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PORTLAND, SATURDAY, JAN. 6, 1917.

THE ROAD PROBLEM.

If a satisfactory road code shall evolve from Road Conference and Legislature an achievement will have been recorded to which we may look back in future with pride and admiration. It is not an easy job. Yet it is quite easy to point to New York and Iowa and casually wonder why we have not done or do not do as well as they.

Iowa's road problems, probably New York's, differ from ours as much as do their agricultural problems. Iowa was one of the original prairie states. It was a simple enough matter in early days to declare each section line a county road. The first wagon over a section line did not encounter as much difficulty as does any wagon on one of Oregon's established highways in the backwoods. The second wagon followed the ruts of the first and the fifth wagon found a road instead of an imaginary line drawn across the prairie. Iowa now knows where its roads are and where they will remain for the future. The land is settled and cultivated on each side. It is able to pay for good roads. There are no serious engineering difficulties, and a little expert knowledge as to varying soil conditions, availability of material and a few other incidentals equips the community with the data necessary for devising a standardized road system.

In Oregon there are mountains to cross, roaring streams and rivers to span, forests to penetrate and desert wastes to traverse. The state is not fully developed. Petitions are numerous for new roads and often they must be constructed for the benefit of an isolated community and through a district which can give little to the cost of construction.

The Oregon road system, or lack of system, has all the solidity that antiquity can give. The road supervisors do not wish to surrender their prerquisites; the County Courts do not care to give up their prestige. Moreover, as much as a highway engineer and expert may know about road construction, the average supervisor, in his own estimation, knows infinitely more, and the average citizen can give the road supervisor better advice as to how to dump gravel into a mudhole than anybody else. We are hampered by precedent, perquisites and self-sufficiency.

If Oregon were developed and its markets and cities definitely established, engineering difficulties and the problems of constructing and paying for roads would not be so difficult. In that event perhaps the advice would be good that the existing system be thrown overboard and that no roads be improved except in accordance with standards devised to fit the various types of roads—trunk line, market road and lateral. But the remote community seeking a highway outlet through a wilderness cannot be tied to a standard, nor can the lateral road in many instances.

There is no question but that valuable suggestions may be obtained from the road laws of other states, but they must be considered with a consciousness of Oregon's peculiar needs and conditions. The word of men who have personally observed their operations is also worth listening to. But there is something more to be considered than the mere fact that a law seems to read well. There is a superficial attractiveness, for example, in the Washington law which provides that the Legislature shall say where state road money shall be expended. This law is advocated for Oregon adoption. In practice it once caused a deadlock between Senate and House with the result that no road appropriations were available for two years, and since then the Washington Legislature has been organized largely on the basis of distribution of road money, while road fund trades have governed in noticeable way the character of general legislation. Probably Oregon's pitiful $220,000 a year would not be a very good basis for trading, but it is the hope of road enthusiasts that it will be possible some day to have a fund of respectable proportions. To dangle such a purse before so busy a mass meeting as the Oregon Legislature is to invite trouble.

It is not the purpose herein to offer a definite plan but to reiterate the desirability of a well-balanced road programme. The trunk line, the market road and the lateral and the wagon trail through the woods must be cared for by a system flexible enough to adjust itself to widely varying conditions. Reasons are accumulating for a better spirit of co-operation between farm and city dwellers. The automobile is daily becoming more of a utility for the farmer. If permanent road construction be held to be a propaganda of auto owners, it may then be held to be the propaganda of practically every industrial interest. There still remain communities which impose upon themselves a district road tax of upwards of 10 mills to be expended for makeshift roads, yet object to a quarter-mill levy for permanent state roads because the state road does not run by their door and is used frequently by city dwellers. But they are growing fewer. The trunk line is coming to be recognized as a necessity, as the backbone to which will be attached the rib roads of lighter construction.

If the day is at hand when public opinion shall be fairly centered upon construction processes and methods of supervision, the financial problem still remains. A better spirit and a broader understanding do not provide money. For state highways and state-aided roads various methods of raising money are proposed. They include higher motor vehicle taxes, an excise tax on gasoline, a bond issue or such curtailment of other expenditures as would permit a legal increase in the general property road levy. In the opinion of The Oregonian, the latter might be profitably and properly combined with either of the former.

EFFICIENCY AT 45.

