

The Oregonian

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PORTLAND, TUESDAY, DEC. 13, 1904.

THE POSTOFFICE AND SOCIALISM.

In The Oregonian of yesterday the report of the Postoffice Department was headed "A Big Deficit." The deficit was \$4,560,044.73. It is a considerable sum, but not enormous. Never, but in one year, has the Postal Department paid expenses. Often in former years, when its business was not one-half, nor even one-fourth, what it is now, it fell behind as much, or more.

Postal service for the benefit of the people is the one branch of the public service which can be directed with advantage by the General Government, in the interest of all. It is different in every way from the railway service, or the telegraph service, or the telephone service; it is different from manufacturing or other productive industry, which socialists insist that Government shall undertake. It is not a productive industry. It is distributive only. Government hires the mails carried, and it

of the human mind—that there would be a turning to frivolity and gayety again.

THE GOVERNOR'S DUTY.

If the State of Oregon had a Governor with a more sober regard for his duties than merely to look pleasant and draw down his unconstitutional emoluments, we should have public order in Central Oregon. It is not possible to view too gravely the startling condition of impotence into which the administration of law has been thrown in more than one county by the timidity of local officers and the procrastination of our complaisant executive. Twenty-eight hundred sheep were slain in Lake County last Spring by a gang of outlaw cattlemen, who took this merciless method of wreaking vengeance on their enemies; and the feud between them led to the shocking and mysterious death of a leading citizen, J. C. Conn. A Coroner's jury said it was suicide; but the circumstances pointed so strongly to murder that there was a loud cry for a more thorough inquisition into the facts and for punishment of the supposed assassins. The Conn tragedy became a living issue in Southeastern Oregon politics, and led to the defeat at the polls of public officers who appeared to have taken the side of the criminals, or to have hesitated to procure their arrest and conviction.

Now thousands of sheep have been slain in Crook County as a consequence of the same conspiracy to expel the sheepmen from the range. The slayers are so audacious in their operations and so avowedly ready to pass from the massacre of sheep to the murder of sheepmen that whole communities are terrorized, the arm of the law paralyzed, and anarchy virtually reigns. In Grant County the stockmen, on their part, have been made victims of the depredations of an industrious band of rustlers, who steal horses and cattle with impunity and practically defy arrest. It is obvious that in all these counties, and perhaps in others, the operation of law has completely broken down, and it is obvious, too, that the depredations of neither the criminal sheepkillers nor the daring stock-rustlers will cease until they kill off one another or until the present Governor of Oregon can be made to realize that the lives of its citizens are imperiled, their property in jeopardy and their right to the law's protection denied.

Sheepmen have the same rights in the country as cattlemen, and cattlemen the same as sheepmen. But it is public land, and neither, at bottom, has any actual right. They are bound, however, in equity and justice, to respect the common right, on either side, to graze their herds and flocks, till forbidden by the owner of the lands. It is intolerable when one party attempts to exclude by wholesale massacre the other party from lands to which neither has a legal right. Active measures would be taken against these sheepkillers if Oregon had a Governor who was not balancing and playing in politics for re-election.

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