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THE TAX LEVY.

Judge Goodall Discusses the Subject and Corrects a few Misrepresentations.

UNION, OREGON, JAN. 1, 1890.
EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:—
I wish to beg of you a little space to reply to an article in last issue of the La Grande Gazette, concerning the tax levy of Union county for the year 1889.

Said article commenced by saying that the tax levy will be about 28 mills. How the writer of the article learned what the levy is or would be, he did not explain. The county court of Union county has not yet been informed on that subject, though it is pretty generally expected that the state levy will be unusually high, as the last legislature was very liberal with the people's money; but so far as I know the state board has not fixed the state levy yet.

The Gazette asserts that the present levy will be within two mills of that made by Judge Alberson, (30 mills) when the total assessment was only \$600,000, leaving the inference that that was the only levy of 30 mills that had ever been made in the county, nor did he state the fact that at the time Judge Alberson made this 30 mill levy Union county scarce owned a bridge or road; that nearly all the bridges and roads in the county, such as they were, belonged to toll companies.

The writer of said article states that a little over two-thirds of this levy of 30 mills is for county purposes, and says that any one attempting to explain why a fund of \$50,000 is necessary for the legitimate expenses of this county for one year will have a job on his hands, and that there is a motive in this levy not hard to guess; that the present county board is favorable to retaining the county seat at Union, and this levy was made to handicap La Grande, etc.; that such a tax levy can have no other purpose, as the county is hardly more than nominally in debt, and asks what is a county fund of between \$50,000 and \$60,000 to be raised for just at this time? and answers his own question by saying, certainly not to defray legitimate court expenses and officers' fees; that this fund is sufficient to pay all such expenses and build a dozen expensive bridges, besides that this levy is simply a bare-faced attempt to hoodoo the tax-payers.

Well now I fear the Gazette man is the worst hoodoo individual in the county. I wonder if this is not the first instance of a county board being charged with making an unnecessary and high levy for political capital. What has all this got to do with the county seat question? I thought La Grande proposed to furnish new county buildings gratis. If the writer of this article had informed himself concerning the subject treated he need not have made a donkey of himself.

Now as this is a matter in which the tax-payers are interested, and the article referred to is calculated to deceive, if not corrected, I wish to point out some of its most glaring errors. First, as to the county being "scarcely more than nominally in debt." I most sincerely wish that was true. I refer the writer to the county clerk's last financial exhibit, which I have not before me, and which the Gazette man surely could not have read or else his readers had not. That exhibit made the county's indebtedness at considerable more than the present levy for county purposes, even if his figures were correct, which they are not, as I will show presently.

The total taxable property of this county as returned by the assessor for the year 1889, is \$2,830,760, not \$3,000,000 as he has it. The tax levy on this for county purposes is 16 mills, which is not, I believe, a little over two-thirds of 28 as he has it. This levy of sixteen mills, if it could be all collected, would raise a fund of \$45,202.16, but as a matter of course a considerable portion will not be collected. Of the tax levy of 1888 \$2,118.16 has been lost already, stricken off by the county court, and there is nearly \$4,000 on the delinquent tax list yet.

Now, as to the statement, or inference at least, that the levy of 30 mills made by Judge Alberson was the highest levy ever made and the only levy made of 30 mills, I find without going back farther in the history of the county than 1876 that the levy for that year

