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ATHENA, OCTOBER 10. 1905

In the Friday edition of the Press editorial mention was made concern ing the proposition to reduce the O. R. & N. company's assessment from \$12,000 to \$10,000 per mile in this county. A statement was made in which the word "valuation" made the article in question misleading and we stand corrected by the Tribune, for the reason that the courts did not pass on the valuation of the railroad property, but decided against the company and in favor of the county wholly on technical points which were brought into the courts by the company. The Press has no desire to be misleading or unfair in the matter, but in all candor, it cannot say as much of its Pendleton contemporary. In the Sunday edition of the Tribune in the first column on page one, in an article headed "Question of Expediency," the paper inflates its favoritism to such an extent that the body of the article does not conform to the head in the least. The article deals with interviews with four prominent men of Pendleton. Only one, Walter M. Pierce, favors the compromise, and his reasons alone are planted out to the public in the bold headlines. Mr. Pierce's prime reason for setting a baleful precedent by a compromise. is that the money is needed for school purposes. The other three men interviewed were W. S. Thompson, banker, who opposes the compromise because he thinks the assessment reasonable and just. Lee Teutsch, merchant, thinks the county court would do the right thing in refusing the proposition made by the railroad company, for in the company's "eagerness for a compromise at \$10,000, shows conclusively that it feels that it will ultimately lose its case in the courts for any cause." Charles Brownfield, capitalist, said: "By all means stick to the original assessment which, to my mind, is plenty low enough." The Press knows of no school that is closed because of the tie-up of the O. R. & N. tax money, and to intimate that the districts cannot stand the pressure until the matter is properly settled is ridiculous in the extreme. There is just this about it: The assessment

placed on railroad property is not any

higher, relatively speaking, than has

been placed on other property, and if

the assessment is cut down by the

proposed compromise, the county court

can prepare itself to eternally sit as a

referee board of equalization, for

owners of all other classes of property

will see to it that assessment on their

property is no higher than is that of the railroad. If the county court compromises with one it must expect to compromise with all, for Assessor Strain is not the man to go on record favor of any class of property owners.

I. H. McLaughlin is the owner of a sawmill in the southwest corner of Umatilla county, and has title to 1300 acres of land that lies in the Morrow county coalfields. Some time ago a 100 foot shaft was sunk on his place and the findings are said to have been very favorable. However, no work has been done lately, as it is useless to do anything with the property until a railroad line can be run to the coalfield so as to provide transportation.

On the ground that no meeting notice school bonds, Attorney General Crawford is of the opinion that the letter and spirit of the law was violated and that the bond issue of school district No. 28, Klamath county. 'was irregular and void, and he advised the state land board not to purchase said bonds on that account.

The atmosphere of the state of Ore gon is-now full of railroad talk now that the building of the Portland and Seattle road along the north bank of the Columbia is an assured fact. Naturally such an atmosphere that has been so long looked for in the great Inland Empire has reached us and there are all kinds of rumors affoat, some of them having the ring

The Idaho Woolgrowers' association has just made the final payment of \$10,000 on the salt plant it has purchased with which to fight the salt trust and has reduced the price of salt from \$2.50 to \$1.75 per ton. This is the lowest rate that has ever been made on salt anywhere in the

Commissioner Richards, of the general land office, has forwarded to the secretary of the interior bis annual report covering the fiscal year ending June 30, last. It shows that during the year 16,979,500 acres of public lands and 77,546 acres of Indian lands were disposed of, the total exceeding that for 1904 by 650,000 acres.

The first issue of the Lexington Wheatfield has appeared under the management of S. A. Thomas. The paper looks bright and makes a good showing. The Wheatfield ought to

MECHANICAL SKILL.

(Pacific Monthly.)

