

THE SCIO TRIBUNE

ISSUED EVERY THURSDAY BY
T. L. DUGGER, EDITOR AND PROP.

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I pledge allegiance to my flag and the Republic for which it stands, one Nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

SCIO, OREGON, DEC. 30, 1920

THE CLOSING YEAR

This week the Tribune will make its final visit to its many readers for the year 1920. Fifty-two times this paper has made its weekly visits, mayhap conveying intelligence which gave joy to some and sorrow to others. To the ones we have extended congratulations and to the others sympathy. But the joy has overbalanced the sorrow and for this let us all be thankful.

Taken as a whole, 1920 has been a prosperous year for the people of Scio and vicinity. Crops have been bountiful as a rule, for which the seller has received fairly remunerative prices and the average farmer, stockman and merchant have added somewhat to their bank balances.

While the past year has been somewhat unusual in that its rainy season commenced so early and which caused crop losses to many of our farmers, most of them were able to house their crops before the rains had injured them. So upon the whole our farmers can be congratulated. Our stockmen have done fairly well, though they have had to meet a falling market during almost the entire year. Some whose holdings are mainly sheep have had to meet an unusual rapid fall in prices for their product, have had to content themselves with a smaller profit and felt they did well to play even. A few others still have their wool and may do better or worse than their neighbors who sold early.

Declining prices have compelled all to be content with smaller profits but, as a whole our producers have done well. They are now down about to "normalcy" and have saved themselves from failure and are ready to go ahead and do the best they can, let the future be what it may.

During the past year there was but little new building, owing to the high prices for building material. The new power station is in an unfinished condition and cannot be completed before midsummer of the coming year and while there have been some business changes of a minor character in Scio, there have been no important changes, nor business failures.

So we commence the new year full of hope and expectation, ready to meet such conditions as may arise.

The inauguration of the new president and the actions of the new congress are sure to create new conditions. But whatever they are let us hope they will be for the best. Our new legislature may make some changes in the law which will effect conditions, but we can feel assured no radical changes will be made.

So with an encouraging future outlook, let every farmer and business man be ready to meet such new

conditions, as may arise, halfway ready to take advantage of the good things we earnestly hope may come to us.

With this feeling towards all, the Tribune wishes its readers a happy and prosperous new year.

TO TAX CHURCH PROPERTY

The Tribune understands a measure will be introduced in the legislature, to meet at Salem next month, the object of which will be the taxing of church property. This measure will strike a responsive chord in the minds of many people and will meet the bitter opposition of others.

Church property is a sort of semi-public holding. It was not built by money raised by direct taxation but by money obtained from voluntary donation. Churches are built to serve the religious peculiarities of a comparatively few people. Thus we have Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Christian or Campbellite, Mormon, Unitarians, Catholics, etc., all of whom have differing church tenets. Some of these denominations have plain churches costing but \$3000 or \$4000 while others especially in the cities, have huge stone structures with lofty spires, costing all the way up to a half million dollars. Now, our present law exempts these church buildings from taxation. No matter how many of them there may be in city or town, all are given a free bill of health by the tax gatherer. Exemption of these properties causes the tax on each home to be just a little higher. True churches do not pay a money revenue. Neither does the home, but the home of the laboring man as well as the mansion of the rich man pays a tax proportionate to its value. Anyway why should the man who worships in a \$3000 or \$4000 church pay a higher tax because his city neighbor must have his religion expounded from the pulpit of a half million dollar structure?

Now there is reason why school houses and all other structures built by taxation should not be listed by the tax gatherer. All the property in a given district is taxed to build this edifice. The Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, etc, all pays his just proportion of this tax. Not so with the church. Only members of a particular denomination and other public spirited citizens build the church. They do not have to pony up their donations, great or small, as they do their taxes.

We have laws prohibiting the intermingling of church and state affairs. In many places church services are not prohibited in school houses, and churches as a rule, are particular as to what entertainments are permitted in their houses of worship. Both the school house and church is devoted to a particular purpose. One however is a public purpose while the other is a semi-private purpose. The difference is quite distinct.

There is more reason to exempt the poor widow's home, who may wash for a living, than there is to exempt even the \$3000 or \$4000 church from taxation, yet that same woman is compelled to pay a slightly higher tax because the church is exempt.

If the state regulated the cost of the church, there would be a terrible roar. Men will say I will take what I please from my property which pays taxes, and give it to the church which does not. As a matter of justice, is this fair?

