

The Lane County News

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CITY BUSINESS REFORM

As a result of the application of business methods, the city of Miami, Fla., is said to be saving an average of 15 per cent on its contracts for street improvements. The first thing done was to reform the old method of street improvement procedure. Heads of city departments met with financial experts, lawyers and engineers especially trained in such matters and drew up a charter that would give the city the powers it desired. The charter was approved by the legislature.

Under the old charter, Miami, like other cities, had required street contractors to accept debt certificates, notes or bonds if the city chose to make payment in that way. Thus the contractor must hypothecate or sell, often at a disadvantage, any municipal paper he might receive. In addition there was often a question as to the legality of the paper. In any case payment was sure to be slow and the contractor needed his money to meet monthly pay rolls and to pay for materials used in construction. These conditions were well known to contractors and as a result bids were increased to offset possible losses on securities or long delayed payments. The purpose of the new city charter, therefore, was to provide a means by which the city could make certain and regular payments for street work. A clause was inserted requiring that a notice of the letting of a street contract should definitely state that the successful bidder would be paid in cash on monthly estimates and would not be required to accept debt certificates or other municipal paper.

This involved changes in the city bond issues. Under the old plan street improvements had been paid for with bonds which were marketable but not at a satisfactory price, because they provided no mode of payment but through special assessments. In other respects, also, they fell short of being gilt-edged investments. The new charter provided that the bonds should mature in annual instalments for ten years and required an annual tax levy to pay the principal and interest. Interest and principal were payable in New York, in gold, and other features were added so that the bonds met the approval of the most critical investors and found a ready market at a good price. Authority was given to sell the bonds at any time after the passage of a resolution definitely ordering an improvement. Payment, then, could be made on the basis of monthly estimates. Soon after the adoption of the charter, according to a writer in the American City, a saving of \$11,000 on a \$70,000 contract was effected, and city officials believe that even greater savings can be made on new contracts.

Eugene papers did not take very kindly to the removal of the Oregon Power Co. offices to Springfield. No, Miss Eugene, you can't have municipal monopoly and a desirable company headquarters at the same time.

Louisville, Ky., is raising fund

of \$1,000,000 to be used to encourage new factories to enter city. What is the whole state of Oregon doing to encourage industrial activity as compared with this one lone city.

SPEAKING OF NEUTRALITY.
(Collier's Weekly.)
Among much else, Secretary

Lansing's note on submarine warfare provoked these typical newspaper comments from abroad:

By the Tagliche Rundschau of Berlin: "It could just as well have been signed by Sir Edward Grey."

By the Daily Telegram of London: "One might think the note had been prepared by Count

von Bernstorff."

Taken together, these two knocks are a panegyric—not that the present secretary of state needs anything of the sort.

The Oregonian editorializes about fraternities in the Springfield High school. Which Springfield? There only 26 in the United States.

The New Adventures of J. Rufus Wallingford

By GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER, Creator of "Wallingford," and CHARLES W. GODDARD

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A Stony Deal

THE chinless lout with the goggle eyes and the dop trimmed straw hat at last recovered from his astonishment enough to yell. "Whoa!" Inasmuch as the spotted gray mule upon which he was seated had been standing stock still for a solid two minutes, it naturally resented this insulting order and turned squarely around, whereupon its rider promptly dismounted and kicked it in the ribs. Both the man and the animal seemed much refreshed by this operation and restored to normality, for the mule contentedly cropped a bunch of sweet wayside grass, and the man sidled up beside the tall gentleman who was eating a leg of chicken and gazing interestedly down at a pair of stout legs which protruded from beneath a motorcar so large and so elaborately furnished as to be better termed a motor house.

"Broke down?" asked the mule rider after listening appreciatively to the vigorous mechanical and vocal sounds from beneath the car.

"No," replied the tall gentleman, thoughtfully wiping his jet black mustache. "we merely paused by the wayside to crochet a few pink buttonholes in yon crimson sunset. What is the name of your mule, please, and is he a family pet?"

"He's not," the man stated, and he gaped, for from inside the car two handsome young ladies and a handsome elderly lady had appeared, and they all giggled. The mule driver finished his speech mechanically. "He's jes' a mule."

"Jes' a mule, eh? Simple name, handy, sensible and easily remembered. Do you mind if I look mule squarely in the eye and see if he'll do?"

