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TAXES—AND WHY

The Oregon Voter has performed a nice job of public service by publishing an 88 page number that gives many of the pertinent facts about Oregon taxation. The Voter calls for "a tax program with leadership".

If the Voter infers that what we need is a tax program that will raise more money we do not agree; if it means that we need a more equitable distribution of tax paying, either in relation to benefits derived or ability to pay, we will agree; if it means economy we shout approval.

We have been saying for some 15 years in the legislature and out, in public and private, that what Oregon needed and would eventually get was a good dose of economy. In private we have generally received agreement, in public applause, in the legislature opposition.

Oregon collected, according to the Voter, \$192,672,044 on income and property in 1955. That is 95.3 mills on the assessed valuation. It is also, according to our arithmetic \$126 per capita for the 1,121,000 residents.

Oregon had 1,089,000 residents in 1940 and now about 170 per cent of that number or 1,750,000 persons. The total tax in 1940 was \$47,050,881. Thus while population has increased by 70 per cent the tax has increased 450 per cent. Say a dollar is worth but half its 1940 figure and it still means that Oregon is on a spending spree that would awe a shepherd with a whole summer's wages.

Property affects nearly every one that way and it also affects governments that way. Depressions are the periods in which individuals and governments pay off the debts they contracted in good times. And it all is unnecessary and not even quite bright.

In 1943-44, says the Voter, we spent \$20,336,140 for schools and our school census was 280,000 children. This school year we will spend \$125,464,592 for schools and the census is some 420,000. Admit that a dollar is worth four bits and still the cost is out of balance.

Legislators say that the increased costs are because "the people demand". We don't believe it. Someone is always demanding more tax money, that is true, and they have time and money to come to the legislature to ask for it. But they don't represent the people; they represent special

groups. In 17 years legislating we found the majority in favor of economy.

Not all, or perhaps no great part, of the extremely high costs of state government can be laid to the legislature. The people voted a lot of it themselves often under the impression that money was piled up in some handy pile waiting to be spent.

Oregon needs a program, alright, a program of organizing tax leagues in every county composed of tax payers who will examine every budget carefully and protest vigorously at high taxes. Search has been too successful all Oregon does not need a program to search for additional taxes. That research has been to successful already. And we are not a bit interested in those who say that it is impossible to reduce the budget or set some of our newly built bureaus out into the chill of public economy.

SCHOOL CRITICISM

Criticism of public schools come from many sources and varies according to the origin. Some would have them teach more fundamentals and others more froth. Some criticize school organization from the district system to the administration in general.

Arthur Bestor, history professor, has written a couple books about schools that have aroused the faithful by which we mean that groups of administrators who feel that the system is perfect (except for the need for money, of course), and that any word said against it akin to voicing unkind words against home and mother.

But when Bestor points out that schools in general suffer from a lack of internal criticism he does schools a service. No organization can be healthy unless young people with ideas can get a hearing and bring about change. It has been contended that school men, both teachers and administrators, should deliberately start criticism to make those in power constantly prove their case—their organization.

There is a need for school teachers and in Oregon there always will be because the qualifications are changed for the purpose of keeping the numbers below the required needs. At that many schools employ more than is needed.

We are constantly told that more money is all that is needed to bring about a sufficient number of teachers although constantly rising salaries have not served to help the situation much. School teaching is a frustrating job and, unfortunately, not one that is attractive to the most ambitious and thoughtful. Starting wages are comparatively high and the rewards for continuance are comparative low. That in itself causes many to leave the schoolroom.

Also a teacher has a course of study to follow, very carefully followed. Deviation is not encouraged. Teachers with bright ideas about some method or some study will always be inclined to get into some business where independence of thought is encouraged or at least tolerated.

Then, in Oregon, a teacher is given an almost hopeless job. Children start school at six and unless death or removal from the state intervenes they finish high

school in twelve years. The law says they have to go to school; the custom is to pass each little pupil each year. The teacher has the terrific job of trying to instill a little learning into a head that doesn't have to show interest or attention. Why? He'll get by anyhow. That teachers do as well as they do is remarkable.

If we have any organization in this state that needs a good carrying the schools are it. Schoolmen might well do it themselves; if not, others should.

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LEGAL NOTICES
NOTICE OF FINAL ACCOUNT
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has filed in the County Court of the State of Oregon for Sherman County, her Final Account as Executrix of the Estate of Charles J. Bullard, deceased, and that Monday, January 9, 1956, at ten o'clock A. M., of said day in the court room of the County Court in Moro, Sherman County, Oregon, have been fixed by the Court as the time and place for hearing objections to said Final Account and for the settlement of said estate.
Lucetta Adlard
Executrix

T. Lester Johnson
Attorney for Executrix 6-9c

Dr. Frank D. Reid
DENTIST
Office days Tuesdays
Wednesdays, Fridays
Telephone 761

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1955

W. T. Balsiger

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