

EDITOR—William M. Tugman
MANAGING EDITOR—Alton F. Baker Jr.
SERVICES — Full Associated Press, United Press, Audit Bureau of Circulations.
The Register-Guard's policy is the complete and impartial publication in its news pages of all news and statements on news. On this page the editors of the Register-Guard offer their opinions on events of the day and matters of importance to the community, endeavoring to be candid but fair and helpful in the development of constructive community policy. A newspaper is a CITIZEN OF ITS COMMUNITY.
Entered at the Post Office at Eugene, Oregon, as second-class matter.

10A EUGENE, OREGON, TUESDAY, APRIL 6, 1954

I.W.W. Passing Into the Realm of Legend

In the March issue of the "Oregon Historical Quarterly," Robert L. Tyler contributes an extremely interesting article on "I.W.W. in the Pacific N.W.: Rebels of the Woods." Forty years and even thirty years ago, the Industrial Workers of the World, with their gospels of "One Big Union" and "General Strike" were an issue from coast to coast.

The I.W.W. survived. In Seattle and a few other large cities, there are musty citadels where a few oldtimers hold forth, but Mr. Tyler writes after visiting one of these places:

Leaving the darkening hall, preserved unwittingly like a museum display, one strolls uptown toward the neon lights and the automobile din, convinced that the I.W.W. can scarcely survive its present membership. It has separated from its own past, a legend which has now been drawn up into American culture and no longer relies upon an existing organization for its sustenance. Significantly enough, many people who like to recall anecdotes about the Wobblies are convinced that the organization died years ago and would be disappointed to learn that real, live Wobblies are no longer the dashing rogues of their stories.

In the Northwest, of course, the I.W.W. movement or menace (whichever way you want to see it) reached its peak on Armistice Day in 1919 with the Centralia "massacre" or riots. This affair was merely the culmination of a long series of disturbances dating back to 1905 when the I.W.W. was organized. The Centralia trouble was preceded by a smaller riot during a Red Cross parade in 1918. The emotions of war time were still at fever height.

It may never be known just who struck first. The Legion parade halted near the I.W.W. hall. Something happened. Legionnaires stormed near the entrance; I.W.W.'s starting shooting. Several marchers were killed and in the followup several Wobblies were slain, and at least one, Wesley Everest, was lynched. It was a horrible affair which shocked the nation.

Mr. Tyler reviews the entire history

of I.W.W. in considerable detail. They were the predecessors of the Moscow-governed Communist party in the United States, as such, but their connections with the Communism of that period were tenuous.

"Why did the I.W.W. fail in its effort to capture the American Labor movement?"

Mr. Tyler offers this theory:

Founded in 1905 by a heterogeneous group of radicals who hoped to put the conservative American Federation of Labor out of business, the I.W.W. soon became not the threatening rival of the A.F.L. its founders intended, but a small fraternity of itinerant rebels and hoboes. These workers were attracted to the I.W.W. because it supplied a home and a meaning for their aimless lives. Structurally, the I.W.W. appealed to them because it made no political demands upon them, because it charged low initial fees and dues, because it allowed seasonal workers to transfer from one constituent union to another without red tape or new fees. It appealed psychologically because it satisfied social needs and because it seemed to be an organization really their own, not something created for them by middle-class socialists, welfare workers, or the Salvation Army.

The writer's narrative is salted with excerpts from the ballads of Joe Hill, the Wobly troubadour, and many other poets of the movement. They are a picturesque lot and the fears which they inspired were probably out of all proportion to their actual strength.

(My Tyler describes the series of I.W.W. riots in Eugene in 1912, during the construction of the Southern Pacific's Coos Bay branch. But most of the Wobly troubles were farther north in the more active lumbering areas because Oregon had not yet developed industry.)

The I.W.W. is passing into the realm of legend. Mr. Tyler believes it will be remembered chiefly for its "personality," its peculiar evangelistic character, "something that has continued to captivate poets, novelists and journalists." In the garden of labor movements, the I.W.W. was what a naturalist would probably call a sport. Nevertheless, it has its place in the infinitely varied history of social development in the United States.

Remember Gold Rush on McKenzie Pass?

Over in Malheur county, near the Idaho border, there has been tremendous excitement the last few days, due to the discovery of uranium in the area known as the Harper basin, which is about 23 miles up the Malheur valley above Vale on U. S. 20. Hundreds of people have rushed in with Geiger counters and on the slightest flicker of the instrument they have staked out claims. So far, the only result is disappointment—assays show no deposits of commercial value.

All this reminds us of the great "gold rush" at the summit of the McKenzie Pass about 25 years ago. We cannot remember the exact date but we would be glad to be refreshed by somebody who can remember it accurately. As we recall it, a chap came down from the mountains one weekend and announced he had found chunks of rich, gold-bearing ore near Windy Gap. That was enough to start the stampede.

In vain, the late Warren D. Smith and other geologists issued statements which said that it was most improbable that gold-bearing structures would ever be found in lava formations such as those at the McKenzie Pass. That didn't stop anybody — they piled into their Model T's with all kinds of digging and camping equipment and headed for the "gold field." We can remember Dr. Smith saying:

"Barnum wasn't right after all. There's at least 100 suckers born every minute."

