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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1903.

The Chaldeans and Egyptians used bricks and the Greeks and Romans used stone for writings. If our race were destroyed today and the earth should be visited from some other planet, five hundred years later, our paper books would have perished and the Roman Empire would be accounted the latest and highest stage of human civilization.—Edward Bellamy.

THE HAND OF A MASTER.

The house committee on railroad and transportation showed its hand Saturday, when it reported the state portage bill to the house, without recommendations.

Too servile to the interests of the strong railroad lobby at the legislature, to openly oppose it, by a favorable recommendation, and yet too fearful of the voters of the central and eastern counties of Oregon to report unfavorably upon it, the committee took the lukewarm, middle ground, ready and willing to fall over on the winning side, which ever it might be.

The hand of the masterful railroad attorneys is seen plainly in the play. They seek to keep the barrier of the Cascades and the Dalles between the people of Eastern Oregon and cheap transportation.

They virtually name the railroad committees in advance of legislative sessions and go into the fight against the people with all odds on their side. The subject slaves of corporation interests who are so blinded to the needs of the state as to be silent on the subject of such vital importance to the people of two-thirds of the state's area, should be remembered and turned down by the voters.

It is a vindication of the people, and a just rebuke to the committee that the portage bill passed the house in the face of the lobby and its committee on railroads and transportation.

The construction of this portage road, owned and operated by the state, is one of the greatest steps yet taken by Oregon, toward the reclamation of idle domain of the interior. It will develop the state and leave the profits in the pockets of the people.

PENDLETON'S WATER COMMISSION.

The news comes from Salem that a change in the charter, involving a complete revision of the present method of choosing the water commission is incorporated in the charter revision bill.

There is no demand upon the part of the citizens of Pendleton to have the water commission question touched.

The past year has been one of the most prosperous in the history of Pendleton's water system. The income, the management, the cost and the usefulness of the system for the year are sources of pride to Pendleton.

The present law, which provides for the retirement of one member of the commission, each alternate year, the eldest remaining member of the commission becoming chairman of the board successively, keeps an experienced man continuously at the head of the commission, and insures uniformity of management.

This present law is satisfactory and profitable to the city. It is a fair,

honest, open business proposition. There is no chance for politics to creep in and weaken the usefulness. The commission is the choice of the people. They are absolute masters of the water system and cannot be replaced by inexperienced men, until their term expires.

The proposed amendment makes the mayor chairman of the water commission and provides for the appointment of a commission by him.

The mayor's hands are full now. If he appoints the city marshal and recorder and meets all the numerous demands that are made upon his time he cannot reasonably act as chairman of the water commission, which is one of the busiest positions connected with the municipal government. It requires practical experience, close attention to details and endless vigilance on the part of the water commissioners to keep the system at its full height of usefulness, extend it as the needs of the city require, and make it pay.

During the year just ended, from December 31, 1901, to December 31, 1902, the income from the city water system was \$13,496.52. The total expense of the system for the year, including \$2,255.60 interest on water bonds, was \$7,740.66. During the year \$5,824.02 were spent in laying new water mains and \$936.88 were paid into the sinking fund.

In 1898 the expenses of the system were \$11,162.15 and the income \$9,977.98, under the old system of management. Since the present law has been in effect the profits of the water plant have steadily increased and the expenses have decreased.

It seems that it would be destructive to the usefulness of the commission to undo the satisfactory work it has in hand and throw the management back into the old methods so recently discarded. What demand is there for a change? Is not the present law satisfactory? Is not the record sufficient to satisfy the people and the legislature that no change is wanted now?

OFFICIAL ANARCHY.

The people are always ready to condemn individuals who break laws and to point the finger of indignation at anarchy in whatever form it appears.

Oregon has an example before her which should cause thinking men to stop a moment and wonder what the object of law really is.

The scalp bounty law has been upon the statute books of this state for four years. It was passed and ingrafted into the code of Oregon and became equal in force and execution to the law against murder or theft.

First one county dared to repudiate it and refuse to comply with its provisions and then another, simply because it was not directly beneficial to them.

A reign of anarchy set in. This law was willfully set aside by the county courts of various counties of the state. Although it was a part of the code of Oregon, these very men who are supposed to be watchful of good government and in whose hands is placed the execution of the law, set a portion of that code aside and refused to comply with it.

Another law on the statute books of Oregon says that no county shall go in debt to exceed \$5,000.