Any schoolboy is familiar with the amazing career of Alexander the Great, who conquered the world before he was 30 and died at the untimely age of 33, sighing for conquests more worthy of his powers. The mighty Napoleon had vanquished Italy and was virtually master of France before he was 30, had reached the zenith of his influence before he was 40, fought the battle of Waterloo at 46 and died at 52.

But these were supermen. The wars of the world have been fought, but not directed, by young men, while the real work of the world has mostly been done by older men and women. The youngest President of the United States, for example was Theodore Roosevelt, who succeeded William McKinley at 43 and took his first elective term at 47. The average age of the Presidents exceeds 50, and is perhaps near 60. Woodrow Wilson celebrated his 60th birthday last week.

The great Generals of the present war are men who have passed the meridian. Joffre is over 60, and so is Von Hindenburg, and the majority of Generals in all the armies are undoubtedly more than 50. Helmuth Carl Bernhard Moltke, creator of the modern army and master strategist of the nineteenth century, was above 70 when the Franco-Prussian War was fought. Kitchener undertook the biggest job of his career at 66. Lloyd-George became Premier of England at 53.

So the young man who in letters or art or warfare achieves greatness is the exception. The men with experience and proven trustworthiness, rather than the prodigies of genius, play by far the greatest part in affairs.

All hail to the Efficiency Club of Portland, organized to show that men are at their best at 45 and more. The women do not need to organize, for no woman is ever more than 30—until she is 80.

WAITING FOR 1920.

During a little editorical excursion through the letters written to various newspapers, by sundry more or less well-satisfied contributors, we have found the following:

> Now I have been a Republican most all my life, and like many other fool working men, I voted for Wilson this last election. But I have voted my last old party ticket. I just woke up, and from now on I am going to vote the only workingman's ticket in the ring, and that is the Socialist ticket, or the real progressive ticket.

Strike prohibition is the occasion of our dissatisfied friend's worry. The President is for it, and apparently it is his intention to push it through Congress if he can. It does not apply, however, to general employments, but to public service corporations.

What did the laboring men who were caught by the molasses of the Adamson act think President Wilson would do after election? They relied, evidently, on his well-known receptivity to political pressure during a campaign and his equally well-known readiness to change his mind after a campaign. Now the President proposes to carry out his promises, and at least one man who voted for him thinking he would break his word is highly disgruntled.

Thousands of Socialists and near-Socialists voted for Wilson. The vote for Benson, the Socialist candidate, is less by 150,000 than the vote of Debs in 1912. But there may be a mighty increase in 1920, if all those who are displeased with Wilson go Socialist.

FORTUNE THROWN AWAY.

The Oregonian recently published extracts from a report by the Federal Bureau of Standards to the effect that a specific gravity test for gasoline is practically worthless as a gauge of gasoline's value for use in combustion engines.

The state of Oregon requires by law that all gasoline shall meet a certain specific gravity test. The sum this worthless law has cost consumers of gasoline since its enactment cannot be accurately given, but it is doubtless several hundred thousand dollars.

The Oregonian has attempted to obtain estimates of the amount of gasoline consumed in Oregon and those furnished by the three principal companies vary greatly. It seems to be a conservative conclusion that between 20,000,000 and 25,000,000 gallons were used in Oregon in 1916.

The extra refining cost imposed on the oil companies by the Oregon test is stated by them to be one and one-half cents a gallon. They say they absorb one-half cent of this additional cost themselves and charge the consumer one cent. It is an incontrovertible fact that in the state of Washington, which does not impose a specific gravity test for gasoline, that commodity sells uniformly for one cent a gallon cheaper than it does in Oregon.

It thus appears that the legal imposition of a worthless gravity test cost the gasoline consumers of Oregon in 1916 upwards of $250,000. It is a sum equivalent to that provided by the state levy for good roads.

There is no question as to the good intent of the Legislature of 1913. But it legislated without scientific knowledge. Even the United States Bureau of Standards admits that it is not yet ready to announce what is a scientific gasoline test for standard adoption.

The law should be repealed.

WORK FOR THE "IDLE RICH."

Senator Works, of California, with seeming bitterness of spirit that we would not look for in the California Senator, demands a law to compel the "idle rich" to go to work. In his valedictory to the Senate he indicates that he has looked about him and has observed that all is not well. Naturally, he has found that there are many hewers of wood and drawers of water, and that there are others who are always willing to let George do it. The burden of labor is not evenly distributed. Some of us are born with proverbial silver spoons in our mouths; the rest, alas! are doomed to sweat and toil.