In a few days came assay reports

which put an end to the scramble. The experts held that if a piece of gold-bearing rock had been found in the lava fields, it had been carried there. None of the rocks actually native to the area showed the slightest trace of gold. Gradually the excitement abated and the "prospectors" and camp followers drifted back to their homes; some had hundreds of miles to go.

In Lane county, there have been only two mining areas that ever amounted to anything—the Bohemia area near Cottage Grove and the Lucky Boy operation on Blue River. Considerable gold was taken from these mines some 50 years ago but the rich deposits are very spotty. There are enormous quantities of low-grade mixed ores but nobody has ever found an economical way to extract the materials. There used to be some cinnabar mining at Black Butte south of Cottage Grove, and at Elkhorn across the line in Douglas county, but those operations dwindled with the price of mercury.

It used to be that the bearded prospector with his overloaded burro was a fairly familiar sight in the hills, all the way from here to California, but the prospector, as such, vanished with the green gold of the timber boom. Any scientist will tell you that today ordinary minerals are more valuable than all the precious metals, but that doesn't impress anybody when somebody reports a "STRIKE." It all seems to verify the old adage that it's easier to sell gold bricks than real gold pieces.

City buildings and other fixed assets are kept in the general ledger on the basis of original cost or estimated cost.

Most of these methods have been in use for a long time in Oregon. For some years, our city managers have made monthly reports, showing the condition of each department's funds, including all the charges made against the authorized budget. Within the last year our county commissioners have adopted a similar record which shows not only the cash paid out but the charges authorized for future payment.

There is still room for improvement in the accounting methods of Oregon's public bodies. Accounting methods are difficult for laymen to understand but they are of the utmost importance.

Joplin Adopts 'Accrual Accounting'

Joplin, Mo., a city about the size of Eugene, is credited with writing into its new city charter provisions for modern accounting methods which have long been recommended by the Municipal Finance Officers Assn. Pueblo, Colo. has adopted similar provisions. The most important features of the Joplin and Pueblo plans are:

All accounts are kept on an "accrual basis"—which means that revenues are marked on the books as income when tax notices go out, and expenditures are noted as soon as an order is placed.

No funds may be paid out unless the order has the approval of the department or agency head, the director of finance, and the city manager.

A city official is to be held personally liable and subject to removal from office for making unauthorized expenditures.

"Testing—"



In The Editor's Mail Bag

WHO'S FOR CLASSICS?

EUGENE—(To the Editor—Signor Antonacci should have no real trouble in assessing the reason for the Baker Drug Store on 3rd and Burnside in Portland being such a good place for the sale of his Mentor line of pocket books if he will but remember the character of the people who inhabit those parts from time to time.

Firstly, if I remember correctly, there are some tattooing establishments in the locality. Tattooing spells sailors, for sailors are the traditional patrons of such arts as are vended in these places. Sailors used to be at sea for much longer periods than they are now—adays, but, I daresay, their reading matter hasn't changed too much since windjammer days, in which by father used to delight. A sailor who could read, and many of them learned while at sea, usually leaned toward books that would stand a second, a third, and usually dog eared fourth time around the crew. Seems as though a Bible was standard equipment in someone's seabag.

Secondly, a large sign reading "Jesus, The Light of the World," vies successfully with one reading "Star Burlesque, Girls, Girls, Girls, Girls ad infinitum et cetera and stuff." The population in those parts may sometimes be on their uppers, and some of them are undoubtedly rugged characters, but there are more of them who have seen far better days, living on small pensions, relief, odd jobs, and handouts, who know, and enjoy, the better "class" of literature, music, and art. These people are the ones who go hungry to go to the "Met" to hear the great stars from the uppermost balcony. These are the people who understand why the classics are called classics because they do not patronize them for appearances sake but because they are "Food for the Soul."

I knew an old man, when I was somewhat younger, who used to come to my house to play an old French fiddle that was given to me by my Grand Uncle John. The fiddle was broken, irreparably, but not till long after Charlie Eakin had pulled many a tune from its stubborn insides. Charlie Eakin was an old time steamboat engineer on the Willamette River, and spent his declining years on a farm a few miles south of Salem. He fiddled for dances, and at parties, or weddings, but he loved his music above all other interests. I recall his playing as if it were yesterday, and, sometimes, with an apology, for he would always say he couldn't do the tunes justice, he would try a Strauss waltz.

It has been a good many years since Charlie Eakin went to his reward. He was a crackjack "Old Time Fiddler," and played all of the old favorites, reels, hornpipes, waltzes, and such. I haven't heard a real fiddler in years that could begin to play so well the old time style. One thing I will remember was his often apology when he started a "Classic" tune. He couldn't rightly do it justice, "it took a violinist, not a fiddler," he'd say, and then he would play like mad. He always used to give credit to a musician of more talent, and had a deep love of good music. To see "Old Charlie" standing on a street corner in Salem, tattered overalls, elbows akimbo, streams of tobacco juice emanating from all sections, one would never suspect the talent he possessed, or the things he held