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## WASHINGTON.

### Doings of the People at the Capital.

#### THE BEHRING SEA MATTER.

A Change in the Seats at the Next Con-  
gress—The New Immigra-  
tion Law.

WASHINGTON, May 8, 1891.

**EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:**—  
Senator Stewart's familiar Santa  
Claus beard was the beacon by which  
I steered today at the capitol until he  
was cornered in a committee room.  
The senator is a pretty good Farmer's  
Alliance man on at least two very im-  
portant questions—the tariff and the  
free coinage of silver, and he insists  
most vehemently that no party can  
win next year that does not put a free  
coinage plank in its platform. His  
pet aversions among the possible candi-  
dates are Messrs. Harrison and Cleve-  
land, and he thinks if they should be  
the nominees of their respective parties  
that a third candidate on a free coinage  
platform would be elected.

The senator proposes using every  
opportunity which presents itself dur-  
ing the coming session of congress to  
push through a free coinage bill, and  
he thinks the probabilities favor the  
passage of the bill, but he has little  
hope of it becoming a law on account  
of the presidential veto; but it is evi-  
dent he has not entirely abandoned  
hope of converting Mr. Harrison, not-  
withstanding that gentleman's recent  
remarks on the subject.

Something important is going on  
between Mr. Blaine and the British  
minister, but no one seems to know  
precisely what it is, further than that  
it relates to Behring sea matters.  
They are both at present in New York,  
where they can confer without excit-  
ing the notice that it would here.  
From the best information obtainable  
it is believed that an agreement be-  
tween the United States and England,  
which may possibly include Russia,  
will shortly be announced that will put  
an end to the killing of seals in Behr-  
ing sea for this season certainly, and  
possibly until the whole question at  
issue between the governments shall  
have been decided by arbitration or  
otherwise. It is known that the treas-  
ury department is waiting upon Mr.  
Blaine's decision to issue orders to the  
commanders of the revenue cutters,  
now on the Pacific coast, for their  
guidance during the coming sealing  
season.

Secretary Foster has big faith in the  
benefit of the new immigration law  
and he has directed Assistant Sec-  
retary Nettleton to give it his personal  
attention until it is thoroughly under-  
stood by the federal officials in all our  
ports, and the assistant secretary has  
gone to New York that he may know  
by personal observation just how it  
works.

In addition to the new senators  
there will be quite a change around in  
the seats of some of the old ones, when  
congress again assembles. Mr. Dixon,  
of Rhode Island, will have the front  
seat so long held by Mr. Edmunds;  
Mr. Sanders, of Montana, will have  
Mr. Dixon's old seat, while Mr. Sand-  
ers' vacant chair will be filled by Mr.  
Dubois, one of the "baby" senators  
from Idaho. Mr. Peffer has been  
extremely modest, being satisfied with  
a seat in the rear row on the republi-  
can side. Mr. Blair's chair will be  
taken by Mr. Pasco, of Florida, and  
Mr. Colquitt, of Georgia, will have the  
front row seat long occupied by Sen-  
ator Brown, of Georgia, which Mr.  
Regan, recently resigned, had filed an  
application for. Mr. Paddock takes  
Mr. Everts' old seat, and Mr. Wash-  
burne will get the one occupied at the  
last session by Mr. Ingalls. Mr. Wol-  
cott, of Colorado, who has had a back  
seat, will take the one vacated by Mr.  
Spooner. The rear row on the demo-  
cratic side will contain an aggregation  
of new faces that in the eyes of all  
good democrats might be called the  
"big four." There will be seated Vilas,  
of Wisconsin; Gerdan, of Georgia,  
(Farmers' Alliance man); Brice, of  
Ohio; and Hill, of New York. It has  
leaked out that Senator Dixon filed  
his application for Mr. Edmunds' seat  
last winter, which indicates that he  
knew of the contemplated resignation.

What action this government will  
take about the severance of diplomatic  
relations by the Italian government  
will not be determined until Mr. Har-  
rison gets back, but it is probable that  
our minister to Italy will be recalled  
and that the American legation in  
Rome will be closed indefinitely.

The Washington correspondent of  
the New York World has been arrest-  
ed, charged with criminal libel, for  
having stated that Dr. Hammond, of  
this city, charged Mrs. Senator Stan-  
ford \$5,000 for the removal of a wen  
from her head.

The forty-second annual meeting of  
the American Medical Association was  
in session here this week. More than  
a thousand physicians from all sections  
of the country were in attendance.

News has been received here of the  
acceptance by the government of Ven-  
ezuela of the reciprocity proposition  
submitted to it some time ago by Mr.  
Blaine. It only requires the presi-  
dent's proclamation now to put it into  
effect. J. H. C.

