

THE SCIO TRIBUNE

ISSUED EVERY THURSDAY BY
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LITERACY TEST FOR IMMIGRANTS DEFFATED

For many years, efforts have been made by the Federal congress to limit or rule out objectionable European immigration. We have laws prohibiting the importation of contract labor, of paupers, crippled, diseased or others who are likely to become public charges. Yet, with these restrictions, undesirable immigrants continue to come to our shores.

Congress has endeavored to extend the restrictions to include illiterates and passed a measure to carry this purpose into execution. President Wilson vetoed the measure and congress could not muster enough votes, last week, to override the veto. The Tribune believes the president made a mistake in imposing the veto upon this measure. While it is true that a few illiterates who would become worthy citizens, may be excluded by this restriction, the vast majority of the people, so excluded, would never become desirable Americans, because they do not nor would not have the ability to become familiar with our customs and laws, at first hands.

In the early days of our republic, when the population was sparse and raw land plentiful, we wanted people and our laws were so shaped that almost any foreigner who came to our shores to become a citizen, was given a cordial welcome. Now conditions are different. We no longer have vast vistas of wild lands to provide homes for them. They congregate in our cities, overstock the labor markets and furnish three-fourths of the labor disturbances.

A literacy requirement from the incoming immigrant would not bar out all of the undesirables and would bar some who are desirable, but would shut out the great majority of the people whom we would exclude. Perhaps any exclusion law we may enact, will be open to this objection. The Tribune believes that if all people coming to our land should be required to deposit a cash bond as a guaranty of good behavior and obedience to law, with the Federal treasury, the same to be returned when the final naturalization papers are issued, almost all undesirables would be ruled out.

The United States no longer needs to encourage immigration. In fact, we need to look out for the people we now have rather than for those of other lands. Public land, which will furnish desirable homes is largely exhausted and what yet remains should be retained for our American born or naturalized citizens. American citizenship is now a boon to the laboring classes of Europe who desire to come to our shores to reside and the present devastating and destructive war raging over there, will make American citizenship more desirable, to them, than ever. For this reason

and for our own protection, a bond for good behavior and rapid assimilation to American ideals should be required. The vetoed literacy measure was a step in the right direction and, for this reason, should have received President Wilson's assent.

MAIL ORDER HOUSES AND THE COUNTRY MERCHANT

The country merchant is up against a pretty stiff proposition these days. He sees catalogues from mail order houses, quoting prices which he cannot meet, unless he changes his method of doing business. He cannot do a credit business and compete with mail order prices.

Some of our merchants in this and other towns have adopted the spot cash system, thus avoiding all risk and reducing business expense. By so doing they can compete with the mail order houses. Under the credit system, which has maintained since Oregon has been peopled, every country merchant figures the percentage of loss of accounts as a part of his business expense and marks up the prices of his goods accordingly. But, with the coming of the mail order establishment, which does a spot cash business, he sees his customers, whose names, mayhap, are on the debit side of the ledger, sending away their cash. When they are short of cash they, as of old, go to their home merchant.

Hence, to meet these conditions, the country merchant is forced to adopt the cash system, else go out of business. No doubt in many instances, this will work a hardship upon the farmer or others, who are unfortunate and whose situations are such that they are forced to ask for credit. These people are not mail order patrons, of course. They could not be if they would.

Now we do not assume that the country merchant can or will keep as large an assortment of goods as the mail order people. Yet he keeps the goods, as a rule, which his patrons demand.

If our local dealers meet mail order prices, which they say they will, our people should certainly give them their patronage. They pay taxes to our school district, to our town, help build our roads, help support the poor and unfortunate and are factors in everything which goes to build up the town and community. Mail order houses do not do this. You send them your money and so much is taken out of circulation in the community. Spend it with the local merchant and, at least, a part of it stays in the home circulation. Then the home merchant buys your produce, your wood, etc. You never sell the mail order house anything.

Merchants, pay the best price you can for produce and sell your goods as cheaply as you can and, in the end, you will get the business.

We have been accustomed, for years, to have railway and other stocks "watered," to have various food products watered with the aqueous fluid and other foreign substances, to have our sugar mixed with sand, our drugs and all kinds of condiments adulterated, our John D. Rockefeller mixed with water, etc. But the latest scheme is to mix water and other foreign substances with the oats, which are being shipped over to Europe with which to feed the war horses with. Truly, tricks that are peculiar, are unlimited in the schemes of the proverbial Yankee.

Copper is so scarce in Germany that a premium is offered the civilians to gather up the empty copper casings of shells and small arms, on the ground where battles have been fought.

VOLUNTEER ROAD WORK

Judge McKnight, in his Corvallis address, strongly advocates volunteer road work, holding out this method as the better plan to improve our roads. He did not favor doing away with road taxes, but one infers from the tenor of his address that he favors a low road tax, trusting to volunteer labor to do the rest.

The Tribune does not believe volunteer labor to be an equitable plan. Some men will be liberal in their volunteer labor while others will work not at all. All would wish to work when they had nothing else to do and this convenient time would be at just not the proper time to do the work, to secure the best results. Then our railroads, telephone and telegraph companies and timber barons would never volunteer a day's labor.

A better plan, Judge, would be to levy about a 5-mill tax and place the same in a general road fund, to be expended in an equitable manner and under the direction of a competent road builder. Do away with the special district tax, for to highly improve the roads in one district while those of an adjoining district are neglected, does not give satisfaction to the traveling public. If, to this should be added a vehicle tax, thus placing the principal burden on the people who use and wear out the roads, our thoroughfares would soon be in first-class condition. And then if heavy teaming, etc. should be prohibited when the roads are soft, the road problem would be solved.

Volunteer work will be found all right in certain neighborhoods. In others it will be found all wrong. Unless you compel some people to do so, they will work not at all. Also, it would be a good plan to restore the old road poll tax system; for many of our citizens' names cannot be found on our tax rolls and, yet, they use the roads as liberally as anybody.

A most commendable editorial on "Roads and Roads" was published in the Oregonian on Tuesday. We wish every farmer in Linn county could read it. It is practical in every way and should stimulate every voter to assist in help doing away with our present haphazard method of road building and the substitution of a plan which will give us a dollar's worth of road for every dollar expended.

Our city council should get busy and appoint an early "clean up" day. At the same time a rigid inspection of our side and cross walks should be made and repairs or new walks ordered, where necessary.

Father Flinn, the oldest minister in Oregon and probably of the Pacific coast, was a witness in a Portland trial court, this week.

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