

THE SCIO TRIBUNE

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IMPROVE LATERAL ROADS FIRST

One of the leading arguments to justify the road bond issue and the building or paving roads along the Columbia river and the roads on the east and west sides of the Willamette river, is the statement that these so-called trunk roads must be built before the construction of the laterals. From the automobile and tourists views, this is probably true. But from the commercial viewpoint, it is a fallacy. Commercially, the railroads will always be the trunk lines as they are today. Before the railroad era this would have been good argument. But with the railroads, which transport the products of the farm, mill, etc., to market, such trunk highways are of slight importance, while the lateral roads to get stuff to the railroads for shipment, are of increasing importance.

Had the road paving enthusiasts planned these lateral roads to be first paved, their scheme would have found more friends among the producing classes. But to take away a part of the road funds to build automobile boulevards, while providing that a large share of the county road funds shall be expended in preparing these proposed trunk lines for paving, The Tribune believes, is most unwise.

Road building, of whatever class, is a selfish proposition. Every individual wants the road he will probably use most, improved, regardless of the wishes of others. For this reason our Portland friends want the Columbia highway completed, especially from Portland to Seaside. The reason is obvious. A paved road down the Columbia to the seaside would enable automobile owners to spend every Sunday at the seaside during the summer, if they chose to do so. But from the commercial viewpoint, the completion of this scenic highway will be of but small value. The same can be said of the paving of the Pacific highway through the Willamette valley.

If one will but consider the people who are boosting this bonding measure, they will see that they are selfish in their advocacy. They are seeking to grind a personal ax.

Portland wants it because it will make that city the tourist center of the northwest and draw much retail trade from the valley to that city. Automobile dealers want it because they think it will increase the sale of autos. Paving companies want it because it will give them rich pickings in royalties before their patents expire. Cement dealers want it for the thousands of tons of cement they will sell, etc.

These are the people who originated the scheme, placed it in the legislature in its last hours and are now, at great expense, endeavoring to cajole the people into ratifying the legislative action. People are

curious to know who is furnishing the money to carry on this so-called campaign of education. Surely nobody will expend his time and money for this purpose unless he expects to recoup later on.

Let us suppose this measure carries. The first road to be improved is the Columbia highway. The counties through which this road passes are exempted from preparing the road bed, because they have bonded themselves to the limit and, in a large measure, have wasted the proceeds of their bonds. Hence all of the expense of constructing this highway will be taken from the \$6,000,000 bond issue. After 100 miles or more of this road is completed, one-half or more of the bond issue will be expended. Then, of course, the balance will be spent on the two roads running south from Portland. Possibly these roads could be completed as far south as Salem. It would then be a pleasant jaunt from Portland to the capital to secure further bond issues. They could make a loud trip of it going on one side of the river and returning on the other.

The bill in its preamble in the selection of the roads to be improved, exempts five counties from preparing the necessary road bed by grading and draining. The bill says: Inasmuch as these counties have expended large sums of money and having bonded themselves to the limit and cannot borrow money, etc., they shall be exempt from the responsibility of preparing the road bed and that the expense therefor shall be taken from the bond issue fund. Now we ask in all candor, Who is responsible for this creditless condition but the counties themselves? If your neighbor mortgages his farm to the limit, must you be required to pay a part of his public obligations because he has not the money nor cannot borrow it? This would be synonymous to what this bill will require of other counties to do. Moreover, these counties have not the money to prepare the road bed, cannot borrow it and, consequently, if the paved road goes, the state will have to do this work. If this proviso had not been made, the Columbia highway to Seaside could not be constructed; for Columbia and Clatsop counties are among the five counties exempt. Unless this proviso had been made, Portland autoists could not run down to their favorite beaches on the summer Saturday evenings.

The exempting of these counties The Tribune believes is contrary to the spirit of the state constitution and offers a premium for county improvidence.

