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SOMETHING ABOUT OUR COUNTY ROADS

By Mrs. F. D. Fish

The election has come and gone away,

And we have shown that taxes shall not stay.

A stirring road meeting was held at Arago Monday, the 27th, and a good deal of sentiment against more taxes was expressed when W. B. Smith spoke, followed by Chas. L. Kime.

They struck straight from the shoulder and expressed the feelings of the people; they especially touched on the fact that taxes were already too high; in fact so high that many were losing their small places because they could not pay the taxes. It was also spoken of by several about the dearth of improvements made on the farms, because after such high taxes there was nothing left to improve with.

When the ballots were cast there was no doubt in anybody's mind how the people left. Taxes were turned down 81 to 18.

Had the County Court left Road District No. 21 alone and not tried to run us in to pay taxes to benefit the road between Myrtle Point and Bandon and leave out the county seat, our own home town, they might have succeeded in getting a small tax, but they over-stepped themselves when they surreptitiously slid us over without a murmur, "by your leave."

It was never made public to District No. 21 until just before the election, some one outside of the County Court, gave them information that upset the well laid scheme.

District No. 21 was a large, heavy tax paying district, commencing at Lampa and extending up the foot hills and along the south bank to Ithemer Robison's place, and is large enough—without running us through to Myrtle Point—and can pay taxes enough, if judiciously spent, to build us a road, and a road we are bound to have if there can be found any public spirited men in the county to fill the court. If one set won't come through, set them adrift and try again.

May as well spend the money on recalls as to have it squandered without results. Our forefathers fought over-taxation without representation and some of that blood still flows in this generation.

On inquiry I find this is not the first case of this kind. The district across the river from us, commencing at the city limits of Coquille and extending down the north bank of the river—I don't know just how far—was set into district No. 19 in the same manner to run the taxpayers in for paying a tax voted upon them for the building of the North Bank road, again to damage the county seat.

The residents of that section feel just as we do, as if it were an outrage.

I asked one man, "How much does that road benefit you?" His answer was, "Personally none, except in taxes and the knowledge that there is another piece of road in the country." When asked to what extent it affected his taxes, his answer was, "About one hundred and fifty dollars." Think of that, on top of an already too heavy tax burden.

Half or possibly two-thirds of the residents of that section will scarcely ever, if ever, use that North Bank road, and there are those who cannot reach the road except by coming to Coquille first.

Again we find that taxes paid in one district have been appropriated and sent to some other district, where the people have voted a special tax upon themselves and the excuse is, "Those people mean business; they mean to have a road and they need the first consideration."

What man among you would be pleased with an agent of his, if he left a thousand dollars with said agent for him to make certain improvements and upon return, not seeing the improvements, he would say, "Where are those improvements I left orders for you to make and money to make them with?"

"Oh, neighbor so-in-so needed it; he was going to make some improvements, and had some money he could put with yours, and really needed your money, so I let him have it, because, you know, he had more to go with and could make so many more improvements."

Honest, as man to man, would you feel as if your agent was working for your interest?

Certainly not; and money passing through your hands and appropriated for that which it was not intended is nothing short of embezzlement. The money should go to the district where the taxes are paid.

The North Bank road was a necessity and should have been started

have never been on.

This court is not the only one that has fallen to temptation but the public has grown tired. "There comes a time when patience ceases to be a virtue," and the time is now here.

Had the County Courts looked after the roads of the county and improved them steadily, beginning with the foundation instead of being mixed with state and state roads, people coming into Coos county, seeking homes would not go away saying they didn't care to buy where taxes are so high and no roads. Our own young men would not say, "I don't want to own a home here, if I ever buy a place I am going where taxes are not so high or where we get some benefit from them."

When a railroad wants to go through a place a survey is made, a grade struck, and the road built without changing grades, and surveys year after year. They couldn't spend all their money surveying and then try the rails without any foundation under them.

In many places it is just as it is on the river road from Coquille to the Hathaway place, a distance of three miles, there is nothing to grade but the crying need is to fill the road bed first with rock and then a top dressing of gravel; but the rock road would be of small cost, comparatively speaking, to dynamite enough to fill the sunken bed of the road as high as the banks along side of it.

Year after year the only work done is to run a grader over the road leveling it by scraping out the middle of the road, while the outside of the passageway is from six inches to two feet higher than the road bed. No chance for drainage whatever. A few more years of such work and the road will be a canal and all we will need will be a flat boat drawn by a horse on the bank.

