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Telephone No. 26

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY BY
John Lamb

Entered as second-class matter January 4, 1905, at the post office at Silver City, Idaho, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1905.

A DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND MINING.

Congressman Van Duser, of Nevada, introduced a bill in the House the first day of the present session of Congress, providing for the establishment of a department of mines and mining, the head of which shall be a cabinet officer. The bill was doubtless drawn to meet the approval of the committee of the recent mining congress and will be supported by men identified with the mining industries generally.

This country has been growing with such celerity and its industries have become so varied and diverse that the creation of new departments to look specially after the different interests continues to become more of a necessity every year. Placing such an important industry as that of mining under a bureau to be looked after by the secretary of the interior, has so far sufficed, but has at length outgrown the ability of that department to give it the thought and attention it deserves. It should now be placed under a department of its own, and be presided over by a person as nearly familiar with all the intricacies and requirements of the great industry as possible.

Almost everyone is more or less familiar with what the department of agriculture has accomplished within the past few years, under the management of earnest and able secretaries, and a like success may await the department of mines and mining. The recent mining congresses have earnestly advocated the creation of such a department, and we have little doubt but that the measure will meet with the approval of the present Congress.

If Dubois stays with the democratic party until then, he will work for, and get, an endorsement of the next democratic state convention for the U. S. senatorship. He has already said to have expressed a fear that the republican state convention will also endorse a certain candidate, and it is to be hoped it will.

Jake's column-and-a-half effort in last week's Avalanche to reply to what truths we told about him and the gang, amounted only to the abuse and vilification to be expected from such a source. The only truth which he told in it was the boast that the law which the sheriff was trying to enforce was still being violated. And the gall of the man, in offering to leave it to public opinion whether or not he was

running a decent newspaper, when that very issue contained slurs and insinuations reflecting upon the characters of persons infinitely his superiors in morals and manners! The fact is, Jake is afflicted with a congenital dislocation of the veracity which no surgeon, however skillful, can alleviate.

Had Senator Mitchell, who died last week at his home in Portland, an old man, died five years earlier his memory would have been honored as that of a man with a long and honorable career in the public service of the state. But living too long brought dishonor upon his name, and left his fellow senators to settle a point in their ethics respecting what notice should be taken by them of his death. Poor old man! With a legal ability which brought him employment as attorney for one of the great transcontinental railroads, and honors as a member of the most honored deliberative body on earth, he had not the moral stamina to resist doing wrong. His was a pitiable ending of a career which might have lived in the annals of the nation as an honorable one.

Herman Jones, the oldest newspaper publisher in the state and owner of next to the oldest paper in Idaho—The Idaho World—died at his home in Idaho City, on the 11th instant, of acute indigestion, at the age of 78 years. Mr. Jones was one of the early pioneers of the state, reaching Florence during the early rush to that camp. He and his son Charles E., became the owners of the Idaho World in 1875, which they have since conducted. His son Charles has for the past few years had general charge of the paper, but the older gentleman still continued to occupy himself about the printshop up until his brief illness, which ended in death. He was a most genial and kindly man whom everybody esteemed, with a rare faculty among local newspaper men, of making no or few enemies. He left two sons, E. W. of Boise and C. E. of Idaho City, and two daughters, Mrs. Garrecht and Mrs. Day of Idaho City.

No one knows better than the sailor or the shore hunter how the sea birds may be exterminated, and no one better than the Indian or the trapper of the deep woods, how sometimes the wildest and most abundant species may disappear. The wonderful great auk, or garefowl, has, within the memory of men now living, been hunted from the face of the earth, so that its skin and its eggs are now worth their weight in gold, says the New York Mail. Practically the beautiful wild pigeon, which once darkened the skies with its vast, cloud-like flight, has met the same fate, though small colonies of it in remote spots undoubtedly still exist. The eastern pinnated grouse it almost practically extinct. In the Chatham islands, alone, in the Pacific, 17 species of birds have become extinct.

On all the islands of the sea, and at all the shore spots to which sea birds resort, the work of slaughter is being carried on quite relentlessly. Largely for humane reasons, and incidentally in the interest of science, the National Association of Audubon Societies is engaged in the work of trying to save the sea birds from extermination. Several species are being systematically destroyed for their feathers. Fashion, of course, does not care whether these beautiful creatures are exterminated or not. The scarcer they become, up to the

point of their actual disappearance, the greater are the prices realized for their feathers, and the deeper the joy taken by the wearer of the ornament. And when at last they are all gone—why, there will be another of God's creatures to put through the same process.

This association has 40 wardens guarding some of the key colonies of these sea birds. This may guarantee them from total destruction at present, but does not insure the maintenance of the birds of the species in question in such numbers as to render their preservation sure. Instead of 40 wardens the society ought to have 300.

Oblivion.
 Nordy—I haven't heard anything of Jinks for a long, long time. He must be dead.
 Butts—No; not dead, but the next thing to it.
 "What do you mean?"
 "He's married to a prima donna."—Louisville Courier Journal.

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