

TWO MILL ROAD TAX IS A NECESSITY IN MULTNOMAH COUNTY

A. S. Benson Learns With Dismay of Proposal to Cut Levy.

Back from a trip covering almost all of the United States, during the course of which over 1000 miles of roads of every description were examined and minutely inspected, A. S. Benson and E. E. Covert returned to Portland this morning, firmly convinced of three things, if not more.

First, that Multnomah county needs a two mill tax levy for roads.

Second, that the water bound macadam road is doomed.

Third, that the question of good roads is daily becoming more important to the nation.

Mr. Benson received the news of the motion this morning to cut the road tax levy from two to one mill at the meeting before the county commission and with dismay. "Multnomah county needs two mills to insure the right kind of roads and do the amount of work on roads that is its due," he said this morning. "Why, Pierce county, Washington, in which Tacoma is located, with an assessment of \$110,000,000, is to raise \$800,000 for 1914.

That means that in three road districts the levy will amount to 7 mills while in another it will go as high as 10. I received a letter from Los Angeles county, California, this morning to the effect that a levy of 5 mills was declared in both 1912 and 1913 on an assessment of \$705,000,000, as against our 2 mills on \$340,000,000 here in Multnomah county. Certainly we are able to do almost as much at least as these counties."

Speaking of the macadam road Mr. Benson says that from his observation of roads in the east and south and from consultations with road builders he firmly believes it will have to go.

"I examined the 80 miles of concrete country roads in Grant county, Michigan, around Detroit, and am firmly convinced that concrete is the wrong principle all the way through. Concrete roads go to pieces in five years. They crack easily and are difficult to repair.

"We examined every known sort of road on our trip, but are unable to announce at this time what we consider the best type for Multnomah county, as we have not finished our investigations.

Wood Fiber Future Road.

"The road of the future, however, I believe, will be the wood fiber road. It is made of wood chips mixed with asphaltum and rolled while hot. It is durable, noiseless and resilient, but is impracticable at this time because of the enormous expense incurred in laying it down. Until some economical means is devised in utilizing it, the price will be prohibitive.

"I am convinced that the common practice of putting a thin wearing surface over concrete is worse than useless. This thin cushion or veneer will not stick and requires constant repaving. I have innumerable pieces that I have torn off roads throughout the country, where the cushion had begun to peel off.

"Mr. Covert and I attended the Good Roads congress in Philadelphia and then independently examined roads throughout the country, going as far south as New Orleans and returning to Portland via California. Everywhere the subject of good roads is paramount and people are coming to a realization of the importance of good roads to the community. In the Imperial valley good roads have made possible auto truck competition with the railroads for the hauling of freight. From Imperial valley to San Diego, a distance of 125 miles, a line of auto trucks is actively competing with the railroads."

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BUSINESS MEN DO NOT TAKE KINDLY TO THE LICENSE UPON SIGNS

Additional Expense to Illuminated Signs May Leave the Downtown District Dark.

As the result of a conference held yesterday afternoon by C. A. Bigelow, commissioner of finance, with business men and others protesting against the recently enacted sign ordinance, where by a license fee is charged for all signs, it is probable that the members of the city commission will reduce the license.

The ordinance, passed some time ago, does not take effect until January 1, and will affect 1400 stores and business houses.

The arguments of the protestants will be presented to the other members of the commission by Mr. Bigelow this afternoon. While attempts have been made to have the licensing scheme abolished, it is believed that the commissioners will only reduce the fees and thus the city will still obtain revenue.

Those protesting contended that if the city attempted to enforce all of the provisions of the sign ordinance dozens of merchants would turn out the lights in illuminating signs, or the street cluster lights which they maintain. They said that the illuminated signs do much toward lighting the downtown thoroughfares and that if turned out the streets would be almost in darkness.

The ordinance provides for an annual license fee of 10 cents per square foot for signs illuminated on both sides and 15 cents a square foot for signs illuminated only on one side. The ordinance is similar to those in other cities and is passed by the city commission.

Among those who spoke against the measure were W. F. Woodward, J. H. Hyatt, W. E. Wilson, F. J. Glass, P. G. Buffum, G. H. Holtclaw, J. Dellar and others.

WOULD ELIMINATE PENALTY

Commissioner Daly Gets Opinion on Electric Light Charges.

Owing to the fact that Franklin T. Griffith, president of the Portland Railway, Light & Power company, will be out of the city for a few days, no definite answer can be had to Commissioner Daly's request that the 5 per cent penalty system on all monthly bills be abolished. A letter was sent to President Griffith last Saturday by Commissioner Daly asking him to use his influence in having the penalty system done away with.

Many complaints have been received by Commissioner Daly from patrons of the light company, who assert that the penalty system is unjust.

Commissioner Daly has referred the matter to City Attorney La Roche, who rendered the following opinion today:

"If the city decides to pass an ordinance changing the penalty scheme, I would advise that the railroad company be given an opportunity to present its side of the case before the ordinance is adopted. I understand that the company claims that the practice in question is not a penalty, but is a discount for prompt payment. Public service corporations are authorized to make reasonable rules for the regulation of their business. I observe that the railroad company has filed with the railroad commission a schedule of rates, which embraces a provision authorizing the practice complained of, namely the addition of 5 per cent to the monthly bills. This practice, so far as I can see, is unauthorized by any law or custom.

