

MANY a city in the United States which has given away its valuable franchises for water and gas, bitterly regrets the fact now, when it is too late, and regrets are utterly unavailing.

ABUNDANCE of good water is a paramount necessity for a successful city. This admits of no doubt. The only question to be considered is, how can it best be obtained? Astoria needs a larger water supply, and upon the good judgment of its councilmen the city depends for the answer to this question.

THE editor of the Walla Walla Journal goes rather strong for some member of the female persuasion in that city when he says there is a foul-mouthed, lying female gossip and scandal monger afflicting the neighborhood in Singleton's addition, who ought to have her tongue cut out by the roots, so she couldn't talk any more.

GERMAN exporters of textiles and hops are alarmed over the prospect of the passage of the McKinley tariff bill. Last year 70,000 cents of German hops were imported by the United States, and the proposed advance in the tariff on hops from 8 cents to 15 cents per pound would, the German papers say, be ruinous to the German market.

BEFORE the Oregon Pioneer association is the question of extending the limit of residence as a qualification for membership, and it is now proposed to extend the time to 1850, which was the date that Oregon was admitted as a state. In that case, all who were here when Oregon was a territory will be eligible to membership. It would be a good date to fix upon.

MANY months have elapsed since Kemmler was sentenced in New York state to die by electricity, as punishment for murder. His case has been brought in several courts of the state as to who should execute the sentence, and it has finally been decided. Now comes another hitch in the proceedings, for the Westinghouse Electric company object to having their dynamo used for such a purpose, and will bring a suit to regain possession of them. The decision will be awaited with interest, and not alone by Kemmler.

THIS evening the city council will have before it the water question, and THE ASTORIAN would again suggest the advisability of calm deliberation and good judgment, remembering that not for the present, but for the city of the future is action to be taken. An editorial in yesterday's Oregonian under the heading of "Municipal Franchises" is well worth a careful perusal by every councilman before he goes to the meeting this evening. The statement concerning the city of New York teaches a lesson for younger cities.

WHEELING, West Virginia, affords a good example of how a city can conduct business, rather than give away the right or franchise to a private corporation. That city owns its gas works and furnishes gas to its citizens at 75 cents per thousand, which is a lower rate than it can be had in any other city. Yet even at this low price, and burning gas in all public buildings and on the streets, that rate is high enough to cover all the cost, to pay interest on the price of the plant, and leave a small margin of profit which goes to the city treasury.

THIS recent thrilling escape of the steamer *Normannia* from an encounter with a giant iceberg in another victory for the twin screw. The vessel was steaming through the fog at nearly full speed. There was a rift in the fog, and through it the captain saw a mountain of ice, but little more than a steamer's length away. He signalled the engineer to stop one screw and reverse it, and sending the other ahead at full speed he swung the great ship around as on a pivot, so that instead of striking the iceberg, now on the vessel entirely escaped except the stern, which grazed the ice in passing. This feat of skillful seamanship would have been impossible with a single screw.

A mammoth raft which will eclipse in size the Juggins raft that broke away from the tow in December, 1897, and caused so much peril to ocean steamships, will soon be towed into New York from St. John, N. B. It will be composed of seventeen sections, each 100 feet long, twenty-five feet thick and thirty-five feet wide.

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ORIGIN OF THE CENSUS.

Moses in the Wilderness—Popular Enumerations in Europe.
The most ancient statistical record of the kind is that of Moses in the wilderness. That enumeration must have been exceedingly simple, as shown by the first chapter of the fourth book of Pentateuch. "Take ye," says this account, "the sum of all the congregations of the children of Israel after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; from twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel; thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies." Then the names of the chief enumerators are also given, those who assisted Moses and Aaron being "the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of Israel." Then the heads of thousands in Israel. Then the enumerators "assembled all the congregation together on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house of their fathers, according to the number of names, from 20 years and upwards, by the polls." This enumeration must have been an affair soon over, requiring probably no more than a day's time, being merely a counting of the heads of the fighting men. There was no counting of women, or children, or old men, or cripples, and "the Levites were not numbered among them." Those who did stand up to be counted numbered 603,550.

There is record of a census in China as far back as the year 2042 B. C., and of one in Japan the last century before Christ. Under the constitution of Solon the citizens of Athens were divided and registered into four classes, according to the amount of their taxable property or income. The Roman census was burdened with more statistics than any of these simple enumerations. It originated under Servius Tullius, sixth king of Rome, and was an affair of much solemnity. It is not at all likely any man or woman was found sufficiently loth to fear of consequences to make faces at census officers, or withhold desired information. Every citizen had to appear upon the Campus Martius and declare upon oath his name and dwelling and the value of his property under the penalty of having his goods confiscated and of being sold into slavery for a slave. There was no trouble about having such a census full and complete. It had the benefit, too, of making the people to be counted anxious to find the census man, while he was not put to the labor of going into houses to find the people. Augustus Caesar, who had a great head for detail, when he had the population numbered greatly enlarged the scope of the census and improved the method of taking it.

The census of modern Europe is comparatively recent. No exact popular enumerations were made in the seventeenth century, but in the eighteenth great progress was made in the development of statistical science. In Russia the taking of the census in a crude way began in 1700, and in 1719, under Peter the Great, though improvement had been made, females were omitted from the enumeration. Census-taking in Prussia dates from the time of Frederick William II. The Prussian census of to-day is very exact and complete. It is taken by civil officers in one day, by means of printed schedules. The first census in Austria was taken in 1754, and for 100 years was taken each three years for military purposes only. In Sweden the science of statistics has been particularly cultivated, and Belgium ranks among the first nations of the world in completeness of its national statistics. In Italy the returns of this character are very complete the range of inquiries having been greatly extended. The movement of the population is determined from civil registers kept by the municipal authorities. In Turkey the enumeration is very imperfect, the chief object in taking it being to provide a basis for taxation and conscription. In France the first census of which records are extant was taken in 1700. Of course, as in everything pertaining to statistics, work of that kind is rough in France. The first census of Great Britain was taken in 1801, and embraced the sex, but not the age, of all subjects. The families and occupations were classified, so as to exhibit the number employed in agriculture, in trade and manufactures or handicrafts, and those not comprised in the classes. Blanks of householders' schedules are now left all over the kingdom by an army of enumerators, and these are required to be filled up on the night of April 2nd, and are collected by the enumerators the following day. The police assist in enumerating the houseless population. The army and navy are returned by the naval and military authorities.

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