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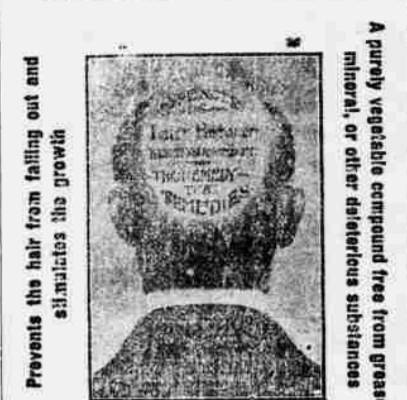


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SENATOR JOHNSON WRITES GAZETTE

Gives Facts and Figures Regarding His Good Roads Bill Which the Governor Vetoes.

Corvallis, Ore.,
March 1st, 1907.
Editor Gazette.

I wish space in your columns to say to my constituents throughout this entire county, that in keeping with my promise as made during the last campaign I did prepare and introduce a bill looking to the systematizing and permanent improvement of our main roads through a system of state aid together with county aid, somewhat in line with the idea advanced by me in my remarks on this subject in said campaign. This provides that the state should aid to the extent of one-third and the county to the extent of another one-third of the cost of such permanent improvements upon our main highways, and that the property holders in the districts along the lines of such main highways so sought to be improved to pay the remaining one-third; provided that such district should include the lands lying two miles on either side of such road to be so improved and one mile beyond its terminus. It also provided that a disinterested board of viewers should be appointed to apportion the benefits and proportionate part such resident land owners should pay of their one-third of the whole cost thereof, also that they should have six years in which to pay the same, one-sixth to be paid each year with interest at a rate to be fixed by the county court but which should in no instance exceed six per cent; and also provided that a majority of the resident land owners must petition the county court before any such permanent road building could be undertaken and thus be made a charge against their lands for one-third of such cost. There are many other splendid features and safeguards throughout the bill and I am sure if I had the space to fully explain it that there could be all, in fact I have yet to find the first one who does not approve it when they thoroughly understand its provisions. But while I was forced to sacrifice the greater part of my time during the entire session to this measure in order to secure its passage, and was thus prevented from giving some other matters the attention that they should have had at my hands and in many instances such time as I should have liked to have given them, still I thought and still think this measure of such great importance to our people in general and to the upbuilding of our state and especially to the welfare and advancement of our farming classes to whom we in this state owe our ultimate prosperity, we being an agricultural and stock-growing state as we are, that it was my duty when once undertaking to father such an important measure, to devote if necessary my whole and undivided attention to it even though it should mean that I must sacrifice individual effort in all other matters in order to secure its passage. And acting along these lines I was unable to accomplish much else with the exception of looking after the interests of our great state institution the "State Agricultural College" of which we are all proud.

But I must confess that I am greatly disappointed and personally feel hurt to see the governor veto this measure (Senate Bill No. 96) not so much on account of my personal effort but on account of the great loss to our people and the state in general by the further postponing of this most needed forward step in permanent road building; and while I was in an indirect way threatened with this veto I could

not think that finally it would be forthcoming from none other than purely political reasons and I submit that when his reasons are carefully considered that there is nothing left except the one he has been good enough to give me over his own signature, to-wit: "the partisan spirit displayed by the legislature in trenching upon the prerogatives of the Executive, etc." In further explanation I wish to here submit a part of an extended editorial appearing in Thursday's Portland Telegram showing the view taken of this matter by our metropolis and we all know that this state aid would fall heaviest upon Multnomah county:

Before the Legislature met there was a glimmer of hope that some substantial advance would be made in good-roads law making. The hope proved to be but a glimmering, however. Evidently the time was not ripe. What the Legislature attempted to do in this direction the Governor, on the score of economy, has annulled by his veto. Oregon has yet to take the real initiative in this important activity, affecting its material prosperity.

The good roads propaganda, like that of civic improvement, and other kindred efforts toward the broader public advancement, progresses but slowly in the Pacific Northwest. Perhaps it is true that we are doing as well along these lines as one can reasonably expect, but the readily appreciable utility and profit which lie in good roads distinguish this movement from the others. To become effective, however, the good roads idea must become a subject for more thorough education. This duty devolves largely upon the Oregon Good Roads Association. But from every other source, where there is information to impart, or new light to be shed on methods of procedure that will bring about permanent improvement of the highways, there should be hearty co-operation.

