which the fleet is deficient, also of new ships to replace those which are lost or become obsolete. If there should prevail any serious, well-founded fear of undue influence exercised by particular interests, of favoritism and discrimination for or against any operator or port, all except those who enjoy such advantages will stand aside, the people will realize that their money is paid to maintain a narrow, closely centralized interest, and they may in their anger do away with the whole scheme of an American merchant marine in order to get rid of what they will consider a tax-supported monopoly. That the suspicion fraught with such possibilities may be averted, the board should conduct its proceedings in the open.

This is of vital importance, for there are in the subsidy bill several provisions which give the board power of life and death over shipping companies. It is proposed that the president may transfer army and navy transport business to the merchant marine whenever adequate facilities are provided, and that for carriage of this business the secretary of war or navy may make ten-year contracts to be approved by the shipping board. Doubtless the president would be advised by the board whether adequate facilities existed, by what line and from which port, and the secretaries of war and navy, burdened with many other duties, would seek approval of contracts in advance by the boards, which would be occupied solely with ships. Government transport business might be just enough to carry a shipping company over the top from loss to profit. It might decide whether a port could maintain a line or not.

It is proposed that no direct aid be given to a vessel carrying half or more of its cargo for the owner of half or more of the stock in the vessel unless one-third or more of the cargo capacity is held open to contract, rendering the vessel a common carrier. There would be much temptation to evade that restriction in order to secure the subsidy, which is designed especially for vessels serving as common carriers. Careful inquiry would be necessary into ownership of ship and cargo, and all interests should be heard. The government wants the fleets of the oil, steel and fruit companies to be available as naval auxiliaries, but these vessels having assured cargoes, the very generous indirect aid granted by the bill should be enough to hold them under the American flag.

No foreign-built vessel is to receive a subsidy unless five members of the board decide that for special reasons it is essential to development of the American merchant marine. Before such an exception is made those "special reasons" should be stated at an open hearing and opportunity should be given to advance reasons to the contrary.

Under the bill the board is not required to pay a subsidy unless the owner "in the judgment of the board . . . shall possess ability, experience, resources and character to justify the belief" that the subsidy will accomplish its purpose. That clause vests the board with discretion wide as a barn door. It gives the board power to decree whether a shipping enterprise shall live or die. As great care should be taken to guard against abuse of that power as the law takes against error in imposing the death sentence.

When the board decides that the subsidy is insufficient to induce operation of ships in a line or service that is desirable and necessary, it may increase the subsidy to the extent "it may deem necessary to secure" such service, not to exceed twice the amount provided in the bill. When it considers the amount provided excessive, it may reduce the amount "with respect to that particular case." Here again is wide discretion that would be open to grave abuse.

The board would exercise powers delegated by congress. The interstate commerce commission exercises parallel powers, and the supreme court has refused to interfere with its discretion unless constitutional rights are plainly infringed. Then the board would be an oligarchy of seven men controlling the destinies of the American merchant marine, of the ports which would live by it and to a large degree of those citizens whom it would serve. Such power cannot safely be given to any body of men without strict limitation and precaution. It should be very carefully limited, well within the bounds proposed in the bill and should be surrounded with safeguards such as are totally absent from the bill. The board has started on the right path by ordering hearings on section 28. It should be compelled by law to continue on that path. The American people would be as intolerant of the rule of bureaucracy as they have been of that of monopoly.

As European nations have begun to attack the problem of depreciated currency in earnest, we may reasonably hope that that cause of fluctuation in import duties will gradually disappear within a few years, but the factor of difference in cost of production between different countries will remain indefinitely and should be considered by tariff-makers. Though the Fordney bill may have placed the rates too high, even to the point of prohibition, on some commodities, its valuation provision is better adapted to both temporary and permanent economic conditions.

Most of the southern California orange crop has been killed by cold weather. But never mind a little thing like that. The defunct orange output can easily be totaled up under the head of lemon production in the next statistical reports.

A thrifty wife would take basket and go out to the Sandy and return with it full of smelt, which she would clean and fry for the edification of her lord and master; but she would be one big chump to do so; therefore she does it not.

The charge is made that the war department has disposed of certain government property at "criminally low prices." Probably some of the same property for which it had to pay criminally high prices during the war.

