

## Heppner Gazette Times

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Official Paper for Morrow County



### Equality in Education

"EQUAL educational opportunity" is a phrase written into the Oregon constitution. It reflects the wisdom of that document's authors in recognizing that the state's well being depends upon a well-informed and well-trained citizenry, and that children of the state, wherever they may be, are entitled to have equally good textbooks, equally good teachers, and equally good everything that goes to make up an education.

But through the years since the phrase was placed in the state constitution, it has remained much as an ideal to be striven for but far from attained. While the state has set up a supervisory system to erect standards, lay down curricula and otherwise set a gauge for uniformity of operation, it has not made equal educational opportunity possible. Monies for school support have been distributed on a per pupil basis, not at all sufficient to provide schools capable of living up to the school standards, and the rich districts have been treated the same as the poorer districts. As a consequence, rich districts have had money to provide good schools. The poorer districts have not.

It is commendable at this time that Rex Putnam, state superintendent, is advocating distribution of state school funds on a basis of recognized need, thus more nearly to attain the ideal set forth in the state's constitution.

What applies on a state-wide basis, applies equally on a county-wide basis. And the point is brought home to the counties, because their people must make up the balance that the state fails to provide to maintain schools of state standards. Counties have their rich and their poor districts; districts where "equal" educational opportunity is afforded, and districts where it is not; again defeating attainment of the equal educational opportunity goal.

It is an essential in the theory of publicly maintained schools that a well educated citizenry contributes greatly to the value of all property, hence all property should bear its just share of the cost. This principle and the one of equality are incorporated into the county school law.

Whether the county school law is perfect in all its phases may be a moot question, but it does not change the underlying principles it is intended to accomplish. That it has done so fairly successfully in counties where it has been applied is a strong point in its favor, however.

It is to be noted that arguments being advanced against it in the present discussions over the county are largely based upon selfish interests and suspicions. Taxpayers in school districts having low special levies are afraid of having taxes unduly raised. They are afraid of giving people outside their own immediate district the opportunity to vote more taxes upon them. People in other districts are jealous of their schools; afraid they will be injured. Most everyone is suspicious that someone else will gain an advantage. People of all districts are more or less uncertain about relinquishing any authority over their own schools.

Many of the suspicions are clear aside from fact and far from tempered with reason, but they obscure

the larger picture of the future well-being of the county which equal educational opportunity would reflect upon property values generally over the county.

It has been suggested that a great deal of economy as well as improved educational opportunity could be effected through a union of high schools of Heppner, Lexington and Ione. That proposal is quite tenable and not, as some readers may immediately think, because this newspaper desires to move the Ione and Lexington school to Heppner. The plan could only be worked by placing the plant at a centrally located point, and that point would of necessity be Lexington.

Now, to head off a howl that might arise from Heppner and Ione, let it be said that while the plan is tenable, it is not immediately feasible. The cost for immediate change might be too great. Eventually, however, as need for plant replacement arises, it would be highly desirable for the benefits of such a move to be taken into consideration.

It is not possible here to discuss all angles of this school consolidation idea. Suffice that in addition to considerable economy of operation, it would make possible placing better athletic teams on the field to compete with other larger high schools, but the greatest factor of all, it would place the rising generations of this part of the county in the position of rubbing elbows with each other at work and in play, thus giving them a sympathetic understanding of each other and wipe out old feuds, superstitions and grievances not of their making that have hindered progress to be attained only through cooperation.

A commonly accepted saying is, "That fellow isn't so bad when you get under his skin." It is human to mistrust that which one doesn't understand. When everyone has an understanding of the other fellow's problems, realizes that he is doing the best he can in the position in which destiny has chosen to place him, then is the basis laid for cooperation. And every farmer knows what can be accomplished by teamwork.

How far consolidation of schools might be carried if the county school law were adopted in Morrow county is problematical. Much would be in the hands of the board of directors and the superintendent. In the ultimate its success or failure would largely depend upon how wisely the people would use their voting franchise in selecting members of the board. With a board in which the public would have trust and confidence, very little fear need be held for success of the plan.

The county school law seems to lend itself most readily for school consolidation such as has been mentioned. It is now working successfully, and it would appear that Morrow county people should be wise enough to make it operate successfully here.

A fear has been expressed that Heppner, with the balance of voting power, might take a notion to vote a big bond issue for a school here for which the rest of the county would have to help pay. This might be a well-grounded fear if Heppner did have the balance of voting power. But, at school elections, where money matters are concerned, only citizens whose names appear upon the tax rolls may vote. In which case, Heppner probably would not be able to swing an election of the kind feared. The law also sets a limit upon the amount of bonded indebtedness, which is also a safeguard against any such occurrence.

#### ATTENDS FUNERAL

Ralph Jackson, in the city today from Lexington, had just returned from St. Paul where on Tuesday he attended funeral services for Bill Smith, a cousin. Mr. Smith was president of the St. Paul rodeo, in which capacity he became known to many Morrow county people last year. His son, Bobby, rode in the Roman race with his ponies at the rodeo here last fall.

#### SCOUT CAMP CALLED OFF

Telegraphic word from the Blue Mountain council office at Walla Walla today announced that the proposed winter Boy Scout camp has been called off because of insufficient registration due to uncertain weather.

### SAFETY SONNETS



A KISS IN A HAMMOCK MAY TAKE A MAN'S BREATH,



BUT A SMACK IN A FLIVVER IS FLIRTING WITH DEATH!

—National Safety Council

Unfortunately, there are no statistics on the number of accidents caused by one-armed drivers, but the fact that many such accidents have been caused is undeniable.

A strong argument against this practice is the fact that the driver is not doing the object of his affection any good by driving with one arm and keeping his eyes on her face rather than on the road. Instead, he is exposing her and himself to an accident, with the possibility of injury or even death as a result.

A driver in California established some sort of a record when he was arrested while driving without using his arms at all. He was sitting in the back seat with a young lady on each side, and was steering the car with his feet.

Nor must the young lady be sitting in the car to cause an accident. A mishap was reported to Secretary of State Earl Snell in which a young man, nervous and preoccupied as he tried to think how he should propose to his loved one, drove through an intersection and crashed into another car.

Love is only one of many things which take a person's mind and eyes off his driving, but all have the same result—accidents. The good driver will make it an ironclad rule to keep his hands on the wheel, his eyes on the road, and his mind on his driving, according to Secretary Snell.

Jackson Gilliam, graduate of the Heppner high school, is one of 550 students leaving the Whitman college campus this week end to return home for the Christmas holidays. Gilliam is the son of E. E. Gilliam. He enrolled this fall as a freshman at Whitman.

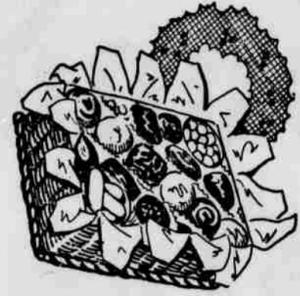
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Vaughn were week end visitors in Portland.

Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Rice were business visitors in the city Tuesday from the Artesian Well farm north of Lexington.

Mrs. Blaine E. Isom has been quite ill at the home in the Gilman apartments, suffering an attack of flu.

#### NOTICE

The Lexington Oil Co-Op has no agreement with Panther Grease Co. whereby it receives any commissions on sales made by any representative of the Panther Grease Co.  
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SATURDAY  
Dec. 31

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