

THE HEPPNER HERALD

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

S. A. PATTISON, Editor and Publisher

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FIRE PROTECTION FOR HEPPNER

Oldtimers tell us that in the good, old days, in the years gone by, Heppner had the best fire-fighting organization of any town of its size in the Inland Empire and if any fellow from some other town asserted otherwise he had to prove it, get out of town, or take a licking. That was the Heppner spirit of the long ago.

It's different today.

A little more than two years ago Heppner had two years ago Heppner had two fires which, combined, cost the town around a quarter of a million dollars.

When the first fire broke out, early in June, the fire fighting apparatus was in lamentable condition. There was no organization worthy of the name. The hose was rotten and the hose carts were wobbly. Even the hydrant wrenches were not in place and when the big opera house burst into flame it was only by a scratch that two or more lives were not sacrificed. There was considerable talk for a day or two and that was all. The town dropped back into its old rut and nothing was done to mend the deplorable condition.

On July 4th, only a month after the opera house fire the big fire broke loose and when citizens essayed to get the hose in place and the water turned on they found the same conditions that hindered them at the previous fire. Nothing was in order. The hose supply was short, due to bursting of rotten sections at the opera house fire as well as the destruction of several lengths on that occasion because of lack of organization and efficient management.

On July 5th, the day after the big fire, the Herald, in its little tabloid, after the fire edition published an editorial on the fire situation of which the following is an excerpt:

"With a record of two disastrous and costly fires within a few weeks either one of which could have been prevented had the town possessed any semblance of modern fire apparatus and any sort of an organization to use it, it begins to look as though this town should begin to wake up and get some sort of a hump on itself. Most any intelligent person, accustomed to the habits and methods of thinking in vogue among the people of other live western towns would have been positive that the experience of a few weeks ago would have been all that was necessary to arouse Heppner to the need for immediate action in the way of getting some sort of fire protection, but as a matter of fact the result of a \$25,000 fire was just about the same as would have been the result of some citizen stepping to the middle of the street, striking a match on his trousers and then carefully blowing it out. Of course everybody knows who was to blame for both our fires and most private citizens are not slow to say so—privately. Of course the water company was to blame, and the mayor and the marshal and the city recorder and all of the councilmen were to blame, says Mr. Private Citizen, and there he stops, shakes his head ominously, and goes back to his business, work or loafing, as the case may be."

Following the big fire there was some response. The mayor and city council became awake to the fact that something must be done. The local demand was urgent. Perhaps the arguments from outside companies who had fire fighting equipment to sell was equally so. At any rate those in authority bought a modern fire-fighting machine—an auto truck equipped with chemical tanks and hose carrying capacity. A machine that is no doubt worth the money it cost provided always that there is somebody on the job whose business it is to keep the machine in perfect order every moment and ready to get it on the job without loss of time and operate it effectively whenever there is a fire alarm.

A fire company was organized with an experienced fireman in charge as chief but who, on the side, was obliged to earn his salary by serving the town as marshal or chief of police. After a few months he was relieved of the marshal job and being obliged to seek other employment, resigned as fire chief. Since that time the fire company has languished. There has been practically no organization and but occasional fire practice.

It is the young men of the community who must be depended upon to protect the town from fires. The competent citizen who has been a long time here and who has acquired title to much of the property is generally, because of business cares and physical rotundity, unfitted for turning out and chasing a fire wagon, or scaling roofs, or fighting flame and smoke and the younger generation whose names are not yet heavily represented on the tax roll are expected to bear the burden and save the other fellow's property when the fire fiend goes on the warpath.

How much encouragement have the young men of Heppner received from the property-owning, business-

directing citizens or from the community as a whole during the last two years to take a real, live interest in organizing a real, live fire company, of making that particular thing a real part of their weekly work, of holding regular practice, of keeping the fire truck and the hose and the hydrants in perfect condition and of getting to the center when a fire breaks out—on their toes to save some other fellow's property and keep their town from being completely wiped out?

What does a fire mean to the average unpaid, volunteer fireman?

