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Athena, Oregon, January 27, 1928

PROPERTY WOULD PAY IT

Should the $3.00 automobile license come, property tax in the state of Oregon would have the burden to carry in proportion to what the present revenue from licenses amounts to and what it would be under the flat rate $3.00 schedule, for automobile traffic would demand the present rate of road construction and highway maintainence.

With the present property tax not able to meet governmental expense, what would be the result when property is called upon to lift that share of the road tax now carried by automobile license fee? Unless property tax covers the deficit, here is what would happen to the state highway program, under the proposed flat automobile license fee rate of $3.00:

1. Loss of $1,180,000 per year of federal aid funds.
2. No funds for the construction of new highways.
3. No funds with which to widen, straighten and otherwise improve existing highways as they become inadequate to properly serve the increased traffic which they must bear.
4. Only sufficient funds to properly maintain about one-half of the highways that are now being enjoyed and that are so important a factor in the commercial and social welfare of the state.
5. Ultimate obsolescense and destruction of a system of highways in which many millions of dollars have been invested.

The Athena community feels appreciative for the completion of the Wildhhorse market road, and a responsive chord has been struck in the announcement that a banquet will be held to commemorate the achievement. Thus opportunity is presented to appropriately dedicate the new highway.

When you have to sneeze, sneeze right out loud. Else you find yourself in the predicament of the Berkeley man, who, not to offend street car passengers, held in his sneeze, and when it released itself it jerked him out of the window and landed him in the hospital with a lame back.

Lindy at last forsook social functions and gave his nerves a rest by going into the woods on a tapir hunt. He topped off a week's pleasure jaunt in fishing for alligators in a Panama swamp, and he proved to be adept at the job. Now the lad is pepped up for another air grind.

That a German divorce decree will get you as far as any other, is evidenced in the case of Elly Ney and her former husband, William van Hoogstraten, director of Portland symphony orchestra; and with as much harmony, too.

"College girls are taking up boxing. They wrestle, also, but it is called dancing," grouchily deplores the Vernonia Eagle man, whom we'll wager doesn't know the difference between the black bottom and the centipede waltz.

Technique of high order was introduced the other day by a Portland thug, when he grasped with his teeth the little finger of a woman's hand and deftly "lifted" a diamond ring from her third finger.

"Five dollars" said a Portland judge to a bunch of 125 motorists who persisted in driving around behind 1927 license plates. They paid and left their flivvers in the garage.

The versatile co-ed is supreme mistress of the chafing dish, if nothing else; and so long as the art of cheese-making remains, let her chafe.

Immense flocks of robins reported in flight over Southern Oregon, portends serious future inroads on a certain well known variety of fish bait.

New styles and an optimistic spring feeling go hand in hand, and dad pays the bill on the first of the month.

"Coolidge pours oil on troubled waters"—meaning that another admiral has talked too much.

Portland plans to spend the mere bagatelle of $8,678,000 for her schools during 1928.

Possibly Admiral Plunkett is seeking a niche on the retired list?

There is quite a speck of dog tax running loose in Athena.

REMAKING AN EMPIRE

(Nation's Business)

Recovery of a lost empire was the problem that confronted a national conference in Chicago in November. The lost empire is about a fifth of the entire area of the United States—more than that of the cultivated farm land of the country—and it lies within the nation's boundaries. It requires no force of arms to retake it; it is not in rebellion. This realm contains the one great eternally renewable natural resource of the nation; it supports one-tenth of our people; it provides shelter for a majority of them; it is the mother of most of our industries. Yet in the midst of progress and prosperity it lags and languishes.

The lost empire is our private forest land; and its plight was described at the conference as "the most important question before the American people today." Part of this empire—desolated and sterilized by fire—is as lost to the nation as if it had been annexed by a foreign power, part of it is in a twilight state of sorry regeneration—ragged, neglected, fire-swept woodlands; part of it is courageously staging a comeback; and a part happily a large part, is still physically sound and intact—abounding in magnificent virgin forests—but economically weak, and in danger of eventual loss. The lost empire has been deplored and bemoaned by practical men as well as by the sentimentalist and the academics, the last two groups frequently coming to the conclusion that the solution of the problem is to compel the owners of timber land to grow timber for scenery if they can't for profit.

The Chamber of Commerce of the United States has long recognized that the recovery of the lost empire is an ecomonic question that must be answered outside of debating societies by practical private enterprise.

The Chamber hit on the novel—actually, it is a novel—idea of calling together the business men who own the woodlands of America outside the public forests, the men who are actually growing timber and utilizing the forests, and get them to suggest remedies.

Long the lectured, the men of the tall timber became at last the lecturers. And they even lectured themselves.

Neither did they evade their share of the responsibility. Without a "but" or an "if" they assumed, "as a civic duty, the leadership in this great national enterprise of perpetuating the forests."

There were more than 300 of them, representing every province of the lost empire, which stretches through about forty states. Sitting with them were representatives of the industries that must have wood or perish and a score or more of professional foresters, including Col. W. B. Greeley, the chief forester of the United States.

The National Resources Department of the Chamber, which directed the conference, cheered it with the announcement of the results of a survey of the present state of commercial reforestation in the United States. Nearly 200 commercial companies already have adopted forestry policies. These apply to about 21,000,000 acres of land.

Moreover, virtually all of the Pacific coast and the adjacent states are systematically protecting their forest land—virgin as well as cut-over—against fire; and so are a large proportion of those of the southern states and of other regions. Such protection has been declared to be 75 per cent of reforestation in the American environment.

