

THE FORUM

TAXPAYERS PAYING TO HAVE STUDENTS TAUGHT FOOTBALL

La Grande, Jan. 20.—(To the Editor)—In writing this article I wish to state that I have no fault to find in the least with our school board, with our school teachers or with any of the school officers. However, on the other hand I expect to be criticised by some people who have different opinions than myself, and that is altogether just and proper for them to do so.

The taxpayers of this county are paying \$50.00 each month for an instructor in athletics who does not teach a class and who "conches" the students in the art of football playing basketball, baseball, etc. I am re-ably informed that in the beginning it was the intention that the gate receipts from certain football games, etc., would pay his salary, but he has been employed since last September and so far has not made an official accounting to the school board. Now I am not finding fault with the instructor, but I do insist that if he was to get his pay through the receipts of the games then the taxpayers should not be called on to pay his salary. I also insist that it is wrong and a practice not to be tolerated for the taxpayers to pay \$50 per month or any other sum for an "athletic instructor." We are taxed a "high school" tax which is all right and I am in favor of it and I help to sustain it in my small way, but I am against any proposition whereby the county or district pays any sum for a man to teach students to "play games" if you please. Any aggregation of students that hasn't get up enough to manage their own games can get one of the professors to help them out after school hours. And if the students and professors have enough "school spirit" they will manage this. A school is not an institution to teach students the art of football or any other game except the "game of life." I admit they need physical exercise and football is all right (I played it three years myself) but the taxpayers and mothers and fathers certainly are not in favor of paying a man \$50 a month to coach students in the art of football, baseball or any other game. Besides, if you please, it is the duty of this "athletic instructor" to look after the finances and management of the different matches in games between the several schools. Oh yes, the taxpayers pay for this bookkeeping too. Any student body should be able to look after its own finances, gate receipts, etc. It is their business if they indulge in these games to look after that part of the "game." Why don't we have a "literary coach" to coach each literary society that is organized in our schools and to look after their finances? It would be just as sensible.

All those in school who are interested in athletics can organize, select their teams in baseball, football, etc., and the same time can manage and take care of every feature. Because really this is a side-issue. Physical training is all right, but on the campus at recess or the noon hour or after school or Saturdays is the time for that and if it includes these games the students should do the organizing and managing with some help "free" from the different teachers. The ob-

ject of school life isn't to beat Walla Walla "high" for instance, in football.

I for one strenuously object to the taxpayers paying \$50 per month out of the taxes or any other sum for an athletic instructor. I though some of taking this before the school board, but really this is only a question and I believe in giving "light" to all matters so they may be discussed pro and con. The school board would consider my protest only as one, and rightly. However, I have talked this matter over with many citizens and they feel as I that tax money is going in the wrong place, because it was voted for "school" purposes.

E. W. EASTMAN.

EDITOR'S NOTE—All schools of consequence now agree that athletics are part and parcel of the school system and must be so considered. Hence the best manner of handling them has long since been studied out and it is now agreed that athletic directors should have little or no academic duties and that athletic management and power should be centralized. For many years volunteer coaching was tried in La Grande with varying success. Seldom if ever is a faculty member able to handle all branches of athletics well. If he does he has sorely cut into his academic duties. Volunteers from townspeople mean no responsibility, and therefore are very unsatisfactory. Lack of centralized authority means haphazard management and any school authority will admit that several years ago the general premise was established everywhere that athletics need the attention of a competent person fully as much as any other branch of schooling, for without this competent leadership it will grow to seed and overrun academic departments and physically injure the youth.

All schools of any size now employ coaches for athletics. Graduate managers have years been deemed indispensable and draw big salaries, this for the reason they put athletics and student affairs on a business basis.

For some little time La Grande paid faculty members for coaching, but being human that faculty member couldn't be two places at once.

In La Grande Chas. Reynolds is a resident and has other work, and by giving part of his time to high school athletics, becomes a faculty member and draws a portion of a full salary. Fortunately he is capable, morally fit, and satisfactory in every way to trust the students with; the other members of the faculty in the meantime giving their sole attention to academic departments.