Simply because one opposes this bonding scheme, is no reason to accuse him of being opposed to good roads. Every citizen of Oregon, if he has the good of the state at heart, desires good roads. Many farmers and others, who will vote "no" on this bond question, has assisted in voting five mills or more special tax on his district and, probably, volunteers many days work on the roads besides. They certainly cannot be accused of opposing good roads.

Should this bond measure carry and the debt is paid off in forty or more years, it will be found that instead of paying a debt of \$6,000,000 they, the automobiles (?) will have paid \$12,000,000 or more, for the debt will, principal and interest, amount to that sum and unless much more is expended in repairs, the road will be worn out when the last payment is made.

When the automobile tax, $\frac{3}{4}$ of which is now returned to the counties, where the auto is owned and the $\frac{1}{4}$ mill road tax is consumed by the state on especially selected roads, counties will find their county road fund short that amount. Some of the counties are not touched by

any of the proposed roads to be improved. Will these counties be given a fair deal, when a part of their road money is legislated away from them and they get nothing in return? And will solvent counties be treated fairly when they are required to help build paved roads in insolvent counties?

The road bond scheme is full of unfairness if one will simply analyze its provisions. Besides, the bill proposes to pave over 1000 miles of road, besides macadamizing and otherwise improving 3000 to 5000 miles of Post and Forest roads. Anybody knows that \$6,000,000 will improve not more than one-tenth of this mileage. It simply means more bonds, and then some, and then some. Will automobiles take care of these future issues? Farmers read your election pamphlets closely and, especially this bill involving the issue of bonds, for it means a heavy increase in taxation if all these roads are improved as contemplated. We all want good roads, but we would rather build them in Linn county than in Columbia, Clatsop, Hood River, or other counties. We have the same spirit of selfishness, which these Portland boosters, auto salesmen and joy riders have, only our selfishness would first improve the roads which will benefit Oregon commercially, instead of for joyriders and tourists.

100 PER CENT PATRIOTISM

Not since the Civil war has there been anything to fan the fires of patriotism in the American heart, until the present time. Our national security, for 50 years or more, has seemed to be so safe and free from foreign interference, that we had begun to think that war for the United States was almost an impossibility.

True, we had a little flurry with Spain some nineteen years ago, but everyone knew that our country was not in jeopardy and that but a few thousand troops would be necessary to win our honorable victory. The war fever scarcely disturbed the serenity of our homes and only a few of our young men were necessary to fill the quota of troops called.

But we are now up against the real thing. We feel that the full war power of the nation will be called into action, for an enemy to democracy has arisen which must be subdued. Possibly the very life of free government is at stake. We know that, should Germany win out, indemnity compared with which the \$7,000,000,000 war levy now about to be made by congress would be a trifle and we have reason to believe German troops would invade American territory as well.

Hence, it behoves the American nation to be getting busy in war preparation at a speed hitherto unknown in our history, if we would protect our country's honor, our government and our homes.

Of course we do not expect Germany to be victorious. Nor would she have, had the United States not entered into the war. But our entrance into the war, will curtail its continuance and go far towards the banishment of the remnant of autocracy in Europe.

It is most gratifying to the American national heart, to see our large capitalists and large manufacturing establishments manifest such an unselfish patriotic spirit as they are now doing, and a disposition to not attempt to capitalize their patriotism as they did in the Civil and Spanish-American wars.

As a matter of fact, we are not surprised that the people throughout the entire nation are manifesting the greatest patriotic zeal and that our young men are rallying to the colors with commendable rapidity. While gratifying and increas-

ing our national pride in American manhood, it is but repeating conditions which have existed in all of our wars. The American citizen, whether of native or foreign birth, is not a slacker. He recognizes his obligation to protect the government as a duty and steps boldly to the front when his services are required.

So we say that American patriotism is of the 100 per cent variety and can be relied upon under any and all conditions.

Few of our citizens, in time of peace, have an admiration for the soldier's life. They vigorously oppose a militaristic government and, unless a war is on, prefer the occu-

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