With this purpose in mind The Telegram respectfully calls attention to the fact that in a number of Eastern States, notably in New York, the construction and maintenance of good roads has become a matter of most important concern. There has been discussion, public education in the premises and action that has brought forth fruit amply compensating. It has been demonstrated beyond cavil that whatever the cost, the game is worth the candle.

They have in New York what is known as the Higbee-Armstrong road law, enacted in 1898. The chief feature of this law is a state bonding proposition, and the expenditure of the money so obtained in conjunction with established proportionate contributions by the towns and counties, the money to be used for the construction of high-class macadamized roads. Under the operation of this law 692 miles of such road have already been built and comprehensive plans are entertained for building some 7000 miles of the same class of highway by the expenditure of \$50,000,000, made available by vote of the people, authorizing the issue of state bonds to that amount. The roads already built are the strongest arguments for the continuance of the work. Farmers have found that they could drive with triple the load that could be hauled over the imperfect highway. There is an actual saving of two-thirds the cost of wagon transportation, to say nothing of the gain in social comforts, in facilities for educating children, in contact with the world through more expeditious mail delivery and in the enhanced attractiveness and opportunities of life generally.

New York is in the lead in the practical working out of this good roads problem; but that state is by no means alone. Pennsylvania has arranged for the expenditure of more than \$7,000,000 in the next six years; and state aid and co-operation in the construction of good roads have been declared for in seventeen other states. Oregon, first through education of the people, and then by the popular judgement considerably expressed, should join the procession. The need is great. We are not as rich as the older Eastern states, but the principle applies just the same. Our activity in this very material line of progress can be commensurate with our means; bearing in mind that it is only fair justice should bear its share of the burden, as it will reap its share of the reward.

There has been a strenuous effort to gain National aid in the good roads movement. When a majority of the states in the Union have shown a practical

manner that the value of good roads is appreciated, National aid will follow in logical sequence. For the benefit of the country at large, which means the prosperity of all sections; and, in the selfish view, more particularly for Oregon's advantage, the people of this state can do nothing better than to give this good roads proposition careful study. Considered as a matter of public advantage good roads is a synonym for good sense.

Further, permit me to say that the reasons given by his Excellency for this veto fall far short of a justification for such action, considering the immense importance and the great demand for some systematized and permanent road building throughout our growing state and when we all, who have given this question serious thought and study, know that we cannot hope to accomplish anything of a permanent character along this line until such time as we shall meet the demand fairly and squarely and extend some state aid as an encouragement to our several counties to do likewise and in turn to thus not only encourage but to enable the residents living along our main thoroughfares to permanently improve same in a systematized way.

Quoting from the dispatches the governor gives the following four reasons for his vetoes to-wit: "That the county and state officers are given no initiative in the matter; it would very likely result in an accumulation of money in the treasury; the local debt certificates are non-taxable and this legislature made many large appropriations without bringing any new subjects under taxation."

Replying briefly to these permit me to say, first, in the judgment of myself and many others who have given this road building much thought, this encouragement in way of extension of state aid should be held out to those communities throughout the state where the citizens will show an interest to the extent of taking the initiative and thus offering to pay their part of the expense, in fact if the bill should have been so drawn as to force this permanent building of roads upon the people and partly at their expense it is not hard to imagine what a howl there would have gone up from many sections of the state and further that there would have been no chance whatever of my having secured its passage and with such a provision how long would it have taken our dear Governor to have decided upon his veto message, having his ear to the ground as he does continuously; and there can be no question but that the people would have taken the initiative under the bill as drawn.

I have been informed of at least four sections in two of our valley counties that had made application immediately upon hearing of the passage of the bill, thinking it was to go into effect immediately, instead of January 1, 1908. Second, the question of non-action and accumulation of money in the treasury, can be but the judgement of one man (the Governor) as against a great majority of the entire 90 members of the legislature and I am only sorry that the law could not have been allowed to stand and be given a trial when in my judgment it would have been proven that applications would have been forthcoming for such state aid even far in excess of the amount so provided. Third, true the local debt certificates provided for issuance to serve in payment of the property holders one-third of the cost, same to run six years, one-sixth payable each year, were to be non-taxable, but the interest such certificates were to bear was to be fixed by the several county courts at time of issue, taking into consideration this provision of their being non-taxable also the fair and moving rate at the time and with the further saving clause that under no circumstances should said rate be more