#### Crop-Weather, Bulletin No. 10.

The observer of the Oregon Weather  
Bureau, of Portland, Oregon, has is-  
sued the bulletin for the week ending  
Saturday, May 16, 1891, the same be-  
ing based upon reports received from  
161 correspondents, which is as follows:

#### WESTERN OREGON.

**Weather.**—About normal tempera-  
ture prevailed for the week. There  
was an absence of extremely warm  
days, but the nights have been warmer.  
The night temperature has more effect  
on general growth of vegetation than  
the day temperature. Warm nights  
mean better and more sturdy growth.  
There has been an absence of rainfall,  
except a very light shower on the 12th.  
Further reports of the frost on the 7th,  
8th and 9th indicate, as remarked in  
last week's bulletin, little or no dam-  
age to vegetation. The weather has  
been cloudy, with two or more days  
almost cloudless. Generally northerly  
winds prevailed.

**Crops.**—The weather conditions  
have been most favorable to the growth  
and yield of crops. Late spring seed-  
ing on low lands is practically finished.  
Fall wheat continues to have good  
growth and color and some of it is  
heading. The spring sown grain is  
generally reported in a most promis-  
ing condition. Unless unforeseen cir-  
cumstances happen, the Willamette  
valley will have the largest cereal and  
fruit crop on record. In Southern  
Oregon prospects are also most flatter-  
ing. In sections of this latter district  
showers would be of benefit. Some  
hay has been already cut, and it yield-  
ed well. Hops are growing remark-  
ably well and the yards indicate good  
yields. Strawberries are ripening in  
sections of Southern Oregon and in  
western and central parts of Benton  
county cherries are as large as a full  
grown pea. Peaches are formed, ap-  
ple calyx forming. The grass is good  
and everything is favorable to all vege-  
tation in Western Oregon.

#### EASTERN OREGON.

**Weather.**—Warm weather has pre-  
vailed, being about a normal tempera-  
ture along the Columbia river, but  
below normal south of the river. An  
occasional sprinkle of rain fell, not  
sufficient to do much good. Further  
reports of the frost on 8th and 9th in-  
dicate damage to fruit south of Blue  
mountains and in southern parts of  
Wasco and Gilliam counties. There  
has been more sunshine, and fresh  
northerly winds.

**Crops.**—Summer fallowed wheat  
and barley in sections are heading.  
Spring wheat is short in stem and has  
slow growth. Good showers would in-  
sure a large yield. Fall wheat will  
yield well, but spring wheat will not  
be as large a crop as last year unless  
more rain falls on it within the next  
four weeks. The general crop pros-  
pects throughout Eastern Oregon are,  
however, good. Wasco and Sherman  
counties have perhaps the best pros-  
pects. In Umatilla county the surface  
soil is dry, but moisture is plentiful in  
under soil. This county's prospects  
are as good or better than at the same  
time last year. In Grande Ronde val-  
ley farmers are generally well satisfied  
with wheat prospects. Fruit is doing  
nicely. The range grass is quite good  
and cattle are doing well. Sheep  
shearing continues to progress favor-  
ably.

**B. S. PAGUE,**  
Observer, U. S. Signal Service.

## THE TAX LAW.

### An Able Argument in Favor of it.

#### ITS EFFECT UPON CAPITAL.

The Holders of Mortgages the Parties to  
be Mostly Benefited by  
its Repeal.

TELLEAVEY, OR., May 15, 1891.  
**EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:**—

I do not like to occupy so much of  
your space by the use of the scissors,  
but to fully comprehend this economi-  
cally it is necessary to reproduce  
the following from the Oregonian:

"Advocates and supporters of the  
mortgage tax law in Oregon are fur-  
nished an illustration by the Chicago  
Tribune, that can be comprehended  
by the dullest intellect. It is assumed  
that a man owns and works a farm  
which will sell for \$10,000. He makes  
a comfortable living off it. He pays  
taxes on whatever amount that farm  
may be listed at—\$3000, or \$2500 or  
\$2000. He gets tired of running the  
farm himself and he rents it to some  
younger man, who is to pay him year-  
ly a fixed share of the produce—so  
much of the wheat, corn, hay, etc.,  
and who is to pay the taxes. The  
owner sells his share of the produce  
and lives off the proceeds. When the  
assessor comes around after such an  
arrangement has been made he does  
not find any more property than he  
did before, and he makes the same val-  
uation of the land. The only differ-  
ence is that the tenant pays the taxes  
instead of the landlord. But the taxes  
come from the same source—the  
products of the farm.

"Supposing, however, the tenant  
gets tired of this way of doing business  
and offers to buy the farm, paying for  
it in twenty annual installments, giv-  
ing a mortgage for \$10,000 on the land  
and taking a deed to the property.  
By this arrangement he pays the old  
owner, say \$600 a year interest and  
\$500 on the principal. This \$600  
comes out of the farm just as the  
previous rent did. Really nothing has  
been changed in the state of affairs ex-  
cept on paper. But the minute this  
sale and mortgage are put on record  
these legislative farmers would insist  
that the new owner of the land should  
pay taxes on the farm he has bought  
and the old owner should pay on the  
farm he has sold—on the mortgage.

But while the former would have  
the entire produce of the farm less \$600  
to pay taxes with, the latter would  
have only \$600, or his share of the  
produce of the farm, to pay with. So  
the farm pays two sets of taxes, owing  
merely to the fact that the original  
owner has made a deed and the new  
owner has given a mortgage."

