

The Bond Issue in Lane County

(By FRED FISK)

Just to the extent that the citizens of a community take an active interest in the public and civic problems which confront them will that community prosper and advance.

One great problem confronting the people of Lane county today is the road problem. I shall not herein waste good time and space on the advantages of good roads, as I believe a majority of the people understand and appreciate their value.

The road problem should be given serious attention, frank and honest discussion, that all may understand the facts of the situation and a majority decide what is best to be done. We must deal in figures and facts and not prejudices and personalities. Under the existing laws and the present method of raising taxes, Lane county with a valuation of \$35,000,000 can raise approximately \$165,000 each year for roads and bridges. This amount can be increased by 6 per cent each year under the 6 per cent limitation law. During the year 1920 this amount is to be expended as follows: Retiring warrants, \$20,000; bridges, \$30,000; Pacific highway, \$40,000; road districts, \$53,000; scarifying and resurfacing, \$5,000; equipment and repairs, \$5,000; rock crusher, \$4,000; weak districts, \$4,000; Harrisburg ferry, \$1,400; road master, \$2,600. However, the above amounts for bridges, road districts, rock crushers, weak districts, scarifying and resurfacing and repairs were this year seriously cut and efficiency hampered in order to pay the \$20,000 retiring warrants and the \$40,000 indebtedness incurred in building the Pacific highway.

Funds Must Be Kept Up.

Of this available fund of \$165,000, two and one-half mills, or about \$63,000, should go back to the individual road districts for local expenditures. At least \$10,000 should go back to the weak district fund. Lane county has averaged \$7533 toward this fund during the past four years. Thirty-five thousand dollars should go back to the bridge fund; Lane county has averaged \$35,095 toward this fund during the past four years. Ten thousand dollars should go toward scarifying and resurfacing; \$10,000 toward equipment, tools

and maintenance; \$10,000 for rock crusher funds; \$5,000 for road master, assistants, Harrisburg ferry, accident insurance. Deducting all of these amounts from a total of \$143,000 from the fund available \$165,000 leaves \$22,000, for specific road projects. This apparent surplus is, however, mortgaged to past indebtedness. Lane county has something like \$79,000 outstanding warrants for road work done in 1919, and some \$40,000 of unpaid obligations incurred in building the Pacific highway. Lane county has delinquent taxes amounting to \$114,000, delinquent from 1913 and following years to date, that stand as an asset against these outstanding obligations. However, it is impossible to say when these delinquent taxes will, if ever, be paid. Even when paid, only a small portion can be applied on roads. From year to year there will also be delinquent taxes which will offset any collections on past delinquent taxes.

Warrants Must Be Retired.

However, this amount of \$40,000 will be paid off during the year 1920 together with \$20,000 toward retiring warrants. It will take the \$22,000 together with \$20,000 toward retiring warrants. It will take \$22,000 for the years 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923 to retire the outstanding warrants should we in the meantime keep in proper repair our bridges and give our present road maintenance. Consequently we can expect from our present available road fund no money to spend on specific road projects during the years above stated and \$22,000 each year after our outstanding warrants have been retired. We have a fund of \$70,000 from the state market road fund for specific road projects and upon this fund together with the automobile license fees which will be approximately \$18,000 in 1920 must we depend during the years 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, thereafter to this fund we may add \$22,000 each year for specific road projects, making a total fund of \$92,000, plus the automobile license fees. This amount being subject to the 6 per cent increase.

Two Propositions Open.

First, extra levies. The people of Lane county, by holding an election each year, may by majority vote in-

crease the road fund from its present 5 1/2 mills to 10 mills, thereby increasing the amount raised \$157,500. With this program, however, the provisions of another law interfere. Article 24, page 27, of Oregon road laws, provides that 70 per cent of money raised for road purposes shall go back to road districts and incorporated towns such as Eugene, Cottage Grove, Junction and Springfield. Of this maximum levy then, \$110,250 must go back to incorporated towns and road districts, leaving a free fund of only \$47,250 for specific road projects.

Some say this money, when raised by vote for road purposes, can be camouflaged and put in the general fund instead of the road fund, thereby escaping the 70 per cent division. If the citizens of Lane county were to raise taxes to the legal limit for road purposes, should not the taxes gained thereby be placed in the road fund? Were this road fund placed in the general fund it might likewise be used for any purpose other than road purposes. Consequently under this method, called the direct tax method, with Lane county's taxes raised to the available limit, there would be an available fund of \$22,000, \$70,000 and \$47,250 each year on hand for specific road purposes. However, it will take the \$22,000 each for four years to pay off present indebtedness and during that time we could have the \$70,000 and the \$47,250 and the automobile license fees for specific road purposes and our taxes raised to the legal limit of 10 mills and one mill for market roads.

Secondly there is the bonding method. We have those that favor the issuance of bonds to the extent of \$2,000,000. Bonds issued are to be sold as needed, not to exceed the amounts the county court can use judiciously and economically, the maximum not exceeding \$500,000 a year. This \$2,000,000 to be expended on roads as outlined by the county engineer and county roadmaster.

