

AMONG THE MAKERS OF OREGON

The Capital City of Oregon is acknowledged to be naturally one of the most beautiful cities in the world. A great plain lying on a beautiful river, elevated grounds for residences and sites for public buildings, wide streets laid off in rectangles, fine park spaces and backgrounds of forest and mountain scenery form a wonderful combination for a great and charming home city. The appointment of a new charter commission is a matter of the greatest importance, and Mayor Rodgers has placed this work in the hands of men like E. P. McCormack, John H. Albert, H. B. Thielsen and Alonzo Gesner, all pioneers of the Capital City, and some of them who have traveled a great deal and seen other cities, and who have the intelligence to give the matter of a greater and a more beautiful city some attention.

The Capital Journal believes the plan of government by commission is a growing one, and many cities are considering the matter. There are many intelligent citizens who believe a commission of three or five men at the outside—three preferred—would give us a better city government than 15 councilmen and mayor, as at present. The commission plan would do away with a large and cumbersome body of aldermen, who represent local constituencies, and substitute men elected by the city at large, who would represent the whole city, and have in their hands a great concentration of power. There would be no mayor, and each member of the commission would be the head of a department. One could be at the police and fire department, one of streets and parks, and the other of finances and ordinances. These three great sub-divisions constitute the whole of a city government. The three men would always work on each problem, and three heads are better than one. If three men can run all the state institutions, three men run the whole county government, and five the whole school district, all three examples of a commission handling successfully a larger business than the 15 do in city government, why cannot three men give us a better city government? We would like to have this matter

discussed in our columns, and believe the matter should be seriously considered by the new charter board.

There is talk of a new bridge policy for the Capital City. Well, this is a refreshing and beautiful proposition to dwell upon. Of all the conglomerate, tumble-down, lot of bridges and viaducts, considering this is a capital city, and representative of the good taste and spirit of progress of a great state, Salem can positively furnish the worst. Most of them would not be a credit to a farming community. Linn county and Tillamook counties have a better lot of bridges than this city. The City, and some of the bridges of the Capital City should be built from the standpoint of permanence and beauty. Architectural grace and symmetry should enter into them. Has it ever occurred to any of our conservative officialdom that bridges and culverts suitable for a country road are entirely out of place in a capital city with broad streets? Has it ever occurred to the gentlemen who are doing things for the public that there is no excuse for putting up any more wooden structures? The modern street bridge in the cities are all resting on concrete piers, and have steel superstructures, with steel and concrete reinforced driveways. That class of structures costs but little more than wooden bridges and culverts that rot away, and are unsightly. The street department should have complete plans and specifications for building such spans and the man who talks seriously about a new bridge policy for the Capital City deserves a gold medal. He also might state to the city council that our village style of treating these matters, and dragging out for two years a structure that should go up in 60 days not only destroys the value of property, the spirit of enterprise, but will land us in the same boat with Sacramento, where the state capitol is to be removed to some more American and up-to-date community. By all means give us a new bridge policy, some new bridges and less resolutions and less referring everything for a legal opinion to the city attorneys. Business men are supposed to be able to think without legal advice.

STILL THEY GO

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Carbon—A Remarkable Mineral.

The most remarkable of nature's mineral products is carbon (sometimes called black diamond)—unique in every particular, found in only one locality throughout the world, an enigma to science, and one of the greatest curiosities in the mineral kingdom.

It is absolutely pure carbon, slightly harder than the crystal or gem diamond, and in fact the hardest substance known; tough though not brittle like the gem diamond, therein lies the value of the carbon, which is used principally in deep boring with diamond drills, and to a smaller extent for other mechanical purposes to which it is an essential attribute.

The carbon is without crystalline form, as a rule, and found in pieces of from 1/4 karat or smaller up to 50, 75 and 300 karats, but seldom larger than 500 karats.

Carbon is opaque, dark gray or black in color, sometimes with a brownish tinge. Although it is a real diamond (being pure carbon) it in no way outwardly resembles the crystal or gem stone.

The only place in the world where carbon has ever been found is in a small section of Brazil of about 75 leagues extent. The carbon is recovered mainly from river beds by natives who dive and bring to the surface the gravel and washings of

the river, which is subsequently hand sorted.

The importance of the tough quality of the carbon is evidenced particularly in diamond drilling, work in which it is subjected to great and continued pressure, which constantly increases with the depth of the hole bored. The heavy pressure would crush the gem or crystal diamond into powder. There is, however, a great difference in the quality or the degree of hardness or toughness of the carbon, which cannot always be determined by appearance, and never by shade or color. Color is absolutely no accurate indication of quality. In diamond drill work the carbon is set in circular pieces of soft steel or iron, usually denominated bits.

These bits are attached to tubing connected to the diamond drills and boring is carried on to various depths, very often to great depths and in one instance, I believe, to over 6,000 feet; the core being lifted out from time to time, showed the exact nature of the formation that was bored through.