Mr. Reynolds has made his reports regularly. They are not made to the School board but to the Athletic board of control, composed of two student body members, two faculty members and one School board member. He has made these reports regularly and at the proper times.

Baker, Pendleton, Portland schools, in fact all the leading schools of the state and northwest do similarly but only in one or two instances are these schools as fortunate as La Grande, and they, unlike La Grande, employ different men for different branches, meaning greater expense than is a fact in La Grande. Therefore, athletics being with us to stay in spite of

some objection thereto, and can't be abolished because some oppose, it behooves school boards to handle the matter as seems best, cheapest and most expeditious. To disavow the presence or permanency of athletics is fallacy. On the other hand, years of experience and hard knocks have convinced educators, school boards and student bodies, that a centralized power under competent leadership is essential, and in the long run the most economical financially, and far superior from the standpoint of efficiency, satisfaction and results.

La Grande is doing only what other sections have long since learned to be the best solution of a problem that exists and will exist as long as there is American youth.

Why shouldn't the same care and caution be exercised in the development of a boy's physical body as is given to his brain? It costs money to develop brains, and it costs money to develop limbs, and arms, and bones and muscle. The time has come when brain learning is faulty and useless unless the brain is housed in a sound body. On this basis of reasoning, La Grande's school board is spending \$50.00 a month to develop the physical side of their students, and thousands and thousands to develop brains. The school board hasn't gone far enough. When it employs a first class athletic director to handle gymnastics, sports and games, developing the body with the brain of all grade and all high school students—paying therefore first class wages for a first class instructor, then, and then only, will it have given that which is due to the physical side of the La Grande boy or girl who happens to be in school.

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Baker's First Booze Case.

Baker, Ore., Jan. 25.—Charles Blackwell, the first person to be arrested for drunkenness and disorder in Baker since January 1, was found guilty in police court by City Judge Cunningham yesterday morning and sentenced to 100 days working for the city. Blackwell admitted that he bought the liquor here in Baker but refused to disclose where he got it. When District Attorney Godwin attempted to secure information he refused to take oath, and in all probability further charges will be preferred against him at the expiration of his jail sentence. Blackwell was arrested Saturday night by Officer Brennan and Sheriff Anderson.

Bad Habits.

Those who breakfast at eight o'clock or later, lunch at twelve and have dinner at six are almost certain to be troubled with indigestion. They do not allow time for one meal to digest before taking another. Not less than five hours should elapse between meals. If you are troubled with indigestion correct your habits and take Chamberlain's Tablets, and you may reasonably hope for a quick recovery. These tablets strengthen the stomach and enable it to perform its functions naturally. Obtainable everywhere.



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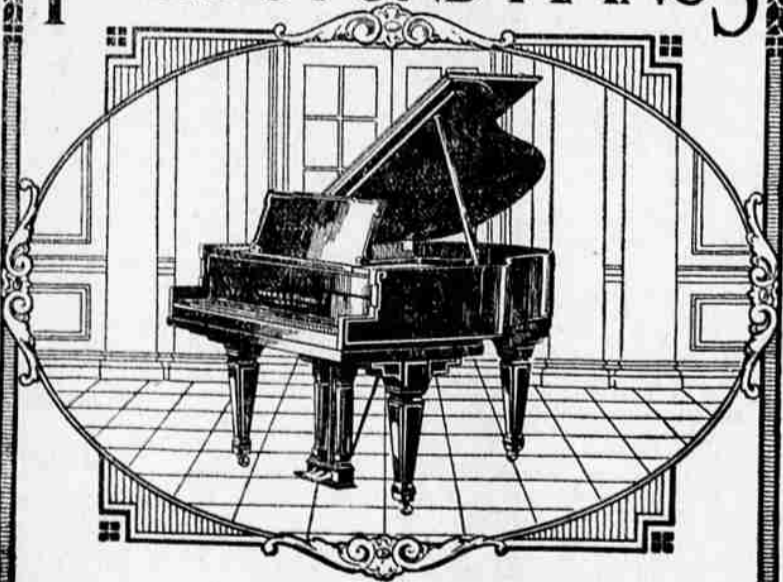
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