Speaking of the manace of the fires, Colonel Greeley touched a sore spot of national and state policy when he declared that, despite gratifying progress, we had not yet made the United States "safe for forestry." So, last year, the forest lands of the United States were exposed, more or less unprotected, to 91,000 forest fires, which burned not less than 24,000,000 acres of land. It should be explained that but a very small part of this devasted area included valuable timber. Most of it was land that had been cut over at least once, and, probably, almost all of it had been burned over before. But it is the land that has been denuded that contains the present hope of future forests. And there is no insurance, or virtually none, which fact was surveyed and deplored by an insurance committee headed by John L. Kaul, president of National Lumber Manufacturers' Association.

PROPOSED $3.00 LICENSE FEE

—County Revenues

A great deal of discussion has arisen regarding the effect that the proposed $3.00 flat license fee would have upon the road finances of the various counties in the state. Under the present basis of distribution the counties receive twenty-five per cent of the net income from motor vehicle license fees after the costs of collection have been deducted. This distribution to the counties during 1926 based upon the net receipts for the calendar year, amounted to $1,419,000, the share of each county being proportional to the amount of license fees paid in by owners of vehicles registered from that particular county.

Under state statutes the money is transferred to the county "motor license fund" and is required to be disbursed; first, for payment of interest and retirement of county bonds issued for road construction and improvement; second, for cooperation on bridges and grading on state highways if such cooperation is required; and, third, for general county highway improvement.

At the end of 1926, the various counties of the state had outstanding road bonds to the extent of $24,650,000. Assuming that these bonds have an average life of thirty years, which is perhaps above the average, the retirements during the year would have amounted to $822,000. Assuming an average interest rate of 4½ percent, the interest requirements for the year would have amounted to $1,109,000, or a total for principal and interest of $1,931,000. It will be seen from this that the counties found it necessary to raise $512,000, in addition to the income received from their share of the motor vehicle license fees, in order to take care of their bond obligations.

This deficit is large enough to throw a considerable burden upon the general finances of the counties, but seems small when contrasted with the conditions which would exist if the proposed $3.00 license fee were to go into effect.

Under the proposed $3.00 fee the county share of the motor vehicle license fees during 1926, would have been reduced to $365,000. This would have left a deficit of $1,566,000 to be made up from other county sources, probably necessitating a direct levy upon the property of each county.

The total taxable property in the state for 1926 was $1,084,538,000, and the raising of the deficit of $1-566,000 would have necessited a levy of 1.44 mills on all of the taxable property of the counties, of $1.44 on each $1.000 of taxable property.

Even those figures do not indicate the burden which would be imposed if the flat $3.00 fee were to be adopted and a tax on the general property of the state were resorted to in order to make up the deficit to the State Highway Commission's revenues. The deficit to the commission, it is estimated, would have been $3,162,500 for 1926, or a total of $4,728,500 to be met from property taxes. The levy required to meet this amount would have been 4.36 mills, or $4.36 on each $1,000 of taxable property in addition to the burden already carried by the direct property taxpayer.

The difference between a 4.36 mill tax on all the taxable property of the state and the present income of $1,419,000 to the counties, plus $4,257,500 to the state, without resort to property taxes is the difference to the average property taxpayer, between the present scale of fees and the proposed $3.00 license fee.

A JUST LAW PROPOSED

(Seattle Times)

The district attorneys of Oregon, corresponding to the prosecuting attorneys in Washington, have recommended an addition to the criminal code that deserves favorable consideration in both states. They propose a law providing that when a defendant is found guilty of a crime by reason of insanity the verdict shall be conclusive that the defendant is insane and the term of detention in an asylum shall be at least as long as the minimum prison sentence for the crime charged.

The justice of this is so obvious that it is a wonder some such law was not drafted and enacted long ago. The insane criminal is more dangerous to leave at large than one who is sane and whose proclivites might to some extent be restrained by knowledge and fear of consequences. The insane person cannot be presumed to have either knowledge or fear.

Under the present law the courts and juries have to wrestle with the fiction that a defendant may have been insane at the exact moment of committing a crime and quite normal at a ten-minute distance on either side of the act. It is this fiction that admits a sickening plausibility to the plea of "guilty by reason of insanity," and induces lavish waste of time and money on the contradictory testimony of mental and nerve specialists.

Able to Navigate

Magistrate—The constable says you were intoxicated and unable to walk.

Prisoner—Excuse me contradictin' 'im, sir, but I was able to walk quite comfortable on all fours.—Tit-Bits.

In Pound

Notice is hereby given that the following described animals have been taken up and placed in Athena city pound, and unless redeemed by owner, will be sold to the highest bidder for cash in hand on Tuesday, January, 31, 1928, at 2 o'clock p. m.

One bay mare, about 6 years old, brand open 8 on left stiffle. Colt at side.

One brown horse, about 4 years old, no brand visable.

B. D. TAYLOR, Marshal.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

In the County Court of the State of Oregon forUmatilla County.
In the matter of the Estate of Martha J. Shick, Deceased.

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been appointed executor of the last will and testament of Martha J. Shick, deceased, by an order of the above entitled Court.

All persons having claims against the said estate are hereby notified to present the same to me at Athena, Oregon, or to my attorneys, Watts & Prestbye, at their office in Athena, Oregon, within six months from the date of the first publication of this notice. All claims must be verified as by law required.

Dated at Athena, Oregon, this 13th day of January, 1928.

ARTHUR E. SHICK,
Executor of the Last Will and Testament of Martha J. Shick, Deceased.
Watts & Prestbye Attorneys for Estate, Athena, Oregon. J13F10