and the two years following was 30 mills and the school tax then was only 4 mills, whereas since 1886 that has been 5 mills. I suppose the Gazette man is aware that the school tax is fixed by statute, and that the county court can only make the levy. The levy for county purposes in 1876 was 20 mills; in 1877-8, 19 mills; in 1879 it was 17 mills and we had very little to show for it in the way of county roads and bridges, then, either. The tax levy for county purposes for the year 1889 is just one mill more than for the year 1888, and that was made necessary by the extraordinary heavy expense incurred in the last year for roads and bridges, which appeared to the court to be demanded by the necessities of the county. The court has had constructed fourteen new bridges within the last year, besides the bridge over Wallowa river, for which Union county pays one-half, besides repairing old bridges at quite a considerable expense, in addition to which the court has appropriated more money to the improvement of the roads of the county than has been expended for that purpose in any previous year. I find by reference to the records of the county that since January 1, 1889 there has been issued in county warrants for road and bridge purposes a sum which added to the cost of a bridge just finished in Eagle valley, for which warrants have not yet been issued, aggregating \$26,350.79, a sum far in excess of the expenditures of the county for a like purpose for any previous year in the history of the county. While the wisdom of the county court in making such heavy expenditures for this purpose may be questioned, by some, the court certainly acted in good faith in the matter. Quite a number of the old bridges had become dangerous and were replaced by a better class of bridges, and a number of bridges were built in new places where they were much needed. A number of appropriations were made in the last year for the improvement of roads in answer to petitions of the tax-payers, and more road tools were bought than usual, such as plows, scrapers, etc., which were much needed.

I can assure the Gazette man that the subject of making the levy for county purposes was considered at considerable length and pretty fully discussed, pro and con, and finally made, as before stated, in view of the stern facts set forth in this article, and I can assure all concerned that the county seat question had nothing whatever to do with it. I do not believe that it was thought of at the time by any member of the court.

While I believe it is a fact, as stated by the Gazette man, that the county court, or at least a majority of it, are opposed in sentiment, to a removal of the county seat, at this time, and that it would be unwise and entirely unnecessary. We, or at least I am perfectly willing to leave the question to the free expression of the legal voters of the county at the polls, and I must confess that I would be completely at a loss to devise a scheme for the county court, to influence that vote if they wished. O. P. GOODALL.

SANGER SIFTINGS.

Miss Legore formerly of Indian creek, is visiting her mother in Sanger. Mr. Scott Long has returned to Sanger, after ten days' absence. He looks as pleasing as ever.

A masquerade dance was given at Sanger on New Year's eve. It was a grand success. Big creek was well represented, and it was enjoyed by all present.

Born, to the wife of Thomas Allen, December 30, 1889, a son. Wife and baby getting along nicely.

Only four feet of snow and still snowing. A good water season next summer is expected by the placer miners.

Mr. Sam George is preparing to open up a placer mine on Eagle creek, about four miles from Sanger. He will run a hydraulic pipe. We wish him success.

Mr. Riley Dean has returned to Sanger. He is a first-class miner and we are glad to see him with us once more.

Sanger has three stores, about fourteen families and no saloon. This is speaking well for Sanger. Everybody is busy and no idle men in camp if they want to work.

WASHINGTON.

An Interesting Letter from Our Regular Correspondent at the Capital.

WASHINGTON, D. C. Dec. 27, 1889.
EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:—
If a "green Christmas" be repugnant to the idea of merry-making, what must be said of a Christmas day that is so balmy that overcoats have to be discarded, and the air is heavy and moist and everything one touches is sticky from it? That was the sort of Christmas day Washington was favored with for this year of grace.

The family arose betimes in the White House and by seven o'clock the wild shrieks of childish delight rang through the corridors of the mansion. There never was a family that evinced stronger affection between all its members. Mrs. Harrison's mourning over her sister, Mrs. Lord, is tempered by none of that fashionable philosophy that curbs sisterly affection as it exists in these advanced days. The President's affection for his grandchildren comes as near idolatry as his nature allows. So you may be sure that stockings were filled in the orthodox manner and there was a Christmas tree loaded with the usual presents. President Harrison, learning with probably little regret that there would be no service at his church, the church of the Covenant, spent all day with the children, assisting in their amusements. There were picture books and dolls and cars and wicker gables.

The only member of the cabinet absent from the city on Christmas day was John W. Vanamaker, and the only one to attend church was Secretary Tracey. All the cabinet families spent the day very quietly, save that Secretary Rusk had such of the Wisconsin congressman as happened to be in town at dinner in the evening.

Quite a number of congressmen spent the day in the city, not feeling able to spare the time to go home. A great many, including Senators Chandler and Ingalls, had their entire families with them.

