

THE OBSERVER

BRUCE DENNIS, Editor and Owner

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PUBLIC SERVICE AS A PROFESSION.

A recent news item from Los Angeles contained a few words which are significant as indicating a trend of ideas which would have been unthought of a few years ago. This was a suggestion appended to the report of the Budget Committee of that city that a course in public service be given in the high school.

The significance of this lies in the fact that the offering in a public school of a course in a special branch indicates that there is believed to be an opening for the adoption of this particular branch as a life work. Probably nothing has done more toward preventing efficiency in public service than the general feeling among both public and officials that such service will, as a matter of course, be taken up by them for only a year or two, when the official will return to his private business, to which in the meantime he has necessarily been called upon to devote a part of his time and energies. We have pretty generally reached the point where we appreciate that certain city positions can be satisfactorily filled only by those who have technical training along those lines, such as city engineers, superintendents of lighting plants, etc., but even so, the engineer is frequently drawn from a railroad corps with a vague idea that his previous experience has fitted him for designing sewers and laying pavements.

It would seem to be almost self-evident that satisfactory efficiency in any department of public service, whether it be supervising roadway construction or managing municipal finances, can be obtained only when delegated to men who are not only of more than average intelligence, but who also have made a life study of the particular branch in question. It has too long been a popular idea that public office is to be considered in the nature of a reward or privilege and not, as any other service, rendered for adequate compensation, for which

is demanded the best ability which the community can afford to hire. The idea that to retain a municipal employee in office indefinitely is to deprive some other citizen of his right to hold the same office is quite common but is a survival of the dark ages of the spoils system which will soon, we hope, be recognized as an anachronism. We hope to see the day when city employees of all grades, including the city manager or whatever official may exercise his function, shall be selected with sole view to their efficiency in filling the position, no question being asked as to their politics or whether they are citizen of the city or state, but only as to their ability and past record in similar positions in the same or other cities, and when able men will take up the profession of municipal service as a permanent one, devoting their undivided energies to the study of this as others do to law or medicine. Until that day arrives it will be absurd to expect the highest possible efficiency in municipal service.

HE KNOWS.

An article from the pen of J. B. Stoddard, former mayor of La Grande in last evening's issue of the Observer, plainly told of the benefits to be derived from a commission form of government. Mr. Stoddard, when serving as mayor of La Grande, recommended a form of government similar to the one now proposed. He saw the lost motion in city affairs, saw the impossibility of attaching responsibility and recognized the almost impossible task of correcting existing shortcomings without changing the method of doing business from a free-for-all manner to a straightforward business-like method.

One thing he mentioned in his communication last evening should sink deeply into the minds of every taxpayer. Here it is as he wrote it:

"Do you know that if the city was not a monopoly and had not the taxing power it could not run business at all in competition with any private concern."

The Evening Observer dispassionately submits this one paragraph to the people asking that it be digested thoroughly. We know the statement contained therein is true, and every voter should try and ascertain for himself the truthfulness of it. Keep in mind that it was uttered by a man who knows exactly what he is talking about for he has been through the ordeal of serving La Grande as mayor. During his administration there were \$7,000 more recorded in paid warrants than in issued warrants, and with that showing he still maintains it is impossible to run a municipality along economical lines under the present form of government.

The one paragraph quoted above from Mr. Stoddard should be sufficient evidence to insure the passage and permanent adoption of the proposed commission charter.

New York, you may have noticed, was not represented at the Conference of Governors.—St. Louis Republic.

WILL TAKE NO MORE CHANCES.

Will R. King, formerly a member of the Oregon supreme court, stopped to visit Baker City friends yesterday. He has been appointed to a fat office in the east by the Democratic administration but when asked where his home was he informed the Baker newspapers that he would always vote in Oregon.

This is amusing when it is remembered that Judge King once left Oregon, removed to Walla Walla, opened a law office and decided he would live on the other side of the state line. Suddenly there was a vacancy on the supreme bench and Chamberlain who was then governor, appointed King to the place. It was in the nick of time and the judge at once gave out an interview showing plainly that he was in Walla Walla only for a short time and that Oregon was his home.

He is one of the shrewdest of shrewd public men and he will never be caught again in the Walla Walla position, hence he announces very emphatically that he is an Oregonian all the time.

Judge Knowles and Judge Morrow are to trade benches for a short time. This will put Judge Knowles in the Multnomah court house which is a marble palace. But good, healthy justice can be dispensed from the old wooden bench just as well as from marble walls, as each of these eminent judges will prove beyond question.

According to Warren Chandler, and he knows, there are more money getting steers roaming around Imnaha than some imagine. In fact, he says, the high grade pay streak of the mountains nowadays is the steer which commands all the way from \$80 to \$90 a head.

PREMIUMS OUT

The grangers of Union county will hold their annual fair at Blue Mountain Grange hall on the 26th and 27th of September, and on Saturday, the 27th, the county grange will be held at this place. The principal object of this fair is to encourage, or interest the young people in agriculture.

Anyone wishing to give a special prize may make it known to C. D. Huffman, W. M., or Mrs. C. E. Golden, secretary. It will be thankfully received. The prize list is:

Mrs. E. E. Grout, best display of apples, \$1.00
 C. D. Huffman, best display of grain \$1.00.

Mrs. W. F. Gekeler, best cake, \$1.00.
 Kathryn Gekeler, second best cake, box home made candy.

Mrs. C. D. Huffman, best potato bread, \$1.00.

Mrs. S. B. Williamson, best loaf light bread, \$1.00.

M. L. Carter, best display potatoes, \$1.00.

J. W. Ingram, best display vegetables by child under 14 years of age, \$1.00.

J. K. Lantz, best display fresh fruit, pair White Leghorn chickens.

Mrs. W. F. Gekeler, best display of canned fruit, trio of chickens.

Mrs. Georgia Gasset, best pie, 50 cents.

N. Daron, best display of jelly, 50 cents.

Mrs. N. Darron, best display of asters, 50 cents.

D. A. McAlister, best head of cabbage, 50 cents.

W. F. Gekeler, best display vegetables, honey worth \$1.00.

P. H. Dickinson, best pumpkin pie, box of pears.

Mrs. L. A. Smyth, best piece of embroidery, \$1.00.

Mrs. Mabel Anson, second best embroidery, 50 cents.

Mrs. J. A. Holman, best white apron, hand made, 50 cents.

Mrs. Addie Grout, best piece quilt, 50 cents.

Willard Couch, best roll of butter, \$1.00.

Mrs. Minnie Couch, best darning and mending by girl, \$1.00.

A. P. Davis, offers a prize of \$1.00 for best answers to the following:

The best plan for a farmer's garden, and answers to questions pertaining to the growing of same, by child under 14 years of age.

Don't Fail to Visit the

Gordon Pure Fur Show
TOMORROW ONLY

You can select from America's Finest Fur Line and have the advantage of choosing from the Newest Styles of the Season.

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