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With Medford Stop-Over

BILLINGS CUTOFF MEETS PROTEST OF TAX COMMITTEE

A committee of taxpayers, organized by Dr. J. M. Keene, met with a similar body from Ashland Friday and passed a resolution at the latter's request, protesting the proposed cut through the Billings property in North Ashland for the Pacific highway. The committee estimated the cost of the same \$25,000, but did not consult the state highway engineer or his assistant, or the county court. They held the cost excessive for benefits received, holding that Engineer Bowlby had made a mistake.

E. V. Carter and Ed Staples led the Ashland delegation while the Medford committee was made up as follows: T. W. Miles, Bert Anderson, F. V. Medynski, H. C. Garnett, G. Knight, H. U. Lumsden, E. Y. Emerick, Dr. J. M. Keene, W. T. Grieve, E. M. Wilson, C. W. Palm and H. G. Wortman.

Speaking concerning the committee's action, County Judge Tou Velle said that the county court had previously decided that no action would be taken in building this section for the present, that no road with railroad grade crossings or more than six per cent grades would be paved, and that it was up to the people of Ashland to provide a suitable entrance, if the route selected by the highway engineer was not satisfactory.

KNIGHTS TO HEAR SOCIALISM TALKED

The Medford council of the Knights of Columbus has completed arrangements for the lecture on "Christianity vs. Socialism," which is to be given by David Goldstein of Boston on Friday evening, May 1, in the Page theater. Mr. Goldstein is a trade unionist, having played an active part in the Cigar-Makers' International union, in which he proudly boasts that he holds a twenty-five-year-old card. As a delegate to the Massachusetts state convention of the American Federation of Labor he was instrumental in having the first positive pronouncement passed by a state convention of trade unions against the propaganda of socialism within the trade union movement, and the socialist attempt from without to destroy the legitimate unions of labor by the organization of the Industrial Workers of the World.

There is no doubt that Mr. Goldstein knows his subject and knows how to tell others what he knows. In a good, clear, capable manner he presents his reasons why the American people should take a decided stand against socialism.

HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETES ARE GIVEN LETTERS

The official M. H. S. monograms were bestowed upon the successful members of the local high school, football and basket ball teams Friday afternoon by Supt. U. S. Collins. Mr. Collins made a brief and interesting talk on the honor of receiving the letters and stated that it was with great pleasure that he handed each successful candidate their rewards for their excellent work during the past season.

The following received monograms: Football team, Thomas, Brown, Pelouze, Gates, Stuart, Vance, Norris, Lumberg, and Brandon. Basket ball, McCredie, Phipps, Pelouze, Cowgill, Brown, Thomas and Beacoa. Girls' basket ball team, Helen Purucker, Nellie Corum, Cecil Stewart, Mildred Bliton and Loraine Lawton.

OUR NEW HIGHWAY BOARD

DR. KEENE'S "special tax committee" of Medford property owners has conferred with a similarly appointed committee of Ashland and passed resolutions condemning the proposed Pacific highway cut through the Billings' property, at the request of the Ashland committee, which "believed that Engineer Bowlby had made a mistake."

It would be interesting to know how many of Dr. Keene's "tax committee" know anything about the engineering features of the road in question, how many have any authentic data concerning the cost and how many are better qualified than the state highway engineers to pass upon the subject.

It also would be interesting to know how much of an investigation these guardians of our taxes gave the subject. They did not deem it essential to consult Engineer Bowlby nor his assistant, nor members of the county court, who were familiar with the subject.

The state highway engineer states that he planned the proposed route through the Billings property as the most practical way of obviating both the railroad grade crossing and the steep grade entrance to Ashland. The estimated cost is not to exceed \$12,000, of which the railroad company will stand a share, besides shortening the paved company will stand a share, besides a saving from shortening the paved roadbed. The alternative is to keep this dangerous grade crossing, with its sharp turns, cut down the present hill some ten feet, with a corresponding fill at the bottom, making an unsightly road bed at an estimated cost of half the amount. To provide an overhead crossing and utilize the present route will bring the cost above that of the Billings route and add 700 feet of highway.

The state laws forbid the establishment of railroad grade crossings on highways. The state highway commission, realizing that the highways it aids in building are not makeshifts, but intended for all futurity, adopted a rule refusing co-operation in improving highways with such crossings, and demanding curves of a certain radius and certain minimum grades. The present road does not comply with the requirements.

