

THE OBSERVER

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CHURCHILL FOR THE PEOPLE.

The fight just finished by State Superintendent Churchill in which he has brought the grasping school book concerns to their knees and forced them to reduce price on some of the school books thereby saving thousands of dollars to the Oregon public, is a fight that rings true and means more than round after round of political ammunition shot by men in office who talk reform but seldom act. Churchill does not talk until after he has done his shooting. If his aim has been good and his game falls, then he smiles that school room smile and gives the press the news of the deal.

In this case it has been excellent news to every patron of the schools of the state, for this year the squeezing out money for text books has been hard for almost everyone. The change, very likely an excellent one, has been expensive as it is always expensive and right here in La Grande many a family has felt the five, ten or twelve dollars it has cost to equip the children with text books for the school term.

If Churchill keeps up this method he will be the kind of man to send to congress or the United States senate, for really economy seems to be a lost art among many who occupy these offices.

MONEY FROM FRUIT THIS YEAR.

The Grande Ronde valley will have a resource this year that last year did not produce much revenue. We have reference to the fruit crop—principally apples. Last year was an exceptional year for low prices all over the United States and this valley shared with other sections in the lack of revenue from orchards. But it is quite different this season. Even this early the demand for Grande Ronde apples is brisk. Contracts are offered now at a good price which means that later in the year the price will advance, for the long headed commission men are not prone to contract for apples when they expect or even suspicion a downward trend of the market.

When the Northwestern Fruit association is willing and anxious to close for "C" grade apples—which in reality is the poorest grade and usually subject to shovel pack, at seventy-five cents a box, there is every reason to believe that the fairly good apple will bring a good price and that fancy and extra fancy will again bring the picture money as of old.

True, the crop is not what the native calls heavy, for Grande Ronders in speaking of heavy crops mean that the trees are breaking under their load. But the crop is comfortable this year, just about as it should be with occasionally a spot that is a little light. However, there are plenty of apples in the valley to bring an enormous revenue and when the fruit trains begin to run local banks will see some handsome exchange in the way of drafts for apples. All of which is not only good news to we people in the Grande Ronde but to the entire northwest, where without doubt the best apple the world has ever seen, is produced.

CONCRETE BASE DEMANDED.

North Yakima property owners have just chosen paving for fourteen blocks. They chose a concrete base with an asphalt top. Apparently such a paving is the only sensible solution of the paving controversy. For those who want plain concrete it is well they should have it, as even then the people know exactly what a concrete paving is. But when it comes to paving with some article that only graduated chemists can understand the risk is too great. And besides it is only a matter of common reasoning that all paving should have a concrete base. We are told by well informed people in this line of work that the extreme east where paving questions have been before the people for years, that no concern is permitted to lay any kind of paving that does not carry a concrete base. The North Yakima people have expressed themselves along the same lines, and we believe La Grande property owners will come to the same conclusion as time goes on.

"OLD MAN" BENNETT.

Leaving a trail of sparkling spark-lets similar to the modern rocket "Old Man" Bennett breezily circled through Eastern Oregon a few days in the interest of the Portland Oregonian. He played one day stands in this section, but that did not prevent him from grabbing a sandwich for the inner man and enough data to make a two column story on every town that he visited.

His story on La Grande was unique, just as his writings are always unique. Whether Pat Foley, proprietor of the Foley hotel, will bring suit against Bennett or whether his gray hair will spare him, is not yet known, but certain it is that Pat either has ground for suit, else taken as true the story will call for repeated treats among Pat's friends.

Dad Bennett's reference to the writer was irrelevant and not germane, as the attorneys would say, hence it needs no contradiction.

But in a general way the Bennett

article was a booster for La Grande. It told the large family of Oregonian readers what is here, showed a few pictures of buildings, impressed the certainty of La Grande's future, and people here are appreciative of "Old Man" Bennett's effort and invite him to return to stay "longer than between trains."

NEW CHARTER DEFENDED.

(Continued from Page 1.)

become of the 15 or 20 dollars it cost him to attend the Round-Up. It is just as easy as it is for anyone to say what become of the \$75 or \$100 which it cost him the last time he visited the large city for a day or two. It went for this and that little expense, some of which was not necessary perhaps but which all helped to make up the total. This was because he was not following business like methods on his trip, was not keeping tab.

If he had started out with a certain amount of money for expenses and no means of getting any more, he would have made it do. That is what he does, or should do on business days.

This city has not been limiting its expenses to its revenue. It has been on a holiday. It has been easy to put in a wafer main here and a light there, to go on junketing trips, to buy fire equipment and install alarm apparatus and build city halls, etc., etc., because all one had to do was to order a warrant drawn to pay the bill.

It has been easy to put in telephones and buy typewriters, etc., etc., and moreover, the individual who opposes such simple expenditures is "incompetent" and must be deposed. If at the beginning of each year a certain amount of money had been set aside for each department to use and the mayor and council had been held personally responsible for spending more, the habit of economizing would have been in the ascendancy instead of the habit of extravagance. This is impossible under our charter.

What is the remedy?

The application to the business of the city of the same principles as obtain in the conduct of any successful business.

The O. W. R. & N., The George Palmer Lumber company or any other successful business concern conduct their business in just the same way as it is proposed to conduct the business of the city under the proposed charter. The stockholders in these concerns elect a certain number of directors who hire a general manager who is responsible to them and whom they may remove at any time. This method of conducting their business seems to be in vogue in all successful concerns.

The revenue of the city of La Grande is in the neighborhood of \$100,000 yearly and increasing all the time. The method of doing the business of the city has resulted in failure, abject failure. Is it not reasonable to adopt some other form of doing business? Is it not absolutely necessary? Is it not reasonable to try the method followed by all successful business firms?

There are those who oppose the charter because they say it is not democratic—it is not in accord with their particular political creed.

When a person comes to you with a business proposition do you weigh it in the balance of your political creed? Of course you do not, you consider it from a purely business standpoint. The business of this city is each taxpayer's personal business. The only reason he does not attend to it is because he has got into the habit of neglecting it.

Some of the opponents of the proposed charter have circulated the foolish story that assessments for street improvements under the proposed charter may all be collected in one year or something of that sort.

The proposed charter cannot change any contracts already in force. The only changes in connection with street improvements will be that a remonstrance, signed by 55 per cent of the property owners on any street will prevent the improvement of such street. At present the council need not pay any attention to a remonstrance signed by 100 per cent of the property owners.

There is only one way to pay off the city's indebtedness, and that is with money. This money must be paid. So the people want their money distributed according to holiday methods as in the past or according to business day methods as provided for in the



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