The ancient social argument about the order of precedence in the receiving line at the White House receptions has revived for the winter, and is now being waged with all the weapons of wordy warfare. The occasion is found in Mrs. Harrison's appointment of her daughter, Mrs. McKee, to represent her at the New Year's reception, as she herself will be obliged to be absent in view of the recent death of Mrs. Scott-Lord. The disappointed affirm that the place of honor in the enforced absence of the President's wife belongs to the Vice-President's wife. They go further in saying that Mrs. McKee's husband having no place in official life, she is not entitled to the recognition.

Another row is raised by the provision for receiving the judges of the supreme court of the District of Columbia with the justices of the United States superior court, while senators and representatives cool their heels in waiting. The difference between our tweedle-dee and tweedle-dum is very strongly marked in our democratic country.

On the last train to carry people north for the Christmas holidays was Senator Everts. Amid a merry chattering throng of young people, the old man crouched far down in his chair, silent and listless. On the hook above his head, dangled his ancient silk hat, looking more dilapidated than ever by contrast with the elegant surroundings. There is something pathetic in the picture of a tired and feeble old man going home to a Christmas dinner that his stomach will not allow him to eat. Senator Everts has aged terribly in a year. The temples have wasted to the last degree, the complexion is like parchment and the lack-lustre eyes take no notice of surroundings, save when he is in conversation. He will sit by the hour buried in a big chair, with his legs crossed and his right hand thrust into his trousers pocket, without a movement. With the exception of "Pig Iron" Kelley, the father of the house, he shows his age more than any man in congress. And yet in that New York office of his he will spend half the holiday season planning the ablest legal battles known to the profession.

It is understood that President Harrison will send to congress on its convening after the holidays a special

message on the silver question. In it he will take the ground held by Secretary Windom, recommending the stoppage of the coinage of silver dollars and the issue of silver certificates upon bullion to be deposited with the government.

TELOCASET TATTTLINGS.

January, 6, 1890.

Finest sleighing we ever "seed."

We have two or three more weeks of school.

Frank Leavitt, of La Grands, is visiting friends in Pyle Canyon.

Bob Tombleson is shipping some Oregon furs to his father, in Norfolk, England. We are well advertised in lots of ways.

John Cates is able to be up and around again, after a long siege with inflammatory rheumatism.

John Hanson and wife are stopping at her father's C. H. Prescott, at present. John had the misfortune to sprain his ankle, badly, in North Powder, a few days ago.

We have a telegraph office, now at Telocaset. The name of the city, is also displayed on a board, to the gratification of many curious passengers. Growing little by little. So did Jerusalem.

Several bands of horses and some cattle are on the hills in this vicinity. Stock owners should take a tumble, as grass is a scarce article on this range.

The dancing craze has subsided. The dancers are brooding with miser care over thick, aching craniums, and empty purses. Schools are running again, after two long weeks of vacation and the light-toed youngsters ply their brains over the text-book, instead of worrying about that "girl o' mine."

W. A. Cates and family were called to Baker City last week, on the death of Hon. L. B. Ison. They have the profound sympathy of all who knew that good man. Mrs. Ison is a sister of Mr. Cates. The vacancy left by the death of Judge Ison is one hard to fill as acceptably as he filled it.

A younger brother of Lewis McMaugh, arrived here last week, from Yamhill county. The young man seems to be well pleased with the appearance of this part of the state, and we hope he will remain to be counted as one of us.

Charley and Robert Tombleson had three valuable horses killed by the train a few days since. The railroad company is not the best hand in the world to pay for stock killed by its trains, and persons unlucky enough to be thus rid of their stock do not receive half value.

John Brooke, our genial neighbor, is now in Nottingham, England. Jack will come back to Oregon in the Spring, a married man. He expects to live at Mount Tabor, near Portland. We wish them all the happiness and wealth and joy that mankind is heir to. May the cares of life rest gently on their shoulders.

