

The Ontario Argus
County Official Paper

An Independent Newspaper

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TRUTH WILL OUT

In the last issue of the Gate City Journal of Nyssa an attempt was made to evade the questions which the Argus two weeks ago directed to the fair-minded citizens of our neighboring community when we told directly the history of the efforts to secure an adequate road system throughout Malheur county. By use of some trite and entirely futile quotations the Journal sought to evade the issue, as well it ought, for had it never previously had taken much interest in road matters. The Argus statement was complete for the reason that the story had never before been told, certainly not by the Journal.

But the real significance of the Journal's attempted evasion was contained in a slip which let the truth out, and accounted for its attitude on road matters, when it said:

"The fact that a fine gravelled road from Ontario to Nyssa and on out into the Owyhee makes it more convenient for the denizens of this neck of the woods to go to Ontario to do their trading possibly had something to do with Ontario's desire to help us get the good road referred to."

Assuredly this consideration had something to do with Ontario's desire for an adequate highway system. What are highways built for if not for the people to use? The only thing that Ontario sought was a fair open road such as the people of the county wanted, to extend from the trading centers through the portions of the valley where people live. Apparently that is not what the Journal wanted. It did not want a good road between Nyssa and Ontario for fear that someone from the Owyhee might come on to Ontario.

But that is not the only inconsistent statement in the puerile attempt of the Journal to evade the issue. In one sentence it declares that Ontario was not accused by it of "being responsible for the error on the road map," while in another sentence it says, "But Ontario's assistance in this matter does not furnish it an alibi in the other." Could words be more plain in their implication? Could anyone be more inconsistent?

The Journal admits that it was Ontario's assistance that got its

roads and put it on the road program. That is a vindication of the Argus statement, which the Journal would evade, and since the Journal has been fair enough to go that far we feel sure that it will go the rest of the way and print a statement as to who is to blame. Since Ontario has nothing to be afraid of in an investigation of this matter it has already started an inquiry to determine the fault and where it should be placed and when the documentary proof is available, the Journal will be furnished copies which in all fairness it will present to its readers, we are willing that their judgment be based on all the evidence.

THE WEEVIL'S ADVANTAGE

It is the proud boast of man that he is the master of creation. Of all the forms of life on the planet man alone is endowed with intelligence. Man alone has been able to conquer the elements and to turn the forces of nature to his beneficent purposes; but in one respect man is less powerful than the simplest forms of life—he does not obey the laws of nature, and though endowed with reason he fails, at times, to take the necessary steps to protect himself against the enemies of his kind or his property.

Here and there are individuals who will act, but their neighbors will not, and since in such a battle all must act untidely if success is to be attained, man's failure to cooperate is often the cause of his undoing. If man would only unit his efforts he would win.

This is the story oft repeated which will be told again in the fight against the alfalfa weevil unless the people of this section awake to the problem before them, according to Claude Wakeland, entomologist of the University of Idaho who addressed the meeting of farmers from Idaho and Oregon at the park last Saturday noon. It is a message that every rancher and every business man of this section of the Snake River valley should take to heart. The weevil is no less the problem of the business man than it is of the farmers. Of course the business man can not stray their stores and fight the weevil, but they can encourage their farmer customers in the fight. The banks can assist by financing the farmers to the necessary spraying machines, and even go to the extent of assisting them in the formation of pools to jointly own and operate these sprayers, and thus aid themselves by securing protection of the crop on which their loans are based. There is plenty to do for everyone in this fight against alfalfa weevil if to be successful.

And this fight must win, for upon the outcome of the battle against the weevil depends the entire economic stability of this section. Even though the growing of alfalfa as the one and only crop is abandoned,—as it will be in time—still there will always be a demand for it here, and it is too valuable as a rotation crop, as a developer of new land, and for the renewing of old land that its importance cannot be overlooked. Steps should be taken now, ere conditions become worse to see to it that the proper start is made that the lines of battle against the weevil be drawn and forces put in action which will assure success.

THE BENEFITS OF DIRECTION

There is a great deal of misinformation extant concerning the work of the county agent, the county club leader and other extension activities of the department of agriculture as at present conducted. This is reflected in a communication which appears in another column of this issue from Charles Becker of Westfall. Mr. Becker is one of the successful stockmen of this section. He is one of the characters of the county, a veteran in every sense of the word; one who has seen the west develop from the crudest conditions of pioneer days when he rode the pony express with Buffalo Bill, until the present time. Mr. Becker is one of the leaders who first imported pure bred bulls to improve his herds, and who has been a factor in the upbuilding of the stock business of this section. Mr. Becker in his own business has applied scientific knowledge.

