

OREGON CITY COURIER

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Published Thursdays from the Courier Building, Eighth Street, and entered in the Postoffice at Oregon City, Ore., as 2nd class mail matter.

Subscription Price \$1.50. Telephones: Pacific 51; Home A-51.

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BACKWARD CHILDREN

We can be pardoned for pausing in amazement as we read the statement of Dr. B. W. DeBusk of the state university, who says that more than 10,000 school children in Oregon are one or more grades behind the standard for their age. This backward horde of little folk is costing the state \$300,000 a year in added expense of maintaining schools.

Surely Oregon children are created with brains as good as the average. What, then is the cause of their failure in school? Dr. DeBusk tempers his statement by saying that Oregon is about average in this respect, but that does not in any manner contradict the fact that something is wrong. It is a moral certainty that there are not 10,000 mentally defective children in Oregon unless they have been made so since birth.

The figures presented by Dr. DeBusk are a severe indictment of the school system of Oregon. We spend our energy and capital in solving the riddle of life for grown-ups; we propose and practice mental development upon insane patients and hardened criminals; we have trained experts to teach aliens the ways of peace and freedom and we have a scad of psychologists who tell us how to develop our own minds—how to overcome the mental defects that we can see and feel.

Yet the fact that the school system of the state and nation has seen very little change in recent years stands as a hideous announcement to the world that America and Oregon are neglecting future generations.

We are not devoting the time and study to the babies that we are to the old codgers with one foot in the grave. The urchin is neglected for the derelict, and the result is that there will always be derelicts. We pay more attention to the insane old people in padded cells than we do to the promising children in our schools, and the result is that there will always be insanity—unless we right the wrong.

Oregon and the United States will be forced to correct the defects of its school systems. We will have to put our minds to the task of training the rising generation rather than attempting to reform the dead one. The thing will work itself out naturally, for if we guide the little minds into proper paths there will be no criminals, fewer insane and never a derelict. Oregon's future depends to a great degree upon the school children of today. If we are criminally negligent and barbarous enough to continue to produce mentally defective children when the defects are absolutely unnecessary, then we shall have to pay the cost and suffer the consequences.

Dr. DeBusk's statement says that about 35 children in every hundred in the United States are one or more grades behind, while half of the 20 millions of school children in the country are handicapped in some way by physical defect. Aside from the aspect of physical deficiency, Dr. DeBusk's statement tells in plain words of the unbalanced brains of the elders of the nation who permit such conditions to exist when there are corrective means at hand.

Of the 35 backward children in each 100, 20 are merely cases of slow development, but 15 fall in their studies because of some preventable physical trouble.

Defective teeth rank first as causes of backwardness in children, according to the figures of Dr. DeBusk, who estimates that 50 to 90 per cent of all school children have dental defects. An additional 10 per cent are afflicted with adenoids or diseased tonsils; 20 per cent have defective vision, and five per cent suffer from bad hearing. Trouble with teeth is attributed largely, so far as Oregon is concerned, to lack of lime—a deficiency which also affects plant organisms seriously in some sections of the state. Decayed teeth, producing poisonous pus, often result in physical disaster.

First-grade students in the state show about 12 1/2 per cent of failures. The percentage decreases up to the sixth grade, then the failure curve

ascends through the seventh, after which the survivors show an increasing ratio of mental capacity.

Defective teeth and other such occasional causes of backwardness are responsible only to a slight degree for mental failures among children. Wrong methods, foolish fads and unworthy theories produce more mentally backward children, a thousand times over, than bad teeth can account for.

ANOTHER PLAN

The opponents of the road bond measure which will be voted upon in June are, to say the least, inconsistent. As an average, those most ardent opponents to the bill are the men and women who are forever bobbing up at such times as this to sing that old familiar ditty about the high flight of taxes. Yet the counter-plan they propose, and which they hope to use as a weapon against the bond bill, provides for an increased tax rate.

We constantly condemn public officials for their disregard of our treasury accounts. And as constantly we are voting to increase these taxes over the heads of our officials and neighbors. It is not a consistent policy. When taxes show an increase we can far more often blame the voter than the official. The voter commits the crime and the official takes the punishment.

