

OREGON MINES AS VIEWED BY OTHERS

The present session of the Oregon legislature will have before it a proposition to establish a bureau of mines. The probabilities are that, if the agricultural element among the lawmakers permit such a measure to become a law, it will provide in a general way for an office similar to that of the mine commissioner or of the mineralogist of the other western states. There can be no doubt that the mineral industry of Oregon deserves just such representation under the local government, and it is therefore the more surprising that the proposed department does not already exist.

Taken in comparison with the extent and importance of its mineral industry, there is no other state in the west that "cuts" a more striking "figure" than does Oregon. It is constantly making itself heard, and its mining men have a way about them that makes one feel as if they mean business—which they doubtless do. This is probably accounted for by the fact that the state's mineral resources are so far from being adequately developed and that they never offered greater promise than today. There are so many new enterprises on foot that the enthusiasms of deeds and the accompanying local pride are only natural.

Notwithstanding the Oregon farmers have a particularly large voice in the government, the establishment of a mining bureau is evidently appreciated. The time for state aid and encouragement is when an industry needs it and not after it is so big that it can afford to be independent of government officers, if not to command them. Herbert Spencer, in his advanced years, declined to accept a degree from a university, remarking that the honor might have done him some good as a young man, but he no longer required it. There has been much complaint that the agricultural interests of Oregon have not shown a proper appreciation of the co-ordinate industry of mining, especially when they forced through the distasteful Eddy law, concerning the taxation of corporations. It is now time for them to realize what the outside world thinks of Oregon as a mining state, for we believe they do not understand that their mining men are doing more than their share toward advertising the commonwealth beyond its own borders.

In this connection it occurs to us that a small colony of Colorado newspaper men has recently taken up its abode in Oregon's leading city. These journalists have gone from a state where mining is a big factor, and the mining news habit will probably cling to them. Not that Oregon has already possessed a good share of bustling mine writers, but that "the more the merrier" it will be for the great northwest. Mine writing is an important phase of mining—whether your dyspeptic conservative thinks so or not. Writers are an important adjunct to any industry, because writers are the business pullers, the motive force that drive and attract capital and brains. If this motive force is not a good thing, why should Portland go to the trouble to hold a big exposition next summer? We know what Portland thinks about it, because her

commercial club is very active and she has an old-time "public movement" man doing nothing else but make things move.

This is the kind of an atmosphere that the mining men there doubtless appreciate. They believe in letting people know what they have. So when they want the legislature to do a thing, they ought to be listened to with respect. —Daily Mining Review.

OREGON STATE FLOWER IS REALLY A FRUIT

In connection with the recent gifts of Oregon grape sent by the Portland commercial club to prominent eastern people, George H. Himes gives an interesting account of the origin of the shrub, and its adoption as the state flower of Oregon.

The first known reference to the shrub is in Parish's "Flora of North America," published by James Black & Son, London, England, 1816, and it is there first called "Oregon Grape," or "Holly-leaved Barberry."

"While considered a shrub, the Oregon grape sometimes attains a height of 17 feet, with a diameter of four and a half inches," says Mr. Himes. "I have a sample of that size in my custody now. The flower blooms in April, is very handsome, though delicate, and is a bright lemon yellow in color. The fruit grows in small clusters, resembles small dark purple grapes, and, while edible, is very sour, but makes excellent jelly."

"It was upon my motion, at a meeting of the Oregon Horticultural Society in 1890 that the question of adopting a state flower was first raised, my personal choice being the Oregon grapes on account of its permanent leafage in variegated colors, according to its exposure to the sun, and its marvelous adaption for decorative purposes at all seasons of the year."

"After consideration by the above society for two years, in which the claims of other flowers were urged, it was adopted on July 18, 1892. The Women's Federated Clubs of Oregon secured the passage of resolutions by both houses of the state legislature of Oregon, 1899, formally declaring the Oregon grape to be the state flower."

MYSTERIES OF MINE VALUATION

There appears to be a great many people who do not understand that the value of a mine cannot be ascertained by merely visiting it and looking at it. Mine valuation is a science which requires a broad technical experience. An engineer with technical training and knowledge of the methods of ore sampling may go through the workings of a mine and carefully take a large number of samples, which, when assayed, will give, together with the measurements of exposed bodies at the places sampled, an approximate idea of the gross value of the mine. If the engineer does not have the experience necessary to make proper estimates on the cost of mining and reducing the ore, his report will possess little of practical value, but when it

embodies the amount of ore in sight and its value, together with the costs of the varied operations necessary to recover this value, it becomes a tangible proposition, which can be utilized to advantage, either as a basis of investment or as a substantial deterrent to further expense in connection with the property.

If mines could be placed on the market on the showing of gross value in sight, the introduction of new mining projects would be easy of accomplishment. Some years since, an elaborate report stated that a certain ore deposit showed several millions of dollars in sight. An engineer, who was sent to see if the statement was true, in his report verified all that had been said as to the value in sight, but also submitted the opinion that it would cost two or three millions more than were there to get it out.

The engineer who accepts a commission to examine a mining property for possible purchasers undertakes a responsible task, and he should be guided by the facts both as to values and as to costs. A noted mine was sold on the report of a well-known engineer some twenty years ago. The mine was equipped and work was prosecuted for a time, but at a loss, and the property was abandoned. This mine is now in operation and paying, not because the ore is more valuable than formerly, for it is a gold mine, but for the reason that the engineers who made the former report were inexperienced in the district where the mine was situated—a remote one—and under estimated the cost of operating in that region. The conditions existing at that time have been changed by the building of a railroad, and the cost of operation has been decreased by improved mining methods, and also by making available a better class of labor, while the possible saving of values has been greatly increased by the introduction of the cyanide process.

Instances of this kind are more numerous than is generally supposed. It's quite as important the that writer of a mining report should be capable of judging the cost of operating a property under the existing conditions as that he should know how to take mine samples, and mathematically compute his averages and gross values. —Mining and Scientific Press.

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