So it is not surprising that the Senator proposes the one remedy that is always right at hand—and that is legislation. Of course. A law for everything and everything according to law is the order nowadays. Universal labor is to be the command—not as a result of the education of public sentiment to hatred of the idler, but by statute, duly enacted, signed and sealed. Let us have truant officers to hunt these vagrant rich men and women from their homes and put them to "doing something." There is plenty for them to do. It would at least be sounder economics than the scheme of "making more work" for workingmen by cutting down individual production.

The trouble with the Senator is perhaps that he lacks perspective. He is inclined to exaggerate the number of idle rich, the harm they are doing and the joy they are getting out of life. There are a good many rich who are not idle, and a good many more who will not stay rich very long unless they start hustling right away. Riches have a way of taking wings. The old saying that it is only three generations from shirtsleeves to shirtsleeves is pretty true. And idleness is not so attractive as it seems. The comparatively few rich men who are really idle prove that by their struggles, often comical, to find something to do. Real idleness is not at all a comfortable state. Real work is preferable to it.

Better than passing a law for punishment of those who are rich and will not work would be to leave them to wallow in their own idleness. No industrious man envies an idle man. The idle man is being punished enough.

MUSIC FOR THE COW.

We are offered today a study in bovine psychology by a correspondent from McMinnville. He has discovered that the constant singing of "Peek-a-Boo" and "Sweet Bye and Bye" in the presence of the family cow causes a yield of one-third more milk.

We shall not hastily enter upon a learned discourse, although it is true that a Chicago lady has given positive testimony that her herd shows appreciation of music in the stable and lace curtains at the windows.

We fancy that stable caroling ought to be begun with caution. Perhaps there is bovine culture as well as human culture. One cow might respond to Wagner, yet kick over the bucket at ragtime. Cows also may be patriotic as well as temperamental. The Jersey may resent "Deutschland uber Alles" and the Holstein tear up the stall to the strains of "Tipperary."

But a stronger doubt assails us. Why should a cow give more rather than less milk when soothed by song? Never having heard our correspondent sing, the thought persists that his Jersey may have thought it was her calf bawling for more.

THE DECLINING BIRTH RATE.

Interest in the always-absorbing problem of the declining birth rate and its ultimate influence upon civilization is intensified by reports of two recent investigations, in widely separated fields, both tending to show that the decrease is in inverse ratio to the prevailing state of civilization, and that the better the facilities for rearing children as they should be reared, the fewer in number are likely to be those who are able to enjoy these multiplied advantages. This is made to appear by an investigator who has been at great pains to trace the life histories of a large number of graduates of Harvard and Yale, and by the unrelated report of the British Birth-Rate Commissioner upon general conditions in England and Wales. It is accepted as a settled fact in both cases that the decline is rather dysgenic than eugenic, and that social and industrial conditions are not in themselves primarily responsible.

The records of the Harvard-Yale inquiry cover some 5600 graduates of those institutions of learning and the period from 1851 to 1890. Of these, 25 per cent did not marry and 21 per cent of those who were married had no children at all. From 1851 to 1860 the per capita number of children of Harvard graduates was 3.13, and of those of Yale graduates it was 3.32. No explanation is offered for the higher rate in the case of Yale, and this is probably accidental rather than socially significant. In the period from 1881 to 1890, however, the decline was marked, the rate being 2.06 for Harvard and 2.04 for Yale. It is calculated by the investigator that upon the accepted basis that a given group, in order to perpetuate itself, must bring to marriageable age three children to the family, the present generation of Harvard and Yale graduates is on the road to certain extinction. The 5618 men listed, it is estimated, will in 200 years be represented by only 850. This is calculated upon the presupposition that the rate does not decline still further. The tendency, however, would seem to be still in the downward direction.

The British commissioner finds that the birth rate in England and Wales has declined approximately one-third in thirty-five years, and he sees no reason for doubting that ultimately—and in the not distant future—these countries will reach the state already attained by France, whose birth rate, the commissioner says, is still the lowest in all Europe, although he regards the French civilization as the highest in form. This decline is not accompanied by a sufficient difference in the marriage rate to explain it on that ground. Here it is shown, too, that the reduced rate of births is in inverse proportion to the social status of the family. In the professions the reduction is considerable. Among laborers it is small. Where housing conditions are the best, the birth rate is lowest. Where the space in the tenement is cramped, there is a relatively high birth rate. It is true that with better dwelling conditions the infant mortality rate is lower, but it is not enough lower to atone for the difference in births.