The proposition now is—and it is fathered largely by these persons who cry "taxation is too high"—to do away with the road bonding plan altogether and to provide money for the improvement of Oregon roads with a millage tax of 1 1/4 mills a year. This would take the place of the present state highway tax of a quarter mill. A bill covering such a plan was introduced at Salem at the recent legislative session by Senator Pierce of Union county, and that worthy gentleman is president of the State Taxpayers' league—pledged and morally bound to keep taxes down.

The Pierce bill had its head cut off in the house after it had passed the senate. It was killed because the house knew the people would not stand for it. Now our State Taxpayers' league, an organization that, withal, has much to its credit, is implicated in a scheme to help up the bonding bill—to defeat it outright, with the Pierce bill and have the latter measure put before the people in 1918.

Of course, there is very little chance for this proposal to be taken seriously. It is thin like watered milk and won't work with the great majority of taxpayers. It serves only to attempt to defeat the bonding bill by making it an issue with a plan to increase taxation and we want no more taxes in Clackamas county.

The people want good roads, there is no debate on that phase of the question. The motorist is willing to pay for good roads—he has so expressed himself. Why not forever quit this quibbling over the matter? Let the automobile license fee pay for hard surface if the motorist is willing, and the rest of us will get the same benefit from the roads that we would if we had to pay for them ourselves with an extra one-mill tax. Under the bonding bill good roads will cost the average man nothing and under the counter-plan provided by such a bill as that of Senator Pierce, every taxpayer would be further burdened with taxes—and taxes are too heavy already to permit another increase.

PRISON OUTMATES

The taxpayers of Oregon are asked to vote to assess themselves for a large sum of money to erect a new penitentiary. Those who are trying to induce the tax-payers to do this say that the present state prison is rather old-fashioned, somewhat dilapidated, and very uncomfortable, wholly out of harmony with our fine spirit of progressivism, and so decayed, cheerless and inartistic that no self-respecting villain would think of becoming one of its inmates.

Probably there is something in

these reasons that may cause the tax-payers to spend some thousands of dollars for a new penitentiary. If we have any money to spend on public improvements, let us enlarge and beautify our babies' home; let us make more cheerful and useful our public gymnasium, if we have one; let us add to the comforts and enjoyments of our working lads who live in our publicly endowed Boys' club—if we have such a thing; let us make happier the lives of our young, so that honest effort and clean living may have the accompaniment of good cheer and may not have to compare its poor rewards with the comforts and pleasures of those who enjoy the hospitality of our hotels for the criminal.

For some reason or other, there is always a movement afoot to alleviate the condition of the poor lawbreaker. And it always proposes the expenditure of a large sum of money. From the tearful arguments of the would-be alleviators, we might think that law-breaking was a highly honorable profession on whose members we should pin medals and confer pensions and bestow other public joy-giving gifts and favors.

In the opinion of the Spectator, our prisons should be made as cold, comfortless and cheerless as is compatible with making things as hot as possible for our criminals. The inconveniences of incarceration are incurred voluntarily by persons who seem unable to resist the desire to dis-enjoy them. Why put further temptation in the way of our weak broth-er by offering him the pleasures of a first class hotel as a reward for his evil doing?

If we erect a prison de luxe for our criminals, what excuse can pinched and hungry honesty offer itself for continuing virtuous? Until we can truly say that we have made life pleasant and happy for the outmates of our prisons, let us not be too fondly extravagant in providing for the comforts of our penitentiary inmates. As long as there is a hungry and homeless lad or an unclothed and unfed widow in Oregon, we should consider our present prison quite good enough for its purposes.

LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

The rising prices for meats, particularly for those provided by the hog, make it timely to urge multiplying the live stock of the United States. E. A. Cudahy of the packing company recently illuminated the situation, the requirement and the opportunity.

In the last decade our population has grown 18 per cent, but American cattle have decreased 20 per cent and sheep 10 per cent. These forms of live stock have not merely remained stationary in number while their consumers increased, but they have actually fallen back. Prices would be bound to rise if population had increased and supply stood still. But when supply decreased while the population increased it became inevitable that prices of meats should rise very high.

An alarming outlook is seen by Mr. Cudahy. If the war should continue another year he sees no prospect of a lower level of prices for live stock for at least two years. There may come occasional drops, but only temporarily. During the decade which closed last year American cattle diminished by 10,000,000 head, sheep by 5,000,000. Other cattle than milch cows increased their value from \$17 each to \$35; sheep from \$3.84 to \$7.14; hogs from \$7.63 to \$11.73. The stockyard quotations exceed these prices by from 33 to 50 per cent. The stockbreeder has not profited as much as prices have appreciated, the cost of land and feed having increased, but he has profited considerably.

