

EDITORIAL PAGE

La Grande Must Provide More Homes

A city cannot grow unless places are provided for the people to live. This is an old and oft repeated argument holding just as much truth now as it ever did.

La Grande has reached an important period in her history. She has outgrown herself. Her housing capacity ceases to come up any ways near the requirements. Men are leaving this city almost daily because they can find no place to live. The O-W shops are working short-handed, due to living conditions. A night force is badly needed in the railroad shops, but the men cannot be put to work, for there is no way to cure for them.

Machinists and boiler-makers who have lately been added to the shop forces are walking the streets when put on duty, trying to find places to live, and without success.

What is to be done?

Shall La Grande grow and take her place among the important interior cities, or shall she stay on a level because of no more homes?

The answer is simple and plain. This city must build homes, no matter what the cost of construction may be. There must be a movement started among the people to form a good-sized building corporation to finance the erection of houses for people to live in.

Two of the largest lumber mills are right at La Grande's door. The labor is here, if it only is collected and organized, so that in sixty days' time fifty cottages could be erected. There is plenty of vacant ground reasonably close in for the enterprise, and with proper guidance and scientific methods a new addition can be added to the city—an addition which will spring up almost overnight.

Who will be the first public-spirited citizen to start the ball rolling?

AMERICAN LABOR FOR AMERICAN HIGHWAYS.

America is building highways, and every state including Oregon, has awakened to long delayed necessity of good roads in order to keep pace with the progress of the land. Yet in some states, the vicious mistake is being made of permitting contractors to employ alien labor on the construction of these roads.

The Observer is bitterly opposed to such a procedure. The contractor who enters into agreement with state, county or city to build roads is merely acting as custodian of the people's money, for which he is to receive a percentage to repay him for the trust imposed. It is still the people's money he is using, and he therefore has no moral right to put on foreign labor which will be paid for with taxes raised by Americans.

In fact the attitude of contractors is going to govern to a very great extent whether the people of Oregon will continue their faith and confidence in the good roads program. If such contractors use any dark lantern methods; if they refuse to be guided by moral duty and obligation to the public, it is very likely Oregon's roads will be shot to pieces for many years to come. On the other hand if they play square, employ American labor, render complete statements of their stockholders and financial backers, thus letting the people know they are doing nothing, the road plans of Oregon will not be curtailed, but they will be augmented.

At present there is no law to compel the contractors to do the things the Observer has enumerated, but there is a law of the people which may not now be written on the statute books but demands just such procedure, and anyone benefitting by road work in Oregon will do well to listen to this law of popular justice.

DUNN SAYS BUSINESS WILL REMAIN ACTIVE.

Probably ninety per cent of the business of the country look upon the present tremendous buying on the part of the people as short lived, and one often hears, "things can't keep up like this."

According to all teachings of the business game they are right, but now comes a new angle, prompting the belief that the old order of things has gone and that a new program is made and will be carried out.

Reverend R. G. Dunn & Co. issued a letter in which was contained this paragraph from Edward C. Hammond, the British banker and economist: "It is my deliberate conviction that as a result of the war, the economic development of the world has been impelled forward by at least two generations, and we are on the eve of a period of activity in trade such as the world has never known."

The day of saying "It can't be done" passed when the American boy stormed the Arc de Triomphe. The day of looking to precedent quickly broke down completely when the American navy actually landed the Japanese admiral. Today the word "can't" is dead in the vocabulary and it would seem high the possibilities of man and are just dawning, the path of which his eye is big enough to even guess.

SHRINERS HAD TIME OF THEIR LIVES.

La Grande is better known to the business world by the Shriners who last week held their convention in this city. Such men as Harvey White, Mark Woodruff and other prominent dignitaries in the world of Shriners have written the Observer, expressing their appreciation of the remarkable entertainment afforded them by La Grande and have requested this note to say to the public in general that the time of the Shriners are profitable and sincere.

Bears His Honor With Modesty.

John J. Pershing, by action of Congress, is a full "general," the fifth man who has borne that proud title in the history of the United States. His predecessors are Washington, Grant, Sherman and Sheridan.

Whether Pershing ranks with that noble company in military genius is too early to say. Time is required to make a proper appraisal. Certain it is, however, that Pershing has done a very big piece of work, big in bulk and in difficulty, and has done it exceedingly well.

More than that, he has done well whatever he set his hand to, from his campaigning in the Philippines down to the present day. Through it all, too, he has remained a plain, simple, straightforward American, receiving the honors of his home-borne triumph with a modesty that must disarm his critics, if he has any.

Pershing unquestionably deserves his title and the great welcome the country is now giving him. Contrary to the old saying, republics are grateful when there is real cause for gratitude. A generous nation delights in showing its appreciation of the soldier under whose command the war was won and American rights and ideals were vindicated.