The road program furnished the committee of 38 and the taxpayers meeting and prepared by the county engineer and county roadmaster has been thoroughly advertised and I believe meets with the approval of a majority of the taxpayers. If these two officers are not qualified to map out a road program for Lane county, who can speak with authority? It is true this program does not pretend to cover all of the roads of Lane county. No doubt some important roads are not included. However, we must remember that with all the roads taken care of on the road program by a bond issue, much tax money heretofore expended on these same roads would be released for expenditure on roads not included in the bond program.

Direct Tax vs. Bonds.

Under the direct tax method, taxes would be raised to the limit of 10 mills and one mill for market roads, a total of 11 mills for road purposes alone. This would mean \$4.50 on each \$1000 of taxable property higher than taxes are at present for road purposes. This would make taxes excessively burdensome while the roads of Lane county were under construction and those thereafter sharing the benefits would in no part bear their due proportion of the expense. Did any taxpayer ever see taxes when raised to a certain high level again lowered?

The direct tax method involves no systematic program of road building, no starting point and no ending point. It is left to the county court as to which road shall be built and to the public each year whether funds shall be voted. A road project might be half finished one year and funds not available the following year to finish the project and the half previously finished be of no use and consequently the money expended would be a loss. The bonding program insures the availability of funds to push the program to a rapid completion.

Under the direct tax method there would also be present the tendency to scatter the funds each year, here a little, there a little, to appease the voters and insure support for the direct tax the following year. Under this method perhaps no single road project would be finished for several years and moving from place to place would involve unnecessary expense.

Under the direct tax method it is up to the county court where the money shall be expended and what kind of a road shall be built. With due respect to the present county court and all past county courts, we know that there is a tendency among elective officers to localize expenditures near the center of population, the voting centers. Under the direct tax method, since there is no set rule, system or program for road expenditures, this custom might be followed up to the detriment of more remote sections of the county.

Roads Specified in Bill.

On the other hand, under the bond program, all roads to be improved are specified in the bond bill to be voted on by the citizens of Lane county. The beginning and ending points of the roads, the distance, the kind of a road and the amount of money to be expended on each project. This money under the law cannot be expended elsewhere, and must be used exactly where specified. There is present no opportunity for the shifting of funds, the building of some projects to the neglect of others. The proposed bond program will probably occupy five to seven years for the completion of the several projects. Under the direct tax method in no way could these roads be built short of 14 years and in all probability it would take 18 to 20 years. The people of Lane county, especially our worthy pioneers, have plodded about in the mud now too long to wait so many years for the conveniences of good roads.

The bond program would not make taxes burdensome but would take 25 years to pay what the direct tax method would pay while the roads were under construction. The tax averages \$1.67 on each \$1000 assessed value to pay off the principal and interest of

the bond issue, not counting on any increase in the assessed value of the county during the 25 years the bonds are running. The auto license fees are herein considered as helping to pay the bond interest charges.

Isn't it better to issue bonds, start on a real road program, finish the roads within five to seven years and have the use of them thereafter and then take 25 years in which to pay for them rather than to make tax burdensome each year by direct tax levy and then wait several years for the completion of the several projects? It is true that under the bond program the bonds draw 5 per cent interest. Isn't tax money as it would be paid under direct tax worth at least 5 per cent if it should remain in the hands of the taxpayer? Most people can make their tax money, should they keep it, earn them over 5 per cent and those that borrow money with which to pay their taxes will have to pay 7 or 8 per cent for the money. If roads are not worth 5 per cent as an investment we are making a mistake in building roads at any time and in any place.

Benefits Should Be Distributed.

I hold that those receiving the benefits of the road program expenditure should share in paying for the same. Under the direct tax method the taxpayer present while the roads are under construction pays the entire cost of the completed road system. Under the bond program, the future taxpayer, the man here from 12 to 25 years hence, helps pay his proportionate part for benefits received and pleasure derived.

Better roads will mean better market facilities; better market facilities will give the incentive for putting more acres in a better state of cultivation thereby bringing more money into the county for farm products, and increasing the wealth of the county. This increased wealth of the county will help pay off the bonds issued for road construction, consequently those receiving the benefits of the roads when built will help pay off the bonds as they become due. By promoting agricultural development in outlying districts these lands will in a sense create a fund of wealth out of which easy payments of interest and principal sum will be taken care of. This is the same principle which underlies the levy of special assessments on property enhanced in value by paving or improving a city street.

The tillable and productive acres at present on good highways are paying more taxes than they would if outlying productive acres had access to good roads. This would continue under the direct tax method while under the bond plan the remote areas would increase in value when the roads were completed and this increased valuation would help pay off the bonds. One great cause of high taxes is our fertile acres that are not producing on account of the lack of transportation facilities. The 300 miles of road as outlined on the bond bill should increase the valuation of Lane county, when completed, at least \$5,000,000. As the present valuation is \$35,000,000, one can easily figure what this would mean in lowering present taxes. In other words, decrease taxes by increasing property values and the earning power of land.

