

The Santiam News

POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT

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PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY BY T. L. DUGGER EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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Save Our Natural Resources

PORTLAND CIVIL ENGINEER has made a careful survey of the Deschutes river from its mouth for a distance of 140 miles up. He pronounces it the finest water-power stream in the world. Its fall is so rapid that the water can be used over and over for almost any number of times. In the aggregate he estimates the motive possibilities at 1,000,000 horse power, and its value, if utilized by the state, at \$7,500,000 annually. And this enormous source of revenue is in great danger of being totally lost to the state.

The proposed Deschutes railway, which the Harriman people are contemplating to build, is surveyed so close to the banks of the stream, we are told, that water power stations would be difficult to locate without interfering with the railway right of way. What are our statesmen doing and what are our big newspapers thinking about, that they remain silent, when property of such immense value is simply being usurped from the people? We have seen the immense water power at Oregon City appropriated by a private corporation to its own use. We have seen the natural power stations of the Santiam, the McKenzie, the upper Willamette and other of the streams of the state, appropriated to private use, until, at the present, there are few natural power stations on these streams unappropriated.

If our Portland engineer's estimate of the amount and value of the Deschutes river is correct, a like estimate of all the water power of the streams of the state at 500,000,000 horse power would not be far from correct. Assuming that the aggregate value would be proportionately the same, we would have \$4,000,000 as the annual value thereof. These figures almost astound one. Yet these immense values have been and are being allowed to slip away from the state, never to be recovered. What an immense income the state has permitted to be frittered away.

The biennial appropriations made by our late legislature were, approximately \$1,500,000. This sum is thought by the average taxpayer, to be extravagant. And it is, when we know that every dollar of it represents the toil on the farms and workshops of Oregon.

But, let us suppose that the vast water power of the streams of Oregon, were paying the state a reasonable annual rental therefor. Let us fancy the Oregon Electric company was paying the state a royalty for the power it uses at Oregon City; and that every mill or manufacturing plant which utilizes water as a motive power, was doing likewise. What a splendid annual income the state would have.

Neither of the methods of taxation for the support of the state heretofore resorted to, have given satisfaction. Nearly every legislature for many years, has discussed this vexed question, without ever reaching a satisfactory conclusion. Nor will a method satisfactory to the people be devised, so long as the effort is along lines of general direct taxation. Suppose the state should at once establish a system of conservation of the unappropriated water powers for the use of all the people, instead of allowing private individuals or corporations to gobble them up? Within a few years not a cent of money raised by general taxation would be necessary for the support of the state. Just suppose the state could have the annual value of the water powers of the state at her command? Think of \$4,500,000 to spend? What magnificent public schools and colleges we could have? What splendid public buildings and public highways we could have? Why, we could even undertake the building of state railroads, if we had this immense sum of money.

Of course there is but a small fraction of the water power of the state now in use. But the boy is now living who will see every horse-power of it

Now, no one will dispute that this immense power which nature has supplied ought to be conserved for the use of all the people. Of course private capital should develop this power and, by paying a reasonable rental to the state, be allowed full control of the same. It would simply be paying a small royalty on a product of nature which, in justice, should belong to all the people.

So, we are about to permit Mr. Harriman to usurp from the people of Oregon, an asset which is estimated to be worth \$7,500,000 per year. Why does Governor Benson permit the state to thus sleep upon her rights? If Mr. Harriman will build a railroad to Central Oregon only up the Deschutes canyon, why is he not required to place the right of way far enough from the banks of the river so that possible power stations will not be interfered with?

It is stated that to build a railway to Central Oregon via the Deschutes canyon, would be much more expensive than to extend the C. & E. into the same territory. Possibly Mr. Harriman may have an eye to the value of the water power possibilities of the stream, and for this reason the more expensive route is given the favorable consideration.

In Oregon, as in nearly all of the rest of the states, private individuals and corporations have been permitted to appropriate the natural wealth which nature has so bountifully provided, to private and corporate use. This is wrong. No citizen should be permitted to usurp any of the bounties of nature, without paying to society a reasonable compensation therefor. Every mine, including coal, iron, copper and lead; every oil well, every gas well, every water power station, and in fact, every feature of nature which is productive of wealth after being harnessed by man, in justice, first belonged to all the people. And whoever utilizes one of these bounties of nature, should be required to pay the rest of the people, through the state, a reasonable rental therefor.