Is it the high cost of living or the high cost of keeping up with the neighbors that has put the furrow in your brow?

Entitled to Generous Treatment.

The president of the New York Federation of Labor has bitterly attacked the cost-of-living report recently made by a special committee of that organization. His antagonism however seems merely to have emphasized the remarkable nature of that report, which was based on several months' study of the situation, and which urged organized labor to do more work rather than less, and postpone strikes for at least six months.

Asking labor to "exert itself to the utmost to increase production of essential commodities and thereby lower the cost to the producer, to enable him to lower the cost to the consumer," the committee added:

"This applies not alone to the necessities of life, but to all manufactured articles which are bartered in commerce at home and abroad, and the production, manufacture and sale from which labor draws its earnings and employers their profits. This can only be accomplished by employers and wage earners working together to that end, each casting aside all striving for temporary advantage and pulling together in double harness for the general good of all the people of the United States and the emancipation of the world from the economic troubles which now beset the peoples of all lands. The eight-hour day for

all is, generally speaking, an accomplished fact.

"It is labor's duty and it should be its pleasure to produce as much in eight hours as it formerly produced in ten, and even more. To that end every man and woman that works for wages should bend every effort to letting the close of each day's work see that he or she has individually added more, and still more, of marketable commodities to the wealth of the world than he or she produced the day before."

This is a remarkable utterance, such as most people would not expect from representatives of labor. It seems evident, however, that it speaks the opinion of the majority of intelligent labor leaders in this country, and of the rank and file of their followers. It agrees with the views which many disinterested observers have been expressing for some time.

It is by no means an echo of expert "capitalistic" opinions, but a conclusion to which the labor unions are coming from their own study of the question. They are to be congratulated for seeing things so clearly, and for having given such frank and generous expression to a truth which organized labor in the old days might have been slow to admit.

Needless to say, when the unions show this spirit, they should be treated in a spirit no less generous than their own.

A Value That Must Remain Stable.

Within the past few weeks sales have been made of real estate particularly of farming lands, that have been on a basis which would have been unbelievable a few years back. There was a time not so very long ago when it was generally asserted that \$100 an acre farming land was altogether too valuable to use for the production of wheat. Of course, it is well known that this is a period of general high prices, but real estate has been the last commodity to take the skyrocket leap, probably because the less stable commodities were expected to fluctuate and before long come back to a lower level.

But it is not the good farming land alone that has been changing hands at a price undreamed of a few years ago. There has been a price boom in city property as well. Any vacant lot convenient to the business center is selling at practically a hundred per cent advance over a couple of years ago, the prices ranging from \$750 to \$1000 for a fifty-foot lot. There is a reason for this, and that is found in the extraordinary demand for living room. Cases are numerous where residence property has been bought almost solely on the grounds that that was the only safe way to be absolutely in possession of a home.

Demand is also an element in the price of productive soil. The population increases and the prices paid are justified under present conditions, and most likely will continue to be justified.

At any rate, there is no one more secure against the fluctuation of the money market, or of the produce market or the grain market than the man who holds a tract of such dependable land as that in the Grande Ronde valley. Taking the situation in all its bearings land values must be stable because land is the ultimate basis of everything.

The spruce investigation has uncovered a net loss of over thirty-five million dollars to the government. It also disclosed that Ryan was largely instrumental in securing General Disque a thirty-thousand dollar a year job. It also disclosed, or rather affirmed, that not a bombing plane reached the western front during the war, from America. The reader can draw his own conclusion of General Disque and the inefficiency which undoubtedly did exist. The reader can also draw his own conclusions as to the profiteering. It is a matter of regret that the congressional committee does not force the hand of the Warren Spruce company and all other concerns operating with government money to show who comprised their stockholders. This should be demanded just as it should be demanded that all road-building contractors show who is financially backing them and who is sharing in their profits.

Proposition to Utilize Canned Sermons.

Only the other day it was announced that the political campaign this fall would be characterized by "canned speeches," delivered into the throbbing ears of phonographic records in Washington, by party orators, and distributed over the country to edify audiences unreachably by the stump speakers in person.

Hardly is the public reconciled to that innovation than a more startling use of the same device is proposed. It is "canned sermons."

Let no irreverent reader remark, at this point, that a good many sermons already seem to have come out of cans, or worse still, that sermons in general "ought to be canned." The proposal is seriously intended to meet a serious situation, and deserves a respectful reception.

A Presbyterian conference at Lake Geneva, Wis., reports that 3000 out of 10,000 pulpits are vacant. It is impossible to fill these pulpits, for the present at least. A high officer of the church therefore suggests that until pastors are found for them, they shall be supplied with "phonographic records of approved sermons."