MUCH GARBAGE IS BURNED

Day Following Christmas Breaks All Records at Incinerator.

According to Will H. Duff, commissioner of public utilities, on December 26 the day following Christmas, 181 tons of the material was collected and burned at the incinerator. This was 21 tons more than on Monday. No garbage collections were made on Sunday or on Christmas which accounts for the large amount of refuse collected the days following.

MEAT ORDINANCE IS DISCUSSED

Commission Men and Others Confer With City Inspector.

Front street commission men and representatives of the meat houses are applying meat to Portland met with City Meat Inspector Stickney and other

members of the city health department this morning to discuss the present meat ordinance. Several of the provisions of the measure are obnoxious to the slaughter house owners and the commission men. They will be changed and the ordinance redrafted before noon. Present at the meeting this morning was E. A. Lundberg, representing a committee from the Portland Ad club, which has promised assistance in the fight for cleaner and more healthful meat.

ALL STAIRWAY GATES MUST GO

Fire Escape Inspector Makes Report; Orders Issued.

Many of the large downtown office buildings are violating the building and fire code by allowing heavy iron gates to remain on stairways leading through the buildings, according to Fire Escape Inspector Campbell. Several proprietors have been notified to remove them immediately or arrests will follow.

The gates in most buildings have been placed on the stairways between the first and second floors, it is said. These are closed and locked at night to keep out all who have no business in the building. As these gates may prove a hindrance to the firemen should a blaze occur and are in violation of the fire and building code they will have to be removed.

COMMITTEE WILL BE NAMED

Auditorium Problem to Be Solved by Four Men.

A committee of four will be appointed to assist Commissioner Brewster with the work of getting the new public auditorium started and it will commence its duties tomorrow, providing the city council tomorrow adopts Commissioner Brewster's recommendations.

The committee will hold public hearings during February and gather all information possible in auditorium construction. It is expected that a site will be determined without further delay, by the committee. Commissioner Brewster expects to make the appointments following the council meeting tomorrow.

WATERED MILK IS SHIPPED

Sanitary Inspector Says Portland Is Deluged With Diluted Article.

Portland is being deluged with watered milk and the practice has been going on continually, according to City Chief Sanitary Inspector Baines, who has sent out a call for a meeting of all of the creamery men to be held tomorrow afternoon in the city hall.

Steps are to be taken at this meeting to put a stop to the practice of farmers and dairymen watering their milk before shipping it to Portland. The meeting will be held in the office of the health department and will be presided over by Health Officer Marcellus.

Give Thanks for Present.

C. D. Shane and W. D. Whitcomb, incapacitated members of the fire department, wish to thank the members of the department and the city officials who contributed to their Christmas gift. More than \$140 was collected for each of the two men. These are the two disabled members of the department who are not eligible to the firemen's relief fund.

Petitions in Bankruptcy.

Asking that M. M. Chase, a merchant of First and Washington streets, be declared bankrupt, petitions of the Barney Fish company, Sherrod Ranch Egg company and Burnett & Son, creditors, were filed this morning with the United States district court. The petition alleges Chase's indebtedness to the three companies more than \$1000. Robert M. Movius, a Cottage Grove cement worker and contractor, was a voluntary petitioner in bankruptcy, with indebtedness of \$1062.66 and no assets.

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"NIGHT OFF" AT PRESS CLUB A BIG EVENT

Program of Vocal and Instrumental Music of Great Merit.

Music rippled from vocal chord, fiddle-string and piano in wide profusion last night at the Portland Press club, when the "night off" festivities were staged in the headquarters of the newspaper men. Of unswerving excellence, the program held some features considered almost wonderful by the audience, and materially raised the standard of harmony and vaudeville in Portland's entertainment circles.

From the one-armed orchestra's initial number to the closing guffaws that followed A. L. Marsh's monologue, the press boys were kept in gasps, either of admiration or laughter. R. L. Wilson, baritone, sang "Lollita" with such brilliant effect that he was called on again and gave "The Charmed Cup," amid acclamation.

R. H. Robinson, "the Alaska miner-poet," recited his "Siwash Pete" with dramatic effect. Miss Nona Lawler, soprano, gave a delightful rendition of Ardit's "Parla," and acknowledged an encore with a lilting ditty full of graceful trills.

Stuter and Finch, introduced by their booking agent, Tom Smith, conducted a four handed pianoforte of a most clever and amusing nature.

Harold Hurlbut, lyric tenor, sang "Finicull Finicula," a selection seldom tried even by the grand opera virtuosi because of the wide range and intricate technique required. With not a falter, he reached the highest notes with ease, and was accorded great applause. Miss May Van Dyke acted as accompanist for this number and for the one following, which was a duet by Mr. Hurlbut and Mr. Wilson, from "La Forza del Destino." It was greeted with an ovation, and was considered one of the most delightful numbers of the program.

The Poshay brothers' whistling of the "Glow Worm" and "Miserere" afforded a novel variation of the program, and the Misses Clarice Laisner and Emma Smith made a big hit with a piano duet on two pianos. J. D. Kammitzer, baritone sang "If I Had a Thousand Lives to Live."

The entertainment was one of the regular functions given by the club for its members, and was considered one of the best of the series.