

# UNION HIGH SCHOOL OWTGROWS BUILDINGS; ENROLLMENT AT PRESENT NUMBERS 225; ENLARGED BUILDINGS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED



By PRIN. ELMER F. GOODWIN

Union High school will be five years old on February 5th, 1920. Fitting exercises commemorating the fifth anniversary of the opening of this institution are now being planned, including addresses by citizens who were instrumental in consolidating the first five districts, members of the first Board of Education and special music by Union High Glee club, orchestra and other musical organizations.

The school has been a success and is a monument to the wisdom of those who foresaw nearly five years ago the need for a "peoples' college" for the young people of this community.

The school has demonstrated fully the following facts:

1. That consolidation will increase the efficiency of the school work and should be encouraged. There are now six districts in the Union which should be materially increased to furnish free transportation to all of the students and to equalize taxation among the people of the larger community of which the school is the center.

2. That free transportation is a safe and convenient as well as economical way to bring the advantages of a large school with many departments and specially trained teachers within reach of the boys and girls of a rural community. Seventy students are now conveyed from their homes in the country to school every day and there have been no accidents or complaints of consequence since the service started, nearly four years ago. The present Board of Education, however, hopes to promote better transportation busses soon, to be owned by the district and driven by officers of the school.

3. That a rural community can have all the advantages of a city system of schools by consolidation and free transportation, without any of the disadvantages, and in this our school is a better place for boys and girls to secure an education than in the city with all its distractions and vice.

4. That the district system is not sufficient to provide the best facilities for the proper education of rural boys and girls. The district is no longer needed to furnish the boundary lines of a community. The district schoolhouse is no longer a community center. Consolidation of districts has made this school the largest of its kind in the state and one of the best. Proper consolidation of some of the graded schools in this community would increase their efficiency at least 50 per cent. Closer connection between this high school and the graded schools of the Union district would greatly benefit all concerned. The gap is too wide between the eighth and ninth grades in some of the schools. The eighth and ninth grade teachers should be as familiar with each other's work as the seventh and eighth grade teachers. Under the present system there is a loss of, at least, one semester to the eighth grade graduate who should be prepared for the ninth grade rather than for graduation. Why suggest to young people that their education is finished on completion of eight grades by giving them diplomas, when opportunity for a high school education is in reach of them all? This condition would be changed by the county unit system or could now be changed in some of the schools by agreement of the two Boards of Education. Our school today is like the healthy, robust American boy who has outgrown his trousers. In order to economize, his mother made them a little longer twice by additions to the legs. They are now too tight around the waist, too narrow through the thighs and must be exchanged for a new pair. Additions to the present school building have been made twice but it was never intended for a large school. The class rooms are too small, the corridors are too narrow and the heating plant not sufficient for a building large enough to accommodate the enrollment even next year. We can not seat the entire student body in our assembly hall this year. It is impossible for visitors to attend school entertainments at the school building this year. A large school needs a gymnasium with gallery for visitors who may wish to witness games or physical training exercises. There is a

pressing need for dressing rooms in connection with the gymnasium and toilets should be located in basement. A cafeteria lunch room is needed. This is not intended to be a criticism of those who had in charge the construction of the present building. They did the best they could with the money at their disposal and the people four years ago did not expect to see such phenomenal growth of a union school. Looking forward a few years ago, to the condition that confronts us today, the present additions to the main building were made. A second unit to the present brick building of similar design would have been a mistake.

Just a word about the condition of the present school buildings to the credit of our teachers and boys and girls. There are no marks or defacements of any kind on the furniture of the buildings or on the walls inside or outside. There may not be another school building in Oregon with such a record. The desks and chairs look like new equipment as well as the rest of the furniture. Three janitors deserve special mention for invaluable services in keeping the buildings always neat and

clean, Messrs. C. E. Rusher, Frank P. Morse and A. M. Wilkinson.

The enrollment has now reached 225 students. They come from 24 districts and four counties. The enrollment will reach about 250 during the year if we can take care of them. There are 80 students from outside districts whose tuition amounts to more than \$100 each. If accommodations are provided there will be over 300 students on the first day next September and they will represent about every school district between Russellville on the west and the Sandy river on the east and as far south as Clackamas river and including Pleasant Valley on the south.

Union High school should be the community center for all this country so far as high school activities are concerned. This community deserves and can well afford a modern high school building or buildings with every facility for the best instruction in every branch of learning usually taught in secondary schools and with special attention given to agriculture.

The assessed valuation for school purposes of the property in the six districts composing the union dis-

trict is about three million dollars or about the same as Oregon City. Other adjacent districts should come into the union at once and raise the property valuation to four or five million dollars. A very small tax on this amount of property would build a union school building that would accommodate all our rural students for several years and many who would attend from Portland on account of peculiar advantages of a first-class rural high school. At present, outside districts are "getting something for nothing" for their children who attend a high school, since the school receives as tuition for them from a common fund just the cost of their instruction which does not include interest on cost of school buildings or bonded indebtedness. This is unfair and contrary to a well known legal principle, and taxpayers of outside districts having children to attend high school would not, we believe, object to joining the union district to help support a school that would be a valuable asset to the larger community

if the proposition was presented to them in the proper manner. Eight or ten additional districts could well afford to come into the union and help build and support a first-class rural high school. The school would enhance the value of their property and there would be no good reason for city people longing for country life to remain in Portland to educate their children.

Something must be done at once if we are to take care of the 300 and more students who will knock at our doors for admittance next September. This union high school is the best investment and biggest institution in this community.

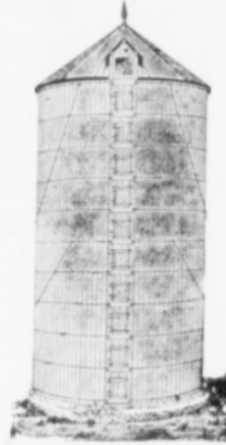
The cannery at Gresham takes care of the fruit and berries of the people who cultivate them, the brick plant at Hogan manufactures a good grade of brick, the Sun Dial ranch furnishes the community with high grade feed and the Beaver State Motor company turns out an excellent drag saw, but the finished products of union high school are educated young men and young women who

are to control the destiny of this community and country tomorrow. Are not educated young men and women worth more to the community than so many bricks or drag saws? Who would undertake to estimate their worth?

Recently there was a complaint from one of the above plants on account of a scarcity of homes for its employes. A company of business men got together immediately and raised sufficient capital to furnish homes for them. At the same time teachers in our school could not find comfortable places to board and 100 young people must be turned away next fall on account of insufficient school buildings. Something must be done at once if the biggest and best institution in this community is to survive and continue to prosper.

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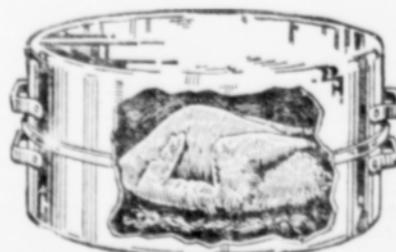
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