Now if we examine into this trans-  
action in detail and analyze it thor-  
oughly, we shall find that the "legisla-  
tive farmer" does not insist on double  
taxation, neither would there be double  
taxation under the laws of Oregon,  
which we believe can be comprehended  
by the "dullest intellect."

In this instance A owns and  
works a farm which will sell for \$10,  
000.

The inference is that the farm is  
worth, and represents \$10,000 in mon-  
ey—representing so much capital,  
which placed at interest at 6 per cent  
would yield an income of \$600 per  
annum. Out of this income the taxes  
must be paid by A, which would de-  
crease his income just the amount of  
the tax.

Now A tires of this and finds a poor  
young man B, of ambition and energy,  
and induces him to take the farm at a  
rental, which would probably amount  
to about 6 per cent on the value of the  
farm—\$600, and in addition the renter  
B pays the taxes, which releases A,  
and he has a net income of \$600.

The situation has now changed. A  
owns the farm worth \$10,000 and pays  
no taxes. B owns nothing and pays  
taxes on A's land.

B, seeing that he has the rental and  
taxes both to pay, proposes to buy the  
farm for \$10,000, on time, and give a  
mortgage on the land for security,  
which A accepts. During all this time  
the assessor has made his regular  
rounds and collected the taxes, in the  
first instance from A, and after the  
farm was rented, from B. After the

sale of the farm he comes around  
again and finds B still in possession of  
the farm, and it is listed at \$3000, \$2500  
or \$2000 as the case may be.

The listing of B's property being  
complete, the assessor says: "Mr. B,  
have you any indebtedness within the  
state?"

"Yes sir, I owe Mr. A \$10,000, a  
note secured by mortgage on my  
farm."

"Very well Mr. B, you will pay only  
a poll tax this year, as your indebted-  
ness is greater than the listed value of  
your property."

The assessor then receives from the  
county recorder a list of mortgages  
subject to taxation, among which he  
finds one of \$10,000 that A holds  
against B, and which constituted B's  
indebtedness on which he was exempt  
from taxation, and so the taxes are  
shifted back again onto A and he is in  
the same boat he was in before he  
rented to B, that is, he has an income  
of \$600 out of which he must pay the  
taxes on his own property, while B is  
exempt, as he owns nothing in the  
eyes of the law.

The allegation, therefore, that "the  
farm pays two sets of taxes" is a false  
statement, and is intended only to  
mislead and create a prejudice in the  
minds of the people against the mort-  
gage tax law of this state.

But, to follow this subject a little  
farther, we find that Mr. A is now very  
much concerned about his present  
condition, though we find him just where  
we did before he rented his farm to B  
—owning \$10,000 worth of property  
and paying the taxes on it, and if  
there is any reason why his property,  
or capital, should be exempt from tax-  
ation because he has converted it from  
a piece of land to a piece of paper  
which yields him the same income  
that his land did, we would be pleased  
to have some advocate of the exemp-  
tion proposition explain. It seems,  
however, that Mr. A has enlisted in  
his behalf the support of about three-  
fourths of the newspapers of the state;  
but let us see what position A would  
be left in by a repeal of the mortgage  
tax law.

When he was assessed last he held a  
mortgage which was taxable, and a  
statement was furnished the assessor  
by the recorder to that effect. The  
mortgage tax law being now repealed,  
the assessor gets no such statement  
and must visit A in person and put  
him under oath in listing his property,  
and in that list we find "money, notes,  
accounts, etc." A, being a conscien-  
tious man and not wishing to perjure  
himself, answers to a note of \$10,000  
against B. Has the repeal of the law  
benefitted him, and if not, why did he  
seek its repeal? It is evident that  
simply repealing the law would do  
him no good from the fact that if he  
failed to list the note it could be easily  
detected when the assessor came to B,  
who would give in an indebtedness of  
\$10,000 on a note in favor of A.

If the mortgage holder is simply  
seeking to avoid taxes on the mort-  
gage, he must do something besides  
repeal the mortgage tax law, and that  
must be something to make poor hon-  
est B keep his mouth shut and not  
tell that he owes anything. This Mr.  
A finds can be easily accomplished by  
remodeling the assessment laws so  
that there shall be no exemption for  
debts.

This was tried in the last Oregon  
legislature, and had it succeeded B  
could not have an opportunity to tell  
the assessor that he owed A anything,  
neither could the recorder, and A's  
elastic conscience could now be used  
to good advantage while B would have  
to pay a tax on property he did not  
own, or in other words, pay a tax on  
his debts.

Repealing the law would not excuse  
the note, which the mortgage secured,  
from taxation; hence, if it is taxable  
in either case, the repeal of the law  
could not benefit the holder except he  
commit perjury. The argument,  
therefore, that the law drives capital  
from the state is groundless. If to  
secure capital we must enact a law  
offering a premium on perjury, we  
might better let capital seek other  
fields.  
W. A. CATES.

**Presbyterian Church.**  
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church that they may be nurtured in mor-  
ality and piety.  
W. J. HUGHES,  
Pastor.