

Corvallis Times.

Official Paper of Benton County.

CORVALLIS, OREGON, OCT. 31, 1903.

IT MAKES TROUBLE.

School Law Does—Several Districts Involved—Suits may be Brought—A Decision.

There is trouble in various parts of Benton, over the question of a pupil attending school in an adjoining district and receiving there the school money to which it is entitled in its home district. Whether the practice was permissible or not remained an open question for some time, and then Attorney General Blackburn partially settled it by an opinion. He held that the word "may" in the law is to be construed as "must" and that there fore a pupil may attend school in an adjoining district and that the school money to which it is entitled in the home district must follow the pupil into the district where school is attended.

In a number of districts in the county, the conditions referred to prevail. At Philomath, there are a number of pupils in the schools who live in the Newton district. In the Corvallis schools there are pupils from several adjoining districts. There are also similar cases in many of the outside districts of the county. And in all of them, in spite of the attorney general's opinion, there is more or less friction over the matter. There are people for instance who claim that the law is unconstitutional. In consequence the school money to which a pupil is entitled is not readily paid over to the officials of an adjoining district. The question has also arisen as to who shall be the person to see that the school money follows the child. Is it the duty of the county superintendent to apportion the money direct and withhold it from the vacated district, or shall the board of directors in the affected district to pay it over.

Another opinion just rendered by the attorney general bears on the whole matter. The opinion was rendered in answer to questions propounded by Superintendent Denman. It says:

"It is the duty of any district whenever the parent or guardian of the child shall present a written request, accompanied by a written permit from the board of directors of the adjoining district, to transfer the child, together with all school money due by apportionment to such child, to the adjoining district, or the district to which the child is transferred, and if the board of directors of the first district refuse to transfer the money so due to such child, the proper method of procedure would for the parent or guardian of the child to apply by proper pleadings to the circuit court for writ of mandamus to compel the board of the first district to pay the same over to the clerk of the adjoining district. A personal right is conferred and the section therefore, is mandatory. Also I am of the opinion that directors of the district to which the child is transferred could maintain the suit."

"I find no law to warrant the county superintendent in apportioning the money direct to the district to which the child is transferred. It first must be apportioned to the original district, and then be transferred as provided in section 42 Oregon School law."

It is understood that there is a prospect for mandamus proceedings to be brought in the Philomath district to compel the board of directors of the Newton district to pay over to the clerk of the former district school money due pupils that have been transferred from the latter district to the Philomath schools.

FOUNDATION LAID.

For Concrete Building—Said to be a Reuter for It When Completed.

The foundation of the concrete building that Burt Thompson is erecting on Main street has been laid and workmen are waiting for the ingredients to dry. There is more or less curious interest in the construction of this building, which is the first of the kind that has come under the notice of most people. A frame of woodwork is the next step after completion of the foundation. Studding of wood is framed for the walls, and then a solid concrete wall is built around them. The inner edge of the studding is left flush with the inner surface of the concrete. The thickness of the wall is eight or 10 inches.

The building is to be 25 feet wide with fifty feet of two stories and an additional twenty of one story. It is said that a reuter will be ready to occupy the structure as soon as it is completed. It is said that a structure of the kind will be superior to brick for this climate in that the walls will be less susceptible to

THEIR QUEER ACTS.

Zealot Worshipers Burn Furniture, Dogs and Other Things—Town is Stirred.

"Positively no admittance, except on God's business"

That is the wording of a sign that hangs conspicuously displayed at the yard gate at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. O. V. Hurt. The same legend is also displayed prominently on the porch at the entrance to the house. The signs and numerous prevalent conditions about the premises have been the talk of all Corvallis for the past two days. Certain caprices of religious fanaticism have been manifested at the house that are so unusual as to suggest a condition bordering insanity. Walks about the house have been torn away. Much of the furniture in the house has been reduced to ashes, on a theory that God wills it. The shrubbery and fruit trees about the yard, and all the flowers have been dug up and destroyed. Kitchen utensils have been beaten to pieces and buried. An incident that has added unusual impetus to the sensational character of the conditions is that O. V. Hurt, a well known business man, former chairman of the republican central committee and at present state committee man, has joined the sect, and is now one of its most devoted members. Wednesday morning, he failed to appear at Kline's store, where he has been employed for a long time. He sent instead his keys to the establishment, along with a message to the effect that he had been living in sin and that hereafter he intended to devote himself to the work of God.

