

The Santiam News.

Politically Independent.

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One year, at end of year	1.50
One year, at end of 2 years	1.75
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THE MATTER OF TAXES.

TO USE A CANT EXPRESSION, taxes are getting to be something "fierce" in these days and with every indication that they will continue to grow "fiercer".

Not more than ten or twelve years ago the legislature, for the first time, crossed the million mark with its biennial appropriations bill. The late legislature succeeded in appropriating just about four times that amount. The question that agitates the minds of most taxpayers is: "What are we or what can we do about it?"

If the present increase of the rate of taxation maintains, in another ten years, the entire income from property will be required to pay the taxes levied upon it.

The late legislature provided for a tax commission. The probable result of the labors of this commission will be, a further increase. In fact, one of the causes of the increase of taxation is the numerous commissions that have been engrafted upon our governmental system. We have increased our public officials, both in numbers and in salary, until this feature of our governmental system is becoming burdensome. The cost of our state government, to say nothing about the county, city and school district, is over four dollars per capita for every man, woman and child in Oregon. When we add to this the county, city and school district tax, the per capita would be ten dollars or over.

The fact of the business is, our governmental system must undergo a season of retrenchment. But where to begin, or where to retrench is the problem. It is a very easy matter to increase salaries and create new offices; but most difficult to reduce a salary or dispense with an officer. We know this, in that the last several legislatures have tried to reduce or decrease the very large amounts of money which is paid to the state printer. But every attempt has resulted in failure.

Then our late legislature was most generous in the creation of new offices and the increase of the salaries of old officers. It forced additional circuit judges upon districts which neither needed nor wanted them, and any official could have his salary increased, if he would only hang out for and leg for it.

If Oregon is ever again placed upon a moderately healthful basis of taxation, it will require heroic work on the part of our legislature. The state will have to quit free colleges; quit building rail and automobile roads; lop off numerous perfunctory commissions; compel men who have property to maintain their crazy relations who are confined in the asylum for the insane and bad boys who are enforced guests of the reform school, and their relatives in the blind and mute schools, etc. The habit of the citizen of shifting his burdens upon the state ought to cease. Then, as a matter of fact, we are paying our county and state officers too great salaries. When an office is so tempting that a half-dozen men will strive for the nomination before the primaries, the emoluments of the office is too great. Men want the place too badly.

But retrench as we may, the rate of taxation upon the man who makes an honest return of his property to the assessor, is now, and probable will be, too great. We must list property for taxing purposes, which now escape in whole or in part. Franchises in Oregon, are valuable properties. They should be taxed upon their earning power, rather than upon a physical valuation.

The Mormon church which is represented to be wealthy, requires its members to pay into the coffers of the church, ten per cent. of their earnings or incomes. Oregon has very nearly assumed that position towards her citizens. A farm, which is worked by a tenant, is taxed an amount which will exceed ten per cent. of its earning power. The money lender receives six per cent. for large loans. His taxes, in most of our towns, altogether amount to three per cent., fifty per cent. of the earning power of his money.

The people of Oregon are confronted with a condition, and a most serious one at that.

Every town in the valley and state has a gambling club and is spending large sums of

money in advertising the resources of their respective localities, for the purpose of inducing capital and homeseekers to locate. Tell the capitalist that one half the earning power of his money will be required for taxes and he will, in all probability, look for a location elsewhere. Tell the homeseeker that ten per cent. of the earnings of the farm is required to support the schools, county and state governments, and the beauties of Oregon will, at once, commence to fade.

This burdensome tax condition exists and the outlook is that it will grow worse before it grows better, if it ever does. We come back to the question of the beginning of this article, "What are we or what can we do about it?" The NEWS is free to say that it don't know.

THE LEGISLATURE AND THE NORMALS.

GOVERNOR BENSON has issued a proclamation convening the Oregon legislature in special session, on Monday March 15. The call is made, ostensibly, to correct some of the mistakes made at the regular session.

Governor Benson has the implied promise of a majority of the members that no new legislation will be undertaken at the special session. But will or can the members make this promise good?

The normal schools will bring every possible influence to bear, to reopen the entire normal school question. The friends of the normals say that the legislature has dealt neither fairly nor justly in refusing to appropriate money, at least, sufficient to pay the salaries of the teachers to the end of the present year. Let us see whether or not the legislature was justified in the nontaking of action in the matter.

The board of normal school regents knew full well when it made contracts with these teachers, that the tenure of the normal schools stood upon a very frail basis, and that the legislature would, as it did, threaten out the entire normal question at the session just lately closed. Hence, contracts should have been made contingent upon the action of the legislature, with these teachers. The board knew full well that there was a strong and growing sentiment throughout the state against the normals and that a legislature hostile to the normals might be elected. It had no right nor authority to compromise the state in any way whatever. The board's authority to contract to pay the state's money could not, from the very nature of the cause, extend beyond the period for which the amount of money at its disposal would cover. The state's honor was not nor could not be involved in the matter; for no legislature of the past had the power to say what a succeeding legislature would or should do in the matter of appropriating money for special purposes.

