

The Dalles Daily Chronicle.

The only Republican Daily Newspaper on Wasco County.

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TUESDAY - - DECEMBER 21, 1897

THE ABUSE OF A GOOD THING.

The necessity for reform in pension legislation is becoming every day more apparent, and for the first time the abuse of the laws, passed in gratitude to the nation's defenders, seems to receive general recognition among our national legislators. The annual sums spent for pensions amounts to \$141,250,000, and unless some measures are taken looking toward curtailment, it promises to go even higher. The money spent for pensions is almost a third of our aggregate national expenditure.

Pensions are a burden left by the great civil war, which we cannot expect to get rid of for many years. In so far as they are just and necessary the people want to bear them and would not evade the responsibility if they could. The obligation is an honorable one, and it is the abuse, and not the debt itself, which arouses criticism. No one is willing to forget the services which the men of '61 rendered the union, and as long as there remains a dollar in the national treasury, no needy veteran should be allowed to be in want. But in this, as in everything else which pertains to our national welfare, we should be courageous enough to look at things squarely, and not condone flagrant violations of the law's intent, either through too much sentiment or through fear of being unpopular.

The pension system is peculiarly liable to abuse, and perhaps some degree of fraud would evade the strictest administration. But it is possible that several avenues of fraud can be closed, and to this end the attention of congress should be drawn.

One of the best suggestions yet proposed is that of publishing the list of pensioners, so that they may be known in every community. This would tend to bring many frauds to light. Where a man whose claim to a pension was founded on deafness is discovered to be a competent manager of a long distance telephone, as is reported in a New York paper, somebody will be sure to see that this knowledge reaches the pension office.

An amendment such as the pension commissioner suggests, refusing pensions to widows who marry old soldiers after their pensions began, would also be a helpful reform. Then let congress be chary about passing private pension bills, except in known meritorious cases, and much headway will have been made.

The country is not forgetful of her defenders, but, as has been aptly said, "We must see that our roll of honor does not become one of scandal."

The Oregonian, in referring to the Mitchell-Simon fight in Multnomah county, a year and a half ago, when the contesting delegates appeared at the state convention, says: "A great majority of these (meaning Republicans outside of Multnomah county) freely admit that an injustice was done at the last state convention, when the Multnomah delegation, fairly elected, was cut in two and one half its strength destroyed." Which delegation does it mean was fairly elected? By implication we are led to believe the one headed by Joe Simon, yet such a statement is far from the truth. The facts are that both sides were much to blame for practices at the polls which should not be countenanced. Yet if the responsibility is to be fixed, Simon and his crowd are the greater

sinner. The Republicans of Multnomah county were tired of being under the absolute domination of one man, and that man Simon, so a revolt was decided upon. When the matter was left to the decision of the delegates outside of Multnomah county, it was seen that to decide which was wholly wrong or wholly right would be impossible, and a compromise was all that could be done. If Multnomah county persists in her political warfare and the decision is left to the country delegates, it is probable she will be left out entirely, and that will be bad, very bad, for Mr. Simon, as the rest of the state has little use for him and his practices.

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