A set of carbons for each drill head or bit usually consists of eight stones, costing considerable. For instance, taking an average weight of 3 1/4 karats for each carbon, a total of 28 karats for the kit, at the present price of \$85 per karat the set would cost \$2380 for only one bit. Notwithstanding this heavy cost, the carbon becomes a very small item compared with the results obtained, and more particularly so, as in no other way would it be possible to obtain like results so accurately and quickly.

The price per karat has varied greatly during the last 25 or 30 years as may be seen by the following:

1879 and previous	\$ 5
1889	\$12 to \$16
1899	\$35 to \$39

Since 1899 there has been gradually an upward movement in prices and at present \$85 per karat is obtained.

In early years, before prospecting with diamond drills came into general use, the carbon was very largely employed in diamond saws for cutting brownstone and other building stones. When the price began to advance, however, it was found unprofitable to employ the carbon for stone cutting, hence borts was substituted. Borts is an imperfect crystal or gem diamond, and is now universally used with success in diamond saws. In a way it is perhaps very fortunate that borts has gener-

ally been adopted for stone saws, for if stone cutters continued to use the carbon the output of this diamond would not be sufficient to supply the demand for this purpose in addition to diamond drills. Many experiments have been made with borts in diamond drilling, but without success, by reason of the fact that it is very brittle and will not stand the hard work and pressure like carbon.

No known substance can ever take the place of carbon in diamond drills for prospecting for gold, silver, copper, iron and other mineral deposits. For this work the carbon employed is of various sizes, being from one karat or less up to 6 or 8 karats, and in many instances larger. The favorite sizes are 2 1/4 to 5 and 6 karats each. The tendency of those who do a great amount of drilling is to use the larger stones.

While it is true that the large sizes make the cost of each drill head or bit greater than the smaller ones, experience has proved the former to be the cheaper in the long run.—I. C. Yawger, in The Mining World.

NO NEW THING UNDER THE SUN

There is no thing under the sun. Many of our boasted new "inventions" are simply second editions of things which were invented a thousand years ago.

The taxicab, about which we have been getting so excited lately, is by

no means a new idea. A German professor has written a letter to the Frankfort Gazette, in which he says he has discovered that Vitruvius, the Roman historian, describes a taximeter cab in use in Rome about the year 70 A. D. The mechanism of the taximeter caused a stone to drop into a box under the carriage every thousand paces. At the end of the journey the driver counted the stones which had fallen into the box, and in this way was able to calculate the fare.

Within the last fifty years an Englishman produced a particular kind of pin, which he called a "safety" pin. For this admirable service to mankind he was highly honored, and fetes and favors were showered upon him.

Just a year or two ago, however, when someone was poking about among the ruins of Pompeii, they came upon a large number of bronze safety pins. They were quite up-to-date pins, too, there was a coiled spring at one end and a catch at the other—just like those in constant use at the present day. So that, far from safety pins being a modern invention, they are roughly about 2000 years old.

Thimbles have been found in prehistoric mounds, and combs and hairpins were in existence before the Christian era. It is guessed with some certainty that the first needle must have been threaded by a thrifty housewife about 5000 years ago.

The combination locks we use today which can only be opened by a combination of certain letters and figures were well known and used extensively by the Chinese many centuries ago.

The telephone also, or, at any rate, an instrument similar to it, was used by them. Moreover, one of their writers mentions boxes which repeated the sounds of people's voices, even though the people were dead, which leads us to suppose that they had discovered the phonograph.

In China, too, they illuminated their houses a couple of thousand years ago with natural gas, which was conveyed to the consumer's house by means of bamboo tubes. But, then, the Chinese declare that what we have done in the realm of science was all discovered by them centuries ago and discarded as useless.

At present there is no positive proof that in the offices of the ancients a charming young lady sat in a corner clattering away busily on a typewriter, but it is a fact that the

kindred accomplishment, shorthand, was well known to them.

It is calculated that some systems go back to somewhere about 500 B. C. If this is so, then it is probable that Xenophon took shorthand notes of Socrates' lectures. At any rate, there seems no doubt that the orations of Cicero were written with as much skill and rapidity as the modern stenographer could boast.

The ancients knew about electricity, and though we usually credit Watts with the discovery of steam as a motive power, Nero describes machines driven by steam 2000 years before Watts was born. This same gentleman invented a double force pump, such as is used nowadays as a fire engine, and he anticipated the modern turbine wheel.

In the British museum can be seen the dolls of thousands of years ago, and the furniture which filled dolls' households long before our own forefathers came to have a table or a chair of their own.—Exchange.

Drowned at Newburg

While playing on a log boat the Willamette river at Newburg Sunday afternoon, Edson Hyde, year-old son of H. A. Hyde, slipped off and was drowned. An uncle with him, but, being unable to swim, was unable to get the boy the river being very deep where accident took place. In answer to calls for help some young men picked up the river hurried to the scene and began diving for the unfortunate boy, but without success. The body has not yet been recovered. A professional diver has come up from Portland to assist in the search.

The newspapers report a "ice storm in Newburgh"—probably a message from Oyster Bay to the New York postmaster.

Life is just as sweet to George Magoon as to anybody else—he just refused to act as "umpire" in the cigar-makers' strike at Havana.

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