

Coos Bay Times

AN INDEPENDENT REPUBLICAN NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED EVERY DAY EXCEPTING MONDAY AND ALSO WEEKLY BY

THE COOS BAY TIMES PUBLISHING CO.

REX LARGE, BUSINESS MANAGER.

The policy of The Coos Bay Times will be Republican in politics, with the independence of which President Roosevelt is the leading exponent.

Entered at the postoffice at Marshfield, Oregon, for transmission through the mails as second class mail-matter.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Single copy, daily, 5 cents
Per month, daily, 50 cents
Three months, daily, \$1 25
Six months, daily, \$2 50
One year, daily, \$5 00
Weekly, per year, \$1 00

Address all communications to
COOS BAY TIMES
Marshfield, Oregon.

STRAIGHT JACKET LAWS.

One of the most apparent reasons for the acknowledged backwardness of the state of Oregon along progressive lines heretofore, is the deficiency in the legal and legislative system. The man who has studied the laws of other states in the light of modern development is amazed when he takes up the study of Oregon's system and makes comparisons. He finds that the Oregon system, both general and local, is in nearly every respect a straight jacket, and that growth under ordinary conditions would be impossible. The present conditions are not ordinary and the growth which this state is now enjoying, is in spite of its laws.

The city of Marshfield is a remarkable example, in miniature of the same defects. It is astonishing that the city has been able to make any progress at all, bound and hampered, as it is, by charter and legislative restrictions. It is no wonder that the streets are in bad shape. No wonder public improvements are lacking. No wonder public spirit is suppressed when its most reasonable demands are met by such ancient obstacles that one has to think a long time before he can figure out just what they are. For instance, the charter provides that the city can not incur a greater indebtedness than \$25,000. There it stands, an obstacle to every move in the direction of progress. It is quite customary, in other states, to limit the power of the city government to incur indebtedness beyond a certain percentage, usually five per cent of its assessed valuation. But here it is fixed at \$25,000. No matter how great the increase is in valuation or population—the limit is \$25,000.

No wonder that the city can do so little! No wonder the people are inclined to object to proper grades, sewers, water systems and public buildings! While the abutting own-

ers of lots should be made to pay for improvements, there is no doubt that, since such improvements are beneficial to the whole community, the assessment which is often suddenly and almost unexpectedly levied, should be carried by the public for a reasonable time. But here the public is weak and the individual, so far as the public benefit is concerned, is relatively weaker. Marshfield should take steps to organize under the general laws and by so doing improve her capacity for self help.

THE RACE QUESTION.

The race question in America is always active and will never down. In the South it is the Negro. In the East and North it is the "scum" of Europe. In the West it is the Asiatic. In the South no real progress seems to be made toward a solution of the problem, but it is encouraging, at least to note that Mississippi can keep cool long enough to elect to the senate such a man as Williams rather than the fire eating Vardaman. In the East and North the "scum" sends its children to school and one generation disposes of the race question there as far as the present phase is concerned. The second generation is all American and as intelligent and patriotic as any. But the question affecting the Pacific coast is different. In the South the problem is aggravated by fecundity. In the West it is plain enough that if given the liberty to do so, the Chinese and Japanese, to say nothing about the Hindus, will swarm over and run over the whole country. The trouble might not be serious if the swarming were less swift and the immigrants could be assimilated before they could impress their own character and institutions on the country and rife our American institutions. It seems plain enough that the way to prevent the Asiatic problem from becoming serious and complex is to continue to restrict immigration from the Orient. Rather than have American students submerged, and the American character superseded, many very wise men would think war preferable.

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