These very county courts which are the guardians of the people's rights, and whose duty it is to be watchful of the interest of the state, willfully violate this law month after month.

Can you blame individuals for breaking laws when these examples are before them? Is it any wonder that lawlessness is on the increase in society or that anarchy is thriving

among the ignorant classes, when they see it patted upon the back and warmed at the bosom of official actions?

There should be a few penalties meted out to official anarchists. It might have a good moral effect on the people.

The announcement that a half million packing plant is to be erected in Portland, is encouraging news to the stockmen of the Inland Empire. More alfalfa, more beef, more profits. The true business era of the North west is just beginning to dawn.

Senator Justus Wade, of Union county, has not yet introduced one bill or resolution into the legislature. It is a distinction seldom achieved. It might be better were there more like him. "May his tribe increase."—Oregon Daily Journal.

The state senate spends about half its time in reconsidering questions hurriedly disposed of. What would be said of a farmer who would spend half of each season tearing down his hay stacks?

When the wires announce the slightest illness of Senator Mitchell, immediately the machine politicians of Oregon begin to rummage the list of eligibles for a successor.

SENATE'S ANTI-TRUST BILLS.

In passing without debate the Elkins anti-rebate and the Hoar general anti-trust bills the senate has done nothing that need make the trusts trouble. It has simply done its part in "making a record" for use in the next national republican campaign text-book.

The bills go now to the house, where the Littlefield measure, containing about the same provisions, is pending. Not improbably the house will pass one bill, the senate another, and both will be "lost in the shuffle."

As for the merits of the Elkins bill, it provides for nothing already covered in the Interstate Commerce act. It does not, in fact, provide such severe penalties for the giving of rebates by railroads as does the present law. It entirely abolishes imprisonment for such offenses and makes fines the only punishment.

Who is verdant enough to believe that a rebate system of which it may truly be said that "there are millions in it" could be broken up by an occasional prosecution and a fine of "not more than \$20,000"—even if a conviction were ever obtained and sustained by the highest court, a thing that has never yet happened?—New York World.

SOMETHING DOING.

A bill has been introduced in the Illinois legislature providing for the municipal ownership of railroads. Every city in the state is authorized to own and operate street railways, and the right must be expressly reserved in every grant of franchise to purchase street railway property must be submitted to the people. An affirmative vote of two-thirds is required to pass the measure.

This amounts to full municipal control and puts affairs in such shape that the city can act at any time. Only a week ago the republican majority in the legislature sat quiet while the democratic minority passed a resolution binding the United States senators to vote for a constitutional amendment providing for the election of senators by direct vote of the people. Things are doing in Illinois!—Boise Capital News.

WHAT MORGAN CONTROLS.

In September, 1902, the Morgan interests controlled 55,555 miles of American railways, or more than the mileage of Germany, Great Britain and Ireland combined. These lines have a capitalization of \$3,002,949,571, which is more than three times the total interest-bearing debt of the United States. In addition, the Mor-

gan influence is powerful in almost all the other important railroad systems of the country.

The direct Morgan interests include 18 railroad systems, one monster steamship company, 13 industrial combinations, seven banks, three telegraph and cable companies, seven great insurance companies and innumerable smaller corporations of divers kinds. The total capitalization of these various combinations is \$6,448,500,000—an amount greater than the national debt of any country in the world, and twice the debt of Great Britain.

The capital of a single one of the Morgan companies—the United States Steel Corporation—is equal to about twice the cost of the Boer war, and its net profits for the current year are estimated at \$140,000,000, a sum about equal to the annual cost of the British navy, and but little short of the total revenues of Spain.

But Mr. Morgan does not depend on the dividends of his stocks for the bulk of his income. His chief business, at present, is promoting on a gigantic scale. When he organized the underwriting syndicate that launched the United States Steel Corporation, the subscribers were pledged, if called upon, to pay in \$200,000,000. They actually advanced only \$25,000,000, and that was returned in the final settlement.

Their profit on this investment was \$56,000,000, or over 200 per cent. The share of J. P. Morgan & Co. was about \$11,000,000. Every company Mr. Morgan floats—and the number is large—yields profits proportionately. Often he has no need to advance money. The mere magic of his name floats a company, and his clients gladly pay him half a million, or a million, or five million dollars for the service.—Success.

The government of Persia has recently stopped all importation of scriptures in the Persian language.

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