Cottage Grove Sentinel

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A test of character—

Is there anything significant about a large number of Cottage Grove boys found guilty of thieving? Is it a challenge to the people of Cottage Grove or will they sit smugly back and say, "I always knew that boy would get what was coming to him?" Shall they eye him suspiciously, as if he were not like their own sons, not a personality, not to be understood? Will they thereby close from him anything but a career of crime?

Or are they willing to take their share of the blame, realizing that maybe they have held prejudices, maybe they don't consider the development of character in youth worth their attention? Should not the emphasis be on correction rather than on punishment? How can the people of Cottage Grove help correct the characters of these boys and boys who have not yet been caught in a criminal act? They certainly can't be corrected without an attempt to understand them. There is no quick remedy. It has taken a gradual trend of circumstances to make these boys what they are. Sending them to Sunday school for a year is not enough. A change must take place in the things that appeal to these boys who after all are boys who have energy which can be utilized in developing character.

One could lament Cottage Grove's need for activities such as those of a Y.M.C.A.; but what is possibly more practical might be followed up. In several larger cities, capable men have undertaken to give some of their time acting as big brothers to adolescent boys. However, it is no small task. It takes study and ingenuity, patience and tact. A golfer might be willing to take one of these boys on a round of golf with him even though the game be slowed up. In different ways yougth's confidence might be gained.

There might be no reward for the well-meaning adult. He might be betrayed by the one he tried to aid. He would have to take that chance. On the other hand what hobby, what work could be more gratifying, than to see character develop? A boy might come to trust his big brother and the big brother could be a better man by trying to make himself more worthy to be trusted. Is it worth trying? V. GOFF.

(Editor's note.—The suggestion that golfers might help the boy is good. However, the local golf club has for a year been helping a large number of boys, even making it possible for the boys to own their own clubs. Most of the boys have been appreciative, a few have been otherwise. There is opportunity for any upstanding lad to leave the streets and spend spare time on the local golf course.)

A. B. Wood writes—

An interesting letter from A. B. Wood, San Diego, for many years a prominent business man here, contains the following comment upon national issues:

Referring to Townsend plan:

"The high pressure demands of industry that deny to workers past 40 or 45 years of age any but the most meager and uncertain opportunity for employment has shortened the period during which a reserve can be laid aside and lengthened the period for which such reserve must provide, which together with the high pressure salesmen who persuade earners to spend their earnings for present luxuries instead of saving for future needs has created a social and economic condition that must be viewed with both sympathy and alarm for the victims.

"These conditions, with the rapidly increasing debt of the nation, and all municipal subdivisions calling for higher taxes, endangers the morale of our people and renders the solution difficult. You are young and a thinker, with a medium through which to exert an influence, and I think have courage to support worthy measures and to oppose unsound measures. (A. B. forgets that the editor has nearly reached pension age.)

"You did not visit our exposition during 1935, it was a good one. It is to be continued for some time in 1936, reopens Feb. 12. If you come, try and bring along one of your good rainy spells, as we are not over supplied with such blessings."

Discussion of measures—

FOLLOWING its usual custom The Sentinel will discuss measures that will be up at the special election January 31:

There are three measures referred by the legislative assembly and one referrd by referendum petition. One is a constitutional amendment. The number is small enough so that each voter should take time to read the affirmative and negative arguments in the voters' pamphlet.

While it may not be of outstanding importance that any one of the measures be enacted, yet each one is a controversial issue and every voter should give careful consideration to each. The Sentinel can give only a brief outline of each.

Bill changing primary elections to September.—300-301.

The Sentinel had taken a position in favor of this change before the legislature enacted the law and referred it to the people. The editor came from a state where the primaries were held a short time before the general election, in Minnesota, and the law seems to work entirely satisfactorily. Eleven states, including Washington, have September primaries.

At present the primaries are held the third Friday in May. The measure on the ballot would change the date to the first Monday in September, leaving 63 to 69 days between the primaries and the general election.

The charge has been made that the change would favor the wealthy candidate. In the opinion of The Sentinel the opposite is true. At present a candidate starts in January or sooner to make his campaign for the May primaries. After the primaries there is so much time intervening before the general election that the successful candidates in the primaries have to make another complete campaign. The expense of two campaigns is terrific. It is nothing unusual for $10,000 or $15,000 to be expended during the two campaigns for a state office. The charge has been made that a few years ago there was expended in the interests of one candidate who was elected governor a sum between $100,000 and $200,000, and he was not even a candidate in the primaries.

It is not well for democratic government that such sums should be expended in seeking public office. Such expenditures mean that those elected will require their entire terms in office to get their election expenses back. Those who have been defeated, after making an expensive fight, have been crippled financially for the remainder of their lives. A suit was recently filed in Portland to recover money due for the expenses of an unsuccessful gubernatorial campaign of a number of years ago.

Bringing the two elections close together should cut the expenses of candidates almost in two. That is certainly desirable. What chance has a poor man now to seek public office? The ordinary farmer or laboring man can not make a good start. Campaigns for important office in Oregon are exclusively for those who can afford to spend a large sum of money, or for those who have friends willing to spend that money, or for those who through public service have received publicity worth many thousands of dollars. In any event the common man has no chance to seek office. The proposed change in the date of the primaries would make office seeking easier for the poor man.

There is still another angle. We have so many elections that the voter gets tired of them. Putting the two elections close together would cut almost in two the time the voter would have to give to consideration of candidates and measures. Putting the elections closer together would tend to increase interest in elections.

Compensation of members of the legislature.—Constitutional amendment.—302-303.

The Sentinel always has favored better pay for legislators. It costs the ordinary legislator $200 or $300 above his $3 a day salary to be present at a regular session. It is not good for democratic government that officials should be asked to work for less than the salary paid them. It makes legislative service a game for the well to do. The person of moderate means, although he often does serve, can not afford to do so. Lawyers predominate in the legislature and one of the reasons for that is that legislative service gives prestige that is of value to a lawyer. But the farmer or the laboring man has nothing to gain by such service. He is simply money out of pocket.

In addition to being money out of pocket during a session, a legislator is out whatever he puts into a campaign, and he is out whatever it costs him to keep up correspondence preceding a session and between sessions. Also many public demands are made upon a legislator that are not made upon other persons. Many legislators suffer losses because of being away from business during sessions or because they offended certain persons or interests by their legislative votes. It is an expensive game.

Salaries of $10 a day during sessions would be about sufficient to enable a legislator to come out even.

The proposed amendment sets no salary. It merely says that legislators shall receive such compensation as may be provided by law. Legislators now fix the salaries of all elective and appointed officers of the state, even salaries for county officers, and there seems no good reason why they should not be permitted to fix their own in the same manner. They would have to be reasonable in what they paid themselves if they hoped to remain in office to draw the salary.

Sales tax bill.—304-305.

Would levy a tax of 2 per cent on retail sales and one-fourth of one per cent on wholesale sales to provide for old age assistance, aid to the blind and dependent children.

The Sentinel has favored other sales tax bills, but is not convinced that this one should be favored. Its reasons for uncertainty are two: That the federal government is more than likely to enact old age legislation that will not require state participation, which would make a state sales tax unnecessary so far as the aged are concerned. The Sentinel believes that a sales tax bill should either forbid the tax being passed on or should require that it be passed on. That would place all business on an equal footing so far as the tax would be concerned. The Sentinel prefers a tax similar to those of California and Washington which must be paid by the consumer. It is doubtful whether a tax that couldn't be passed on to the consumer would be constitutional, for such a tax might result in confiscation of property, and it would require a huge force to see that such a tax

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