

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

THE DALLES OREGON

WASHINGTON LETTER.

WASHINGTON, July 16.—The extra session of congress will take out of the impoverished treasury a big sum in cash. Through many of the expenses of the national legislature run on during its absence from Washington, they jump to a maximum when it sits. To make laws costs Uncle Sam a large amount of money annually. The pay alone of members of the house amounts to \$1,800,000 a year, and they get \$130,000 extra for mileage. To help them transact their business they require a small army of clerks, doorkeepers, pages, etc. The salary list for this force of assistants runs up to \$730,000. This does not include the office of the sergeant-at-arms, which is a sort of bank through which the salaries of the representatives are paid. To run this financial institution an outlay of \$16,000 more is needed. An additional \$26,000 provides for the support of the house postoffice, through which as much mail matter passes as comes into and goes out of a good-sized city.

The number of senators being much smaller, their annual pay amounts only to \$440,000, with an addition of \$45,000 for mileage. There is an expense of \$5,460 for employes in the office of the vice president. The office of the secretary of the upper house, which does the banking and attends to much of the clerical business of that august body, costs \$64,500 in salaries. Clerks and messengers to various committees draw \$163,500. The sergeant-at-arms, doorkeepers and other helpers get an aggregate of \$118,000.

It also costs a great deal of money to run the building which congress occupies for business purposes. The capitol is under the charge of Architect Clark, who is allowed \$65,000 a year for keeping it in order. Four plumbers do nothing but mend and renew the arrangements for water and gas, and twenty-five laborers are engaged every day of the year in scrubbing the corridors of the great edifice. All this has nothing to do with the keeping up of the two wings, so far as their interior arrangements are concerned. The care of them devolves upon the senate and house respectively. Furniture and repairs require an annual outlay of \$18,000, to which must be added about \$35,000 for fuel and gas. The capitol and grounds represent a cash outlay of nearly \$20,000,000. This estimate would have started its original projectors. Wanting a design for the building, they offered \$500 and a building lot for the best one that should be submitted. Until twenty-five years ago the site comprised an area of only twenty-two acres. It was enlarged to its present size of fifty-one and one-half acres at a cost of \$685,000.

It is not generally taken for granted that the Sherman law is to be repealed, and speculation as to the construction of the house committees is rife. There is a great deal of talk about Mr. Bland's not going again at the head of the committee on coinage, weights and measures, but there appears to be no reason to doubt that Mr. Bland will remain in his old place. It is believed that a majority of the members of the house are now in favor of the repeal of the law, and if this is so a bill for its repeal will pass the house regardless of who may be chairman of the committee on coinage. The rules of the house will in all probability be such as to permit a majority to transact business, without any arbitrary assumption of authority or filibustering on the part of any one. It is believed also that a bare majority of the senate would vote for the repeal, but there the mode of procedure is different, and with a determined opposition, such as will be offered by the leading silver senators, a vote may be delayed. A fair guess is that a bill repealing the law may pass the house promptly, and that it may then stick in the senate for some time, with the possibility that a measure favorable to silver may accompany it as an amendment when it goes back to the house.

I learned at the pension office that 2,700 pensioners have been suspended up to date under the recent ruling requiring beneficiaries of the act of June 27, 1890, to prove total disability where they are drawing pensions for total disability. Many of the cases suspended will not probably result in the dropping of the pensioner, but may be confined to a reduction of pension according to the actual state of disability.

The idea, now seriously suggested, of taking the desks away from the members of the house may yet result in making congress look like a big rural school without enough birch rods and conical headgear to go around.

The gold reserve in the treasury more than kept pace with the thermometer readings last week, and closed at ninety-eight (millions) and over. J. R. L.

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