The Medical Record, commenting on the findings, says that it is not proved that fewer babies necessarily mean better babies. "It may be true," the Record observes, "that it is for the good of the Nation if babies are fewer and of finer quality, but when they are fewer and of inferior quality it is obviously and distinctly detrimental." With which conclusion, of course, there will be general agreement.

The relationship between the two investigations cited is important in respect of their agreement that to ascend in the scale of what we call civilization does not increase the sense of personal responsibility to the race as a whole. Thus, the more highly educated man or woman, in a position to obtain more of the "comforts" of life as he goes along, seems to prefer to appropriate them to himself. Ex-President Eliot, of Harvard, detects "a preference on the part of both men and women for freedom from care and responsibility and for passing leisure rather than solid satisfaction." The British report justifies the same conclusion. For example, it is significant that the birth rate among coal miners is twice that among physicians. The more freedom from care a man has the more he wants. It is not that professional men are without their own cares, but they may be said in the larger sense to have removed themselves from the zone of grinding poverty. The same thing has been shown as to women by other investigations, notably one made in Glasgow. Women graduates of higher institutions of learning show greater disinclination to bear children, accounted for, it is believed, only in part by the obvious fact that they marry later in life when they marry at all.

One fact as to natural laws stands out, and that is that Nature places sense of responsibility to the race high up in the list of her demands upon men. Whatever may be done for the fancied "good of civilization" by those in the higher walks of life, they are doomed to extinction so soon as they begin to lose that sense of responsibility. There cannot be permanently a "select class," therefore, if it is a class characterized by selfishness in the racial sense. The men and women who possess this selfishness in highest degree necessarily bear within themselves the means of their own extinction; and so, if we are patient, it will all come out even again in the end.

WHY NEGROES LEAVE THE SOUTH.

A statement by Robert R. Moton, principal of Tuskegee Institute, about the number of lynchings in the year 1916 and the states in which they took place suggests that steady jobs at good wages are not the only attraction which the North offers to the negro. His life is safe from mob law. Fifty-four persons were lynched, of whom fifty were negroes, and all except one of these mob executions took place in the South. Georgia heads the list with fourteen, or more than one-fourth of the total; then come Texas with nine, Florida with eight, Arkansas and Oklahoma four each, Tennessee three, Kentucky, Louisiana, North Carolina and South Carolina two each, Alabama, Kansas, Mississippi and Missouri one each.

The pretense that lynching is an outburst of Southern chivalry in defense of white women against negro brutes is proved baseless by the facts. Forty-two of the fifty-four persons lynched were charged with other offenses than attacks on women, that is 77 per cent of the total. Only twelve of the negroes murdered by mobs were accused of such offenses. Ten were accused of killing officers of the law, seven of murder, six of stealing hogs, four of wounding officers of the law, two of insult and one each of slapping a boy, robbing a store, assisting a son to escape, brushing against a girl on the street, entering a house for robbery, defending a son who had killed a man in defense of his mother, fatally wounding a man, speaking against a mob in the act of lynching, attacking a man and wife with a club. Of the four whites, three were lynched for murder, and one, a Mexican, on suspicion of cutting a woman.

The pretense that the South lynches negroes in chivalrous defense of women is all buncombe. It lynches a negro for any crime whenever it becomes unduly excited and bloodthirsty. It has only itself to thank when the negroes desert it for Northern homes.

The value of the silo is just beginning to be appreciated in South America, where it is now realized that it is a splendid form of insurance against unevenness of seasons. In those regions where it is too wet part of the time and there are intervals of drouth at other seasons, where there are difficulties in making hay alternating with plagues of locusts and dried-up pastures, the silo has saved the day for large numbers by insuring a continual supply of feed that can be counted on with certainty. This has had a far-reaching effect. Formerly it had been the practice for growers of cattle to sell large numbers of animals on the approach of conditions unfavorable for keeping them, and this resulted naturally in forcing down the price below the point of profit. It also had the effect of so reducing the supply that in other and more favorable seasons for feeding there were not enough cattle to make good use of the range. Silo feeding has brought about a desirable adjustment, and more reasonable, more profitable and at the same time more uniform prices have been the result.