To be sure our road law is a little lame inasmuch as every district should have their supervisor sent by the citizens of that district to look after the interests of that district; but instead we depend on three men to look after the roads all over the county and to my knowledge there hasn't one of them set foot on this piece of road for several years.

Had this forty-foot width road on the river bank been kept to its width and also kept in a passable condition there would not have been this ter-



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rific flurry over a state road. We would have had a good road and the state road could have adopted it or gone any way she was a mind to go. That bunch don't care for local conditions. If we stand for economy, efficiency and good roads as has been the slogan of the office seekers for the past few years there is no reason why we shouldn't have each one only that efficiency seems to be lacking. Material for the other two are lying right by your hands

Don't let friction "warm up" your engine

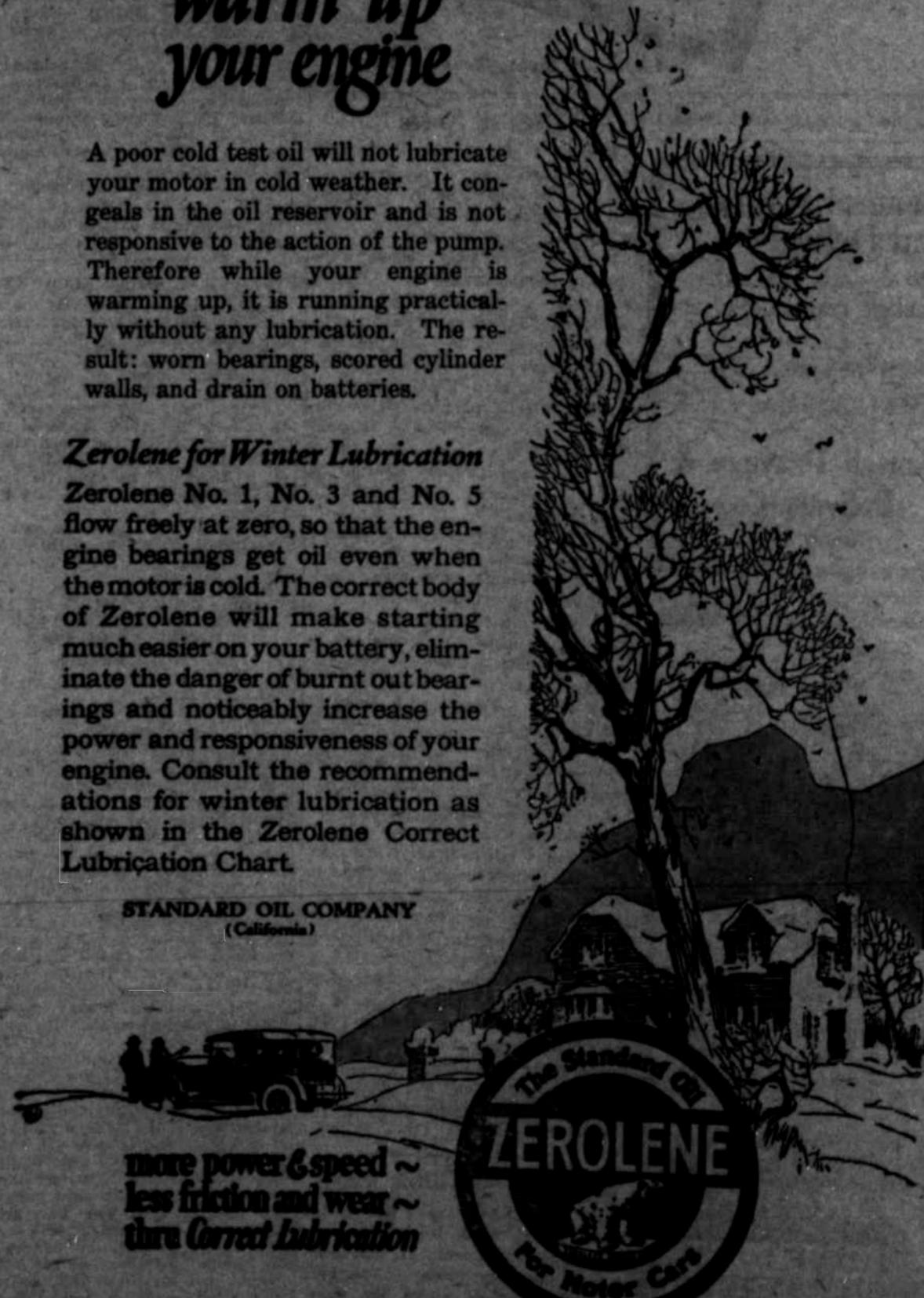
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