DOINGS OF THE SECT.

Members of the Hurt family have long been leading lights in the sect in Corvallis. Formerly they were members of the Salvation Army. One time, after joining the new sect they carried on their devotions in a house on Main street. Their nightly incantations so much disturbed the people living in the locality that complaint was made, and the authorities ordered the noise stopped. After that, a sort of camp meeting was held in a tent on an island in the Willamette south of town. Recently the worshippers moved to the Hurt house, and there a daily and nightly manifestation of the peculiar bent of the membership has been kept up much to the annoyance of the neighborhood. During their devotions, the worshippers roll on the floor, groan, scream, pray, shout and otherwise give evidence of great bodily and mental agitation. There are in all about 20 members of the sect. Among them are Mr. and Mrs. Hurt, Frank Hurt and wife and sister-in-law, Miss Maud Hurt, Creffield, a swede with light hair, Brooks, ex-captain of the Salvation Army at Corvallis, Mrs. Hartley and daughter. All of the above persons are most of the time at the Hurt house. There are a number of families and others, some of whom engage in their peculiar form of worship in houses in various parts of town. Of the latter, none have been so demonstrative as those at the Hurt house.

THE TOWN ELECTRIFIED.

It has been a long time since interest has been awakened to so high a pitch as that occasioned by developments at the Hurt house. The doings of Wednesday night about the place, and the tearing up of walks and destruction of furniture Thursday forenoon, flew over town like wild fire, and everybody became interested. It was told about that a number of dogs and cats had been thrown into a sacrificial fire as a part of the manifestation of the sect's faith. The report, which was accepted as a religious manifestation not far removed from the doings of barbarous ancients, sent peoples imaginations to work, and everybody discussed the sect and its antics. Everybody also was seized with curious desire to see something that was going on. Accordingly the walk in front of the Hurt house was lined with people most of the afternoon, the crowd of onlookers sometimes numbering 75 to 100. It was in the evening, however, that the visits by Corvallisites to the Hurt house really began. The walks leading to Mary's river bridge and beyond were lined with excursionists, either going or coming from seven o'clock or earlier to a very late hour. The walks in front of the house and to either side were not only filled with onlookers but many occupied places in the street. All seemed impressed with the idea that something of an extraordinary character was going to happen, but in this respect they were disappointed. The house in the early part of the evening was lighted up, but by half past eight all the lights were out, and everything inside was quiet. The crowd began to dwindle after

nine o'clock, and by 11 the place was practically deserted.

BURNING THE DOGS.

The reported burning of the cats and dogs had a powerful effect in exciting public interest. The visit of crowds to the Hurt house was not the only manifestation of public excitement. On the street throughout Thursday, no other topic was discussed. Men stood in groups on the pavements and related incidents concerning the sect or expressed opinions of what should be done. Many said that the officers ought to in effect, and others asked what could the officers do. It was generally conceded that Creffield and Brooks, the acknowledged high priests of the sect should be required to quit the community. It is the universal opinion that they are fanatical to a degree bordering on mental unsoundness.

The general reason assigned for the alleged burning of the cats and dogs was that the act was an outer manifestation of something in the creed of the sect. This is however, denied by the members. During the afternoon of Thursday, Mr. Hurt told the officers that no cats were burned, and that but one dog was sacrificed. He said with reference to the latter, that the dog was not wanted at the house, and that it could not be driven away.

He added that the dog was killed in a humane way, and that its body was subsequently thrown into the fire. The story that more than one dog was burned, and that several cats were thrown into the flames, comes from the neighbors, and some of them insist that the story is true.

TWO ARRESTED.

A development in the situation was the arrest yesterday of Creffield and Brooks, the leaders in the movement. Creffield is a swede of small stature, with light hair. He came to Corvallis about a year ago, and it has been frequently reported that he was driven out of McMinnville. He is mostly the master of ceremonies at the Hurt house, and is the person with whom people who apply there to see any of the inmates, come in contact. Brooks is the ex-captain of the Salvation Army. He came to town a year or more ago, and after his retirement from the army he joined the new sect, in which he has been a very active apostle.