The chairman of the democratic national committee is a visitor in Portland.—News item.

Probably the gentleman has heard that fossils are still to be found in Oregon, and is here to see if any of them are left.

Grand opera was a financial failure in San Francisco to the extent of a $65,000 deficit. Didn't anybody realize beforehand that the Fatty Arbuckle trial would be an irresistible counter attraction?

In view of the enormous popular demand on the various candidates for governor to make the race, we shall expect nothing less than for each of them to be elected by unanimous vote.

How things come true! "Turning on his heel" has been known since man began to wear boots. Now a Portland man has invented a heel that turns itself.

If casualties among army officers continue at the present rate congress will be saved the trouble of having to pass that army reduction bill.

The war is over and everything is normal at last. Two nominations for brigadier-general were sent to the senate the other day.

As between McAdoo and Kruttschnitt regarding railroads "breaking down," the latter knows railroads.

Contemplating silvery smelt from the Sandy, one well may envy the Indian, who bolted head and tail.

Tumulty, dreaming, forgot the passage of time when he "quoted" Wilson.

To be or not to be, starting today —John McGraw or Connie Mack.

Give one book, at least, to the library.

Stars and Starmakers.

By Leone Cass Baer.

Evelyn Nesbit is dancing in La Marne cabaret at Atlantic City. Newspapers mention that Evelyn has put on flesh and looks smart and dashing. She says she is through with her career as a restaurant proprietor and is going back into vaudeville in the fall.

* * *

Nora Mayes has adopted another child. This time she has selected a daughter, a lovely little maid of 2 years, whom she calls Leonora, after herself. The other child, an adoption of a year ago, is Norwood, who is now 4 years old.

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Lillian Boardman, a Portland girl, is appearing over the Loew circuit in a repertoire of classical and jazz songs.

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The vaudeville novelty, "Sawing a Woman in Two," has its sequel in "Shooting Through a Lady." Its originator, Frank Lafell, says he picked it up in Rio de Janeiro and played it throughout Europe. He announces that he uses any rifle and any ammunition provided and that the bullet apparently passes through the woman, who is placed in a small box, and breaks a glass on the far side.

* * *

The next play in contemplation for production by George M. Cohan will be "The Mission," a drama by Ethelbert Hales. It calls for a stupendous production, and while not unlike "The Miracle Man" in treatment, carries a different theme and style of construction. Likewise, according to Mr. Cohan, it will be one of the most difficult plays to cast he has ever experimented with. "The Mission" will be produced as soon as conditions warrant it, Mr. Cohan adding that he would be working on it now, but the current business status prohibits him from doing so.

* * *

Two very old professionals died last month in New York. One was Mrs. Isabella Lancaster, who was 85 years old and who half a century ago was known the circus world over as "Isabelle, the Greatest of all Bareback Riders." The other death was that of Solomon Pariser, known as Pop Perry throughout circusdom and Coney Island. He was 90 years old. Fifty years ago he established Perry's glass pavilion on the Bowery. Perry's death was a suicide.

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J. L. Sacks will make a revival of "The Merry Widow" in London in the late spring, with Joseph Coyne and Edith Day in the leading roles.

* * *

Henry Miller and his company will play an eight-week season on the Pacific coast, opening in San Francisco about May 1. The Miller company will leave New York April 20, making Salt Lake City for two performances en route to break the coast-to-coast jump.

Blanche Bates and Ruth Chatterton will play the leading roles in the repertoire to be presented by Mr. Miller. Miller will produce two new plays in Frisco, one by Thompson Buchanan and the other by A. E. Thomas.

* * *

Frances Starr is to make a road tour in her old play, "The Easiest Way," which is to be revived with the original cast by David Belasco.

* * *

John Charles Thomas, whom we heard in "Maytime," has given up the stage for good. This week he attached his signature to a five-year contract of which R. E. Johnston is the party of the second part, calling for his appearance in a series of concerts, the first tour being scheduled to begin next September. Thomas appeared at one benefit performance at the Belasco theater last week, but in order to insure his presence it was necesary for the promoters of the affair to procure permission from his new manager.

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Edward Clark is writing the book and lyrics of a new musical show, for which Rudolph Friml is composing the music, to be called "Cinders." George M. Cohan has the piece under consideration for production.

