

THE OREGON SCOUT.

AMOS K. JONES EDITOR.

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SENATOR DOLPH AND THE SURPLUS.

Senator Dolph's proposition to spend the surplus revenue in coast defenses, harbor and navigation improvements is not only a popular scheme but is favored by a number of able men like John Sherman, Senators Frye and Ingalls and Wm. Kelley. Sherman's views are substantially in line with those of Mr. Dolph, while Mr. Kelley really favors the same principle when he proposes to repeal the federal whiskey tax and remit the imposition and collection of whiskey taxes to the states. Wm. M. Grosvener, in the *North American Review* for January, 1887, inquires "What would the surplus be worth to the people if left in their hands?" Railroad capital averages about 4 per cent.; capital invested in farms does not return 4 per cent. to owners. The increase in all wealth from 1870 to 1880 was about 3 1/2 per cent. yearly. From these facts Mr. Grosvener argues that the American people would be better off to invest the surplus revenue in the industrial education of the people through establishment of technical trades schools like those supported by the municipal and state governments of continental Europe than to keep their money at 3 1/2 per cent. He also argues that the remission of taxes would not do as much good as a wise use of the money raised. The nation now pays about \$100,000,000 yearly for the schools, at an average cost of \$15.50 per scholar, and the return would be far greater if every scholar were taught the rudiments of useful trades and employments. Industrial training, Grosvener argues, would give each boy a chance to find out what faculties he has, for what work he is best qualified, and thus lessen the awful waste of power and loss of opportunity which come from mistaken choice of work.

Grosvener states the simple truth when he says that the schools now send too many boys into trading, teaching or living by their wits. Industrial training would win a larger share to productive labor, show how to put brains into it and make it more highly esteemed. He would provide industrial training for the girls, too; would instruct them in sewing and all household arts and economies. It costs the French people 15 cents per day for food for each inhabitant; costs our people fully 40 cents per day. A third of this difference, or 13 cents per day, is due to household waste and ignorance in cooking. Grosvener would expend the surplus in providing industrial training free to all children, in addition to the public school system, and have it expended by the general government or state or local boards. Their government and municipal trade schools have done wonders for the common people of continental Europe. Our government has not hesitated to vote money in the shape of lands to maintain agricultural colleges in the states; industrial training in the trades is as rudimentary as knowledge of agriculture. It would be no more socialism than water works, public parks, libraries and humane institutions; no more socialism than the common school system. Grosvener inquires: "Can we give to the poor in any way more wisely than by educating and training them in the rudiments of productive labor, so that by honest industry they may become less poor, and therefore less burdensome?"

This argument is plausible to this extent that such industrial instruction has been of immense practical benefit in Europe, but it is a fact, we believe, that few graduates of agricultural colleges adopt farming, and farmers' boys are as a rule the first to desert the farm for non-productive and precarious employment. Many farms of New England have been deserted by American farmers on the plea that "they were starving," and yet these same farms have been taken by Irish-Americans who make them pay handsomely by hard work and saving. It is not unlikely that if industrial training were made a part of the school system it would raise productive labor in the estimation of the growing generation and a larger number of persons would be willing to work steadily with their trained hands than to starve trying all to live by their shallow wits.

But there are other thinkers who justify the spending of the surplus for the public weal on the broad philosophical ground that taxation should defray something more than the necessary expenses of government; that scientific taxation should ascertain a people's exact right and share in the wealth of the country, collect it, pay all legitimate expenses out of it, and

then redistribute the surplus for the production of new wealth through the employment of idle labor. Senator Dolph practically seeks to apply this philosophy by his proposition to spend the surplus in procuring common advantages for the whole public. A few years ago Mr. Powderly showed that two millions of men were out of work because they had nothing to do. It is argued that the surplus revenue distributed in any kind of work, so that it paid for itself in the production of new and actual wealth, would be a good investment of the people's money; that at least in hard times it would help to empty poorhouses and start the wheels of idle industries. This philosophy of the collection and redistribution of taxes, spending the surplus, after necessary expenses are paid, in various ways, as suggested by Senator Dolph, is held by a good many able and thoughtful men both in Europe and America.—*Oregonian*.

A RETURN TO FRACTIONAL CURRENCY.

The United States Postal Improvement Association is the name of an organization that has been formed to promote the re-issue of fractional currency, and also to secure a reduction in the postage on seeds and plants. Every planter now has to pay a tax of 10¢ per pound on seeds, bulbs and cions, and that is the postage on this class of mail matter. It is desired to have seeds and plants classed as third-class mail matter, and subject to a rate of postage of one cent for each two ounces, or eight cents per pound. The rate in Canada is only four cents per pound. Any plan that will facilitate the dissemination of plants and seeds is for the universal good of the nation, and will be supported by nine-tenths of the population. Incidentally it is desired to abolish the present postal note system and substitute therefor money orders for \$5 or less at a charge of three cents. The value and importance of this great facility to the mail business of the country will be generally recognized.

