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WURZWEILER & THOMSON

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Central Oregon, Crook County And Prineville.

COUNTY COURT BLAMELESS

Fault Should Not Be Found Regarding Road Petitions When Body Is Powerless to Act.

During the past week the Journal has received several communications from different parts of the county—taking the county court to task for not granting certain roads which have been prayed for in petitions. The county court has been censured roundly for its alleged negligence and some of the communications threaten a division of the county unless these matters are given immediate attention. One communication brings its presentation of the case to a climax by saying, "Unless the county court and others in power are not more accommodating to the wishes of the Haystack and Agency Plains people, Crook county will be 'split up the back' and the richest part of Crook county will have a set of county officials of its own."

To all of which THE JOURNAL wishes to state that the districts themselves and not the county court are to blame for the apparent neglect which they have received. Several times during the past year petitions have been received by the court asking that certain roads be run. These petitions were set aside, not because of any unwillingness on the part of the court to grant them, but because of some error in the petition which rendered the court powerless to act. As a matter of fact road petitions must be worded and drawn up in strict accordance with the law, and failure to do so renders them null and void. It seems to have been the general rule with the last few petitions which have come in from the districts now complaining of neglect, that the essential clauses have been left out or the legal phrasing of the petition contorted in such a manner that the court has been left without authority to act.

On the face of things, therefore, the fault passes over the head of the county court and is directly traceable to either the road supervisors or the persons drawing up the petition. The county court has never yet refused to grant an extension, a change, or the building of a road when the petitioners demands lay within the bounds of justice and reason.

It is now so with the residents of Haystack and the Agency Plains. If new roads are needed or changes are desired they must make their prayers in a petition which is in conformity with the state statutes. Then if the court refuses to grant their prayers ensure will be the order of the day. But the court stands ready and willing to help those who help themselves, and it is not probable that a petition would be refused if presented in the proper form to be acted upon.

MEANS MANY NEW BRANDS

Recent Ruling Will Affect Crook County Cattlemen.

The recent ruling of Judge Bradshaw involving ownership of branded cattle, in which he holds that cattle brands must be recorded in the name of the person or persons claiming the brand is being commented upon unfavorably throughout the county. This ruling makes it difficult in certain cases to establish claims to range cattle, and has hastened our county cattle men in recording their brands. The recent rush has disclosed difficulties in the way of conflicting brands where one cattle man has owned and used a brand for 20 years, and another one but a short time, but if the latter succeeds in registering the brand first, it is his and will be protected against the intrusion of the man who has used it for 20 years. In no case will the same brand be recorded twice. This works a hardship on a number of our county cattle men, who will be forced to rebrand in order to comply with the law.

TAX ROLL IS COMPLETED

Taxable Property in Crook County Shows Increase This Year of Half a Million Dollars.

County Assessor B. F. Johnson, has completed the final summing up of Crook county's tax roll and the result shows some interesting figures. The total amount of assessable property in the county is half a million dollars in excess of last year's roll which is a gratifying increase to say the least. On the whole the assessor's efforts in getting on the rolls property and livestock which have hitherto escaped taxation have met with approval on all sides.

The total amount of taxable property in the county foots up this year to \$2,398,799 as against last year's assessment of \$1,852,281. This is an increase of \$546,518 and will make a difference to the good, (the tax rate of last year—22 1/2 mills—is assessed this year, of \$12,160.46. This year's roll includes 480 timber claims assessed at \$500 each which were government property last year and so did not add to the county's coffers. Exclusive of these the tax list shows a net increase over last year of \$306,518.

Five thousand more head of cattle were put on the present roll and nearly one thousand more head of horses. The notes and accounts reached the sum of \$141,564 while those of last year were assessed at \$93,760. The taxable merchandise was increased \$8,000. The number of acres of tillable land is given in at 34,083 acres, an increase of 7,000 acres, while the non-tillable land foots up to 675,482 acres, an increase of 104,209 acres. This noticeable difference is the result of the large number of timber claims which have been filed upon during the past year, but while they greatly increase the non-tillable acreage they fall under the assessor's hammer at a valuation of \$500 per quarter section, which is materially greater than the assessed valuation of some of the grazing lands.

Mr. Johnson's work during the past year has been thorough in every respect and shows that the county is gaining both in new residents and wealth. The equalization board so far has had but few kicks registered which it was necessary to dissolve, and most of the rebates given have been instances in which various persons were assessed for property they did not own. The amount received this year from taxes, if last year's rate is assessed, will be approximately \$54,000.

CROOK'S CATTLE MIGRATE

Lem Cassell Buys Herd of 250 Head and Will Drive Them to His California Ranch.

Lem Cassell, the Stockton, Cal. cattle buyer, who has been in this section for more than a month past, left for his home Saturday in company with J. F. Shattuck.

Mr. Cassell purchased during his stay here about 250 head of cattle, most of them yearlings, with a few two and three year olds. Among those selling to him were Boyd Adams, who sold 100 yearlings; Wm Combs, who sold 50, and J. F. Ferguson of Crook and others. The general price paid by Mr. Cassell was \$17 for yearlings, and the others in proportion.

He will drive his band to Stockton where he owns a large hay farm and will feed them for the winter market.

Mr. Shattuck, who accompanied him, is driving about 200 head of stock cattle to the same point where he will either sell or feed. His action was made necessary by the high price of hay, as he had only enough to feed about 75 head of cattle. Those he left on his ranch near Crook.

ROAD LAND WILL BE SOLD

Report Is Current That Company Will Dispose of Some of Its Crook County Property.

