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COUNTY OWES CITY

Barrett Alleges \$4,797.57 Due From Illegally Collected Road Tax—Commission Proceedings

At a meeting of the city council Monday evening, C. A. Barrett appeared before that body and made the statement that Umatilla county owes the city of Athena the sum of \$4,797.57 for road tax illegally collected during the years 1905-09 inclusive. Mr. Barrett's statement is based on Section 1, article 5 of the city charter, which exempts the inhabitants of the city from county jurisdiction in the payment of road taxes or the assessment of property within the city for road work, provided the council assesses and causes to be collected annually, from all property owners of the city the sum of \$2.00 for every \$1,000 or property assessed to such person, for city purposes, and in proportion for a greater or less amount than \$1,000 for street purposes. Mr. Barrett read statistics showing that the county collected road tax belonging to the city in 1905 amounting to \$586.89; in 1906, \$841.21; in 1907, \$1,093.97; in 1908, \$1,365.24; in 1909, \$910.76, a total of \$4,797.57. Mayor McEwen referred the matter to the city attorney for investigation.

On roll call, Councilmen Tompkins and Wilson were absent.

Mayor McEwen named April 11 for cleaning up streets and alleys of the city.

The following bills were allowed: C. A. Barrett & Co., nails, \$13.55. Commission water rent, \$54.00. Recorder Richards, salary, \$13.00. Marshal Gholson, salary, \$50.00. Pierson-Parton Co., lights, \$65.00. Athena Truck Co., transfer, \$13.00. McEwen, nails, \$6.00. Hugh Robb, labor, \$20.00. M. Kelley, labor, \$21.25. Will Dobson, labor, \$1.25. Cleve Stanton, labor, \$2.50. Fred Pinkerton, labor, \$8.75. W. H. Lamm, labor, \$7.50.

The Water Commission. At the regular meeting of the water Commission Tuesday evening C. A. Barrett was made chairman for the ensuing year. W. J. Gholson water superintendent and B. E. Richards clerk.

The \$1,500 bond of Treasurer Hawks was accepted and placed on file. Monthly report of Water Superintendent Gholson showing collection of \$185 in water rents, \$18 for water meters; \$5 for one tap, making a total of \$181.50, was accepted and placed on file. The following bills were allowed:

Geo. Bannister, two cords of wood \$13.00. H. McBride, rig for 4 days, \$12.00. A. R. Booher, \$5.00. Gholson, salary \$30.00. Richards, salary, \$10.00. H. McBride, rig, \$1.50. Athena Truck Co., hauling, \$2.00. Pierson-Parton Co., power, \$83.35. C. A. Barrett & Co., supplies, \$13.60.

Warrants were ordered drawn as follows: First National Bank, note and interest, \$188.40.

C. A. Barrett, acc't of loan, \$304.00. C. A. Barrett, chairman, acc't sinking fund, loan, \$326.00.

Report of Chairman Barrett showing that the commission books had been checked and found correct was accepted and placed on file.

On motion the commission was authorized to order 50 8-inch collars and 50 10-inch collars, at \$1.35 and \$1.75 each, for repairing pipe line.

The proposition of Commissioner Taylor to prospect for water at the head of the gravity water system was discussed at length but no action was taken.

Mrs. L. T. McBride, of Weston, is seriously ill, and Mrs. Harry McBride of this city is attending her bedside.

STRAIN WOULD BE OREGON'S GOVERNOR

Umatilla County Assessor Announces Candidacy Through Columns of Portland Daily Journal.

Charles P. Strain, assessor of Umatilla county, would be governor of Oregon. It's a long skip from county assessor to the governor's chair—Lut Grover was a sheriff, you know. Of Mr. Strain's candidacy the Portland Journal says:

Charles P. Strain, well known throughout eastern Oregon as the assessor of Umatilla county, has announced himself to be a candidate for the Democratic nomination for governor at the coming primaries in September.

Since 1903, when Mr. Strain was elected assessor of Umatilla county, he has been prominent in the state through his work as an assessor. He has done much towards the enforcement of an equitable assessment of the O. R. & N company and other corporation holdings in Umatilla county, and his lead has been followed by other assessors in different parts of the state. In making his announcement Mr. Strain goes into his record as assessor of Umatilla county somewhat in detail, showing some of the main points of his administration.

The letter of announcement is as follows:

"If you will kindly allow me space in your columns for the purpose, I will address myself to the people of Oregon. In order to get my case before them, I shall have to speak in the first person, recounting briefly what reforms I have been connected with and the result of those reforms. My public career began with my election as assessor of Umatilla county in 1903 on a platform pledging equal assessments as between private and corporate property. I found the O. R. and N. company's railroad bed and right-of-way assessed at \$4000 per mile. I raised it to \$12,000 per mile in 1903 and now in the 1909 roll I have it assessed at \$40,000 per mile.

