

STOCK DRIVEWAY AND DISTRICT MAP

We have just completed a map of Malheur County and the entire Vale Land District. Besides being a complete county map this shows just what lands are included in the Vale Land District, and, best of all, shows in detail all the Stock Driveways designed by the Sec'y. of the Interior. An introduction to this map we are making a special price of \$5.00 for blue line white prints. Special features, such as indicating certain tracts of land, will be added at reasonable rates.

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Malheur Enterprise

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VALE, OREGON, SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 1920

ROAD BOND AMENDMENT

Among the nine states measures—to be voted upon at the May 21 election is a constitutional amendment ratification of which is essential to early completion of the state highway program. It is a measure increasing the Constitutional limit on state road bond indebtedness from 2% to 4% of the assessed valuation of all property in Oregon. As the assessed value aggregates approximately \$1,000,000,000, adoption of this amendment would enable the legislature to authorize the issue of a total of \$40,000,000 of state highway bonds, including all that have been authorized or issued to date. Unless this amendment is ratified, the existing 2% limitation would hold the bond issues down to \$20,000,000, all of which has either been issued or has been contracted for in state highway work to be completed during 1920.

The alternative to authorizing this increase to 4% is to let completion of the state's main highways drag along after 1920 as they can be improved from annual revenues, or to vote a heavy direct state tax on property such as has been proposed for the November election. The direct tax proposal is for a 5-mill state road tax, which would visit such a heavy additional burden upon property that its enactment is unthinkable so long as there is any other method of financing the state highway program.

As against the direct tax proposition, the bonding amendment to be voted upon May 21 contains distinct advantages, is that no property tax whatsoever is involved in its ratification. The annual revenues from the present auto license fees and gasoline tax will amply finance both principal and interest of the entire \$40,000,000 bonds that have been and can be issued under the 4% limitation. No increase in either of these fees will be required, and as said, no property tax whatsoever.

A table has been compiled by the legislative committee and published in the official state pamphlet, mailed to registered voters, showing the income from auto license fees and gas tax and also the interest and bond redemption payments as they will be made from year to year until all the bonds have been redeemed. This table reveals that besides taking up interest and principal of all bonds, the revenues from auto license fees and gasoline tax will yield an annual surplus, to be used for other state highway purposes. The revenue figured upon for bond interest and redemption does not include any part of the proceeds of the auto license fees that are turned over to the counties, and neither does it include the cost of administration of auto tags or auto fee collection. Neither of these disbursements are interfered with or invaded, and the revenue for bond interest and redemption is the net that is left after the counties have been taken care of and all administrative expenses paid. This table, which will be in the hands of every registered voter, is one which should be studied carefully. It has been audited and certified as correct, and shows beyond a doubt that the revenue from the two automobile sources will be abundant to take care of bond principal and interest without any increase of present rates and without any property tax. In the light of the information in this table, it would seem suicidal for taxpayers to permit a direct state road tax levy of 5 mills in addition to all other local property taxes that must be net in ever-increasing amounts.

By ratifying this bonding amendment, the voters of Oregon simply permit the automobile owners to get the early use of the state roads which they are paying for out of their own pockets. If the bonds are issued, all the main state highways can be connected up soon, so that travel may be enjoyed from each section of the state to every other part, via the state highways east and west as well as north and south. The development that will follow in the wake of this travel will be of incalculable value to the state, to say nothing of the enhancement in property values that will accrue. Along the highways, an outlet will be furnished for the products of all the adjacent and tributary farming regions.

In addition to providing funds for completion of the main state highway program, the authorization of a total of \$40,000,000 bonds (including the \$20,000,000 already authorized by the constitution), will enable the state to match the federal funds that have been apportioned to Oregon for post roads and forest roads. Unless this pending amendment is ratified, the state will not have sufficient funds with which to meet the government on a dollar-for-dollar basis, and thus will be denied the aid of millions of federal money on Oregon roads.

Failure to adopt this amendment is certain to visit a heavy penalty on the taxpayers of many counties. It is certain if the state has insufficient funds with which to connect up the main highways, such a clamor will go up in many localities that the counties will be forced to vote direct property taxes to construct the missing links. In this event, the county property would have to carry the burden that would be borne exclusively by the auto owner under the pending amendment. No one who has observed the trend of sentiment in favor of completing these state highways but what is aware that it cannot be restrained. If the auto owners are not permitted to have their own money used to build the roads at an early date, they will unite in support of any direct-tax that may be proposed as a means of getting the roads finished. As a safeguard to protect property from inevitably heavy taxation for state roads, farsighted taxpayers are giving this 4% bonding amendment their earnest support.

Oregon has been singularly fortunate in that the cost of state highways has been held down by an exceptionally able and honest state highway commission. Paving of state roads in Oregon has cost from 20% to 50% less than in most other states, and this lower cost has been in spite of the advantages possessed by most other states in the lower costs of road materials. In no other state, without exception, has public sentiment been able to draft into the public service highway commissioners of the caliber, reputation and ability of the men who have served Oregon in this capacity and are now on the commission. To provide this commission with adequate funds to complete the state highway program is to insure its early completion at a minimum of cost for a maximum of return for each dollar spent.

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