The citizens of Lane county want and will beyond a doubt have better

roads either by the direct tax method or the bonding method. I believe that under the bond program necessary roads will be built and open for traffic before they could be provided under any alternative plan and that it likewise offers the best method of paying for the same and therefore offers the best solution of the road problem for the taxpayers of Lane county. (Paid adv.) Lane County Good Roads Assn.)

Tested Recipes

Boiled Pork With Sour Crout—Select a cut from the shoulder end on the loin, about 2 1/2 pounds. Place two quarts of sour crout in a large kettle and cover with cold water and bring to a boil. Cook for 30 minutes and then add the pork and two medium sized onions. Cook slowly for two hours.

Ginger Cup Cakes—One cup molasses, 1/2 cup shortening, 1 1/4 cups sour milk, 1 1/2 teaspoons soda, 1/2 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon each of ginger and cinnamon, 1 teaspoon lemon extract, 3 cups sifted pastry flour; bake in hot oven. Makes 18 cakes.

Brown Bread—One cup corn meal, 1 cup graham flour, 1 cup rye flour, 1/2 cup molasses, a little salt, 2 cups sour milk or buttermilk, 1 teaspoonful soda. Steam 2 1/2 hours, then bake 15 minutes.

Your home newspaper is first entitled to your support.

S. D. Allen Out for Assembly. Attorney Seward D. Allen, of Eugene, has announced his candidacy for the republican nomination as representative in the state legislature from Lane county. Quite a number of his friends have been importuning him to allow his name to be used and finally he has consented. Five are now candidates for the three legislative positions.

THE SHADOW.

In my path a shadow lay
Stretched before me long and dark,
And I feared the next step onward
With a heaviness of heart.
And I tripped and stumbled blindly
Over stones I could not see,
When a voice of silvery sweetness
Spoke from overhead to me.

Turn about, O weary traveler,
Face the sunlight of God's day,
'Tis thyself that casts the shadow
'That is darkening the way.
Turn about, so shall the shadow
Lay behind thee, seen no more,
And the stones o'er which you stumbled
Shall lead up to heaven's door.

As I turned to hear the message
Slowly moved the shadow too;
Could it be, I thought in wonder,
That the angel's voice spake true;
'Tis thyself that casts the shadow,
I have seen it many a time,
Now I'm facing God's bright sunlight,
And the shadow lies behind.
(Hyde Park Press, Chicago.)

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Notice of School Meeting

Notice is hereby given to the legal voters of School District No. 45, of Lane County, State of Oregon, that a special school meeting of said district will be held at auditorium of high school building, on the 9th day of April, 1920, at two o'clock in the afternoon to vote on the proposition of levying a special district tax. The total amount of money needed by the district during the fiscal year beginning on June 21, 1920, and ending on June 30, 1921, is estimated in the following budget and includes the amounts to be received from the county school fund, state school fund, special district tax, and all other moneys of the district:

BUDGET—ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES	
INSTRUCTION	
Teachers' salaries.....	\$17,300.00
Stationery and supplies.....	240.00
	\$17,540.00
GENERAL CONTROL	
Election and census.....	50.00
Superintendent's salary.....	2,200.00
Clerk's salary.....	140.00
	2,390.00
OPERATION	
Janitors' salaries.....	1,675.00
Janitors' supplies.....	300.00
Fuel.....	850.00
Water.....	75.00
Light and power.....	150.00
Telephones.....	75.00
Printing and sundries.....	125.00
	3,250.00
MAINTENANCE	
Repair, replacement, upkeep, play sheds and grounds.....	2,500.00
Insurance.....	100.00
	2,600.00
HOME ECONOMICS	
Teacher's salary and department maintenance.....	1,450.00
	1,450.00
MANUAL TRAINING	
Teacher's salary.....	1,350.00
Maintenance.....	150.00
Equipment.....	1,000.00
	2,500.00
SCIENCE LABORATORIES	
Equipment and supplies.....	400.00
	400.00
OTHER PAYMENTS	
Library.....	50.00
Bonds to redeem.....	1,000.00
Bond interest.....	2,650.00
Warrant interest.....	500.00
	4,200.00
Total estimated amount of money to be expended for all purposes during the year.....	\$34,330.00
ESTIMATED RECEIPTS	
From county school fund during the coming school year.....	5,950.00
From state school fund during the coming school year.....	1,200.00
From county high school fund during the coming year.....	2,500.50
Estimated amount to be received from all other sources during the coming school year.....	200.00
Total estimated receipts, not including the money to be received from the tax which it is proposed to vote.....	\$9,850.00
RECAPITULATION	
Total estimated expenses for the year.....	\$34,330.00
Total estimated receipts not including the tax to be voted.....	9,850.00
Balance, amount to be raised by district tax.....	\$24,480.00

The amount of money to be raised by this special tax is more than the amount raised by special school district tax in the year immediately preceding this, plus six per cent. It is necessary to raise this additional amount by special levy for the following reasons: Increased salaries of teachers, increased cost of operation and maintenance, and the installation of necessary equipment and supplies.

Dated this 5th day of March, 1920.
H. J. SHINN, Chairman Board of Directors.
Attest: WORTH HARVEY, District Clerk. mh19a9

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