It is quite time that the people of Oregon should be moving to save for themselves, the rest of the water power of the state, which nature has so richly endowed us with. In the Deschutes matter, steps should at once be taken to protect the state's interests, or Mr. Harriman will soon have them so compromised that they will be gone forever.

MEMORIAL DAY

NEXT SUNDAY is Memorial day. While the 30th day of May is a legal holiday in most states, it has a much different significance to that of any other of our holidays. No other day of the year causes so much harmony of thought and feeling, as the day dedicated to the memory of the soldier dead. The meaning and sentiment of the day has come to be broad enough to take in the memory of all dead of the past. Cemeteries which contain, possibly, no remains of soldier dead, are visited by the loving hearts and hands of the living, a fact which is evidenced by the garlands of flowers which may be found upon every grave therein. The custom, which came into existence with the close of the civil war, is both beautiful and touching. What can appeal more to patriotic reverence and sentiment, than to see the trembling bent forms of the gray haired veterans, who once wore the blue and carried their stars and stripes to victory, marching to the graves of their comrades who have preceded them to the Great Beyond, and depositing thereon their offerings of flowers?

The thoughts expressed on this day by the thousands of orators throughout the land, can but inspire a feeling of better manhood and womanhood in the hearts of both old and young. It inspires a patriotic reverence for the soldier dead in the minds of the young, which will bear fruit in the future, should our country again require to be defended from the assault of an enemy. It is a common consent of the people of all over our country, the day is given by the living to thoughts of the dead. Who will say that the thoughts generated on Memorial day, does not tend to make us, one and all, better men and women and better citizens.

Many of the old veterans, who will take part in the ceremonies of next Sunday, will do so for the last time. When the roll is called one year hence, they will fail to respond. The very youngest of the boys who wore the blue and who marched to battle in 1865, are now old men. At most, they can participate in but few more memorial days, except it be as a spirit to watch the stringing of flowers upon their own graves.

Younger hands will soon have to perpetuate the custom which was given birth by the largest volunteer army which ever marched to battle. Let us hope that the descendants of the veterans of the civil war, will ever perpetuate the custom established by their fathers of decorating graves with garlands of flowers on May 30. It cannot but inspire good thoughts in the minds of the living and, we feel sure, that it gives pleasure to the spirits of the old veterans who has fought his last battle with death and lost.

The Judges and the Law

EXCEEDINGLY interesting and highly characteristic of the times we live in is the attitude of certain Washington judges toward one of the statutes of that state. It is a statute which requires the judges after June 14 to wear a uniform when they are on the bench. It seems to the untutored lay mind not one whit more tyrannical or unreasonable than the law which requires Army officers to wear uniform in the field. Both judges and generals are in the service of the public, and the public may properly require them to acknowledge the fact by wearing some appropriate clothing. But the Washington judges are not of that opinion. Their attitude toward the law, which happens to be obnoxious to them personally, is very much like that of some judges toward all laws. When they do not like them they refuse to obey them. What can they expect of other people in similar contingencies?

Judge McCredie, for example, is quoted by a daily paper to the effect that he thinks the law "ridiculous" and that he "has no notion of wearing" the uniform. Of course, if Judge McCredie may properly disobey any law which he deems ridiculous, so may all of us. What a beautiful state of society we shall have if we may call any law ridiculous which we happen to wish to disobey, and thus escape all censure. Judge T. H. Brents says the statute is unconstitutional. One would suppose that a judge who had a proper feeling for the proprieties of his station would let somebody else decide such a question when it arose in his own personal case. When it comes to every judge assuming the power to set aside any law which affects him unpleasantly, we are brought to much the same pass as we should be if we flatly declined to obey them, like Judge McCredie.

Another judicial light, Judge Black, pipes that "a large majority of the judges will not consider the law seriously." Is not all this edifying? Does it not indicate something of the source of our modern disrespect for law? When the judges themselves despise the law, who shall respect it?

GET A PIECE OF LAND

AN OFFICIAL of the New York city tax department makes the astonishing statement that all the land of that great metropolis, with more than 1,000,000 people, is owned by less than 100,000 of them. It says that only one out of every seven registered voters is a land owner. Of every nine families of five persons each, only one owns land. Of every 1000 population only 25 possess any land. In Exton the proportion is probably about the same. In Chicago there is a somewhat greater percentage of land owners.