"It was at first predicted that I would fail to make my assessment stick. When I succeeded, it was prophesied that the transportation companies of the state would advance their freight rates enough to recover by increased charges what they had lost in higher tax payments. I then began an agitation in favor of a state railroad commission. One of the leading contributions which I made to that agitation was published in the Sunday Oregon Journal of October 14, 1906.

"The railroad commission was created and it is one of the most efficient commissions in the United States today. It has reduced grain rates, as I understand it, 40 cents per ton in my own county from here to Portland. This means an annual saving of \$48,000 to the wheat farmers of this one county. The commission has also made a reduction of about 14 per cent on other freight charges east of the Dalles. It has also reduced express charges in this territory. I am not at this time advised what has been done in other parts of the state, but I presume that every section of the state has received benefit from it.

"I found the tax laws of Oregon inadequate to reach certain kinds of property, especially franchises. The tax laws were obsolete and inefficient in several respects. Accordingly, I began an agitation for a temporary tax commission. Such a commission was created, the Honorable Fred W. Mulkey of Portland, Honorable W. J. Lachner of Baker county, and Honorable E. B. Seabrook of Coos county receiving the appointment as commissioners. This commission organized by electing Mr. Mulkey chairman and Clyde B. Atchison, now railroad commissioner, as secretary.

"As a result of their excellent work we now have this fine statute: 'The taxes land, real estate, and real property, as used in this act shall be construed to include the land itself, whether laid out in town lots, or other wise, above and under water, all buildings, structures, substructures, superstructures, and improvements erected upon, under or above, or affixed to the same, and all rights and privileges thereto belonging or in any-wise appertaining and all franchises and privileges granted by or pursuant to any law of this state, or municipal ordinance or resolution or corporation, other than the right to be a corporation; and all mines, minerals, quarries, fossils, and trees in, under, or upon the land. Our tax laws were improved in several respects.

"I found the assessor with power to regulate the county school tax. The state law in 1903 required the county court to levy a five mill school tax on the assessed value of each county respectively. It was then within the assessors power to assess the property of his county at any percentage of its actual value that happened to suit him.

"If he chose to do so he could assess the property of his county so low that the five mill school tax would

produce very little, or he could assess it so high that the school tax would be entirely beyond the need of school requirements. I at once began an agitation which resulted in a law that provided for a levy high enough in each county to produce a fixed sum for each child of school age.

"I have been, and am now, an advocate of popular government as provided for under the present initiative and referendum laws of this state.

"To sum up: I found the railroads of the state assessed at \$5,858,101.50. They are now assessed at \$45,199,322.50. The mileage has increased only 1689 miles to 2213 miles. Not only this, but before this agitation began the transportation companies were masters of the people, fixing charges and extending or restricting service to the public at will. The railroads have, therefore, been required to pay their share of taxes on the one hand and have, on the other, been denied authority to recoup themselves by advancing freight charges. The tax laws have been modernized, and the public schools have been given definite support.

"These reforms have been worth many thousands of dollars to the common people of Oregon. My connection with the— is well known history and can be established beyond question. I set out to benefit the people generally. I have worked out the 'lead' which I began on so far as I can do so through the assessor's office. The old system has been corrected and the assessment of railroad property has been committed to the care of the tax commission.

"But a new condition has arisen which threatens to consume the full substance of all taxable property, both corporate and private. The tax budget of this county, including city and school levies, has risen, during the past seven years, from \$195,000 to \$441,000. If this increase has been duplicated in other counties, and I think it has, it presents an alarming state of affairs.

"It is not unusual to find taxing districts where the annual tax consumes from 25 per cent to 50 per cent of the income from money loaned out, and from other income producing property.

"As I see it, the most important reform now needed is economy in public affairs. Somebody ought to check the already enormous and ever increasing public expenditures. I feel that if I am to render any further official service to the people of this county and state, I could be more useful to them in an executive office where I could suppress public extravagance. As to my ability to get results along this line, I will mention that I have managed to make the assessor's office of this county cost, on an average, \$600 per annum less during the past seven years than for the seven years next preceding my tenure in office. There has been, of course, a good deal more work to do during the last seven years than during the preceding seven years, owing to the growth of the county. I have also classified the deeded land of the county into 40 acre units at an expense of about \$2000, and I have renewed a large portion of the ownership records of the county. I learned economy in the school of experience, having worked my way up from a penniless boy to a position of moderate comfort during the past 23 years. I began life in Oregon as a farm hand 23 years ago.