Presence of 60,000 addicts to drugs in Massachusetts does not speak well for the theory that prohibition by depriving men of alcohol will drive them to use of drugs. It is doubtful whether Oregon under prohibition has as large a proportion of drug fiends as has the Bay State with open saloons in Boston and many other cities.

Representative Dent, chairman of the House committee on military affairs, is another pacifist of the Hay stamp. He has declared against compulsory service and against any new military legislation at this session of Congress. There is small hope of real preparedness so long as the Southern brigadiers are in control.

The statement of Yeoman Hill that he was driven to theft because his pay is not sufficient to support his family is a setback to the recruiting officer. The high cost of living may cause Secretary Daniels to move for an increase of pay in the Navy.

The National Association of Clothing Designers at Chicago decrees there shall be no change in men's garments. Shirts, however, will continue to change at the end of the week generally as heretofore.

The tercentenary exposition of the landing of the Pilgrims will indeed be an event of class, with an expenditure of $18,000,000 to prepare a tract for the show, as proposed.

If all grade crossings were kept in bad condition and the fact generally made known to automobilists, they would be the safest spots in the state.

They have begun to save daylight in Australia, where it is now midsummer and early rising is not an inconvenience.

Germany says she will not strike through Switzerland and the statement is not made on "a scrap of paper."

Germans express the hope, but not the promise, that submarine activities this year will starve England.

The United States produced less gold last year than formerly, but received plenty, nevertheless.

A prominent member of the Duma is missing and nobody suggests seeking him in Siberia.

Once those old ducks ('45 to '60) go on the warpath, young blood would better beware.

Jo Jo should have a medal as a token of his efficiency as a fire alarm.

Spring-fever weather, but do not be misled.

Tumulty is tumultuous in denial.

ROAD BOND ISSUE IS PROPOSED

Correspondent Offers Arguments in Favor of Raising $7,000,000.

MOSIER, Or., Jan. 4.—(To the Editor.)—As the 6 per cent limitation act seems to have killed all hope for a state levy for good roads, at least for an adequate amount consistent with the needs of our great state, and as our state officials and others interested in a good roads movement seem to be all at sea as to what is the best to do and as if anything is done the amount would be still small and inadequate for road needs, in view of the above why not bond the state for say, $7,000,000? Thus we could match Federal aid without doubt, place Oregon where we could attract settlers and tourists and incidentally bring pleasure and joy to ourselves.

The entire amount of the bond issue would remain in the state, spent at home with our own people. And the cities and towns of Oregon and the large corporations would pay nearly two-thirds of the bond issue, leaving only a small amount for the small farmer and the poor man to stand for. No doubt a large number would object to bonding the future, those to follow us bearing the burden. To answer this, they would have our assets and the advantage of a settled and prosperous country to help them.

With the war in Europe and the great prosperity in the East, the war cuts off immigration and the East is satisfied just now at least with itself. All those drawbacks throws us more or less on our own resources, which probably in the end will be a good thing for us, and make us self-reliant.

The shipbuilding industry is an evidence of this, one which The Oregonian helped make possible—an evidence of what we can do. The 40 miles of the Columbia River Highway is the greatest asset Oregon has today. I was informed that it brought a half million dollars to Portland alone last Summer for the short time that it was open. Robert Strahorn is about to build a railroad in Southeastern Oregon costing millions of dollars, and this, mark you, through a wilderness. Is he wrong? No, sir. Faith and hope are needed in the matter of this bond issue for the state.

We must do something to attract settlers and help Oregon and in my opinion a state bond issue for roads will do more than anything else for this purpose. I believe a fund can be raised by private subscription to engage talent to talk and set forth all the benefits to be derived from the good roads bond issue and the voters thus be easily convinced that they would be placing their state in the front rank of prosperity and development and they would vote the state bond issue hands down. It would be the cheapest and best medium of advertising with real lasting and beneficial results that the Oregon public could possibly form.

California has gained in population three to one as against Oregon. So have Washington and British Columbia. Up to the last 12 years this was not so, but since good roads became a factor in building up the country and California and Washington saw the advantages and took hold with a big heart and no fear but lots of faith, they have made good.

It would be unfair and unjust to pass a law taxing autos excessively to raise money for roads. In this way the burden of providing roads would fall on a few. The same would hold good in the event of taxing gasoline. It would be small business and poor business and unfair in the bargain for our big progressive state to raise funds in this way.

