

EDITORIAL

A Long Way Around

This week the Gazette Times family mailed a birthday gift to a little friend at Ritter. There is nothing unusual about mailing birthday gifts to little friends (or big ones, for that matter), but in this instance the matter of geography enters into the picture and causes one to pause and give a little thought to the subject of highways and mail routes.

In the matter of the birthday gift, let us trace the distance the parcel had to travel to reach its ultimate destination only 56 miles from Heppner. To begin with, it was hauled to Arlington by mail truck. There it was loaded onto Train 18 which carried it on to Pendleton. From there it was taken by mail truck to Ritter. Now consider the distance. Heppner to Arlington, 57 miles; Arlington to Pendleton 85 miles; Pendleton to Ritter approximately 70 miles—all that distance to reach a point 56 miles distant from Heppner. It lacks but 12 miles of being four times the actual distance between the two points.

Time was when Heppner was the outlet for a large part of the John Day region. Stages ran from here to Canyon City, carrying mail, express and passengers to Monument, Long Creek, John Day and Canyon City. Freight wagons hauled merchandise from Heppner to the interior region for many years, being finally supplanted by the swifter auto trucks. The Condon branch of the Union Pacific took a bite out of the Heppner interior trade territory. The Vale-Burns branch provided an outlet in another direction and with the building of the John Day highway Heppner lost the last vestige of interior trade territory, and now we find ourselves traveling more miles to get

into the John Day region or, as related above, our mail to that section has to take a devious route.

Not a small amount of credit for the loss of this territory was due to lack of foresightedness right here at home. We had a good thing but did not appreciate it enough to protect it when others sought to cut in. It would have been impossible to hold all of the trade but if an effort had been put forth to build a highway directly into the John Day valley rather than off to one side we might still be enjoying profitable trade relations with a section that once liked to come here.

Heppner cannot deny that it was given an opportunity to do something about a good road into the middle John Day country. Mrs. Mary Davis, owner of the Ritter Hot Springs, spent her own money and time coming over here to sell Heppner on the idea of a highway from here to her neighborhood but could stir up no effective response among the business men. She finally directed her efforts to other fields and we know who is getting the benefit of the business most of which at one time came to Heppner.

It is not likely that another urge will come from that direction and if Heppner ever takes a notion to build up trade relations with the John Day country it will have to do so on its own initiative. We will have to present advantages (and we have them) that other points do not have and prove to our neighbors that we really want their trade. There are no greater barriers between here and the John Day country than have already been broken down in construction of other routes to that section. If there is no immediate highway in sight, at least we can have something to look forward to as a matter of postwar enterprise.

LOCKER OPERATORS SEEK REASONABLE REGULATIONS

The Central Market, owned and operated by Mrs. Sara McNamer, is circulating a petition for the purpose of obtaining some semblance of reasonable regulations by the Office of Price Administration relative to locker plants. The petition asks that grading of producers' meat for their own consumption be rescinded. The orders and regulations, as they now stand, are interpreted by OPA to require grading of a farmer's own meat when he has the meat animal

slaughtered for him, and the carcass is temporarily in the possession of the locker plant by storage in the chill room. Likewise, when the locker plant processes the meat by cutting it, wrapping it, quick freezing it, and then putting it in the patron's individual locker box, OPA insists that the meat must bear a grade label.

Grading of meat which is to be sold is not objected to and Mrs. McNamer states that the organized locker industry is willing, as it always has been, to cooperate in the meat rationing program against

violations of the price structure. The only reason for petitioning at this time is to enable the locker plants of the nation to stay in business, on a reasonable basis, continuing to serve the patrons in the conservation of their meat supply.

Lloyd Burkenbine drove to La Grande today to bring his wife home after a sojourn of some weeks in the hospital following a serious eye operation.

Mrs. R. L. Bengel returned Wednesday evening from Portland after a short visit in that city. She

accompanied her daughter, Mrs. O. H. Bengston and children that far Sunday on their return to Medford after a two weeks visit here. Mr. Bengston met his family in Portland and drove them to Medford.

Henry Happold returned Tuesday from Montana, having finished the shearing season. He reports it

was a wet season, bad for shearers but good for crops.

Here to attend the funeral of Mrs. Mary Thomson were her brother Karl W. Farnsworth of The Dalles and her stepson, Earl Thomson, and wife of Portland. Mr. Thomson is a member of the Portland police force.

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The Heppner Gazette, established March 30, 1883. The Heppner Times, established November 18, 1897. Consolidated Feb. 15, 1912. Published every Thursday and entered at the Post Office at Heppner, Oregon, as second class matter.

Subscription Price \$2.50 a Year
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