Blackie Daw was engaged in this test when there was an extra strong clank of metal from beneath the car, a snapping sound, and an extra strong expletive, and then the owner of the legs slowly and painfully wriggled into view. He was a man big of girth and broad of chest and wide of shoulders, and his round pink face, usually jovial, was just now dripping with perspiration and grimed with oil.

"Broke," he said, embellishing that bit of information with polite thorns of speech, and the ladies laughed.

"Never mind, J. Rufus," soothed the tall gentleman. "We'll not spend the night in the cold, cold world, for I've secured you a new motor." And he waved his hand toward the grazing beast of burden.

J. Rufus Wallingford looked at the animal and then at the car in huge discontent. "It might be a wise move to trade the car for the mule," he suggested scornfully.

"It ain't my mule, though," hastily protested the goggle eyed one, whose countenance was further embellished with protruding teeth.

"Why didn't you tell us that in the first place?" demanded the thin gentleman.

"I never said I owned the mule," protested the other, aggrieved. "I'd a' tole you right away if you'd a' asked me that it's Jones Squibbles' mule. He owns nigh everything around Squibbles' ville yonder—this mule and these fies' an' the gristmill an' the grain elevator you see stickin' up above the town."

"Squibbles' mule?" The blue eyed young lady seemed suddenly interested in that fact. "Squibbles' mule, Fanny."

The brown eyed young lady had been leaning through a small notebook. She turned the page now and revealed a list of names. Ten had been scratched out. The eleventh name was "Jonas Squibbles," and opposite the name was set the sum of \$12,000.

The mule driver said he was Henry Hunt, and although he protested some, Blackie Daw impressed the mule into service, and the party started back for town.

Jonas Squibbles sat upon the steps of "the store" and viewed the approaching procession with mild curiosity. Toad Jessup, however, an archer so thick with freckles that he looked like a shrimp omelet, came running from far up the road with a deadly blow to Mr. Squibbles' tranquillity. "Hey!" he gasped, tugging at his one gingham suspender strap to draw his breath together. "They're a-astin' your mule!"

It was in front of the Auditorium hotel that Wallingford first emerged from the car, clean shaven, brushed,

and his automobile cap replaced by a soft gray felt hat. The village drew an admiring breath as he stepped down and in a carefree tone inquired the amount of the damages. Jonas Squibbles had with some labor worked up the sum total of his bill to \$13.00, but the moment he saw Wallingford he stopped figuring and said:

"Twenty dollars, haulin'. Hen Hunt's time, two fente rolls, wear and tear an' lastin' damage to the mule, an' the rent of my field that your contraption's a-standin' on now."

The "villagers" heard this itemized statement with awe and admiration, which was increased to amazement when Wallingford, without "dickerin'," calmly abstracted and paid over a twenty dollar bill from an oblong roll.

Having tried to eat a "supper" at the Auditorium hotel, Wallingford and Blackie decided not to risk the rooms at that hostelry, but sadly purchased a pair of fowl and, returning to their car, cooked themselves a square meal.

A visitor came upon them as they were enjoying their coffee and cigars—Hen Hunt.

"Jones Squibbles," he said impressively, "is a stingy ole cuss!"

"What! Did he only give you half of that twenty?" exclaimed Blackie in apparently pained surprise.

"Half!" gasped Hen. "He wouldn't even gi' me a red copper."

"He's the stingiest man in the world," continued Hen. "He's the man that made the county build a poorhouse so he could send his mother to it. Ain't that stingy, hey? You remember how he charged you for them fence rails? Well, last spring a tall feller with nose spectacles picked up a little piece of blue rock from this very field and took it away with him, and Jones Squibbles made him pay a nickel for it. Think o' that! Jes' crumbly blue rock, that ain't even fit to drown cats with! An' there's four acres of it here! Squibbles' stone farm, they call it. Firs' off, Jones thought mebbe it might be wuth some-thin', 'cause the feller said somethin' about lithograph stone belt, but nothin' ever come of it. Funny lookin' man, this feller was, with a red beard that grewed out here an' there in little curly patches."

Blackie nodded his head wisely. "Williams," he said to Wallingford, inventing a name upon the spot for the unknown man. "Careful chap, Williams: one of the best we have. I think."

"Was he workin' for you?" Hen eagerly wanted to know.

"Well, we wouldn't care to have it talked about," replied Blackie with a great air of mystery, "so we'll just consider the subject as dropped. Your friend Squibbles is about the richest man in the country, I suppose?"