Great advances have been made in the stock industry. Hog cholera, for example, has been virtually uprooted. There are signs of increased interest in the industry. Since 1913 ended our cattle have increased by 4,600,000 head. Bankers take new interest in loans on cattle, making it easier for growers to finance their operations. State and national authorities have awaked to the necessity for controlling disease among live stock. Last year the loss from exposure and disease cost the country \$130,000,000. But Mr. Cudahy expects a big boom the next few years in American cattle raising. It is noticeable that last year the producer of live stock received 80 cents of every dollar of gross revenue the Cudahy company made.

PUPILS GET PRIZES

School Children Write Short Stories and Essays in Contest

The first prize, a cash donation from A. King Wilson of Oswego for the high school essay contest on "Clackamas County Wagon Roads," has been awarded to Lillie Koenig of the Milwaukie high school for a splendid exposition of the past and present condition of county thoroughfares. In the contest among high school pupils on miscellaneous subjects, Fred J. Toozie, Jr., of the Oregon City high school, won first place and some of the prize money offered by Mr. Wilson. Agnes Berg, Canby; Annabelle Leach, Oregon City, and Anna Gilmore, Canby, were other prize winners in this division. Work in the contests has been in charge of Brenton Vedder, school supervisor, and was judged by Mr. Vedder, Superintendent Calavan, County Judge Anderson, Mrs. H. B. Blough, Cora Hunt, Professor J. R. Bowland and Thomas A. Burke.

The best original work in the high school short story contest was submitted by Harold Johnson, of the Milwaukie high school. Other prize winners were Lorraine Lee, Canby; Alice Dawson, Oregon City, and Evelyn Walker, Milwaukie. In the grammar school short story writing, Sadie Hellbacka of Meadowbrook school won first place; Gladys Moore, Wichita, second; Thelma Eshleman, Estacada, third, and Cora Douglas, Canby, fourth.

Eight prizes were offered in the grammar school essay contest on "Clackamas County Wagon Roads," and were awarded in order to the



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Following: Perry Murphey, Douglas Ridge; Inez Outfield, Concord; Lewis C. Lorenz, Maeksburg; Jean Starkweather, Concord; Hector Anders, Porter; Orpha Clester, Douglas Ridge; Myran Davidson, Oswego; and Vesta Mark, Canby. The grammar school miscellaneous subject essay contest was won by Emeline Friederich, of Boring school. Other prize winners are Helen Wooster, Estacada; Helen Swigart, Canby, and Olive Kendall, Canby. The prize winning work was all of an exceptionally high order, the judges say.

Easter Tidings
March 28 will be a notable day for Mr. and Mrs. Willis Hughes, of Bearpiper Creek, to whom fine twin girls were delivered by the stork yesterday morning. One of the little girls weighs a little less than seven pounds and her sister is heavier than seven pounds by a few ounces. Mrs. Hughes and the twins are doing splendidly amid the congratulations of their many friends.

Marriage License
County Clerk Iva Harrington Saturday issued a marriage license to Vinnie C. Kauffman and Loney L. Yoder, of Hubbard, Ore.

Let Your Eyes and Taste

Decide Your Easter Apparel

MAYBE you'd like to decide this clothes proposition for Spring entirely by yourself without the influence of the salesman's arguments or the obligations you sometimes feel to buy after having entered a store.

☐ We want to make your decision as comfortable for you as you like. We're satisfied to have you create your own desire for Hart, Schaffner & Marx.

☐ With this idea in mind we are making a window display this week of H. S. & Marx Suits and Top Coats, especially appropriate for Easter dress. Study them yourself from the outside of the store. Consider their style attractions, their fabric appearance, their pattern variety and decide from these factors whether or not you want to know them more intimately.

☐ We venture you'll feel inspired to come in and see how they'll look on you.

☐ You'll believe that clothes so elegantly and cleverly styled must also embody fit and tailoring quality. They do.

☐ Our window display will give red blooded young men an appetite for these clothes. Close acquaintance will give you a genuine desire to own them.



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