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THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS
Editor and Owner.

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THE MAYOR'S MESSAGE.

Elsewhere in this issue the Evening Observer prints Mayor Richardson's message in full. It is a document worthy the careful attention and consideration of each and every citizen. Without endeavor to bewilder the reader with rhetoric or flowery language the new mayor calls attention to some of the good things accomplish-

ed by the Meyers administration and then makes a few recommendations that are proper and essential.

For instance, his statement relative to the fire department is without doubt one of strict importance, and later we predict that the mayor will go a step farther and recommend a paid fire department for La Grande. There is no question as to the need of such an institution and we believe Mayor Richardson will at the proper time be a strong advocate of it.

His reference to the health of the community is important, and the recommendation that all citizens be compelled to use city water should be thoroughly understood. Some might think this is an interference with personal rights, but it is not so. The public health is not an individual matter. One many may choose to neglect himself or his family and cause illness which might spread through a whole community, in which case that man has no right to set up his own wishes and desires above a community. Mayor Richardson, in his campaign to protect the entire community will have the heartiest support possible to accord an official

by the great majority of the people of La Grande.

It was with considerable pleasure that we read what the new official had to say regarding the indebtedness of La Grande. Everyone is aware that La Grande is about sixteen months behind in current money for current expenses, and Mayor Richardson touched upon this subject in no unmistakable manner. He hopes another year will witness La Grande paying her paper at par, which would without doubt be one of the best things this administration can do. Few things tend to hold a city back more than the fact that its paper is below par. A discount of five per cent, does not seem large but it places an odium on the whole community that is hard to overcome. In his efforts to bring the balance sheet even the new mayor will hear little complaint, even if the city taxes are raised a peg to do it.

As a whole the message is a most commendable introduction of the new administration.

BARRETT AND GOOD ROADS.

State Senator Charlie Barrett is over from Athena today interviewing his Union constituency regarding the proposed good roads bill which Judge Webster of Portland will have introduced in the legislature this winter.

That bill provides for state aid to counties that will agree to add twice the amount given by the state for road building. In other words if Union county would agree to put up \$40,000 the state would put up \$20,000 for road building in this county. On the face of it there might be some attraction, but when one comes to analyze the matters it certainly is not the right way to solve, or attempt to solve the road question. In the first place, who pays the tax that will raise this money contributed by the state? The entire state, of course. Now according to the bill as it is framed, if a county does not take advantage of the state's offer then that county is out its portion of the general tax, which goes to some county that does take the state's offer.

But this is not the worst feature of the whole matter. Two years ago a man by the name of Judge Scott of Salem, came through eastern Oregon

talking good roads apparently for the good of the cause. This year one Judge Webster from Portland did the same thing, apparently for the good of the cause. No one could understand how these men were giving of their time and paying their own expenses just to agitate a good roads movement. Here is the joker. It now develops that the Webster road bill provides for state highway commissioner at a salary of \$4,000 a year, an assistant at \$1800 a year and an army of clerks and underlings, and it further develops that Judge Scott of Salem and Judge Webster of Portland are each a candidate for the position of commissioner which position will be created under the new bill.

Shades of darkness. Did you ever see the like? It is almost a safe guess out here in Oregon to attach a personal motive to the act of every public man. Usually when the whole matter focuses down it is found that a salary is the prize and the man doing the screaming is after that salary.

This paper is against the good roads bill as framed by Webster. Thoroughly against it with both feet. We want good roads as badly as anybody in Oregon, but we are not willing to raise a Judge Webster or a Judge Scott on the public when these two self-appointed road men have been busy for two years making for themselves a soft place to lay.

And from the way Senator Barrett talked to us today we think he will oppose this measure on the floor of the senate, which will be but the right and proper thing to do.

Advocates of this measure say, "We want an automobile road from one end of Oregon to the other so that tourists will come here."

They are wrong. Oregon is too new and not sufficiently developed to be paying to tourists. What we need here is good roads for the farmer, for the lumberman, for the wood hauler, for the miner, so that products of this great state can be hauled to market with as little cost as possible. Automobile roads will be all right later, but right now we need practical highways that will benefit the producer.

Under the bonding act each county is empowered to vote bonds to build roads in that county. This is all right

and it is good enough. Lets let the matter rest at that instead of getting into this endless expense of state aid which in the end provides jobs for a lot of office seekers and sells large quantities of road machinery.

SUIT AGAINST GOVERNOR WEST

Today in Judge Knowles court the case against Governor West, George H. Currey and Senator Turner Oliver was argued. It is a suit wherein a railroad rate expert claims damages from the above named defendants for publication of a letter said to have been written by Governor West when he was at the head of the state railway commission.

No, there is nothing serious about the matter—just a case of a man being hauled into court after he has achieved prominence in being elected governor. Mr. Currey and Senator Oliver are incidental in the case, for the belief is that the real man the expert rate man is after is West.

But twenty-five thousand dollars damages is a good deal. A man must show that he has been wronged to quite an extent before he is entitled to collect that much money, even from a governor. Perhaps that letter of the governor's not only curtailed the earning power of this rate expert but put him out of business, so to speak. But at that \$25,000 is a chunk of coin.

Hoxey's Body to be Cremated.

Pasadena, Jan. 3—The late Aviator Hoxey, was buried this afternoon at 2.30 from the undertaking parlors. The body will be privately cremated.

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