While making a just plea for consideration for the country school teachers, Mr. Becker suggests the abolition of the county agent and club leader. In a private conversation he admits these may be alright, but adds, "if we can afford them."

That in reality is the real issue to be considered in discussing this moot question, for it is a question which has two sides and concerning which there is much disagreement in the county.

In view of the attendance here last Saturday of more than 100 farmers seeking advice on the vital question of methods of controlling the alfalfa weevil, and the very emphatic admission on the part of those in attendance, that the thing most needed is co-operation and leadership in this battle, it would seem that there indeed is a sufficient field for the work of the county agent, and there is where his work is apparent.

If by the activity of the county agent the farmers are so brought to a realization of the need for co-operation in this fight, and he can so direct the efforts that the destructive force of the weevil is reduced by fifty per cent, we venture the assertion that the saving thus made to the farmers and the stockmen alone will be ten, yes fifty times greater than the entire cost of the service.

If a county agent is not provided to direct this work who then will do it? How will it be paid for? Who will undertake it? Through what agency can we secure the advice and assistance of the department specialist in this battle, unless it be through the recognized channels of county agent work?

The Argus believes that those who have the welfare of the farmers of this section at heart should think of this side of the problem, and though taxes are high and the burden is great, is there not in this fight alone the possibility of saving so great that it is better, as a business proposition, to make the fight with the established leadership of a county agent than to run the risk of undermining completely the agricultural basis of the county? If there is a better, or a cheaper way of securing the same end the Argus is for it, but so far we know of none.

CIVIL SERVICE EXAMINATIONS

The United States Civil Service Commission announces a Postoffice Clerk examination, to be held on July 15, 1922, for the purpose of establishing an eligible register from which selections may be made to fill vacancies as they may occur in the position of Clerk, Postoffice Service, Ontario, Oregon. Salary \$1400 per annum.

All citizens of the United States who meet the requirements, both men and women, may enter this examination; appointing officers, however, have the legal right to specify the sex desired in requesting certification of eligibles. Age limits, 18 to 45 years on the date of examination. Age limits do not apply to persons entitled to preference on account of military or naval service.

For further information and application blank apply to Daniel A. Grady, local secretary, board of civil service examiners, at Ontario, Oregon, or to the Secretary, Eleventh U. S. Civil Service District, 303 Postoffice Building, Seattle, Wash. The SECRETARY, Eleventh U. S. Civil Service District, 303 Postoffice Building, Seattle, Washington.

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THE PUBLIC FORUM

The Argus welcomes communications from its readers or other citizens of this section. Such communications should be limited to 300 words and will be printed if they do not contain libelous, personal or other objectionable matter. The fact that a communication appears in this paper does not mean that it reflects the ideas of the publisher, and no responsibility for the views is assumed. All communications must be signed or they will not be printed.—The Editor.

DON'T CUT TEACHERS' PAY

Some time ago I read an article in the Vale Enterprise that the school board for the purpose of reducing our county taxes proposes to reduce the number of teachers in our public schools; also cut down the salaries of our already poorly paid teachers. Use the "axe" on our teachers' salaries, as the Enterprise terms it. This seems to me, and it seems to be the sentiment of everyone I have spoken to regarding this matter: That to reduce the number of teachers in our public schools, also cut down their already too meagre salary, considering the valuable and important service they render our children and the nation at large, is the wrong place to use the "axe," for the purpose of reducing our taxes. There is no question but what there are salaries paid in our county where the axe could and should be used to good advantage from the standpoint of the overburdened taxpayers of this county. Why not commence on some of our unnecessary useless offices of our County Farmer, who, if I am rightly informed, draws a salary of about three thousand dollars per annum. I dare say there are few, if any farmers and stock raisers in Malheur county with a farm land investment of twenty thousand dollars or more who have cleared the amount of the salary a "Farmer of the Farmers" of this county draws from the county every year without any risk or a dollar of capital invested—to say nothing of the hard labor and privations they and their families have to undergo.

There is also the office of "Club Leader", whatever that means, which seems to be an entirely unnecessary and useless office which only adds to the burden of our too heavily loaded tax payers, with three hundred thousand dollars of delinquent taxes for 1920 on the sheriff's books, and only a small part of the taxes of 1921 yet paid. The great majority of the people of this county are financially unable to send their children away from home to higher institutions of learning, and are entirely dependent upon our public schools to get an education for their children. In order to get the full benefit of our splendid public school system, it is necessary to have high class, competent teachers, who are, if any of our public servants are, entitled to a salary sufficient to enable our fine women and men who teach our children, to maintain a standard of living in line with the high position they hold in the community and the valuable services they render our children and the nation at large. It seems to me that in place of reducing their salaries, they should be raised.

Charles Becker.

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