

The Santiam News.

Politically Independent

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EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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OFFICIAL EXTRAVAGANCE IS THE RULE

While it is true that with the advance of improvements in public utilities in all fields increased expenditures of money becomes necessary, a spirit of extravagance seems to have firmly seized hold of all branches of government embracing National, State, County, and Municipality. This extravagance is probably attributable to the great prosperity that has visited every portion of the Nation. While prosperity is desirable to the State and individual, there is an evil or undesirable feature attached to it. When money is easily obtained it is expended with a lack of forethought that in the end brings distress and oftentimes financial ruin. During flush times, or when money is earned with ease, we are apt to form expensive habits either as individual, Municipal, County, or State government. When the prosperity vanishes and money and employment become difficult to obtain, then the extravagant habits formed in the days of prosperity, if not curtailed, generate debt for the individual, Municipality, County, or State.

The purpose of this article is to propound a few questions to our County Court. The NEWS wishes to know why it now requires about three times as much money to pay County expenses as it did a half-dozen years ago?

It is reported that the assessed valuation of Linn County as now shown on the assessment rolls is, in round numbers, \$19,000,000. The Court has placed the levy for County and State purposes at 10 mills. Ten mills produce a revenue of \$190,000. Of this amount \$60,000 will be required to pay Linn County's portion of the State tax; which would leave for County purposes \$130,000. Now if we deduct the special road tax from this amount (\$38,000) we have \$92,000 for other County purposes. Why has Linn County's expenses been practically doubled with the past four years? The people have been under the impression that as the assessments of railroads and timber lands have been increased by about 300 per cent while other property, such as farm lands, by only 100 per cent that when the farmer goes to pay his tax he will not be required to pay quite so much as he paid last year. But farmer friend, just get ready to be disappointed; for you will find that you will have to dig up fully as many dollars as you did last year, and then some.

There must be a large-sized leak in the management of the County's finances in some way. The present Court is perhaps looking after bridge work a little closer than previous Courts did; but as one member of the Court superintends building and repairing, thus lessening the cost, the expense should not be greatly increased on that account. Nor has the price of bridge material increased more than 25 to 30 per cent, so that the large increase in County expenditures cannot be charged up on that account. The Court is appropriating money to the public roads fund to some considerable amount, in addition to the special fund. The practice is to donate to a road district an amount equal to what the citizens of a district will subscribe. Probably \$10,000 of the increase can be accounted for in this way. There would yet remain \$82,000 for the Court to account for.

Last year the assessed valuation of the County was about \$8,000,000. The levy was 21 mills, which produced a revenue of \$168,000. The State tax last year was, we believe, \$33,000; leaving \$135,000 for County and road purposes. Deducting the 2-mill road tax, and to which add \$10,000 for special aid to road districts, would amount to \$26,000. Deduct this amount from \$135,000 and \$109,000 is what the Court disbursed last year.

The NEWS thinks the Court should issue a financial statement showing what became of this money—how and for what it was expended. This is due to the people. Our County Court is certainly responsible to the people for the economical expenditure of the sum placed at its disposal. The people are willing to be taxed to build good roads and bridges and for a liberal support of our public school system; also, for the necessary expenses for the County government. But to wasteful extravagance the people most emphatically object.

The Court, if it would escape suspicion of graft, should publish an itemized statement of the expenditures during the past year. If it can be

shown that the \$100,000 or better that was raised for County purposes was honestly expended, even if the people think the Court extravagant, its action will not be severely condemned. The people are being taxed too heavily. One per cent on the cash value of property is too much to pay for government annually. In addition to the one per cent required for County and State, School District and Municipality will require another one per cent and in most instances more. When a citizen is required to contribute annually two to two and one-half per cent of the cash value of his property, he pays entirely too much for the privilege of living. It is a preventive of immigration and discouraging to the citizen.

It is certainly in order for the Court to account for the large expenditures of last year, and to declare its purpose in raising even a larger revenue this year. A great many Linn County people were originally Missourians. They want to be shown.

THE KNOCKER.

Almost every city, town, and community has among its citizens persons who can rightly be termed "knockers." The knocker is a person who continually looks through smoked glasses. He is ever ready to predict failure for any enterprise that would advance the interests of his community. If, by concerted action on the part of the people of a community, a public enterprise can be induced to come to town, the knocker is always ready to give a black eye to the effort. Just why such people wish to retard progress, it is hard to say. One would think that every citizen would desire progress and prosperity for his home town, but the knocker seems an exception.

In Stayton, our nearest Marion County neighbor we are told that there are a number of knockers—men who oppose the building of the electric road from Salem to that city. They are opposed because they fear that Stayton people might go to Salem to trade occasionally. Such ideas are nonsensical. If Stayton merchants will keep the same quality of goods that Salem merchants do, and sell them as cheaply, a consumer would be a ninny to pay car fare down to the Capital city and return to buy his goods. The merchant that wishes his home town to remain isolated in order that the people will be compelled to patronize him, is certainly a back number and a detriment to his community. So let us hope that our Stayton knockers will see themselves as others see them and get out of the way of progress.

Scio is not entirely a stranger to the knocker. A proposition was made a few days ago to call a public meeting and name a committee to wait on the Southern Pacific officials and endeavor to have the proposed change of line pass through Scio. Two or three persons said it was no use and said the road would not come through Scio without a heavy bonus. The NEWS man inferred from what was said that these parties were at heart opposed to making any effort to induce the road to pass through our town.

Now as a matter of fact every one of these gentlemen will admit that should the Southern Pacific come through town, property would in a short time be worth double what it can be sold for now. If this is true, then why would it not be wisdom to make every effort to induce it to do so? If necessary Scio could well afford to pay a bonus of \$25,000 to accomplish the desired result, and then make money by the operation.

Surely if we sit supinely and await for Dame Fortune to come and beg us to allow Progress and Prosperity to take hold of our town, we are sure to be disappointed. If we show some spirit of enterprise and a disposition to meet the Southern Pacific authorities half way, we may succeed. "There is a tide in the affairs of men, if taken at its flood, leads on to fortune." The NEWS thinks the tide in this matter is now at its flood, and it behooves us to get to work and work vigorously. True, we may fail; yet we will lose nothing by making the effort, and it is possible that we may win. At all events, we can ascertain what inducement is necessary. We can then say if we are able to meet it.

To these knockers the NEWS will say, drop your pessimism for awhile and become an optimist. Let us think that we can accomplish our purpose and go to work vigorously to that end. Let us gather all possible data and send a committee to Portland armed with the strongest possible argument. If we fail with the Southern Pacific, the proposed electric line is still left to us. Possibly both lines may be secured. In that case we could watch Scio grow with considerable satisfaction, knowing our efforts were largely responsible for the result. Let us be moving. Let us make the New Year the most prosperous for Scio that she has ever had. We can do it if we will.

"Tongues of Fire" is the name of a so-called sect of religious fanatics that are now operating in Salem, Portland, and Albany. Those who are posted in regard to the actions of the fanatics say they are practically the same as the Holy Rollers were. The people of these infested cities are at a loss to know just how to handle the matter. Recognizing the right of any person or persons to worship God in a manner they deem most fitting, there is a delicacy about interfering with this sect. If these people are Holy Rollers masquerading under another name, they should be suppressed at once. A so-called religion that disturbs the mental equipoise of its adherents and disrupts and breaks up families certainly should be prohibited by law. Society has a right to protect itself even against a fanatical religion.

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