

The Daily Astorian. ASTORIA, OREGON: TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 1887

Not the least of the inconveniences arising from the prevalent and wide spread humidity is its obvious interference with the legislative excursion season.

SECRETARY BAYARD, on being shown a published statement to the effect that he had sent a dispatch to Minister Phelps informing him that the British schooners seized by the revenue steamer in Alaskan waters for illegal fishing were wrongfully seized and held; that they will be given up, and that proper damages will be paid for their detention, said: "I have no knowledge of such a despatch. I have written none such."

THE brevity of the item telegraphed by the associated press, that the national board of trade rejected the resolution favoring government aid in the improvement of the Columbia river, says an Oregonian special, may cause it to be misunderstood. When the vote was taken there were present only twenty-three delegates, twelve strong for and eleven against the resolution, a two-thirds vote being necessary for its adoption. The opposition came mostly from Chicago and neighboring delegates. They spoke in favor of improving the river but thought the state ought to provide for the improvement not the government.

CANADIAN ingenuity has discovered a new and valiant method of annoying our fishermen; it is to refuse letters sent to them, addressed at local postoffices. Nothing but wanton malice could make any civilized being prevent a poor sailor from getting the dearly prized and all too rare letter from his loved ones at home. We could understand the motive if the Canadian postmasters refused to forward letters mailed by our men down there—a new two-cent stamp might be worth stealing. But no such pecuniary inducement prompts the confiscation of letters sent from this side. It would be interesting to look through a microscope at the mind of the statesman who devised this latest stroke of policy.

FINE special cars are one of the extravagances of American railroads, and not a small extravagance either. Of the twenty or thirty western and northwestern roads each one has from \$60,000 to \$100,000 invested in palace cars. If these cars lasted forever, there would be still from \$2,000,000 to \$3,000,000 invested in palaces on wheels, which did the stockholders no earthly good, which drew no interest but which did cost money to maintain. Take all the roads on this continent, and it would probably be found that there are \$5,000,000 on wheels for the sole delectation of their general officers, and a study of the books of these roads would probably show that the \$5,000,000 worth of magnificent rolling stock needed to be renewed every ten years.

A NEW use of the photograph process is the preservation of manuscripts. It is an idea of the publishers of the Century Dictionary, the work on which involves so much handling of the sheets of paper, containing the matter to be printed that they would soon become unreadable. Each of the 25,000 sheets of "copy" has been copied on a negative, reduced one-fortieth in size. The negatives are kept in a fire-proof building. When a duplicate of a sheet copy is wanted, one is produced from the negative of any required size. A great saving in the cost of insurance has been effected by the adoption of this plan, the value of the mass of copy to the publishers being not less than \$150,000, and cost of the negatives being not more than \$300. And no money from an insurance company in case of destruction of such prop-

erty by fire could repair the loss of time consumed by the host of students who had contributed the original manuscript. The idea was borrowed from the custom followed in Paris during the siege by the Prussian army, when reduced copies of letters were sent by carrier pigeons.

THERE are about 1,500 veterans of the Mexican war on this coast, says the San Francisco Chronicle, who will receive pensions shortly. The bill passed by congress grants a pension to every veteran of the Mexican war over the age of 62 years. If under 62 and disabled from manual labor, proof will have to be made that the applicant is suffering from a disease that disables him in a pensionable degree, in the same way that those applying for pensions for disabilities contracted in the civil war have to make their proofs. But there is this important exception, that Mexican veterans applying under the disability clause will have to prove only their present disability, and will not be required to show that it was contracted or originated in the service of the United States. In addition, the applicant, as in other cases, will have to prove his actual service in the Mexican war and the rank which he held in the army. This, of course, will not be a matter of any serious difficulty in most cases.

SLAVERY is not wholly abolished in the United States. Some secluded Seminole Indians in the everglades of Florida, still have negro slaves dwelling in their own way, holding aloof from their white neighbors, and adhering to their patriarchal customs. They live principally by fishing and the chase, and cultivate the soil to a limited extent. Among the poorer of them their wives perform the drudgery, but the more prosperous have their negro slaves, upon whom is devolved all the hard work, and who are held as rigidly to servitude as in ante-bellum times. These Indians are perfectly aware that slavery has been abolished among the whites, but they do not realize or admit that the emancipation proclamation has any application to themselves and their slaves. Slave owning and trading is carried on among them with perfect openness and confidence, and even when they visit the white settlements to exchange their peltries for ammunition, clothing and other necessities, they often take with them their black bondsmen to carry their burdens. It might be supposed that the whites would inform these slaves of the true condition of affairs and exert themselves to effect their liberation, but the Indians keep them in profound ignorance of any language but the Seminole. No idea of their claims to freedom has ever found its way to them, and the whites, probably, do not take interest enough in the matter to make any energetic movement to break up the system. Here is a good chance for a little old-fashioned abolition work.

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