

### COOS BAY TIMES

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**OFFICIAL PAPER OF THE CITY OF MARSHFIELD.**

**THE AVERAGE LIVING WAGE.**

**A** MASSACHUSETTS official says a man can support a family of five decently on \$600 a year. The man who falls to do it must, he says, be ignorant or wasteful. Presumably he is correct, for John Mitchell, who knows much about labor conditions, says the same. It makes considerable difference, though, whether the man who gets the \$600 lives in a small or a large town—in Boston or in Marshfield.

There is another statement of the Massachusetts official to which unqualified assent cannot be given. He says that if the wages of workmen were increased by \$1 or \$2 a week, the only effect would be to increase their "economic wastefulness." That is an old story.

In 1848, while one of the Vermont railroads was being built, the pick and shovel men, who had been getting 50 cents a day, demanded 75 cents. The superintendent was advised by the person who looked after their spiritual welfare not to give them the additional quarter, because, according to him, they would spend it in drink. The phrase "economic wastefulness" had not been coined then.

When a hundred men get a raise of a dollar a week, each of them has his own way of dealing with the dollar. Some, and their number is not inconsiderable, add nothing to their living expenses, but put the dollar in the savings bank. Others live a little better, but put part of the dollar in the bank. Still others spend it all, part on their families and part on themselves.

The broad assertion that an increase in wages fosters "economic wastefulness" will not hold water. It does with some, but not with others. The most marked effect of increased wages, even where they have been increased because of a general advance in the cost of living, is a gain in saving bank deposits. But even if the wage earner were to spend nearly all his additional dollar in ministering to the health and happiness of his family, he could not justly be accused of economic wastefulness.

#### LAND GRANT DECISION.

**T**HE decision of Judge Wolverton in the \$75,000,000 land grant case of the Southern Pacific railroad, involving as it does 2,370,000 acres of land in western Oregon, is by far the most important one ever rendered by any federal court in the west, possibly west of the Mississippi river. It involves the rights and destinies of more people perhaps than any similar piece of litigation, exceeding in the amount of money directly or indirectly involved, the famous hydraulic mine decision of Judge Morrow.

Naturally the final adjudication of this case is what the people are interested in, for the decision of Judge Wolverton of course is not final. By sitting as a federal judge and with constitutional questions involved the case will not go to the circuit court of appeals but will be landed directly for its next hearing in the supreme court of the United States. Thus, the time involved before the adjudication will not exceed possible a year.

The persons who follow the case closely will not be surprised when the decision is handed down to learn that the Southern Pacific railroad is de-

clared a trustee of the lands involved to sell them to settlers at \$2.50 an acre.

As it was, the company construed the grant to mean that it had the right to take or hold those lands and dispose of them at will, or refuse to do so, and charge whatever price would suit them. In other words, the company looked upon its huge grant as an asset upon which it could issue bonds or raise money in any manner in which it saw fit. It could, according to its idea, sell these lands, hypothecate them or do anything other than sell them to settlers if it felt so disposed.

Wolverton knocked that idea out and all good lawyers are inclined to believe that the supreme court will so construe the statutory enactment by which the grant was made.

This land was first granted to the Oregon Central Railroad company in 1866. It was stated that the company should build a railroad from San Francisco to Portland and as a bonus therefor every odd section of land not occupied on either side of the right-of-way for forty miles was given to the company. Having failed to comply with these terms by starting the railroad between San Francisco and Portland, the Oregon Central in 1869 made over its grant to the Oregon and California Railroad company and on April 10, 1869, congress passed an amendment confirming to the Oregon and California Railroad company the rights held by the former company in toto and extending the time. In 1872 the Oregon and California company, having failed to start work on its proposed railroad, asked an extension of the grant and this met with much resistance. It was debated for something like four weeks, finally coming to a showdown, and it appearing that the amendment would be lost, a compromise which saved the day for the railroad company was passed.

Congressman Rainey, of Illinois, offered the amendment, virtually to the effect that the railroad company should be a trustee of these lands to be sold to settlers for \$2.50 an acre. The company in a written contract accepted this amendment and the measure as passed and California and Oregon ratified the arrangement as affecting their rights as states. Since that, however, the railroad company has placed the construction upon the amendment that it was a covenant and not a mandate. In other words, that it could sell the lands at \$2.50 an acre or regard the same as an asset upon which to raise the wind.

Under the terms of the Rainey amendment the railroad has been built through from San Francisco to Portland and in operation for some twenty-three years. In the meantime the company has refused to sell the lands to settlers at \$2.50 an acre and has fixed the price greatly at variance with the statutory enactment. In the meantime, thousands of people have undertaken to purchase these lands, making tenders therefor and appearing in the light of would-be actual settlers. A big regiment of wildcat lawyers has encouraged them in this belief, the said lawyers taking their money on the representation that they could appear as intervenors in a suit against the railroad company by the government and secure these rights.