It means a lot of hard work, ruing his \$80 suit, his \$15 hat, his \$12 shoes, to say nothing of risking his life or in the winter season taking a long chance with pneumonia or flu.

At a meeting of the commercial club a month or so ago a plan was suggested by a member who has had considerable experience as a fireman in larger towns than Heppner, along the line that some plan should be worked out by which members of the Heppner Volunteer Fire Department should receive some compensation for their work. In brief the plan outlined provided that the company should hold a practice meet two or more times each month and that each member who is in town and without a perfectly reasonable excuse should be subjected to a small fine for non-attendance. That in case of a fire each member should receive a fee of one dollar for the call and additional compensation for each hour or fraction of an hour he works after the first hour.

The plan sounded good to the club members and a committee was appointed to confer with the city authorities with a view to working some such plan out. So far as the Herald is able to learn there has been no action.

Such a plan would cost the city a few hundred dollars a year. Wouldn't it be worth the money if the result was a really effective fire company?

The boys who are expected to fight fire and protect property not their own should be recompensed at least enough to pay for damage to their clothing. It isn't fair to ask otherwise.

Insurance men tell us that an effective fire company in Heppner will mean a substantial reduction in insurance rates.

Isn't that worth trying for?

Can Heppner afford to lag along as she has been doing and take any more chances on having the rest of the town wiped out?

How would we all feel if a fire should break out on the lower Main street one of these dry, hot, windy days and clean out that part of town including the new hotel before it is even opened or paid for?

Let's act.

WILLING TO FURNISH OIL TO NAVY DEPARTMENT

The Associated Oil Company announced today that it has offered formally to the Navy Department to furnish whatever may be its equitable pro rata of fuel oil to cover for Pacific coast needs until September 30th at the present pipe line terminal market price of \$2.00 per barrel.

The company announced it has no fuel whatever in excess of its commercial customers' needs and is drawing heavily on its reserve stocks, but nevertheless recognizes the essential needs of the Navy and is willing to take its share of the load. The following statement was issued by the executive committee:

"In view of the widely published and conflicting statements about the so-called 'seizure' of oil by the Navy the executive committee of the Associated Oil Company authorized the following statement:


First—The Associated Oil Company has at all times recognized the Navy's essential need for oil and at all times is willing as a patriotic obligation, aside from any other motive, to supply the Navy with the allotment falling to the Associated Oil Company, as determined by its relative capacity to furnish fuel oil.

Second—Independent, however, of any question of allotment, the Associated Oil Company has never failed to meet any demand of the Navy for oil. During the past three years the Navy has declined to pay the market

price which all other consumers have paid, offering figures below the market price and leaving in the future any question of adjustment. To protect its claims for the market price the Associated Oil Company has re-estimated the demands instead of the ordinary purchase regulations of the Navy for oil, result being the so-called seizures, which are seizures only in a technical sense, as the facilities of the oil company have been as freely and as fully at the command of the Navy in making the oil deliveries as they are for any other customer.

Third—All questions of past prices of oil deliveries to the Navy up to June 30th recently have been adjusted with Admiral Cozzit in Washington. The present question is whether or not the current market price or the offer of the Navy of \$1.75 at San Francisco pay points shall govern. We anticipate this will be amicably adjusted. The Associated Oil Company is willing to accept for the three months ending September 30th a price of \$2.00 per barrel for its share or the obligation to furnish the Navy fuel oil at its pipe line terminals on San Francisco bay. At Los Angeles and San Diego it has no tankage or pipe line facilities.

"In this connection attention is directed to the urgent need for the conservation of fuel oil by all consumers and the encouragement in every proper way of greater production. The demand is far outrunning the supply.



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COLLINS CHOSEN PRESIDENT OF ROUND-UP

H. W. Collins, prominent grain dealer of Pendleton, has been chosen Up Association successor to the late as president of the Pendleton Round-Up.

Mr. Collins has been a member of the Round-Up board for nine years and he makes the announcement that plans are being perfected to make the Round-Up this year the best ever.

Hood River, Ore., Aug. 9.—Seven thousand feet of iron pipe, temporarily used in building the grade of the Columbia river highway, will find a permanent use in irrigation works here.

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