* * *

May Irwin has gone to her summer home on the St. Lawrence river. She has abandoned her plan of converting her river home into a roadhouse.

* * *

Robert B. Mantell, Shakespeare actor, with his wife, Genevieve Hamper, may spend ten weeks in Tokio next season at the invitation of the Imperial theater of the Japanese capital. A financial guarantee accompanies the invitation.

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Patti Harrold, who will sing the title role in "Irene" next week at the Heilig, is a daughter of Orville Harrold, operatic star.

* * *

Bobby Watson and Florence Tempest dissolved their vadeville partnership last week following a brief career as a team. Watson created the male milleur role in "Irene." Miss Tempest is formerly of Tempest and Sunshine. Watson will continue in vaudeville with a new partner.

Eva Le Gallienne, co-star with Joseph Schildkraut in "Liliom," has accepted a new play by Mrs. De Acosta, based on the life of Joan of Arc, which will probably bear the title of the canonized saint, which she proposes to do following the closing of "Liliom" in Philadelphia.

This will elevate Miss Le Gallienne to stardom, but the identity of the management under whose direction she will produce the new piece is problematical, depending upon whether the Shuberts will renew their contract with her and accept the piece.

The Shuberts originally contracted for Miss Le Gallienne's services and under their banner she appeared in "Not So Long Ago." They "farmed" her out to the Theater Guild following the close of that show. She is the only child of Richard Le Gallienne.

* * *

An assembly of big names has been grouped by the Selwyns for the southern company of "The Circle" for next season. The company will be composed of Wilton Lackaye, Amelia Bingham, Henry E. Dixey, Thomas Ross, Robert Edson, Charlotte Walker and Maude Fealey.

This company will play all the southern stands and the middle west territory. The original company of "The Circle," with John Drew and Mrs. Leslie Carter, is now on tour and bound for the coast. Portland may see this play in the late spring.

INCOME TAX AND INVESTMENTS

Fear Expressed That Development of State Would Be Retarded.

PORTLAND, April 12.—(To the Editor.)—I have just returned from a trip of something over six weeks, having spent considerable time in Los Angeles, Kansas City, St. Louis, New Orleans, New York, Providence, Hartford, Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis. I have had occasion to call on some of the largest owners of timber and manufacturers of lumber in the state of Oregon, but whose principal stockholders reside at various points in the east and, on calling their attention to the possibilities represented by investment in additional properties in this state, I was confronted in two instances by the emphatic reply that they could not conceive of anybody investing money in the state of Oregon in the face of the present taxes and the agitation, according to the press, for a state income tax similar in its application to the federal tax. The two companies to whom I refer are now paying several hundred thousand dollars per annum in Oregon state taxes.

It may also be of interest to the Oregon state tax investigation commission, as well as other organizations and individuals who are advocating a state income tax, to learn that I met other very prominent concerns who have had under consideration investments in Oregon properties involving from two and a half million to five million dollars, who have decided to postpone for the time being any further action on investments in this state, as they cannot view with any degree of confidence the threatened state income tax in addition to the federal tax, and believe they can make investments in other states where this agitation for a state income tax has very little, if any, popular support.

It is my observation, as a result of the different opinions expressed by non-resident investors in Oregon, as well as those who were contemplating large investments, that all persons and civic organizations that support a state income tax are doing all they can to retard the development of our vast undeveloped resources. Furthermore, should this movement be successful and a state income tax be imposed in addition to federal tax on incomes, the real effect will be further to depreciate property values, due to general withdrawal of capital from this state to other places where the burdens are not as heavy; interest rates on bonds for new development work covering highways, public utilities, etc., would be prohibitive, and new population would go elsewhere.

Oregon is neither New York nor Massachusetts, and there is no use in trying to make a comparison in defense of a state income tax. This state is sparsely settled, with vast undeveloped resources, as contrasted with a dense population in the two eastern states referred to, and where their resources were exploited many years ago. If it is the desire of the average individual and civic organization to attract outside capital, I know of no more deadly measure than the state income tax, which will, in effect, build a financial Chinese wall around the geographic lines of the state and serve notice on outside investors to keep away, while the rest of the Pacific coast states will be able to point out to the possible investor that they are free from such confiscatory laws.