"He's got cash money buried an' hid all over his house, an' his barn, an' his gristmill, I reckon. He um's have, because he don't trust no banks, an' any dollar that he chances down an' ketches says goodby to this vain world."

"I don't like anything I have to," Wallingford stated savagely, after Hunt had left. "I think I'll wind up Jonas in a hurry."

"Go right to it," invited Blackie. "I'll admire to see you fall down for once in your life. I bet you my jade fob pendant, which you want, against that scabby cravat pin, which you won't give up, that you break your finger nails and don't loosen anything unless it's all on the level. Understand, Jimmy, I expect to win or I wouldn't offer the bet. Here's one lick that you can't skin for amusement, practice or \$1,000."

"I'll take the bet," agreed Wallingford. "The biggest riches in the world are the village misers. Gold lick factories are entirely supported by lickwads."

Wallingford was up early the next morning and made a careful inspection of the field upon which his car stood. It was almost void of verdure save for a few tufts of scattered rock grass, and everywhere, especially in a steep bank about fifty feet back, there were outcroppings of the shale limestone of which Henry Hunt had spoken. He picked up a piece of the rock and scraped it with his pocket-knife. It was surprisingly soft, and it cut as smoothly as butter. Well pleased, he walked back to the car to find Toad Jessup waiting patiently for Blackie Daw. Wallingford immediately drew a quarter from his pocket and gave it to the boy.

"Son, can you find me a spade?" he inquired and found himself looking at the spot where "Toad" had stood.

The boy, who knew by Hen and his

toy the contents of every garden, barn and alley of the village, was back with a rusty spade before Wallingford had picked out a favorable spot for his operations, and with him he brought an equally rusty pickax, which had one point broken.

"If you want to dig," "Toad" helpfully informed him, "I reckon you'll



"Here's your \$225," said Wallingford, producing a fat wallet.

need this here pick. Le' me dig some, will you, mister? I'm a good digger."

"Come right on, Speckles," Wallingford invited heartily. "We'll dig together." And, taking the pick, he began with a will.

Wallingford, however, being rather heavy for this sort of work and somewhat short of breath, was very much relieved when Jonas Squibbles came at last and gazed into the incipient ditch with wrinkles of cupidity corrugating his nose and almost closing his eyes.

"What are you diggin'?" he demanded.

"A hole," returned Wallingford calmly, spitting on his hands and taking a fresh grip on the pickax.

"I'll have to have damages for that," Jonas quickly decided.

"I'll not pay for it," declared Wallingford. "The rent of this ground was included in the \$20 I gave you."

"That didn't include injurin' my property," Jonas severely told him. "You'll have to pay damages, or else I'll sue you."

"Sue and be jiggered!" answered Wallingford, turning vigorously to his work again; then he suddenly straightened up in an apparent flash of anger. "What'll you take for your old field?" he asked.

"Well, I been holdin' that site back for a town hall when the town grows up to it," Jonas declared.

"The wooden plank with your name on it will be rotted down among the weeds before that happens," Wallingford sourly retorted. "I'll give you \$200 for the field."

Jonas almost had palpitation of the heart. Except for use as a building site, which was the most remote of chances, the four acres were absolutely worthless. Still, a bargain was a bargain. "I'd ort to have \$225," he declared, in much seeming reluctance.

"All right," agreed Wallingford, so quickly that Jonas was almost reluctant in good earnest. "Have it your own way. I'm willing to pay any price to do as I please, if it's only to dig a hole. Here's your \$225," and from a fat wallet he produced the money and thrust it upon the astounded Squibbles.

"Now come on in and sign a bill of sale, pending a deed."

"Just one moment, gentlemen," begged Blackie, holding them off with his outstretched palm. "Please remain where you are and enjoy the fresh air and beautiful mountain scenery while I engross the keenest bill of sale that ever fogged a larynx."

Flushed with pride in his achievement, Blackie called in the parties of the first and second parts and made them listen to his gem of composition and showed them where to sign it, after which himself and "Toad" Jessup affixed their names in the proper places as witnesses, and Blackie, after a vain onslaught on Jonas, compelled Wallingford to pay him 50 cents in real money.

Just then the girls came along, and

(Continued on Page 4)



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S. W. CRAMER, Administrator.

J. H. BOWER, Lawyer.

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