

# Polk County Observer

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HUGHES AND FAIRBANKS.

## RE-OPENING OF THE SCHOOLS.

The reopening of the public schools marks the ending of the long summer vacation and the commencement of another term of studious application by children and young folks. To many of the latter the resumption of school seems like work, and some may even deplore the necessity of returning to books, recitations, drills and discipline. Yet it really is a rare privilege which is thus afforded to the young people of this day and age, an opportunity which they should appreciate and gladly embrace, instead of shunning and regarding it as something of a hardship.

Educational training is what makes men and women intelligent, efficient and capable of assuming the real duties and responsibilities of life and citizenship, and a lack of early educational training is a handicap that invariably is deplored by those who have failed to secure this great and immensely valuable advantage. Of course there are some who manage to get along and even succeed, despite the lack of an early educational training in schools, but usually it will be found that such persons have managed to educate themselves, through persistent application and much laborious effort, and their condition would have been still better, and their success greater, if they could have enjoyed the educational opportunities open to practically every American boy and girl today.

And even if school attendance is regarded as something in the nature of work, it is work worth while, for it brings returns which often are overlooked. Educators, for instance, maintain that each boy and each girl who finishes a high school course virtually "earns" an average of \$9 a day for every day that the pupil attends school. This is computed from official statistics showing the average earnings of un-educated laborers, and of persons who graduate from high schools, the latter, in the course of an average life, actually being compensated at a higher rate sufficient to pay them \$9 a day for every day of school work.

Nine dollars a day is pretty good wages, and if the boys and girls could be made to understand that this is their reward for school "work," they would be less inclined to lament their lot and more inclined to pitch in and do their best to master school studies. Even this, however, is only a minor part of the compensation for school work, for the latter helps to make better men and women, who are of more use to themselves and to the state, and who learn how to live and enjoy life at the same time they are gathering the rudiments of education.

## GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP.

There is a widespread feeling that the eight-hour law which has been adopted by congress has advanced the cause of government ownership of the railroads by many years, and may result in causing this question to become a live political issue within a short time. The principle established by the enactment of this law is certainly far reaching, for it is an assumption of federal authority over the wages paid to the employees of interstate carriers, no less than over their hours of employment. And having gone thus far congress cannot stop, but must proceed to exercise this authority in further and larger regulations, until it logically leads to a final decision on the long discussed question of government ownership.

As a matter of fact it would appear that sentiment in favor of government ownership has been growing steadily for a number of years, and it is a notable fact that a number of prominent railway heads, during the past few years, have expressed the opinion that government ownership of the rail system is bound to come. There is still a good deal of

opposition to this step, however, and had it not been for the recent strike crisis and hurried action of congress in adopting an eight-hour law, it is probable that many years might elapse before this question became a live and leading issue. Close observers now claim the situation has been entirely changed by this revolutionary eight-hour law, and they insist that the problem of government ownership looms immediately ahead.

This may be so, and if it is so the only thing for the American people to do is to face this problem and settle it, in a way that promises to best protect the rights and interests of the public and promote the welfare of the nation at large. Of course there are many angles and phases of the situation which first must be given careful consideration, but after all this problem is no more difficult or complicated than others which have faced this nation and have been solved in a wise and satisfactory manner. Like many other problems, moreover, the solution of this one will doubtless appear more easy after it is once tackled with seriousness. Already the government ownership proposal is not the bugaboo it once was, and in time the actual accomplishment may come about simply as a matter of course.

## HEALTH ABOVE ALL.

What profiteth a man that he gain the whole world yet lose his health? Naturalists say that long ago the prehistoric waters were infested with a species of enormous shark which finally became extinct by reason of the workings of its voracious appetite. Thus nature eliminates the over-fed.

The desire for ease of life and plentiful diet is universal and is the great stimulus of man and animals alike. When man becomes greedy and takes more ease and food and drink than is his share, nature discards him.

In the race for power and place, for ease of circumstance and relief from the stimulus of hunger, the modern man is apt to forget that unless he is careful of his body he will soon be made to suffer for the infraction of nature's inexorable physical law. With the loss in body tone comes an equal loss in mental acuity and the brain which for a time was able to operate despite the complaints of an over-fed, under-exercised, self-poisoned body, stops working.

Statisticians have discovered that the mortality rate of persons in the United States over 45 years of age is increasing. The strenuous life of today is not alone responsible for this. Lack of health-giving exercise, superfluity of diet, lack of restoring sleep, over-stimulation, the high pressure of the race for power, wealth and position, plus physical neglect—these bring early decay. The goal is reached, wealth is amassed, honor, position and power are just being grasped when the apple of accomplishment turns to the ashes of dissolution. The brilliant mind becomes clouded, the steady hand is no longer accurate, the eye which once gazed fearlessly on the whole world is dimmed and it is not long before the final break-up occurs. All of this was entirely preventable.