And why not? People are always criticizing the churches for not being progressive and businesslike. Here, surely, is progress and sound business sense. And there would probably be no lack of fitting reverence in a "canned sermon" service, when once the strangeness of it had worn off.

Let us all hear more about Secretary Lansing's stand on the treaty

and the league of nations. Bear in mind that Secretary Lansing is a schooled man in state affairs, and his opinion is worth far more than a political opinion wholly.

By all means let both sides of the treaty and the league of nations be carried to the people. No one who wants a free discussion of affairs can object to Hiram Johnson and William Borah taking the stump to give their views on so important a subject.

According to Bird Lewis, who is the best and most extensive tourist in Union county, many of the California highways are chipping and showing the wear. California uses cement almost exclusively to construct her roads, and it would seem that a new process must be discovered before the cement road will make good.

Word has been received in Baker that Captain Percy Olmstead, son of the late Judge O. M. Olmstead, and well known in Baker, now in command of the U. S. S. Nebraska, has been permanently detailed to duty on the Pacific coast, and will probably be stationed at the Puget Sound navy yard.

Portland four mills were suddenly forced to suspend operations Thursday, when workmen employed on the first of three shifts left their places in a general strike of grain handlers and mill operators, according to the statement of mill officials, who disclaim knowledge of any reason for the action.

Eastern Oregon's second largest nugget, valued at \$254.35 was added to the gold collection of Fred R. Melis of the Oregon-Idaho Investment Co. in the Shoemaker building when Alf E. Gentry of Canyon City, brought the prize to Baker this week.

Uncle Johnny Shell, 131 years old, wants to take out some life insurance. Says, "You can never tell what will happen." Most men of his age would be wanting to take out a little fire insurance on the same grounds.

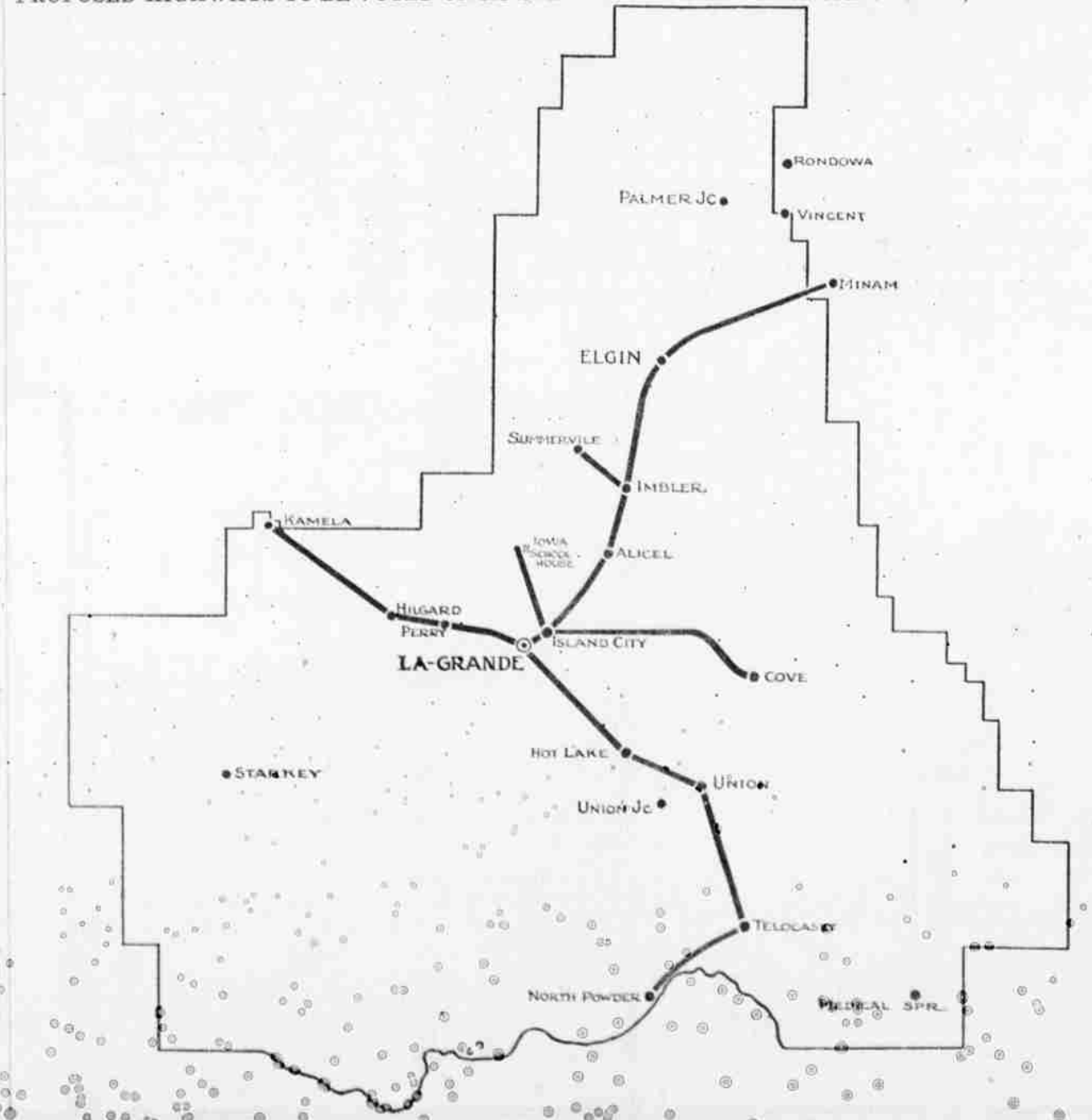
The belief in the wisdom of bees gets a severe jolt when one reads of the swarm of bees in Chardon, Ohio, that mistook the radiator of a running automobile for a hive and flew into it.

