

The West.

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It is thinking of self too much that gives us little time to think of another's wants.

WHAT is the wish of the people of Florence regarding incorporation? This matter should be discussed, and if it is to be, articles should be drafted and submitted to the citizens at a public meeting.

THE result of raising the \$100,000 subsidy for the Siuslaw & Eastern railroad is in placing the matter of building the road in positive form. No delays can be urged on this score, and we may presume work will commence at once.

Two years ago Lane county threw 281 votes for congressman, and this year 4133 were cast. This shows an increase of 852 votes in the county in two years or a population of 4360. In population as well as in wealth our county stands in the front rank.

THERE is satisfaction in returning to our home and our work editing THE WEST. With all the vicissitudes of fortune and annoyances connected with newspaper work, it is preferable to that canvassing for an office, especially when the position requires an exhibition of one's person and oratorical talents on the traditional "stump."

THE political kaleidoscope made a curious turn in Coos county when the voters scratched the name of their best friend, Hon. Binger Hermann, and voted for a political mountebank. Mr. Hermann was opposed for the office of congressman in all the counties of the first district, and especially so in Lane county, by political enemies, because of his partiality to Coos county in obtaining large appropriations. No more forcible positive rebuke to this accusation could have been given than the majority votes thrown by Coos voters for Rork, who disgusted everybody by the assiduity with which he condemned appropriations by the government for harbors generally and for Coos bay and Coquille in particular. For all that, Rork is a power in Coos county and his promotion over Mr. Hermann shows a distrust of the latter that must cool his ardor in his work for the people of that county.

THE proposition that citizens of Lane county generally are not deeply interested in the improvement of our harbor if the government is no longer tenable. The solution of this question has been thrown into practical shape by the large vote given Mr. Hermann and a citizen of Florence for the state senate. The limited benefits to all people in this county seem to have ventured in the calculations of citizens down to a pretty low point. It is estimated that our harbor improved and the railroad completed will vastly cheapen the carriage of grain and all farm products to Portland, San Francisco and other ports, for the rail-transportation will be shortened and the cheaper water highway more

accessible. To the people of Lane these are not all visions of a more sure road to cheaper freight rates, but are plain facts after studying situations. Farther than the fact of the shorter route to markets, it is conceded there would be of a necessity a keen competition between carrying highways which would lower rates. Once admit the Siuslaw & Eastern as a competitor for freights to this point, and the real competition would be between the railways to Portland, Yaquina and Florence, with the advantages in favor of our road.

IN COMMENTING upon the inconsistency of the average prohibition voter, the Eugene Register says: "Probably a few prohibitionists 'vote as they pray,' but this cannot be said of adherents to that party in this city. A majority of them in this city voted for men who have been branded by temperance people as members of the 'whiskey ring,' and in one precinct fourteen or fifteen voted for a bar-tender. This will not help the temperance cause very materially." While on the canvass, Gaylord, the temperance advocate who accompanied a bottle of whiskey most of the time, repeatedly edified his hearers by stating that the "people of Florence and the Siuslaw did not enjoy the necessaries of life," what this had to do with the cause of temperance is a conundrum too hard for us, but in the event the two are not analogous it may be presumed Gaylord made use of this language so that those who voted for him in this precinct could have something to nourish their sorrow for not sending their friend to the legislature.

CERTAINLY one who has recently traveled the road to Eugene must have noticed two very valuable improvements made. From Seaton out a short distance, the road supervisor, Mr. Tanner, has turnpiked the road for some distance made necessary ditches to convey the water away from the road, built culverts and brought the highway to as even a grade as is possible to do. "To do well whatever is done" is an axiom that has practical force in building roads as well as in other affairs of life. We plead then for the continuance of the good custom of building our roads well. But as we go farther on and cross the mountains on the Lake Creek route, we see some excellent road work done by the Whisman boys. The road has been so changed that the grade is less. The Whisman boys must take first rank as mountain road builders, for with \$300 appropriated by the county, they have made more improvements and better ones than is usually done with twice the amount. If these boys had about \$200 in addition to the sum already given them, they would have a good road from Hale to the Lake Creek bridge. A good highway from Eugene to Seaton has been and is an important matter to us, but under existing circumstances it may be presumed nothing will

be done in the matter for two years at least.