Other things being equal it is the man who leads the well-balanced life who lasts the longest, whose work to the end is uniformly the best, he who neither over-works nor over-plays, neither over-eats, over-drinks, nor over-sleeps, he who maintains a standard of simple healthy diet in moderation, who offsets mental work with physical recreation, who is as honest with his own body as he is with his own business. When success comes to such a one his physical and mental condition is such that he can enjoy in peace of mind and contentment of body the fruits of his labors.

The regulations of U. S. Public Health Service state: "It is the duty of officers to maintain their physical as well as their professional fitness. To this end they shall be allowed time for recreation and study whenever their official duties will permit." If the government regards it as essential that its sanitary experts shall be safeguarded in this way, is it not equally important to every citizen that he similarly maintain a high standard of physical integrity?

## WHY NOT WRITE BETTER.

"I have just spent ten minutes personally trying to decipher a signature at the end of a letter of considerable importance," said a business man the other day. "I have taken the letter into the office of an associate and interrupted him in the midst of his dictation in order to find out whether he is better at deciphering hieroglyphics than I. He isn't. I have asked my secretary to figure out the scrawl, if possible. He has come in with three possible translations—all different from mine. As a last resort I have been compelled to telephone to the concern with which 'Mr. Scrawler' is associated to find out his name, for I have business reasons for wishing to write to him directly. After tactfully answering several office boy

questions as to my business and my identity I have learned the name of my illegible correspondent. I have wasted nearly an hour and I am decidedly irritated."

The above experience is one that occurs daily in business life. It is an experience that we have all had at some time or other, and there is no reason for it. It causes worry, trouble, delay and expense. Legible writing seems a small thing in itself. In its power to save or make work it is often an important factor.

President Wilson, we are told, welcomes the efforts of the republican leaders to make a campaign issue of the eight-hour law. Another case, it would seem, where everyone is satisfied.

It is to be hoped that Henry Ford's new tractor will not mark the going of the horse. The horse will still be needed to pull the auto out of the mud in Oregon.

"General" Coxe of Coxe army fame has filed papers as an independent candidate for United States senator from Ohio. Probably hopes to catch the hobo vote in that state.

The "big show" will be staged just six weeks from today.

## OTHERS' OPINIONS.

**Good Roads Spirit Marching On.**  
 The Dallas Chronicle—Coo county, in the southwestern part of Oregon, furnishes an object lesson in the matter of sensible road building. For years its only highways were the ocean, via Coos bay and its rivers and inlets. Heavily timbered, its first roads were mere trails, but eventually the heavy expense of opening roads through the forest had to be undertaken, not to take into account the grading of hills and building of bridges.

For the first few years the work was of the customary haphazard character and then the farmers woke up to the fact that it didn't pay. There is a rainfall of 65 inches in that section, most of it during the winter and the road problem in the mountain districts and on the low lands was a difficult one. At first the roads were largely corduroy; later the rock highway and this was succeeded by the plank road. About five years ago, the progressive citizens acknowledged the fact that large sums of money were being expended every year without any permanent highway resulting; that the system of repairing and patching was all wrong.

A campaign for sane road construction was then begun, and a road department was organized with the idea of giving the taxpayers real roads for the money it was taking from him. It is a big county, but they did away with the old system to a great extent, and put the work under the direction of a practical road builder. During this time they have been expending more than \$200,000 a year in permanent roads; the old supervisor system has been relegated to the scrap heap and in their places are patrolmen (on the system adopted in British Columbia long ago) whose business it is to patrol sections of the different highways, make small repairs, see that the drainage is kept up to the standard and report any work that cannot be done with the equipment provided. In this way chuck holes are kept filled up and mud puddles are drained out so the roads will not cut up.

Coos county has 635 miles of roadways, and this method of scientific construction gave such excellent results that last May the county voted \$360,000 bonds and levied enough additional so that next spring they will have a fund of nearly \$600,000 available for permanent road construction.

The story of Columbia county had percolated to every part of Coos county, but they have an intelligent and economic system of expenditure and the misfortunes or mismanagement in Columbia county in no way deterred them and the bond issue carried overwhelmingly.

They have only 13,000 population, but they have the right idea of the road question and the nerve to put it through. More than that, five years of scientific construction and maintenance has convinced the most skeptical that good roads pay for themselves. The good roads movement is moving with tremendous strides and if the voters of Wasco county will take up the consideration of it with open minds and a determination to look into it from all sides, there is no doubt the economy of construction, the saving in maintenance, and the lessened cost of travel and hauling will be so apparent that there will be only little opposition to bonding.

**John Happy Improving.**  
 John Happy, the Pioneer boy who was injured recently, is convalescent.

**Rents Rickreall Farm.**  
 Louis Husser has rented his Rickreall farm to J. N. Woods for a term of years, to take effect October 1. Mr. Husser and Miss Marguerite Husser will move to Dallas to live. For a time Mr. Husser will not engage in any business.

Dayton has decided to hold a corn show in November.

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