The state of Oregon is now supporting financially a movement whereby Frank Branch Riley is visiting various centers of population in the east and pointing out the wonderful possibilities for the investment of capital in this state, and it occurs to me to inquire just what the effect would be if he also enumerated a state income tax in addition to a federal tax.

Oregon, with a state income tax and its relation to property values would be relatively in the same condition as North Dakota with a non-partisan league in control, because the obvious effect of the non-partisan league in North Dakota has been to drive capital out of the state, depreciate property values to a point where there are few, if any, sales, and, furthermore, there is no new population coming into the state because they have no inducements to offer the average individual seeking a change of residence. At least this is the information given me while coming through the state two weeks ago.

If the Oregon state tax commission desire to do something for the benefit and upbuilding of the state, they will recommend to the incoming legislature and use all of their influence to pass a resolution to the effect that a holiday be declared by the state legislature against further appropriations for any new purpose for a period of at least ten years, and that appropriations for existing state departments, boards and agencies of whatsoever character be reduced at least one-third, and that the legislature turn a deaf ear to all of the various boards and personnel who have an exaggerated conception of the importance of their own particular department in its relation to the state work and development. It is high time that the state of Oregon was compelled to exercise the same degree of economy and thrift that the individual here and elsewhere throughout the world is rapidly learning the necessity of practicing in order to "get by." It is tax reduction by drastic measures that will improve the state's reputation and relieve the tax-burdened property owners, and a further tax of the kind now proposed by the Oregon tax commission, as well as various candidates for office, will operate to retard the development of the state at least 25 years, if not for all time, as they have nothing to offer the representatives of capital outside of the state of Oregon for the upbuilding of the state if the recommendations now being considered are adopted by the incoming legislature.

PAUL C. BATE.

Eagle Creek Trail Dangerous.

PORTLAND, April 12.—(To the Editor.)—Could you advise me whether or not the mountain trail to Wahtum lake, that is the Eagle creek trail, is open yet this year for hikers? This trail is further identified by my saying that it is the one which leaves the highway at a point about a mile beyond Bonneville. Due to the heavy snow which fell this winter the trail may not be in a good condition or may still be deeply snowed under, of which you might be informed.

THOMAS G. STALEY.

According to Mr. Grace, president of the Trails club, Eagle creek trail is in very bad shape and should not be attempted by any other than an experienced traveler.

Grades on Pacific Highway.

PORTLAND, April 12.—(To the Editor.)—1. Kindly publish the maximum grade of the Pacific highway crossing the Siskiyous.

2. Also any point in Oregon exceeding 5 per cent on the Pacific highway. X. Y. Z.

1. Five per cent.
2. None.

Husband Is Poor Messenger.

Judge.

"Is this the woodenware department."

"Yes."

"I dunno if I am in the right place."

"What is it you wish?"

"My wife told me to get some lipsticks."

Those Who Come and Go.

Tales of Folks at the Hotels.

Smelt in the Sandy river, out near Troutdale, are as interesting to tourists at the hotels as they are to the householders of Portland. News of the annual run of smelt in the Sandy was received at the hotels yesterday and many persons chartered automobiles to go out and see this famous run. To the easterner who is not familiar with a run of fish and particularly to people who live in the interior, the smelt are a wonderful attraction. The march of millions of these silver fish swarming up the confines of the glacier waters of the Sandy river toward their spawning grounds never fails to evoke exclamations of astonishment. Hotel clerks have learned that they can recommend a real attraction to visitors by sending them out the highway to see the run of smelt. Tourists yesterday were so notified and they were also advised to equip themselves with nets or buckets or something with which to scoop up the fish, for no one can stand on the bank of the stream and see the myriad of fish passing them without a wild desire to go fishing on the spot. The trouble with catching smelt is that the fisher gets more than he needs or can use, so he brings back a gunnysack or two with the fish and inflicts them on everyone who can be induced to accept them. Smelt are as fine eating fish as can be found when scooped from the Sandy waters, but a person cannot eat more than several dozen.