Many of us remember how insidiously these normal schools have been engrafted upon the state; how they, at first, only asked that those schools should be recognized by the state and that diplomas issued by them should be recognized as being equivalent to a state certificate, in the matter of authority to teach in the public schools; how that the normal school lobby has been on hand, at every session of the legislature since that time, ready and willing to debauch the legislature if necessary, in order to secure the appropriations they wanted, etc. When we remember these humiliating facts and hear, at the same time, the friends of these institutions talk about the state's honor being impugned, one can only laugh at the impudence which they manifest.

As normal schools, in the true sense of the term, the institutions at Ashland, Weston, Monmouth and Drain, are failures. Their graduates, to say the least, are no better than the normal graduates from private colleges and academies. Nor does 25 per cent. of their graduates take up teaching as a lifework. These are facts which the history of the past will verify.

Therefore, if the state has made a mistake in its normal school endeavor, our late legislature did a heroic act in refusing to spend the state's money for what everybody now knows is a mistake. It is now proposed to submit the whole matter to the people at the next general election. This is the correct method of disposing of the question. Our present normal school method will be set upon so emphatically when the people get a whack at it, that the question will never vex us again. But the people view the coming special session with suspicion. They know of the unscrupulous work of the normal school "push" in the past, and they will never feel entirely easy, until the present plan is as dead as the traditional door nail.

Now that Senator Chamberlain has taken the oath of office as United States Senator, has been assigned a seat and, we presume, has been slated for committee appointments, we wonder if ex-Senator Fulton has disposed of that smile on his face of which he had something to say, less than one year ago. While Mr. Fulton was one of Oregon's senators, he was active and energetic, yet he was, unfortunately, on the unpopular side of most questions. He was popular with the politicians (Republicans) of Oregon; but somehow, he failed to keep in touch with the masses of the people. Of course he will be shelved, as a politician and office holder, in Oregon, whether he is appointed U. S. judge or not. He belongs to a school or class of politicians for which the people of Oregon have no use. Like Binger Hermann and M. C. George, he will be numbered with the "has beens."

NEW SCHOOL LAW.

(By M. A. MILLER)

Following is a summary of one of the most important bills passed by the late legislature affecting the public schools of Oregon.

House bill 77 provides that each district in the state must maintain at least 6 months' of school each year.

The county court of each county is required to levy a tax that will aggregate not less than \$7 for each child in the county between the ages of 4 and 20 years.

If the \$7 levy does not give the district an amount sufficient to carry on a six months' school, then it is the duty of such district to levy a tax not to exceed 5 mills, or so much thereof as may be necessary to maintain a six months' school; provided, any school district fails to make such a levy then it shall be the duty of the county court to make the levy upon the taxable property in said school district.

The law further provides that in case the \$7 capita and the 5 mill levy fail to produce sufficient funds to carry on a six months' school, then it becomes the duty of the county court to supply the deficiency from the general funds of the county.

If any district fails to report to the county superintendent within 15 days after its annual school meeting or does not maintain at least six months of school during the year it shall not be entitled to its proportion of the school fund.

This is one of the most important and far reaching bills ever enacted by an Oregon legislature, so far as rural schools are concerned. Following is proof of the foregoing.

COUNTIES.	Districts.	Months' School.
Baker county	10	4
Benton county	21	4
Crook county	20	4
Douglas county	29	4
Gilliam county	17	4
Jackson county	19	4
Lincoln county	29	4
Malheur county	10	4
Morrow county	20	4
Umatilla county	12	4
Wasco county	10	4
Lane county	35	4
Linn county	12	4

In other words we have something like 336 districts in the state which have only 4 months' school, 210 districts with 5 months and 400 districts with 6 months.—Lebanon Express.

EDUCATIONAL MEETING.

The educational meeting to be held in this city, on Saturday, under the auspices of Banner Grange, and to be managed by Supt. Jackson, will open at the public school hall on Saturday morning promptly at 10 a. m. Everybody and his family is cordially invited to be present and to bring a well filled lunch basket. The committee to superintend the preparation of the lunch will see that coffee, sugar, cream, spoons and dishes are supplied. The following is the published:

PROGRAM

Music, Scio Band. Opening Song, Members of the Grange. Songs and Declamations, By pupils of the Public Schools. "Comic Selection", Prof. C. M. Kendall. "The County High School", Prof. L. R. Alderman of the State University. Music, Scio Band. Address, State Supt. J. H. Ackerman. "Select Reading", Prof. Kendall. "Purpose and Work of the Grange", Hon. J. J. Johnson, Lecturer of the State Grange. "Recent School Legislation", Senator M. A. Miller. "Miscellaneous Period", General Discussion.

LITERARY WORK—Declamation, (a) Prize for best declamation by pupils above the 6th grade, \$1.50; (b) Prize for best declamation by pupils below 6th grade \$1.00. Songs, (a) Prize for best class song, U. S. flag (8x5 ft); (b) Prize for best solo, U. S. flag (8x5 ft). Maps (a) Best map of the U. S., by pupils above the 6th grade, \$1.50; (b) Best map of Oregon by pupils below the 6th grade, \$1.00.

BASKET DINNER—All patrons of the Public Schools, Grangers and Friends of Education are most cordially invited to bring their baskets—well filled—so that the noon hour may be spent in a social dinner.

Notice.

Those knowing themselves indebted to the undersigned will please call and settle. I need the money.
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