Complaints from various sources were made during Thursday to the authorities, and in the afternoon, Sheriff Burnett and Deputy Attorney Bryson visited the Hurt house to investigate. The front gate is securely wired and approach from that direction is barred. The officers however, climbed the fence and passing on the porch knocked loudly at the front door. A crowd of fifty to seventy five curious persons hung round in front of the premises, and gazed on the temple with curious interest, waiting and doubtless hoping for developments. The knock of the officers brought one of the inmates to the door. He was Creffield. He denied the request of the officers to be admitted and the three engaged in a parley.

CALL THEM "HOLY ROLLERS"

The officer asked for Mr Hurt, and Creffield said that Mr Hurt was seeking God and could not be seen. Presently the officers passed round the house, where resistance again met their proposal to enter. Finally they met Mr Hurt in the yard and by him were invited to side. They saw however but a portion of the house. Their visit resulted yesterday in the arrest of Creffield and Brooks on a charge of insanity, and both had a hearing at one o'clock yesterday afternoon before the county judge.

The members of the sect call themselves "God's Anointed." The sinners call them "The Holy Rollers." The members claim to have direct communication with the Almighty. When the officers called at the house and demanded to see Mr. Hurt, one of the high priests denied them admittance. The officers protested reminding the priests that they were the arms of the law and authority in the land, and insisted upon having their request granted. "Well I will consult God about it," replied the vicergerent of Heaven, and thereupon, he began to walk backward and forward across the porch with a faraway look in his eye and his face turned toward the sky, as though he were penetrating the mysteries of the beyond. About that time the crowd in front called out to the officers that Mr Hurt was in the yard on the other side of the house, and the new disciple was at once communicated with by the officers without the interposition of Providence or the assistance of the man on the porch.

WHY THEY BURN FURNITURE.

A feature of the doings of the Holy Rollers, as sinners call them,

is the burning of furniture, the destruction of kitchen utensils, musical instruments and other household conveniences. Guitars, mandolins, chairs, window curtains, clothing, carpets and many other articles of use and comfort, without regard to value or cost, have been freely consigned to the flames. A large amount of the conveniences of the Hurt house were so destroyed, and a considerable quantity of goods from the Hartly home was similarly disposed of. This, with the tearing up of the sidewalk, and digging up of flowers and shrubbery at the Hurt place have attracted wide attention and comment. The reason assigned by the members for the destruction is that it is the will of God. They say they do what he directs, and they claim to be in constant communication with Him. A TIMES man was a supplicant at the door of the Hurt house Thursday forenoon, and one of the high priests excused himself to the reporter, saying that a message was about to be received inside from the Almighty, and that he must go in, which he did, leaving the newspaper man alone on the stoop.

STONED THE HURT HOUSE.

A contemptible outrage was committed Thursday evening by unknown persons who stoned the Hurt house. A large crowd was assembled in front, and in the darkness it was impossible to see who did the stoning. Rocks rattled frequently on the roof or crashed through window panes, scattering broken glass right and left. Two men appeared on the porch, knocking loudly at the door, and when there was no answer, one of them knocked the glass out of the front door. All the windows were swabbed, excused and bruised, and the perpetrators should be sought out and punished. No response or outcry came from within the house while the stoning was in progress, and by half past eight o'clock all the lights about the building were extinguished.

The examination of Creffield and Brooks was in progress all yesterday afternoon, but no result had been reached when the TIMES went to press. The examining physicians were Drs. Pernot and Cathey, with Judge Watters and Deputy Attorney Bryson in attendance.

A popular belief is that Creffield is a hypnotist, and that it is to his hypnotic influence that most of the conditions are due. When Brooks and Creffield were taken in custody the officers found most of the worshippers living about on the floor on mats, blankets, and other places of rest. In the center was a young girl with a cloth over her face apparently in a trance. She was at the moment receiving a message from on high, which others about the room were taking down. The head of Creffield was close beside that of the youthful messenger.



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