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ATHENA, JANUARY 2, 1906

The old idea that a railroad can make or break a town is pointedly exemplified in the case of Wallula, says the Walla Walla Union, which is now reviving from a long comitose condition. In its palmiest days the town boasted the population of some thousand people, and plans were being made for the erection of one of the finest railroad depots in this part of the country. But presto! the railroad god frowned upon Wallula, and Wallula withered away. The O. R. & N. shops were moved to Umatilla and the Northern Pacific hit upon the site of Pasco as a spot which ought to have a town. Many of the houses which were built in Wallula were bought at cut rates and moved out to surrounding farms, and the town itself was wrapped in peaceful slumber. In its dreams it could still see the past, and when it was aroused for a moment by some train which chanced to pass that way, it could see in the desert a mirage of things which might come. The mirage seems to be a little plainer now and Wallula is watching it with more wakefulness than she has had for a long, long time. She is looking for the new railroads which are said to be coming her way to return to her the prosperity which the O. R. & N. and the Northern Pacific once gave and then snatched away.

All the good things that were promised in the earlier reports of the condition of the country's crops have been more than realized. The final report of the department of agriculture shows yields of principal crops even greater than expected, in notable instances. This country began to feel the stimulating effect of good harvests some months ago, when the winter wheat was cut. The good news kept coming after the harvesters turned northward to the spring wheat, and finally, when the corn crop came along to maturity, there were the best reports of all. So much for crops that have been, nationally. Locally, prospects for a good crop at the next harvest are indeed bright. So far this winter all parts of Umatilla county have been blessed with a bountiful supply of moisture, something that did not come to any great extent last winter. With the 10-inch snow fall Saturday night there is now more moisture than came altogether last winter, and we have four months yet to go on. Winter moisture is needed to make a good wheat crop, hence the flattering prospect.

The New York Sun says of Senator Gearin: Governor Chamberlain must be very sure of the Gearin brand of democracy. It is said to stand the severest test of regularity. "I don't know any but straight democrats," says the new senator. But he is an outspoken admirer of President Roosevelt, and his voice is always for expansion. He insists on free trade with all our dependencies. The career of the senate of this stalwart Oregon democrat, who has been so intimate in his business and social relations with prominent republicans, one of whom earned unpleasant notoriety, will be followed with curiosity.

Weston, even though a little late, is privileged in ranking with other towns in building a "paper railroad." It isn't always the early bird that catches the worm when it comes to railroad building, though it does seem that active corps of civil engineers pegging grade stakes up Wild Horse creek would be preferable, as a starter, to a letter penned on paper that had never been smudged with printshop ink.  
Bourke Cockran says that it is absolutely impossible to put the possessor of \$10,000,000 in jail. That is the

way it looked in France before the revolution. But after things got under way, kings went to jail just like common folks. In America revolutions are peaceful.

When Senator Clark settled \$1,000,000 on his new grandchild, he merely gave one month's output of his famous United Vere mine. No matter how many grandchildren, the senator is loaded for them.

The authorities are after hazers at the naval academy, where hazing has become dangerous and disgraceful. It is high time something were done to stop that barbarism.

**LARGER INCOME FROM TAXES.**

(East Oregonian.)  
According to the new law which has been drafted and is now being printed for distribution, the \$1 county poll tax will be transferred to the road fund and collected as the road poll tax is now collected.

The penalty on delinquent taxes will be reduced from 10 to 5 per cent and the rate of interest from 12 to 10 per cent. The 3 cent rebate on taxes is to be abolished. The amount of tax paid by each county will be based on current expenses.

The assessment roll shall be published before being acted upon by the county board of equalization.

Taxes on gross premiums of insurance companies have been raised from 2 to 3 per cent.

A 1 per cent tax will be levied on the gross earnings of express, telegraph and telephone companies.

The state shall be represented at the appraisal of all estates over \$10,000.

Heirs will pay one per cent of the amount inherited. Heirs of the second degree of consanguinity pay 2 per cent, and all others 3 per cent, and for sums over \$10,000 and up to \$100,000 a graduate up to 10 per cent will be levied.

The governor, secretary of state and state treasurer will be created a state executive council for determining all railroad values, based on reports of earnings and all other information valuable.

Sleeping cars, dining cars, coal and tank cars not owned by railroads will also be taxed.

The bill, it is estimated, will produce an increase from insurance tax of \$30,000, railroad assessment \$40,000, cars \$10,000, inheritance tax \$100,000, publicity tax rolls \$25,000, gross earnings of telegraph, express and telephone companies \$25,000. Total increase \$230,000.

The committee suggests the creation of a tax revision league to circulate the petitions for the enactment of the law.

**"BECOMING THE BIG END."**

(Portland Journal.)  
President James J. Hill of the Great Northern railway was quoted in a recent speech in St. Paul as saying that the cities of the Pacific northwest "are giving you all uphill races. They are in the lead. I tell you that they are becoming the big end of the

country." A Seattle paper quotes him as alluding especially to that city and Spokane, but there is every reason to suppose that he had Portland and Tacoma in view quite as much as Seattle and Spokane, especially Portland, else he would not be spending millions of dollars to get into this city by the direct Columbia river route.

Other railroad men have also discovered that this region is "becoming the big end of the country," from a transportation point of view. The great trade centers will be on the two sides of the continent, rather, except Chicago, than in the interior. An inland port like Portland, the terminus of various transcontinental railroads and steamship lines extending all around the world, has great strategic advantages, and with an improved river and harbor there is every reason to expect that Portland's commercial growth will be very rapid.

Mr. Hill advises the Minnesota cities of St. Paul and Minneapolis to go in for manufacturing, promising them cheap fuel, though his remark about "the big end" indicates his apprehension that the big jobbing centers of the far west will soon be coast cities rather than interior cities. Indeed, the movement of freight eastward from Pacific northwest terminals is already far greater than the movement westward, and the time should not be far distant when empty cars will be westward rather than eastward bound.

The attention of the Press has been called to an incident which transpired at the O. R. & N. station Saturday evening. Agent Smith and T. M. Bush related the facts and they are printed that justice may be given C. F. Shubert, the operator. Shubert, it appears took his purse from his pocket while making change for a passenger, when he was accused by Lee Raney, a young man from Lexington, of having taken his (Raney's) purse. Raney's accusation was heard by all the people who were in the waiting-room at the time and also Shubert's denial of knowing anything about the Lexington man's pocket book. Some heated words took place, after which Raney went out of the depot and found his purse in his clothing where it had slipped instead of going into his pocket. Instead of apologizing to Shubert and squaring him before the people as suggested by his friend, Bush, when the purse was found, Raney took the train for home. Shubert, who is a stranger in town, has been greatly wrought up over the matter, and evidently concludes that some people have queer ideas of what a "square deal" means.

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