From present indications it is very probable that a large amount of the land owned by the Willamette Valley and Cascade Mountain Wagon Road company will be put on the market in the near future. For some time past the latter company has been endeavoring to unload a large part of the land in a body to other companies, but so far has been unsuccessful and it is not unlikely that the sections owned will soon be disposed of to individual purchasers.

This move, which will meet with general satisfaction by those who have had any dealings with the company in the past, will be brought about principally through the increased taxation which is making the holdings rather expensive possessions. This year the company's property in Crook county was assessed for \$433,839 making the total taxes to be paid nearly \$10,000. In Prineville alone the city lots, which the company has lately put on the market, were assessed for \$1875. The income derived from the various leased sections of land in this county does not amount to half that paid out in taxes, and as a result the company realizes it is on the losing side of the proposition.

Heretofore the company has sold no land and has simply leased it at various amounts according to the location. The effect of this method has been an inconvenience to those who were compelled to rent lands adjoining their own when more than anxious to buy. If the company places its tracts on the market at a reasonable figure a large amount of it will probably be sold in a short time, and many of the uncultivated sections, which at present are unproductive and worthless, will be tilled and made valuable. The move, if made, is one which will add materially to the wealth and attractiveness of Crook county.

ROOM FOR INTERIOR OREGON

Jefferson Myers Says Inland Empire Will Be Well Represented at the Fair.

Jefferson Myers, president of the Lewis and Clarke Centennial Fair commission, arrived in the city Monday evening from Burns, and left on Wednesday morning's Shuniko stage for Portland. Mr. Myers stated while here that the commission in charge of Fair arrangements intended paying special attention to the resources of the isolated portions of this state, and that it will make every possible effort to get this practically unknown region advertised to the eyes of the vast crowds expected in Portland in 1905.

Mr. Myers urges the cattle, horse and sheep growers to pay especial attention to the finest breeds between now and that time, that they may be able to get up a creditable exhibit. The lumber and agricultural resources of this section will also be stimulated in getting up other exhibits.

From Mr. Myers was learned something of the good work done by the commission which was created four months ago by appointment of the governor. During this time the commission has spent but \$1100 of the \$500,000 appropriated for the fair by the last legislature. This has been used by the commission in paying traveling expenses and office hire. Mr. Myers said the fair people are confident of a congressional appropriation of \$1,250,000. This sum if secured will be expended as follows: \$250,000 in erecting a permanent memorial building; \$100,000 for statutory for the fair grounds, and \$1,000,000 for the fair.

The electrical display being arranged for will surpass anything ever seen on the Pacific coast. Seventy-five thousand incandescent lights will be used which is 35,000 more than was displayed at the fair held in San Francisco in 1894.

The hotel accommodations of Portland will be greatly increased, as Eastern capital is now being interested, and it is probable that the present facilities will be more than doubled.

COUNCIL MUST WAKE UP

Civic Conditions in Prineville Are a Disgrace to the Residents of the City.

It would perhaps be useless to state to the city council that there are many conditions in Prineville which need immediate attention. Such an assertion is needless because it is an ever present and plainly discernible fact that improvements and imperative ones should be made at once.

Examinations of the bridge across Crooked river on the west side of town, and the bridge across the Ochoco on the north side, which were made last week, disclosed the fact that neither is absolutely safe for travel. The Crooked river bridge is so old that it is almost past repair, and the other is in such hazardous state a person wonders at the heavy freight teams which cross it safely. The unsoundness of these two structures is not a condition which has lately been brought about. Months and years have witnessed the slow process of decay and no attempt has been made to remedy the trouble. Even now when the tardiness of the city council is to blame for the unsafe condition into which these bridges have fallen, not a single effort is being made to rectify the wrong. To say the least they are a disgrace to the city and a daily menace to travel—poor monuments to a county and town, the latter almost out of debt and the former priding himself on the fact that no accounts stand against it.

But the bridges are not all. A single hours walk around the city is enough to justify severe words towards the body which allows such unreasonable negligence of the sidewalks. Up hill and down over loose boards and holes ranging from a few inches to as many feet in width, stubbing his toes on raised nails and patchwork of all descriptions, the pedestrian is compelled to pick his way, fearful of life and limb, and scarcely daring to look up when meeting a passer-by for fear of falling.

Then in the business portion another feature of Prineville's peculiar civic hospitality meets the eye. Strangers and residents (the residents have become accustomed to it however) find that one business firm is monopolizing a goodly portion of the street for stacking cord wood, while in the next block farm implements of every description sometimes congest the entire width of the thoroughfare. And the cows run around, unhampered and unmolested in their daily promanades up and down the sidewalks. Sometimes they meet a person face to face. If it happens to be a woman she generally takes to the street and leaves the mild eyed bovine contentedly chewing her cud, the proud possessor of the people's rights.

Such conditions are the results of gross negligence on the part of the council. Evidently it is a body organized for the protection of individual interests with the city a loser. Broken down, ungraciously looking bridges, and sidewalks in as bad a shape with half the streets occupied by private interests are not much with which to advertise the city's progressiveness. Few complaints have been made in the past, but it's the future that's vital now, and we shouldn't be like the Missourian in speaking of his politics, "What's good enough for Dad is good enough for me." A few dollars spent now may save a few human lives or prevent the maiming of an indefinite number of persons who are compelled to bear patiently with conditions existing. And even if it doesn't, pride alone in the city's appearance should be sufficient to cause a decided change for the better. No town or individual ever stood stock still for any length of time. It's either a question of go ahead or go backwards, and the lethargy which has crept over the city council should be shaken off before the latter condition becomes more fixed than it is at present.

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