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The Herald

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RICHARD B. SWENSON
 Editor & Publisher

MONMOUTH, OREGON

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Monmouth Meditations

About Motives and A Few Incidentals

"Back of the Recall—What?" asked the Independence Enterprise last week in 12 point type and proceeded to bewail the sorry spectacle of the Herald's sordid selfishness in wishing for Polk county a better name abroad in the state than it has at present. We admit the selfishness in this regard. We have a high opinion of Polk county and its possibilities and are just selfish enough to wish to see it where it belongs—in the forefront of the galaxy of splendid counties that border the Willamette.

Because Judge Robinson refused to be bullied into a willful violation of the statutes, asserts the Enterprise, referring to highway work, he is condemned by the Portland papers, etc. The judge will not work with the highway commission because the commission wishes to violate the law, etc. Next to the courts, the official interpreters of the laws are the state's attorneys, headed by the attorney general. Attorney General Brown advised the commission that it was complying with the law in the point where it disagreed with Judge Robinson. Mr. Brown has since been appointed to the supreme bench and the appointment has been ratified by the voters of the state. Considering his qualifications as an expounder and interpreter of laws, we marvel that the governor and the people of the state in selecting a supreme justice, overlooked the editor of the Enterprise.

Again, the editor of the Enterprise asserts that as regards the routes south from Monmouth and from Independence—"Of course the Herald is not telling its readers that it will cost Polk county many thousand additional dollars the Monmouth way. It is silent in this matter and the soft pedal is used in giving its justification". In this, the Enterprise man, of course, is talking for home consumption. Like the man who wanted to think that blue was pink and kept repeating and reasserting the thing on every occasion, he is trying to make himself and his readers believe an untrue thing by asserting and reasserting its alleged truth. For if there is any one thing the Herald has done, it is to expose the falsity of the assertion above quoted from the Enterprise.

In his testimony before Judge McCourt, Commissioner Booth told of the various ways in which the commission had tried to make peace in Polk county. Notwithstanding the route was longer and would penalize the through traffic by over two miles, he said he favored the Independence route, if as asserted it could be built cheaper. At the time Commissioner Kiddle was appointed, the latter with Mr. Booth went over the two routes and held a meeting with the business men of independence. But when they came to get the engineer's estimate on the two routes they found the Monmouth route was cheaper because the building of a necessary trestle at the crossing of the Luckiamute near Parker

would more than offset the grading of the two hills south of Monmouth.

As to the motive back of the recall—selfishness—as charged by the Enterprise man with some flippancy and considerable ambiguity, we are all in a sense selfish. It is selfish to seek to live, to cultivate the regard of friends, to have rights and to seek to maintain them. We admit selfishness in believing that Monmouth has certain rights and in seeking to maintain them.

At the time of the highway convention in Dallas in 1919 certain projects were set aside for improvement, embracing the main traveled roads of the county. Project one specifically named the road south of Monmouth as a part of it, by way of the Helmick bridge and skirting the Wheeler hill. It was provided the bond money could not be spent on any but the projects specified. When the official notice was issued the other projects were named as adopted, but project one was not described as adopted by the convention. Its description was so worded as to be applicable to a number of routes. This made our road south the only main traveled road in the county not specifically provided for. Rightly or wrongly, we blame Judge Robinson for this omission. To the best of our knowledge he has not denied responsibility.

Were it not for this fact, what ever we might have thought of the controversy with the commission, Monmouth would have kept out of it. As it was we felt we must act to vindicate our rights. Therefore we assisted the commission in its suit as best we could and presented certain facts and papers which had a share in winning for the state. We now feel that the fact of the changed description jeopardizes our rights and as a matter of self protection, we support the recall.

As to this whole controversy, we make bold to express the opinion that Independence is, with its back to the direction of progress, standing in its own light. It is alienating a large section of country that formerly was friendly to it. With good rail and water connections, with its position as terminal of the railroad to the Siletz basin, with an agricultural country adjacent unsurpassed in fertility, with the prestige of long establishment in trade, it is wasting its heritage because it is not broadminded enough to live and let live. Because it can not have its own way in the highway matter, it is willing to throw a monkey wrench into the works to the detriment of the county and section in which it is located. For the sake of a fancied municipal advantage it is willing to defy the public spirited opinion of the people of Western Oregon. Foiled in the achievement of unreasonable demands, it maligns the highway commission, a group of clear minded and able gentlemen, serving the state without pay and seeking to do that only which is for the best good of us all.

Prating of selfishness and sordid motives in others, it would cause every one who travels through the south of the county to go two miles out of his way for a barren achievement that would earn only the obloquy of the travelers whom it inconvenienced.

We might suggest in closing, that if Independence is inclined to meet Monmouth on a fair and just basis, that of the greatest good to the whole section, both cities might begin to achieve some of the growth and development now being withheld from us.

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