China is a good place for a young man to go providing he has good connections, according to H. F. Hewitt, a young newspaper man who has spent more than three years on various publications in Manila and China and is now in the United States for a short time. He was in Portland yesterday. Mr. Hewitt worked on the China Press in Shanghai for a year and eight months and on the Manila Daily Bulletin for about the same length of time. His father, Clifford Hewitt, is now installing a new coin mint in Shanghai for the purpose of aiding the Chinese government in establishing a standardized system of exchange. As conditions now are the coins of China are anything but standardized. When a person seeks to change an American dollar into the native coins he receives in return 180 pennies. "The new mint will turn out 5, 10, 20 and 50-cent pieces," said Mr. Hewitt yesterday. "The building is costing the Chinese $400,000 and the machinery will cost in the neighborhood of $2,000,000. When the mint is completed it will turn out half a million coins each ten hours. This is more than the combined United States mints at San Francisco, Denver and Philadelphia turn out each day." Mr. Hewitt will remain here for several days and then go east to represent his father in the purchases of machinery for another mint that is being started in southern China.

Dayville and Prairie City are well and numerously represented on the registers of the Perkins and the Imperial this week. About two dozen citizens of Grant county are here on very official government business. Four of the delegation are charged with doing a little moonshining while the rest of the crowd are here as witnesses on one side or the other. Grant county is one of the most mountainous counties in the state and it is also one of the richest in minerals. Years ago Grant county was the happy hunting ground for prospectors but of late years this has been a sort of desultory occupation. Some day, old timers predict, Grant county will be the center of excitement, for gold will be discovered in great quantities.

Dr. and Mrs. S. W. Foster of Atlanta, Ga., Dr. F. C. Waite of Cleveland, O., and Professor W. J. Geis of New York, are with Dr. H. C. Miller, dean of the Pacific Dental college, and are making a survey of the college while on a tour of the United States and Canada. They are representatives of the Carnegie foundation for the advancement of teaching. The visitors are registered at the Multnomah.

A. W. Norblad of Astoria passed through Portland yesterday on his way to Albany, where he was to speak last night, firing the opening gun of his campaign for the republican nomination for the first congressional district. Mr. Norblad for several years has been state senator for Clatsop county and is the author of the law which has put the purse seines out of business off the Oregon coast.

Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Andersen of Aberdeen, Wash., are at the Benson. Aberdeen invites Portlanders and the rest of the Pacific northwest to attend the tulip festival, which will be held in that town the first week in May. The tulip festival is one of the first, if not the first, of the flower celebrations on the coast, because, naturally, the tulips are among the pioneers of spring blooms.

H. H. Cleland, supervisor of utilities in the department of public works in the state of Washington, was a Portland visitor yesterday. Mr. Cleland was on his way to Puget sound from holding hearings in eastern Washington regarding water. This department in Washington handles water cases, which in the Oregon procedure are taken care of by the state water board.

In eight hours L. J. Shannon, road supervisor of Umatilla county, made the run yesterday from Pendleton to the Hotel Portland. This is considered pretty good time and shows that the roads are in splendid condition, notwithstanding the snow storm which visited east of the mountains Monday. Mr. Shannon is here to attend the meeting of the state highway commission, which will be held tomorrow.

G. Wingate, who for years has had visions of barges filled with wheat coming down the Columbia river from the inland empire to Astoria, where the grain would be shipped, is registered at the Hotel Oregon. Mr. Wingate was one of the pioneer advocates of the port of Astoria.

Wesley Vandercook of Kelso, Wash., is at the Hotel Portland. Mr. Vandercook is associated with the Long-Bell Lumber company, which is clearing many, many acres near Kelso preparatory to building one of the biggest lumbering plants on the Pacific coast.

Matt Mattison of Seattle, formerly a reporter on The Oregonian—say in 1903—but now looking after the welfare of the republican party in Washington, was in Portland yesterday visiting his sometime friend Harrison Allen.

Dr. and Mrs. J. A. Fulton drove from Astoria yesterday to attend the concert last evening.

Mending Pool Table Covering.

MOUNT ANGEL, Or., April 11.—(To the Editor.)—Please tell us the correct way of applying mending tissue on pool tables. We are not having the desired success in applying this mending tissue.

CHARLES NORBERT.

If it is a bad tear it should be sewed first, using a bent needle and green silk thread. Then use the green court plaster, which should be pressed down firmly with some hard object, such as the head of a hammer.

More Truth Than Poetry.

By James J. Montague.