"Curiosity killed the cat." It will also kill the pussy-foot drinker whose love of investigation leads him to try wood or demure alcohol.

A New York woman hid \$3000 worth of diamonds in the sleeve of her husband's coat, and now some thief is laughing up his sleeve.

Remember the good old days when mother had one good black silk dress? Yes, and wasn't mother lucky?

PROPOSED HIGHWAYS TO BE VOTED ON AT SPECIAL ELECTION IN UNION COUNTY, OCTOBER 11.



MEMBERSHIP APPEAL IS MADE

AMERICAN LEGION TO RAVE A NATION-WIDE DRIVE

Dr. Ingle Asks All Service Men to Join the La Grande Post—Local Men Active.

The following extract is from a letter received by the La Grande Post No. 43 of the American Legion, from the state executive committee:

"Between Monday, September 15, and Saturday, September 20, a nation-wide campaign for the American Legion, which will increase its ranks to 1,000,000 members. Oregon's quota in the greatest of after the war drives is 8742. Already led by only six states in the Union, Oregon must not fall behind in the big effort.

"It is up to you to see that your Post does not lag. You can put it across, and we are depending upon you to make a good showing.

"The quota for La Grande is 50. 'Your state secretary would like very much to know as soon as possible the total strength of your membership, and the approximate number of service men enlisting in your locality. And in the meantime, make your Post the first in the state to report its full quota.

(Signed) "State Executive Committee, The American Legion of Oregon."

That last sentence contains a challenge to every one of the 43 posts in the state. La Grande post accepts the challenge, and although it was the last to be organized, it is the intention and the purpose of the executive committee to be not only the first post in the state to report its quota, but to be able to send a telegram to the state secretary early Monday morning, the first day of the drive, saying that La Grande post has doubled its quota.

Service men of La Grande and vicinity, it's up to you. While you were doing your bit in the army the people at home were doing their bit by going over the top in every Red Cross and Liberty Loan drive that was held. They have built a reputation for La Grande as a town that does things up in a hurry and now here is your chance to boost that reputation.

You are all going to join the American Legion "eventually," why not now? Don't wait for the committee to look you up, but help us to go over the top by going to Silverthorn's drug store, where an American Legion representative will be posted all day Sunday, and filling out your application card and paying your dues for the current year.

All of those who join at once will become charter members of the post and avoid having to pay the initiation fee which will be charged those joining later. The dues are two dollars per year. There will be a meeting of the executive committee of the American Legion at 8 o'clock in Room 37, New Foley building.

DR. J. L. INGLE, Temporary President.

L. J. FRENCH TO ACT AS HEAD

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a competent chorus leader. In Prof. Edwards we have the most competent chorus director in Eastern Oregon, a man who has won prizes in contests leading choruses. He also holds medals for musical compositions won in contest. It is not that we are lacking in that department. Music lovers should be the first to appreciate the opportunity to work under competent direction as we have."

Continuing, Mr. French said: "The earnestness of our intentions and efforts can be judged by our continued organization for over a year without voluntary recess. The 'flu' has hindered our work as it did others. Our ready response to the calls for music in our public gatherings was gladly rendered. We were glad to be of service to the various churches of our city in the recent series of meetings at Riverside Park."

"Of the future," he said, "our plans call for an oratorio upon which we will begin work as soon as copies can be secured. Other plans that are under consideration, when worked out, I believe will be found to be much appreciated and of value to our community. Details of these plans, are not sufficiently developed to announce at this time."

Mr. French especially urges that more people join the Community chorus and he extends to the returned soldiers a special invitation to become members.

The next meeting of the chorus will be held Monday evening at 8 o'clock in the Tabernacle.

The same energy that is now directing forty to fifty voices can direct several times that many to advantage. In this connection he mentioned you," said Mr. French, "there are few cities that can lay claim to