

SCHEMES.

The Legislature will meet in regular session January 14th. There are whisperings of a great many schemes that are now being quietly matured by which various private interests are to be pushed at enormous expense to the state under the plea that these schemes will redound to the benefit of the state. It would be well for the tax payers to keep an eagle eye on the movements of these schemers. To begin with, an effort will be made to foist the canal and locks at Oregon City upon the state at a large figure. Now, it should be borne in mind that the state gave this company \$200,000 in bonds and a large amount of interest to build these locks. Whether this was a gift to the company, or whether it was in the nature of a loan to be paid back to the state by the company when the state should purchase the locks, (if ever) is not quite clear. It is evident that the company regards the \$200,000 as an absolute gift, while subsequent legislation indicates that the Legislature regards the appropriation of the \$200,000 as a mere loan. However this may be, the people are not in the state of mind to saddle on the state a large expenditure of the people's taxes to get a very large elephant upon its hands with the people to bear the burdens in increased taxation. There will be a number of bills introduced appropriating large sums to open up wagon roads between various points in the state. While it is very desirable to have new roads built into the unsettled portions of the state as an inducement to settlement, yet the policy of appropriating state money for such purposes is dangerous in the extreme, and if the door is once opened to such legislation it would be difficult to tell where the matter would end. Another move will be the scheme to build a ship railway at the dalles of the Columbia river above The Dalles. This is also dangerous ground as involving the expenditure of immense sums of money wrung from the already overburdened tax-payers. One of the political schemes on foot is a repeal of the law by which the Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer as a board have control of the Insane Asylum, and by which the Governor has charge of the appointment of a superintendent and other officials at the penitentiary. A majority of the Board of Insane Asylum Commissioners are democrats, and this move is simply to take the control of the asylum out of the hands of democrats and put it into the hands of republicans, who have itching palms for these crumby spoils. The republicans have ample votes in the Legislature to carry out these schemes even against a veto of the Governor should they decide to do so. There does not appear to be anything wrong in the management of these two state institutions, and it remains to be seen whether the people will approve the change contemplated, when the only object is to secure the insignificant spoils that attach to these offices. There are some other matters to which we will refer at another time, being content at the present with calling attention to these matters in order that they may be discussed by the people.

The railway mileage of the year just past was increased by no less than 7,120 miles of main track. While this is much less than the phenomenal mileage for 1881, 1882, 1886 and 1887, the record exceeds that of every other year with the exception of 1871, when 7,378 miles were added. Kansas still leads in extent in new mileage, as she has done for several years. California comes next. The most striking characteristic of the work is the large number of separate lines of which it is composed and the correspondingly small average for each line. The building of great competitive lines has practically ceased for the present and the year's work was devoted chiefly to the construction of short independent lines or branches.

The machines which are now seen in hotel corridors, where you drop a nickel in the slot and get your life insured for one day, have thus far been called on to pay only two policies. They were taken out by a man who was going from New York to Bridgeport and fell off a horse car shortly after he secured his policies. Two companies are jointly interested in this business. The policies are issued by an English company, which is said to have a million and a half to pay for losses, and the boxes are owned by an American company. The business is said to be increasing.

The nations which still eat with the fingers defend the practice on the ground of cleanliness. A Malay gentleman regards the use of a fork much as we should think of the use of a borrowed toothpick. He is troubled by the reflection that it has been in other mouths and that some lazy servant may have neglected to wash it properly. The care of his fingers is in his own charge, and he knows that they are clean and that they have never been in any one else's mouth.

A tramp named Liauty has just been condemned at Blois for the murder of an unfortunate woman, whom he met on the high road. He attacked and stabbed her repeatedly, afterwards throwing her into a pool while she was still living, first taking from her her little savings, amounting to sixty cents. The peculiarity of the case lies in the evidence that convicted the murderer. On the bank of the pond near the spot where the corpse was discovered there was found a large piece of bread, the end of a loaf with a singular bulge at one side. One of the neighbors testified that on the morning of the day the crime was committed, Liauty had come to her house to beg for something to eat. She gave him a glass of piquette and a hunch of bread. He drank the wine and put the bread in the breast of his blouse, saying he would eat it later. The loaf she had cut it from was home-baked. One of the bricks in the floor of her oven was missing so that in each batch of loaves there was one with a protuberance, marking the site of the missing brick. It was this protuberance that enabled her to identify the bread found near the body with the piece she had given Liauty. Th was forthwith found guilty and condemned to death.

Senator Sherman carries a list of forty-three Chicago delegates, instructed and pledged for him, who were bought by Alger, and each man's price is carried out on the list, and each case is supported by affidavit.

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