Fortunately, taking the whole country into view, there are more land owners in proportion to population, yet not so many as is desirable. The last census figures showed that nearly half the families in the United States live in their own homes. The percentage is only 26 in New York state, but is 48 in Maine, 55 in Iowa and runs as high as 59 in South Dakota. The states with none or few large cities naturally have the largest population of land owners.

Every influence that can be brought to bear on the people generally should be used by educators of all classes to induce them to get a piece of land. Most people could do this, if they tried hard enough. A small tract of land is enough, in most cases—in many portions of Oregon, for instance. Its ownership and occupation make people better citizens. Then they realize that they "have a stake in the country." They feel responsibility that they cannot otherwise require. A nation of land owners, home owners, will take care of itself.—Oregon Weekly Journal.

ADMINISTRATOR'S NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to all persons concerned that the undersigned, has been appointed Adminal. trustee of the estate of Allen Van Ness, deceased, late of Linn county, Ore. All persons having claims against said estate are required to present the same to the undersigned at his residence in Scio, Oregon, duly verified as by law required within six months from this date. Dated the 20th day of May, 1906. First publication May 7, 1906, last publication June 1, 1906. J. F. LEYLER, Attorney for Administrator. Administrator.

Administrators Notice
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been duly appointed by the county court of the State of Oregon, for Linn county, adm. trustee of the estate of William T. Hickman, deceased. All persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present the same to the undersigned or property verified as by law required, at his office in Scio, Oregon, within six months from the date of publication hereof. Date of first publication May 7, 1906, last June 4, 1906. C. E. BROWN, Attorney for Administrator. Administrator.

Administrators Notice to Creditors
Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been duly appointed by the county court of the State of Oregon, for Linn county, adm. trustee of the estate of William T. Hickman, deceased. All persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present the same to the undersigned or property verified as by law required, at his office in Scio, Oregon, within six months from the date of publication hereof. Date of first publication May 7, 1906, last June 4, 1906. C. E. BROWN, Attorney for Administrator. Administrator.

Assessor McKnight's Advice

Editor Santiam News— We feel it our duty to call the attention of taxpayers of cities and of road and school districts that are intending to levy for special purposes to the fact that the assessed value of Linn County for the present year will show a marked increase over that of 1906. And we think it also might be well to explain, briefly, why the raise has been made and to refer to its relation to the state tax.

We find in most cases that it has been the custom of school districts at the annual meeting in June to not only decide upon the amount of money they wished to raise but to actually fix the mill levy, using, of course, the value of the previous year's assessment as a basis. This practice has always been productive of bad results and should be abandoned. Every year we have instances of districts following out this old plan and, as a result, raising more money than intended. To avoid these miscalculations it is well to bear in mind that while the money to be raised may be decided upon at the annual meeting, or at any time for that matter, the millage necessary to raise the required amount should never be fixed until the assessment roll is balanced and the assessed value of the district in the hands of the clerk. This will apply to road districts and, perhaps, a few cities as well. For example, the County Court would never think of fixing the levy for county and state purposes until having the summary of the assessment roll before them as a basis. It would be well if local tax-bodies would follow the same methods in this respect as communities often add to their tax burden by being just a little thoughtless in these local matters.

The raise in value is made to comply with the state law and we hope will not be considered by any one as an attempt on the part of the assessor "to boost" or that is no part of his duty. If he was to follow his own inclinations, it could be much easier to decrease the assessment roll at any time than to increase it. In relation to the apportionment of the state tax, let us say that the raise in the assessed value of Linn County will in no way effect the amount of her state tax, as is thought by many, nor did it in any way effect it under the law just repealed. We now have a State Tax Commission that will appropriate to each county her share of the state tax, not upon the value, as returned by the assessor, but upon the value of the county as they see it. As an illustration, the last apportionment of state tax of Linn County was made on a basis of \$28,000,000, yet, the assessor required only \$21,000,000. Thus, it will be seen that our state tax is in no way effected by a high or low assessment.

In conclusion let us remember that it is not the increase of the assessment that causes the trouble, provided, of course, it is equitable, but it is the amount of money we raise from it, that shut down the mills friends or at least let them grind slowly.

D. B. MCKNIGHT.

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