Our large daily papers are looked upon as leaders in measures of this kind. They educate the public and we look to them for help and guidance in such matters. Their arguments and deductions for or against molds the majority of the public opinion.

Why cannot we look out and beyond? Let us have faith, vote a good bond issue for roads. It will mean wealth and prosperity for our great Oregon.

J. K. MCGREGOR.

WHERE ONE MAN'S MONEY WENT

He Invests in Seattle Realty and Now Regrets It.

CHICAGO, Jan. 2.—(To the Editor.)—Sometimes in forecasting our plans for the future, we err, because we cannot always predict what the future is to bring forth.

In the year 1908, when this country was at its worst, the writer purchased vacant property in the City of Seattle to the value of $640, and in the course of the two subsequent years local assessments of $225 were levied. Taxes from date of purchase to 1916 have amounted to $45, and these amounts combined and at 8 per cent annual interest would total $1450—and better.

Kindly note attached letter from the George A. Spencer Company, of Seattle, Wash., under date of December 15, 1916, in which Mr. Spencer states $600 would be a fancy price for this same property today.

Only one year since 1909 have the taxes failed to increase by leaps and bounds, and for the year 1915, the taxes were 52 per cent higher on the same valuation than in 1909.

When poor, old Seattle learns its lesson and awakes to the fact that men who by chance (and not because of their love for knowledge) have stumbled into gold mines in Alaska, are not capable of running city governments and dictating city policies, then, and not till then, may the writer hope to get more than 35 cents on the dollar.

E. J. FLAHERTY.

The inclosure is as follows:

Seattle, Wash., Dec. 15.—To Mr. E. J. Flaherty, care of Marsh L. Brown & Company, 70 West South Water Street, Chicago, Illinois. Dear Sir:—Replying to yours of December 6 in regard to lots 7 and 8 in block 14, Salmon Bay Park Addition to Seattle, will say that this is a poor time to sell vacant lots in Seattle. The lots are fairly well located for the district, which is in Ballard. I would say that the lots are worth now about $600 or $500 each, though it might be difficult to get even that. My advice would be that you hold them for a year or two, as I believe all Seattle property will increase in value in the next two years.

If you decide to sell them please let me know and we will make an effort to get you an offer.

GEO. A. SPENCER & CO.
By Geo. H. Spencer.

Music for the Cow.

M'MINNVILLE, Or., Jan. 4.—(To the Editor.)—Your subscribers around here that I have talked to, are getting somewhat tired of the horsehair-snake communications you have published lately.

I have a new marvel that has caused a lot of discussion around stoves, street corners, feed stores, etc., the last few rainy days.

The question is, does kindness, music, singing, etc., increase the flow of milk from a cow?

If you will grant me the space I will give you my personal experience in a few words.

I am 47 years old, never had any experience milking cows. I came here one month ago; have begun to milk a Jersy cow; am learning to milk, am singing while milking, such songs as "Peek-a-Boo," "Sweet, Bye and Bye," etc. The cow seems to enjoy it and my sister and brother-in-law say the flow of milk has increased fully one-third.

What is the answer?

GREENHORN.

Her Absent-Minded Husband.

Boston Transcript.

Caller—Is it true, my dear, that your husband is very absent-minded? Mrs. Newly—Yes. We've been married six months, and many an evening at 11 he gets up, takes me by the hand; tells me what a delightful time he has had, and would leave if I didn't remind him.

EXPLANATION THOUGHT NEEDED

Writer Inquires About Reduction of Power and Light Company's Taxes.

PORTLAND, Jan. 5.—(To the Editor.)—I would appreciate space to inquire on what theory the State Tax Commission arrives at the taxable value of properties of the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company. I believe that corporations should be accorded the same treatment as individuals, but do not think they should be favored at the expense of the taxpayers generally.

The summary of appraisal submitted to the Public Service Commission of Oregon by this company as of January 1, 1913, showed a total value of over $58,000,000, and that from January 1, 1913, to June 30, 1915, approximately $1,000,000 was spent for additions; yet in the appraisal of the Public Service Commission made as of June 30, 1915, the value was fixed at only $45,000,00 and the assessed valuation was reduced to $30,000,000 for 1915 and the ratio of taxable value was about 60 per cent, making about $18,000,000 upon which taxes were collected for that year. For 1916, however, the full value has been reduced to $27,000,000 and the taxable value to $16,000,000, which means that this company will pay the state $70,000 less for 1916 than for 1915.