AFTER having visited all the other towns and cities in Lane county and can in truth congratulate them upon their growth and prosperity, we have no reason to think the less of our own home, Florence. She has kept pace with her sister hamlets, and he who cannot see the advance of prosperity and growth here, is certainly shortsighted in his vision of a fact. At this moment there is a large sailing craft just outside the offing awaiting the service of tug Lillian, and when this sailing vessel shall have gone out with her load of lumber, it will be counted the tenth cargo of our forest productions that has found a market in San Francisco during the past two months. The wheels of our lumber mills are continually turning and for the first time since we came here mill men are advertising to pay cash for sawing timber. Our merchants, too, are doing a larger and more extended trade, while employes and employers are more numerous. The exodus of citizens from more thickly populated portions of our country to this is becoming a daily occurrence, and the improvements in town and country keeping pace with older and richer portions of Lane county. To fully appreciate our town, our country and our climate, one only needs to go to other portions of our domain for two months as we have, and on one's return a deeper love for the blessings to be found here and less complaints for all inconveniences will be the result.

DEPRECIATED MONEY.

SINCE much discussion has been indulged in regarding the value of money during the campaign, we give a few facts about African currency for our readers' attention. If any man in this country were presented with a fortune of ten thousand dollars in gold or silver coins on condition that he carry the money home at once on his own person he would find that he had a pretty heavy burden, but if he lived in the part of Africa where cowrie shells are the medium exchange a ten thousand dollar pile of gold or silver would look insignificant compared with the enormous bulk of ten thousand dollars in the currency of that country. These shells are worth on an average about one-thirteenth of a cent, and ten dollars' worth of shells are said to be a good load for one man to carry. Ten thousand dollars would be represented by about thirty million shells, and it would take one thousand men to remove the money at one time. Indeed, African travellers who hired porters to carry their shells before starting into the regions where shells are the medium of exchange, have sometimes found that the wages of the porters in gold or silver in a short time amounted to considerably more than their burdens were worth. They overcame the diffi-

culty by discharging their hired porters and buying slaves with some of their shells to carry the remainder. In this country when a man has an inconvenient quantity of gold or silver money to carry he can easily exchange it for bank notes or government notes which can be again converted into gold or silver at any time and thus large amounts can be carried about without inconvenience, but paper money is a product of civilization which is unknown to the people who use shells as the medium of exchange. If cowrie shells had always been as cheap in Africa as they are to-day it is altogether unlikely that they would ever have become the medium of exchange. Just as in this country gold and silver are selected for coinage on account of their intrinsic value so in these uncivilized African wilds the shells being in great demand while the supply was limited, they were adopted as the medium of exchange because a man or woman who had one of these shells could always exchange it for food or any other necessity of life.

The early traders from Europe finding that the natives valued these shells so highly and that they could buy slaves, palm oil, ivory, etc., with them, began to import cowrie shells in enormous quantities from other countries, especially Ceylon where they were very abundant. The effect was very much the same as if such enormous quantities of gold and silver were suddenly discovered and imported into this country that the value of gold or silver bullion would fall considerably below that of copper. The gold and silver currency would under such circumstances become greatly depreciated in value. It was just so with the shell currency of the African savages and the king who had stored up in his treasure house thousands of cowrie shells found his fortune slipping away from him whenever a shipload of shells arrived as surely as if the ship had carried thieves, each of whom had stolen a number of his treasured shells and carried them away on the ship. If the ships that brought the shells in such large quantities had carried away the shells instead of bringing them to the country, those that remained would have increased in value on account of the scarcity. As it was, shells became very cheap, and it became a burden for a man to carry home his wages in the money of the country. In this country such a sudden depreciation in the value of gold and silver as has been described would cause temporary trouble and embarrassment, but eventually some substitute for gold and silver would be found. We would not continue to use them for coinage very long after they became so cheap, but the savage Africans were too conservative to make a change. Shells were the currency when they were scarce and valuable, and shells remained the medium of exchange when they became plentiful and cheap.