

The Ontario Argus

GEO. K. AIKEN, Editor and Publisher

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ONTARIO'S OPPORTUNITY.

There is a reason for Ontario. Likewise there is duty for Ontario to perform. And as a wide awake purposeful community Ontario is trying to justify the reason for its existence and to perform its duty.

Starting with this bald statement of fact perhaps there is no need to go further and endeavor to prove the contention made, but it might be worth while to determine whether or not the community is really doing 100 per cent justice to itself and to its neighbors.

Aside from furnishing a place in which to trade, for the ranchers about the city, it is the duty of a community to provide those means of entertainment which will help in making life worth living. As the old adage has it "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," so too a town that furnishes nothing by commercialism as its advantages will soon become too dull for those who want, and have a right to expect leadership in other phases of life's activities.

There are many forms of amusement needed to round out a wholesome life for a community. One of these is sports of all kinds that appeal to men and women, and these, in Ontario are furnished in part by the programs at the Malheur County Fair. That these sports are enjoyed is growingly manifested in the attendance each year.

But horse racing, baseball and that type of entertainment is not the only amusement the citizens of a community desire. They are entitled, too, to educational entertainment such as keeps them in touch with the outside world, lectures and musical programs. These can not be supplied by the moving picture houses, for the cost and risk is too great at this time; therefore these must come thru co-operative effort.

It is here that the Chautauqua and Lyceum bureaus come forth to supply a community need. It is true they are run for financial gain, and that their contracts are, the lawyers say, unalateral but they do supply a need that can not otherwise be furnished, and the success they have achieved, especially the wellknown bureaus clearly indicate their worth to any community.

At the close of the Chautauqua last year more than 100 Ontarians showed their appreciation of the programs given then by signing a pledge to take tickets for this year's program. There was no doubt in their minds that such a week is worth while there need be none in the minds of anyone, for it is impossible to think that here in and about Ontario there are not many people who possess esthetic taste and desire to have the cultural life of the community given due consideration.

KEEPING PACE WITH PROGRESS.

Land values in Malheur county are going up. The demand for land is keeping pace with the cost of living, and it is reasonable to believe that the cost of living will continue to stay high along with land values, unless land is made to produce more than under present methods of cultivation and use.

While it is of immense interest to the rancher to have prices for farm products remain high, for a time at least, it is not to his interest to have prices go to a point where it is impossible for his customer, the average consumer to live.

To prevent this condition from resulting land must be brot to a higher productive stage. That will make possible the continuance of high valued land, and also maintain the income return of the land while permitting a reduction in prices that will ultimately be of benefit both to consumer and producer. That would, and maybe the solution that will be reached in the present economic tangle.

There are many states in the Union that are striving to increase the productivity of their soil, and to apply the best of scientific management to agriculture on the farm. They are doing this by the co-operation of State and Federal departments of Agriculture, by experimentation, by co-operation and by all of the means that progressive men in this basic industry can conceive.

To deny that these men have made progress is foolish. It is contrary to the recorded facts. Back in Illinois one county, sent to Oregon and took from this big state

a man who had charge of the extension work of the Agricultural college and offered him as much money that this state pays its Governor. This county has a larger appropriation for the work of its County Agent's department than has that of all the counties in Oregon.

The county agent is the connecting link between the great experiments going on in the bureaus of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, in the laboratories of the Agricultural colleges, at Extension stations and every where that the problems of agriculture are studied, and the individual ranchers. To have no county agent is to deny the ranchers of this county of the benefits thus to be derived.

The facts of the matter are that the ranchers of Malheur county are contributing their share in the cost of the Federal Department of Agriculture; thru the state taxes they are contributing their share in the maintaining the state organization and are entitled to receive back these two sources two-thirds at least of the cost of maintaining a county agricultural department in Malheur county. All this they are throwing away thru the lack of a small appropriation for the direction of the work here.

Malheur county is one of the leading agricultural counties in Oregon, it is second to none in eastern Oregon, and yet it is the only important county in this section of the state that does not have a county agent.

No matter what may be the view of previous efforts to maintain a department here it must be admitted that there are many problems here for solution and with conditions rapidly changing in agriculture our ranchers are entitled to have the benefits of co-operation to keep abreast of the time.

And this is a problem for the ranchers themselves to solve. If they want an agricultural department in the county no doubt they can have it. The business man are willing to co-operate and do anything they can. Now is the time to act.

PUTTING IT OVER.

Nothing succeeds like success, says the old saw, and it is true. That is why the further completion of Ontario's building program is going to succeed, for the worst half of the fight has been successfully made.

When Messrs. Taggart and Body secured the signatures of twenty-five of Ontario's responsible citizens to the pledge to build homes in the near future, they did something worth while for the city. That was the most constructive day's work done for Ontario in years.

That was not all. Not only has a long step been taken toward the solving of the housing problem but there has been demonstrated a faith in the future of Ontario that speaks volumes for the city. There is nothing now within reason that we can not attain for Ontario, given of course, the same spirit of co-operation and faith in the city.

This home building campaign and the success so far attained opens vistas of progress for the city. It is not hard to picture in the near future, avenues tree lined and lawn fringed, back of which are the comfortable homes of progressive and prosperous citizens.

Such a prospect could not be hoped for when half the merchants on the street were renters. It is not human nature to spend time and energy maintaining such things, when the roof over one's head is the property of another. There is lacking that sense of pride, and the feeling of permanence to warrant the bestoyal of labor on rented land. Therefore from every view point the campaign to build homes in Ontario is the best movement ever inaugurated in the city.

To those who have not signed the roll it should be said there is no limit. Everyone is welcome and urged to proceed to make the number 100, if possible, the more the merrier.

BE PATIENT BUT PRESISTENT.

There has been a great deal of comment, not much of it pleasant, concerning the delay of the Highway Commission in getting work started in Malheur county. The Argus, while as anxious as anyone else to see work started, and at times forced to use restraint to prevent giving utterance to criticism, believes the county will secure just treatment at the hands of the commission and will get the roads if it is patient and presistent.

Oregon is a big state. It takes time to build roads, and the Highway Commission naturally started on its program systematically to build out from the borders of Multnomah county. Therefore in the logical

order of things, Malheur, being the terminus of three state highways will be last reached. Unsatisfactory as this may be to the anxious enthusiast for action, there is no escaping it.

The big thing for those who would criticize the commission to remember is that the Columbia River—Old Oregon Trail highway is or will be soon, completed as far as the top of the mountains between Pendleton and LaGrande; the John Day Highway is financed and contracts will be let soon to the Malheur county line, and two contracts will be let soon within Malheur county on that road, beside the building of the Cairo-

Nyssa section. In fact the John Day Highway is third in the state toward completion. It must not be overlooked that a mile of the Old Oregon Trail in Malheur county is to be paved in the spring and thus a start will be made within a year after the county voted its bonds, on two highways, and these without the use of a dollar of the bonds thus authorized.

This does not mean, however, that the citizens of the county should neglect to keep the needs of the county for good roads before the commission. We should keep everlastingly at it, all the time.

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