The opinion of Judge Wolverton sets at rest that illusion, however, and holds that the railroad having no rights is not in a position to convey rights to intervenors, save in strict accordance with the Rainey amendment. In short, the company itself has no rights under the construction that it has placed on the statute, hence third parties cannot acquire rights which the company never held.

The disposing of these lands will have to start from the beginning and the company, it will be found when this case is over, must sell the land to applicants for \$2.50 an acre, and those who have imagined that they could force their way in under the wrongful understanding of its title subsequent to the act of 1872 by the railroad company, will find that they will have to take their chances along with others who may decide at this time to purchase.

#### THE GIRL WHO WORKS.

**T**HE TIMES recently printed a letter from a correspondent signing herself a "Hired Girl" making a plea for recognition of greater social equality. While this does not mean that she desires to become a member of the family it was an expression of a sense of wrong now suffered because of her position. This question of caste is a peculiar one. Assumed social superiority and inferiority is found in every community no matter how small.

Blue-blooded and red-blooded—

what does it mean? Scientifically speaking, of course, there is no such thing as blue-blood, and if it were possible, it could only be likely of a corpse. The red corpuscles of the blood are the life. In pre-scientific times, it was conceived that just ordinary humanity were red-blooded; the people of whom it was said they were "common"; the people who worked. Those who did not work were the blue-bloods, the patricians, the aristocrats, the kings and queens, the idlers and hoboos of humanity. For a definition which excludes work includes every man or woman who does not toil. Hence, morganatic marriages and mealliances of lesser degree; hence, indeed, the origin of "white slavery."

With the beginning of the American republic and its aristocracy of tobacco planters dependent upon the exploitation of the negro, even sometimes the white slave, for their income, it came to be recognized that the man who did not toil was not necessarily any better than his fellows. And presently there was evolved the idea that the man who deserved most of his fellow men was he who did work. Primogeniture no longer went in this country. Huge fortunes in a generation or two were split up. Even if a man inherit riches he is no longer necessarily considered in American society as a man worth while if he does not work for himself. There is a truism as old as the parable of the New Testament, which speaks of the talents: Of the man who is given ten talents, much is required; even of him who has but five; and of him who has but one, yet that one represents the capital upon which he must earn his interest. Each in his own degree.

In some ways English society is far more democratic than is the case in the United States. Whether a man works or not matters little in balancing his social status, against the fact of his birth and family. While he is working, this counterweight will do much for him socially. If he succeeds, there is no doubt about his status. If a man without birth or family succeeds as to wealth and is decent in other respects, his weighing in the balance is a foregone conclusion. He will not be found to be wanting.

This has gone further in these days of the suffragette. The woman who works is nowadays—in Great Britain—in the same category. Further yet, peereases openly conduct millinery shops. In this free United States, despite the ever-to-be revered Robert Chambers, birth plays no vital part, even if one belong to a Knickerbocker family or to the Daughters of the Revolution. That is, theoretically. But in place of aristocracy of birth there has been placed primarily a plutocracy of success in making wealth. The sons of the plutocrats are the aristocrats of the new America, an America which is, perhaps, less democratic than the aristocracy which was abjured in 1776.

Not intentionally democratic, the

average male American looks less upon his wife or daughter as an integer in society, co-equal with himself, than as a potential queen whom he may fall down and worship—to throw in the dust, mayhap, when he is tired of her. But women are weary of being dolls. It is not a question of the home, of race suicide, as Theodore Roosevelt would put it; it is a question of the status of woman. Why should not the woman who works be regarded as the social equal of the man who works? Why should not a woman of the family whether that family be reckoned in the European or American sense, who works whether she has a private income of her own or not, whether she is obliged to or not, be regarded in exactly the same way as a man in the same category?

Further, why should not a new Thackeray write a new "Book of Snobs" and include in his pillory the man or woman who looks down upon the girl who works?

#### ABOUT PAVING.

**A** MARSHFIELD man has handed The Times a paving article. According to it Ann Arbor, Mich., is paying an average of 75 cents a square yard for hard surface streets, where Marshfield has been putting up over \$2. Tared concrete is the class used. It consists of a heavy concrete base, and a wearing surface of tar and sand, which needs to be put on every two or three years, costing only 1 1/2 cents per square yard. It is said concrete is not satisfactory unless so protected, and then it will last indefinitely.

McMinnville has issued bonds to the amount of \$70,000 for the purpose of improving all the business thoroughfares and a part of the residence district with smooth-surface pavement. Salem will pave ten miles of streets this year, and plans are under way for twenty miles next year. Corvallis paved the business district last year, and is now laying the hard-surface material as far out as the union depot and the college grounds. Enterprising Roseburg has several blocks of improvement already completed and contracts have been let for 65 blocks more—which will include practically the entire town.

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