"The Portland Concession Company" is the uninspiring name under which Captan C. S. Baldwin holds a plot of ground at the Lewis and Clark exposition over by the American Inn. under a big barn upon which he has two airships. One of these, the "City of Portland," he built in two weeks to meet the popular demand for something that could fly and incidentally to capture the \$10,000 prize the expo sition offered. He took to the exposition the "Angelus," his latest experiment, but found that he had advanced working out the detail, and built his second airship as an improvement ou lie officials. the "Arrow," the airship which made several successful flights at St. Louis. The goal of these aeronauts is an

airship which will stand any ordinary wind. They do not hope to make mechanical birds, and expect to need as much care in landing as a ship coming to its moorings. What they are building now are models, upon with the brand of discriminating in which they improve constantly with

the vitimate purpose of securing an airslip of such proportions that the model can be enlarged to any size. They dream of a day when the currents of the air will be as definitely mapped as those of the ocean, and aerial navigation will be the ordinary method of rapid transit. They see the time coming, but they know it will take the lives and devotions of a hundred men working on the one line of development.

Airship building has reached the stage where a mechanic can do more than any one. Lincoln Beechey is the mechanic in this partnership. He and Captain Baldwin work hand in glove, the one furnishing the technical skill and the other the experience and the imagination. The comwas placed on the place of meeting of bination has produced the "City of the school electors for the purpose of Portland." Captain Baldwin calls contracting for the issuance of \$4050 this model a digression, but said he had to advance by slow degrees

"We are confronted with this condition always," said Captain Baldwin, standing in the shadow of the gas bag, "that we are pioneers. We have no drawings to go to; we must figure out every line for ourselves. Conse quently in such a complicated and delicate matter as this, where we make everything as light as possible, we are constantly making failures. But we profit from our failures and always advance. But no other man can begin where we leave off. He must make his own failures first. That is why there is no secrets. It is all a matter of mechanical skill.

STRAIN WINS OUT.

(Spokesman-Review.)

Assessor Strain of Umatilla county, Oregon, has demonstrated that it is possible to acquire the railroads to pay taxes, on the same basis as other property bolders pays taxes, when the effort is backed by an intelligent, courageous, bonest county assessor. The assessment valuation of the Oregon Railroad & Navigation company was formerly placed at \$5700 per mile in Umatilla county. Assessor Strain saw that this was grossly inadequate and raised the railroad assessment to \$12,000 per mile. Assessor Strain's reason for assessing at that figure was that under the Oregon custom property was assessed generally at about one fourth of its true value. He reasoned that since farmers and other property holders were assessed at one fourth of the true value of their property, there was no reason, in law or justice, why the railroad should not be assessed at one fourth of its true

Assessor Strain made a careful investigation of railroad values and found that as a matter of fact the O. R. & N. was worth more than \$48,-000 per mile, but to be on the safe pany any possible injustice, he conceded that their true valuation was only \$48,000 per mile, and, therefore, they should be assessed at one fourth of that sum as other property

The railroad company resisted the new assessment and carried the contest into the courts. The state circuit court having decided in favor of Assessor Strain, appeal was taken by the railroad to the state supreme court. That high tribunal has also sustained the assessor, and the railroad company is now seeking a compromise before the board of county commissioners.

In other words, the principle has been established in the courts of Oregon that railroad property ought to pay taxes on the same basis that other property pays taxes. This principle of justice would have been established long ago in these western states too far in his leading ideas without if railroads had not enjoyed favored treatment from weak or corrupt pub-

TOO MUCH ONE-MAN POWER.

(Watchman, Boston.) The life insurance investigations have made it plain that in spite of boards of directors and other officers the great life insurance companies are one-man affairs. The want of good faith in the reorganization of the Equitable Life Assurance Society was made clear when Paul Morton was made president with plenary powers, before Grover Cleveland and his two associates to look out for the interests of the policy holders. The appointment of these commissioners was evidently a blind for the purpose of leading the public to believe an honest reorganization had been effected. The full power is, however, in the hands of Mr. Morton, over whom they have no control. They can neither curb him nor displace him. His power over the affairs of the society is absolute. The testimony of John A. McCall, president of the New York Life insurance company, before the committee of the legislature, shows that the same state of things exists in that company. There has been some talk about dummy directors. Apparently all the directors of these companies are dummies. It is difficult to see how the administration of these and other corporations similarly conducted would be changed if they were simply the personal property of the presidents. In the case of the Equitable, this absolute power was used for the benefit of the president and family and his friends; in the New York Life there does not appear any evidence of a use of the power for

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