Another feature. In nearly every town or city, there is twice as many churches as are needed. Because men differ slightly in their religious belief, they must have a separate place in which to worship. Here preachers generally poorly paid and talk to congregations which do not fill more than one-third of the seats,

and some of the church buildings are preacherless and without congregations. Yet their empty buildings pay no taxes, while the poor man's or widow-woman's home must pay or be sold under the sheriff's hammer. Mr. Churchmember is this fair and in accordance with the teachings of the Savior, while on earth?

And this measure to tax church property will have more support in the legislature than many people suppose. In these days of exceedingly high taxes, new sources of tax revenue are being sought out. Assessors are becoming more alert. More property, which has escaped listing, is being found all the time and very many people are wondering why churches are not taxed, why these magnificent city structures, built to stand for a century and costing hundreds of thousands of dollars, while the washer woman's poor cottage or hovel must pay. If we reduce this matter to a final analysis, there is no just reason why the church should not be listed on the tax rolls. If a man or class of men must have a separate preacher and a separate building in which to have his peculiar religious ideas expounded, he should be willing to pay for it.

NO CAUSE FOR PESSIMISM

Alarm at the prospective exhaustion of the petroleum supply of the world just when its use for fuel and many other purposes has become well nigh universal should be allayed by recollection that there have been such scares before. When production from the original oil fields in Pennsylvania began to diminish, there was fear of their running dry, but in the eighties discoveries extended into West Virginia and Ohio. Since then oil in vast quantities has been found in Kentucky, then in California, then in Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas and last in Wyoming. Abroad great oil fields have been found in the Baku district of Russia, in Galicia, Roumania and Persia and last in Mesopotamia. There are good indications in Alaska and the republic of Colombia, and vast areas have yet to be explored.

There was probably a similar alarm when the forests of Europe began to show a deficient supply of wood for fuel, but coal took its place. This fuel is known to have been used by the Saxons of England as early as the middle of the ninth century, but did not come into general use for about six centuries. It is now mined in vast quantities in almost every country in the world, and was man's chief reliance as fuel until oil began to supplant it. Great beds of lignite are still nearly untouched to eke out the coal supply, and we need not fear actual exhaustion of oil resources till the great deposits of oil shale in the Rocky mountain region are worked out.

Experience with wood, coal and oil justifies confidence that other means of producing power and heat will be found when they become scarce. Scarcity sends prices upward, and thereby sets enterprise and ingenuity to work in search of cheaper substitutes. Each substitute has been more effective and economical than that which it replaced, and so it may continue. High prices also impose economy in use, which postpones the date of final exhaustion. The possibilities of electricity are but partly known, and the supply of that substitute for fuel will last as long as streams continue to flow.—Portland Oregonian.

Holiday week has passed very nicely and people generally are having a good time in visiting and eating bountiful dinners.

Our friends must think the Tribune family are kids from the number of boxes of candy and fruit sent us.

Greetings

To close our books at the end of the year without expressing hearty appreciation for the business and kind acts you have entrusted to us would leave a debt unpaid.

We thank you and yours and send you our best wishes for a Happy New Year.

Sincerely yours,

J. F. WESELY

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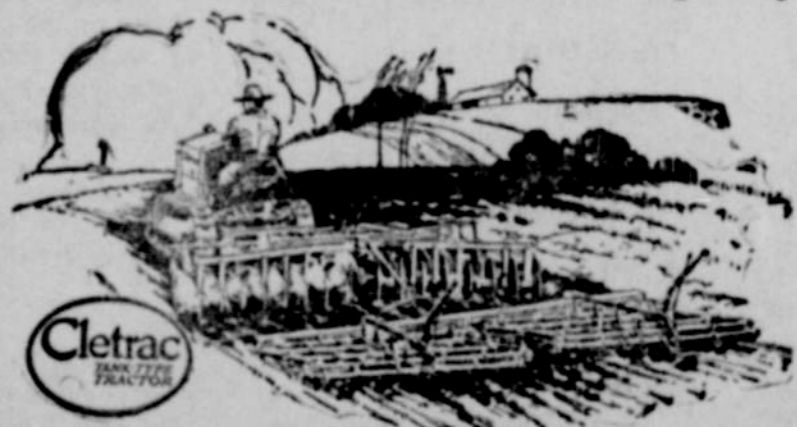
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