"By economy in public affairs, I mean that when money is appropriated, each dollar of it should be made to return the public a dollar's worth of service, or of supplies. I further mean that appropriations for enterprises that are local or personal in character or of doubtful value should be defeated.

"Another matter of still greater importance than economy is the defense of our system of direct legislation. An executive is needed who can be depended on to defend with his veto power our splendid system of popular government against the oncoming assault upon it by 'interests.'

"If the people of Oregon can use me for such purpose, I am willing to undertake the great responsibility. At the same time, I can say in all sincerity that I have reached a point in life where my attitude toward political honors is passive. I simply offer my services to the people. If they accept them, I will do my utmost to make good. If they do not, I will find a niche some place in private life where I will fit in comfortably."

The Alumni of the State Normal at Monmouth ask your support for that school. You know we must have teachers. We must educate the boys and girls; a trained teacher is the best agency for this. The cost is four cents a year on a thousand dollars. Vote yes for Monmouth and settle this question. J. B. V. Butler, Sec. Com.

CLEAN UP THE TOWN

Mayor McEwen Proclaims Monday, April 11, to Be Clean Up Day. —Walla Walla Here.

At the meeting of the city council Monday evening, Mayor McEwen named Monday, April 11 as Athena's annual cleaning up day.

All citizens and property owners are expected to turn out on that day and clean up their premises and the streets and alleys contiguous thereto.

It is essential that the whole town be thoroughly cleaned for the reason that all desire that the city present a creditable appearance at the time of the holding of the meetings of the ministerial association and the county track meet, both of which events take place next month.

Pendleton and Milton have had clean up days and the local papers of two towns report splendid results accruing from united effort on the part of property owners and citizens.

If all will give the matter attention and a little time, the mayor is confident that the town will have a great deal better appearance when the day's work is done.

The fact that the members of the Walla Walla Commercial club, over one hundred strong, accompanied by their wives and sweethearts, are to be in Athena the day following clean up day, should serve as an incentive to all in furthering the effort to clean their premises. The Walla Walla Club will run a "get-acquainted" excursion from the Garden city to Pendleton on Tuesday, April 12, stopping at the intervening towns. The excursion will reach Athena about 10 a. m. and will be met at the O. R. & N. station by the members of the Athena Commercial Association, citizens and possibly the Athena band.

DEATH OF ALEXANDER M'KENZIE

Prominent Mason and Pioneer Passes Away Tuesday—Funeral Today.

After years of suffering from the ravages of cancer, Alexander McKenzie died at his home west of this city, Tuesday. At his bedside were his sons Daniel and Alexander, and daughters Ruth, Lizzie and Agnes, and other son, Robert, not being present when the father died.

Mr. McKenzie was one of the old pioneers who contributed their energy in the development of Umatilla county. Some 35 years ago he took up a homestead near Adams and there with his estimable wife, who has preceded him to the grave, a home was made and the children reared to manhood and womanhood.

He was a prominent Mason, and until his affliction bore him down, he took an active interest in Masonic affairs. For many years he had been a devout member of the Christian church in this city. He was born in Glasgow, Scotland, July 1, 1841, and when a young man came to this country. He was one of Nature's noblemen, and was held in high esteem by all who knew him. A kind friend and loving father, he will be missed by friends and family alike. The funeral sermon was preached by A. McKenzie Meldrum, at the Christian church at 1:30 this afternoon. Services at the grave were conducted by the Masons. The funeral was largely attended.

Oregon's Grand Old Man.

George H. Williams, the "grand old man" of Oregon, the most prominent figure in the political history of this state and once a member of President Grant's cabinet, died suddenly at his home in Portland Monday aged 87. Death came peacefully during his sleep early in the morning. He had only a few days ago celebrated his 87th birthday by giving a banquet to his friends. Judge Williams retired to private life two years ago. He was one of the founders of the union party and canvassed the country for Lincoln for president. Later he served as United States senator from Oregon and became attorney general in Grant's cabinet in 1873.

To Enlarge Milton College.

The contract has been let by the trustees of Columbia college for the erection of new buildings for the institution. The contract went to Earl Williams of Milton, the lowest bidder, for \$23,581. The heating and plumbing contract will be let separately. Work will commence at once as the contract calls for the completion of the building by September 1. The financial agent, Rev. H. S. Shangle, is now in the east attending the conference of the M. E. church, south, and will probably receive help for the college.

The work of clearing off the athletic field at the city park is nearing completion. J. E. Froome, who has had the work in charge has performed his duties well, and the meeting of the Commercial Association Wednesday evening was given a vote of thanks.

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