We heartily endorse this movement to increase our postal facilities. We urge all of our readers to immediately write to their representatives in both branches of congress to give this matter their earnest and cordial support. The value of these personal letters to congressmen from their constituents cannot be over-estimated. If this is followed up by the general circulation of petitions in behalf of these measures success will be assured. The national grange in session at Lansing, Mich., unanimously voted on Monday to help this work for postal improvement in every possible and legitimate way. Success is certain, if every one in favor of these ideas will take hold in earnest.

There is continually an increasing evidence that the people desire the re-issue of a fractional currency. At present a large majority of our citizens are hindered in making remittances in sums less than \$1, very much to their discomfort and dissatisfaction. Either postage stamps or postal notes must be used. In most cases, distance from the nearest money-order post-office renders it difficult to secure the postal note, while postage stamps are not intended as a circulating medium and are not negotiable. Moreover postal notes, being issued at only about 14 per cent of the postoffices in the country, are difficult to obtain.

They are no safer than a fractional currency bill, while those who have experienced the delay necessary in our large towns and cities to secure one of these notes, as well as to collect the payment on it, will be in sympathy with the present movement to secure from Congress an early re-issue of fractional currency.—*EX*.

AN IMPORTANT CASE.

An important case involving the treaty relations of the United States with Hawaii and San Domingo was argued last Wednesday in the United States supreme court. The case stands on the docket as *Hugh Kelly, plaintiff in error, against Edward L. Hedden, collector*. The question presented is the alleged exemption from duty under the existing tariff of products of the Sandwich Islands, admitted free from duty under the reciprocity treaty and the special act of congress, approved August 15, 1876. About twenty years ago the United States entered into a treaty with the dominion republic, by which each country agreed not to charge higher import duties on the products of the other than were imposed upon like products from any other country.

The importer claims the exemption from duty of certain sugars and other products imported by him from San Domingo, upon the ground that the articles were of such character that, had they been imported from Hawaii, they would have been admitted free of duty under the treaty between the United States and Hawaii, and the act of August 15, 1876, enforcing that treaty.

The United States government

maintains that the treaty with the Hawaiian Islands was not a mere reciprocity treaty, but was in substance a commercial contract, by virtue of which Hawaii pays a valuable consideration for the admission of certain merchandise to the ports of the United States.

Counsel for the importer say that if the United States should be defeated in this case, San Domingo might become the Honolulu of the Atlantic coast, while if the United States should succeed, Denmark, Brazil, Central America, Peru, Persia and other foreign governments would be at liberty to shut out other manufacturers and products from their ports, without giving us any cause for complaint, for violation of existing treaties, pledging the United States an equality there with all other nations. This, they say, would upset nearly all our existing commercial treaties with foreign powers.—*Astorian*.

COMING TO SETTLEMENT.

There is due to the state of Oregon from the general government a sum of money, now stated at \$539,454, principal and interest, for services rendered during the first year of the war of the rebellion. The claim upon this account has been hanging fire in the War Department for years, and doubtless would have kept on hanging there till "the crack of doom," had not Governor Penoyer, on his recent visit to the National Capitol, given the matter his personal attention. He found out where the claims were lying. They were in the War Department whereas they should have been placed in the Treasury Department for auditing. They were followed up and kept before the minds of the Department until it now seems there is a prospect for the speedy adjustment of the matter, so long delayed. A recent communication from the Treasury Department to Governor Penoyer informs him that "the claim will be taken up and adjusted during the present session of Congress in time for an appropriation for its payment should a balance be found due the State."

It is said to be the intention of the Governor, in case an appropriation is made, to recommend to the next Legislature that it be expended in building a portage road between The Dalles and Celilo, by the State. He can arrange it so as to make it a god-send for Eastern Oregon, and at the same time do no injury to the balance of the State. If he can do so, so much more to his credit, and thanks to the careful and zealous efforts of Governor Penoyer on behalf of this commonwealth.—*EX*.

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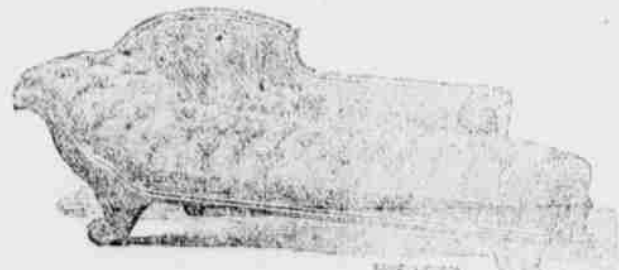
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