Has any individual been treated so liberally? Have other corporations fared likewise? When individuals submit a statement of their property we know of no reduction of the valuation for taxing purposes. We pay taxes on 65 per cent of the full value of our property, while this corporation, according to the statement of the Tax Commission, pays taxes on less than 30 per cent of the value of their property.

This does not seem fair, and if the discrepancy can be explained, I am sure a large number of individual taxpayers would like to have it explained, and if it cannot be explained, it would seem that the Legislature might profitably devote a little consideration to the matter.

A. S.

While in Multnomah County we pay taxes on an average of 60 per cent of the "true value" of property, that "true value" is not the price at which we may hold the property or the cost of its reproduction, but it is the price at which it would sell in the open market. Thus the Tax Commission, in determining county ratios, goes to the actual records of transfers to ascertain the "true value" of property for taxation purposes. As public service properties are not ordinarily subject to barter and sale, the method of assessing them in Oregon is to capitalize the yearly net operating revenue of each company at the rate of 7 per cent. Taxes imposed on public service corporations, therefore, fluctuate from year to year. The tax on the Portland Railway, Light & Power Company is between 9 and 10 per cent of its gross revenues.

IT IS GOVERNMENT IMPOSITION

Telephone Manager Complains of Tax Collection Method.

HALSEY, Or., Jan. 4.—(To the Editor.)—Permit me space to state a problem with which I have come face to face. If a corporation should require me to collect for it some of its accounts, just because it did not want to go to the trouble of collecting them itself, telling me that I pay the money over by the 30th of the month, and were it not so remitted a penalty of 50 per cent would be attached thereto, and that if such account, together with penalty, were not paid, they would attach and sell my property to settle same, all this to be done without compensation on my part, even requiring me to make a sworn statement that such accounting was correct, could they get away with it? Would the Government permit such action?

Yet this is just what the incompetents now in charge of Government affairs are doing themselves. For two years they have imposed upon the people the penny-ante game, requiring the telephone companies to collect a penny from each individual who uses the telephone for long-distance purposes. Within 30 days from the end of the month the company must make a sworn statement to the collector of internal revenue, paying the notary public out of its own funds, collecting and forwarding all moneys at its own expense. If it fails to make such report and remittance within the prescribed limit, there is imposed a 50 per cent penalty. Can they get away with it? Would the Government permit such action? No doubt they need the money.

ONE OF THE VICTIMS.

Winking the Eye.

Buffalo, N. Y., Express.

Pa—At last I've found a way to make that young scamp of ours stop winking his eyes. Ma—Really? Pa—Yes; I'll show him the articles in this science magazine where it says that every time we wink we give the eye a bath.

In Other Days.

Twenty-five Years Ago.

From The Oregonian, January 6, 1892.

The fleet steamer Telephone belonging to the Columbia River & Puget Sound Navigation Company, struck on the Government revetment off Coon Island at the mouth of the Willamette yesterday morning and sank. She carried 80 passengers and a crew of 30. She was valued at $80,000. There was a dense fog. The passengers and crew were all saved.

It is almost assured that Portland will hear the great and only Patti. Treasurer Adams, of the Marquam Grand, has obtained over 100 subscriptions for all the way from one to 10 seats at $10 each. February 27 is the date tentatively set.

Charles Felton, the new Senator from California, was a 'forty-niner.

J. L. Killian, a prominent grain merchant of Pendleton, and ex-State Senator from Umatilla County, is in Portland at the St. George.

Doc Hughes, probably the biggest man in Oregon, died at Wagner, last Sunday. He weighed 368 pounds.

O. C. Yocum has returned from a photographic survey with some rare pictures of the Columbia from the boundary to Priest Rapids.

READY TO PRUNE EXPENDITURES

Senator La Follett Says Labor Laws and High Taxes Hurt Oregon.