than six per cent. So I submit that this is no excuse whatever as the lessened rate to the farmer and builder of the road acting as a further inducement to them to take the initiative much more than offsets the tax which might have accrued to the counties, but which must have been paid in the end by the people in additional interest paid upon their certificates. And fourth, while it is true this legislature did make many large appropriations, still I submit that this is no good excuse for the indiscriminate wield of the ax upon bills of such vital importance to the very life and upbuilding of our farm homes throughout our state and the upbuilding of our state as well, especially so when there has been such an extraordinary demand for some legislation looking to the systematic and permanent improvement of our miserable roads and further when we have been holding road conventions all over our state during the past few years trying to educate our people up to a full realization of the need and advisability of a forward step along these lines. And too, when all who have been taking the lead in this effort had approved this bill of mine and further it had the qualified approval of the entire press of the state and of the people wherever they were made familiar with its provisions. Hence why the veto? And if it was to be vetoed why did he not return it prior to final adjournment with his veto message as it was on his desk two full days before adjournment, and thus have permitted its further consideration.

Was there any kick on the part of the tax payer against this provision for the extension of state aid? If so, most surely this would have been reflected through the columns of the press of the state, but no such kick came. The truth is that all objections on his Honor's part are but subtleties, for I happen to know. And in fact have it from his own lips that there was and is another, and the all prevailing reason to-wit:

That the bill provides for the appointment of the state engineer at a small salary, to have general supervision of the work and its systematization. Also a commission to help in this systematizing and proper distribution of such state aid, said commission to serve without pay, however, by the State Board, consisting of the Governor, Secretary of State and State Treasurer, and the threat of a veto of my bill came to me even before the final passage, hence, before the governor could have known of the good or the bad features of the bill, except that he did know that it did not provide for these appointments by His Honor solely. And I may add further that my standing up and being counted in the republican column throughout the session proved very distasteful to his excellency which he was not at all slow to express through those close to him, and in two instances directly.

I am very sorry a good measure of state wide importance and one for which I worked very earnestly had to thus meet its fate at the hands of the governor for this small and purely political reason mingled no doubt with more or less personal spite against its author. However, it is a sense of satisfaction to feel that I did my best in the promises and am satisfied with the record we will let time answer as to the wisdom of the Governor's action.

Respectfully,
A. J. JOHNSON,
Senator for Benton Co.

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A dispatch from Washington dated Feb. 28, says:
The American National Red Cross forwarded by cable today to China \$55,000 for the relief of the famine sufferers of that country. The entire remittance was made today from Dr. Louis Kloppsch, editor and proprietor of the Christian Herald, who states:
"The advices which by letter and cable, have reached this office show such a distressing condition of affairs in China that the Herald feels impelled to put forth a mighty effort to stay the ravages of starvation, plague and death to the full extent of his ability."
The needs of the Chinese are set out in the following cable dispatch to the Christian Herald, New York, from the editor of the North China News:
"The distribution of relief to famine sufferers by the missionary committee, with headquarters at Chin Kang Si, is proceeding smoothly. It is recognized, however, as only a drop in the ocean of need. The area of the affected district is enlarging as winter advances and destitution is longer drawn out. Daily the number of deaths is increasing and in the interior are thousands of deaths that will never be

reported.
"Authorities are sending many refugees back to the localities from whence they came, promising individual relief. The trouble is so few have homes to which they can return, floods having destroyed houses as well as crops.
Isolated riots are reported, but all are unimportant."

Real Estate Transfers.
W H Ish to E McLennan et al 320 acres s of Philomath; \$10.
United States to John Colmar, Patent, 165 acres w of Bellefontain.
B I Carey to H Hirschberg, 112 1/2 s w of Philomath; \$10.
F W Holmes to F L Holmes, 20 a near Albany; \$1.
State of Oregon to A Knapp, 324 a n w of Philomath; \$405.30.
A Knapp to J D Garman, 324 a n w of Corvallis; \$2500.
United States to W J Warfield, Patent, 162 a in Alsea.
J L Osburn to E J Harrington, lot 9, block 3, Co Add Corvallis; \$450.
E J Moore to J A Harper, lot 5, block 6, Co Add Corvallis; \$900.
C C Huff to R L Glass, 8 1/2 a n w of Philomath; \$1.

The Gazette for Job Work!