NO CHANCE FOR THE READER.

I've read a thousand tales, I guess,
By millionaires and others
Who always say that their success
Was due to gray-haired mothers.
Yet when these mothers fondly said,
"Good-by; be noble, sonny,"
They gave each boy a loaf of bread,
But never any money.

The boys were noble, so they say;
Plain living kept them healthy.
They worked long hours for little pay
And soon grew very wealthy.
They all allow that rather soon
They tired of vulgar riches
And longed to have their statues hewn
For fame's eternal niches.

They're all alike, these stories are;
They never slept nor rested,
But hitched their wagons to a star,
As Emerson suggested.
Poor boys they were, but bound to win;
They starved, wore mean apparel;
And soon the wealth came pouring in
By barrel after barrel.

These stories have become my bane—
I read them till I'm jaded.
And always hoping I may gain
Success and wealth like they did,
I'll read them till I'm old and gray,
Although I know, dod rot it!
That not a one will ever say
A word of how he got it!

* * *

Cruel and Unusual.

The senate has sentenced the irreconciliables to ten years of peace and they can't even get anything off for good behavior.

* * *

Not Surprising.

After trying vainly for two hours to get a telephone number, a man can understand why women frequently provoke wars.

* * *

On the Road.

The Stillman divorce case is now touring the provinces, and not doing particularly well.

Burroughs Nature Club.

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Can You Answer These Questions?

1. Do sparrows bathe in water?

2. Should daffodil blossoms growing out of doors be picked?

3. I caught a snake a few days ago and though I give it worms and flies and other things I know snakes like it refuses to eat anything. A friend says snakes never eat in captivity. Why?

Answers in tomorrow's nature notes.

* * *

Answers to Previous Questions.

1. Why do some people call the teacher bird "oven bird"?

From the shape of its nest, a rounded heap on the ground with an opening at one side, roughly resembling a Dutch oven. Also called teacher bird from its note and golden crowned thrush from the bright rust-colored V on the top of its head. It is not a thrush at all, but a warbler —seiurus aurocapillus.

* * *

2. Do bees carry a stone for ballast while flying?

Not for ballast, probably. This is as ancient myth founded on writings of Aristotle and Pliny, but it is based on a bit of real observation. The mason bee does actually carry something resembling a small stone, but it is grains of sand stuck together with a sticky fluid from the bee's mouth, and used in building the masonry cells, constructed by this bee as storehouse for food for her larva.

* * *

3. Are the tassels on corn stalks in place of flowers?

They are flowers, the staminate kind that produces pollen, necessary to the other, or pistillate kind of blossom-producing ovules. The ovules can grow into seed only after being fertilized by pollen. Cut off your corn tassels and the crop will be nil. It is thought that the ovules are not fertilized by pollen from tassels on their own plants, but from wind-blown pollen from a neighbor, thus insuring double strength to the seeds formed by this combination.

In Other Days.

Twenty-five Years Ago.

From The Oregonian of April 13, 1897.

Salem—C. H. Hellinger, United States district judge for Oregon, was today appointed by Governor Lord a regent of the university at Eugene for a term of 12 years.

Frank Hennessy will, at the manufacturers' meeting at the Marquam Grand Wednesday night, sing an entirely original song entitled, "Made in Oregon."

William Wilmer Page, ex-judge of the state circuit court, and ex-associate justice of the state supreme court, died yesterday.

Judge Shattuck yesterday decided that H. J. Molunis was illegally removed by Mayor Pennoyer from the position of harbor policeman, that he still holds his office and is entitled to pay for his services.

Fifty Years Ago.

From The Oregonian of April 13, 1872.

Kingston, Jamica—A revolution has broken out in St. Barie, Haiti. Troops are massacreing the insurgents by the wholesale. Citizens are protected by the French consul.

The Portland library has received new books entitled "Lord Bantam," Fifty Years in the Magic Circle," and others, beautifully illustrated with engravings.

Captain Max Willis, corps of engineers, engaged in running the proposed route of the North Pacific railroad along the north bank of the Columbia, and his crew were camped yesterday on the Washougal river.

There are 162 patients in the insane asylum at East Portland.

Speed of Circular Saw.

SUMPTER, Or., April 10.—(To the Editor.)—(