This kind of weather is hard on noses. It reminds a man of his many tender spots, every time he sallies forth into the two-below-zero-air. It is bracing. Our ears are our best friends. Also our fingers call on us for recognition pretty often. He who has no work to do this kind of weather, is lucky above all men!

Men in this vicinity who disposed of their sheep interests in the fall, are now glad they did so. Feed is not in abundance, generally, and this kind of weather is heavy on hay. It is thought we will have the heaviest snow-fall known for a good many years past. Lots of it makes good crops, so let 'er come!

The snow at the mills above North Powder is just three feet deep. The loggers went up last week to prospect, but found the logs covered too deep to be skidded easily, and returned, decided to wait till nature in her processes shall have reduced her wealth of the "Beautiful Snow."

The snow bird flits,
And the sleigh bell jingles,
Hurrah for the snow, ho, ho!
Our noses sting,
And the girls car tangles,
Hurrah for the snow, ho, ho!
SIR SINGLE.

"A PLEA FOR SCHOOLS."

Huffman's Argument—A Tribute to Some Glorious Names.

EDITOR SCOUT:—
As Mr. Moore's time is too precious to be wasted in newspaper correspondence, it would not be courteous in me to infringe on him, but however much of frivolity and absurdity I may advance, in Moore's way of looking at it, just remember that nineteen summers are not sufficient to acquire knowledge and enlightenment of such magnitude that is necessary to cope with a gentleman who has graduated at an eastern "college" and who has made the subject of defense of the old dogmas a practice for years.

His first adventure is to make the assertion that "I must needs again take up my pen, even though but for a few thoughts." This is very common with religious men. A few (and very few) thoughts at a time are all they entertain. They scarcely ever wander far out into the fields of thought. Like the old navigators, they hug the shore.

The position I took in my first article, that is, that sectarian schools should go, I still stand by, and by saying "down with them" I mean that the present age should cleanse itself of all the old notions, as the past age has; I mean that the rising generation should be awake to the needs of our people, in establishing for them a free and unfettered system of national institutions; I mean that it is the imperative duty of every man who has the power, and manhood, to aim at the total separation of religion, as it is to-day, and education; I mean that we should put men at the head of our government who will have sufficient interest in our public welfare to strive to lay the foundation of an imperishable superstructure of national enlightenment, free from all sectarian bent, and warp, free from priesthood, free from the dogmas that are taught, and of a character that shall serve all classes with equal charity. Large appropriations are made yearly for useless and non-beneficial purposes. Let these be cut off, and our boasted surplus, which offers so much temptation to our slick fingered politicians, be used in laying the corner stone of the American system of education—and not the religious system. The state tax at present is even heavy enough, and a handsome system of state educational institutions could be started without imposing a mill more tax.

Set before our legislature the fact of our need; send men there who are not afraid of the votes of the religious element, and let him say to the body, "Let these useless little appropriations cease and let us turn our eyes to the citizen's interest."

In pointing to the three institutions of liberal bent, I do so with pride, and say again that these three are just ushering in the stars of Freethought that shall shine in the azure heavens of American free education in the "good time coming." I say again with all sincerity that the age of free institutions is just dawning; that the age of liberal education is just spreading its peaceful wings over this fair land of ours! And I say, further, that Liberals as a class are supporters and maintainers of schools. I point to every public school house in America as evidence of this fact. Our public school system is a liberal system throughout. Religion is not taught there, and children are taught the practical things in life—to know how to set valuation on commodity, how to compare, and the fundamental rules of business. All we need in the way of establishing a better system is aid from the state, that higher and more thorough courses may be taught in our Liberal public schools.

Infidels are opening up the old system. It is through their efforts that bible reading in public schools has nearly ceased, and by the time we are as old in America as Christianity is, grant the indulgence that we can produce as many learned men, as many colleges, as many lights in the national arena, as many noble and majestic monuments of intelligence and thought, as does the Christian America to-day.

James Lick did not stamp his gift with his peculiar belief. He did not

Continued on last page.

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