SALEM, Or., Jan. 4.—(To the Editor.)—I see in the New Year's Oregonian where Mr. John Tait voices my sentiments exactly. Here is what he said that interested me most:

> I believe I am conservative in stating that we are regarded the mother state of that class of legislation, which has been termed "progressive" by some and "freak" by others. If there was anything that could come from parentage of a great issue of this kind we would have profited by it. If population or if the builders of industry and commerce viewed this trend and this development with favor, we would have won pre-eminent business in the West, and, perhaps, in the country.
>
> I admit that we have not so won. On the contrary, we have lost. Our relative development has been all out of proportion to other Northwestern states, and, in fact, nearly all other states in the Union. We have the natural resources of a great business fabric and for an enormous population, but with all of our beautiful theories, and all of our abstract virtues, and with all of our dreams of a legislative paradise for the human race, we have made less progress than practically any one of our neighbors.
>
> In my opinion the cause of these high taxes and a lot of fool laws is labor legislation. There are 48 states in the Union and Oregon pays one-fifth per capita more than any state in the Union. The taxes in Denver, Colo., are $3,000,000 less than in the city of Portland and they have about the same population. Do you wonder at your payrolls or your manufacturers not moving ahead faster? The labor laws are driving lots of industries out of this state. Where is the Oregon Packing Company that was in your city? Today it is in our sister state at Vancouver, where it employs 300 or 400 people. That is why our neighboring states are forging ahead of us. I heartily agree that the Oregon System has got to be revised. The taxes of this state were increasing so alarmingly that the Taxpayers' League inaugurated a measure before the people limiting the increase to 6 per cent at any one session of the Legislature. I happened to be one of the officials of that league and I have been maligned and abused not a little for taking a part in it on the ground that it would greatly impair the efficiency of the state institutions in not getting all the money they ask for. But our Secretary of State makes a statement that we can get along with the 6 per cent limitation without impairing the efficiency of the state institutions and no man in this state is better qualified to know than Ben W. Olcott.
>
> Being a member of the next session of the Legislature, I am very anxious to help repeal a lot of these obnoxious laws that are against the interest of Oregon; abolish all useless commissions, consolidate all where we can save the state any money without impairing the efficiency of the commission. I will be one of the 90 members of the next session of the Legislature who ought to do everything in their power to cut down our exorbitant taxes without impairing the efficiency of our state government. As I said before, we are taxed more per capita than any state in the Union, and I have the statistics to prove it if anyone doubts it.

A. M. LA FOLLETT.

Willing to Lend.

Indianapolis Star.

Tom—I wonder why Harry broke his engagement with Miss Peckem.

Jack—According to my information, her father offered to lend him money enough to get married on.

Tuesday.

PORTLAND, Jan. 5.—(To the Editor.)—Please tell me what day of the week March 13, 1888 came on.

SUBSCRIBER.

From a Thousand Sources to a Pleasing Completeness Comes The Sunday Oregonian

NEWS OF THE WORLD—No matter where it happened, in war-stricken Europe or in lands of strange tongues and races, if it's news, The Oregonian has it. World news, National news, state, county and city news—thorough and authoritative information for particular readers.

THE DAYS OF GOLD—Eva Emery Dye, eminent Oregon historian, writes in a special article of the days when Oregon's wealth of "yellow sands" brought the bearded prospectors up from the El Dorado of California to the new northern fields. Where was General Sheridan's first battle ground? This story tells.

THE FAVORITES OF TIME — Taking stock of the present, that unquenchable optimist, Herbert Kaufman, discovers that mortals of these years of grace have everything to be thankful for—and he tells why. Read his "Pen the Hogs" if you are with the housewife in the fight to lower food prices.

DANCING TO GET GRACE—In a special article, takingly told, Mary Glynn, charming danseuse, treats of the influence of the classical or "natural" expression of dancing in developing physical beauty, plus health and a happy personality. Pictured with a few steps by the authoress.

CHURCH AND SCHOOL—Pages devoted to news and gossip of each. Read Rev. John H. Boyd's Sunday morning sermon on the Christianity of the present, which he declares incompetent for the task before it. The school news is edited by a special student staff.

OUR ESKIMOS IN 1916—You may not imagine that the Eskimos in 1916 were any different from those in 1900, remembering at the same time the pictures in the school geography of 1880. But Frank G. Carpenter, correspondent in the Far North, says they were, and predicts further change through their contact with the white race.

THE CAMERA AND THE NEWS—A group of photographs of wide geographical range—really news stories told in pictures. With accompanying paragraphs of comment and explanation.

THE OLD POEMS—Someone has asked that "Little Boy Blue," that sweet little song that has dimmed so many eyes since Eugene Field penned it, be printed on the Old Favorite-Poem page. And there it is, in the place of honor, with a tender illustration to match.

PAGES FOR MILADY—The seasonable chapeau, in its various guises, is shown in The Sunday Oregonian, with accompanying fashion hints and advice.

THE SUNDAY OREGONIAN—JUST 5¢