It is now up to the expert road engineers of Dr. Keene's tax committee to secure an entrance into Ashland that will save Ashland the expense of condemning a right of way, prevent the damage resulting from giving a man a paved highway past his door, comply with the state law and the regulations for state-aided highways.

If a steep hill entrance into Ashland is satisfactory to Ashland people, Medford merchants will second the motion for selfish reasons. It is a matter of rejoicing also that we have a body of such progressive citizens to not only regulate county taxation, but to give expert opinion and final judgment upon our state-aided highways.

EVERY MAN A DISTILLER

THE proposed national prohibition law will enable every man to become a distiller, according to its author, Representative Hobson of Alabama.

Before the house judiciary committee, Representative Hobson contended that his resolution, directed against the sale of liquor for "beverage purposes," would not interfere with states' rights. He said that under the proposed amendment it would be possible to manufacture liquor "for use," but not for "sale." The amendment, he said, would not interfere with the "old drinker drinking," but would prevent the "debauching of youth."

Mr. Hobson explained that the present revenue laws would be repealed by his amendment, which would permit anyone to make whisky for his own use.

Just how permitting every individual to manufacture liquor for use, if not for sale, and at the same time sanction its manufacture and sale for medicinal purposes, is going to promote the cause of temperance is hard for those outside the pale to grasp—it surely is dry logic and worthy of a Hobson.

THE NEW AMERICAN CITY

A Resume of the Recent Movement in Municipal Politics and the Salient Features of Civic Reform. By Benj. C. Sheldon, Secretary Medford Charter Commission.

V.—THE COMMISSION PLAN

There has been one, ever-present, dominant note in the movement for municipal reform in America from its first mutterings of discontent to the present overpowering demand for a new order: "Make public officials responsive to the people's will." As the movement grew, this plea defined itself in more concrete principles. They grew out of a study of the features of the old plan which prevented this reform. That scheme was copied from the federal plan with its institution of checks and balances, embodying the thought that it would be dangerous to give to an official power to do anything of consequence without first getting the consent of other officials. The ancient fear of kings dominated the minds of the framers of that plan. It scattered real authority.

Evils of the Old Plan

The evils were plain: Lack of definite power and responsibility; lack of a governmental machine that would permit prompt, efficient, business-like decisions; a feeling on the part of officials that they need not follow closely the popular will; and a lack of interest on the part of the people, due largely to the fact that it was hard, if not impossible, to make their wishes felt.

The Commission Plan

The phrase "commission plan" has been a misnomer since the Galveston commission, first appointed by the governor, became elective. The word

commission implies appointment, and in a correct sense there have been no commission cities in America except Washington, D. C., and for brief periods, Galveston, Tex., and Chelsea, Mass. The phrase has been applied to all those cities that have changed their charters so as to conform in some degree to those of Galveston and Des Moines. These charters vary from almost exact copies, through a gradual shading, to charters essentially unlike the original plan in all but name. One city merely changed the title of its council to "commission" and considered itself as belonging in the list of such cities.

To the average American the commission plan means a new scheme of city government involving certain fundamentals, which has seemed to bring about a substantial reform wherever tried. But there exists a confused idea of the exact nature of the plan and the necessary principles. When the incidental features are eliminated, the essential element necessary, and to which is due all the success the plan has obtained, is simply this: Clear, clean-cut respon-

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sibility of officials; few in number; under the people's control, and elected by a ballot and voting system whereby they accurately represent the real popular choice.

Rapid Growth

The movement grew slowly at first, but as the idea became better understood it increased in momentum till at present, to quote the words of the governor of a mid-western state, "the spread of the idea has assumed proportions comparable only to the sweep of a prairie fire." Up to October last, 317 American cities had adopted the plan.

Never has a new movement been examined so closely or by so many investigators. The officials in commission cities have been bombarded with inquiries. Delegation after delegation have visited these cities, making the rounds of city hall, newspapers, civic organizations, as well as interviewing business men and students of municipal affairs. Magazine writers have made exhaustive investigations. Such organizations as the National Municipal League, National Short Ballot organization, Bureau of Municipal Research, and other similar bodies have kept a constant, alert watch on the movement. While the Boston commission was planning their new charter, President Eliot of Harvard made a tour of the commission cities and returned so enthusiastic that he won over that city to an acceptance of the more fundamental features of the plan. A committee of the Illinois legislature made an elaborate inquiry. Nearly everybody expected a hostile report. But it was a strong indorsement of the commission plan, stating that in every city having adopted it, a betterment of conditions had resulted and the people were more than satisfied.

Essentials of the Plan

The first essential of the commission city is: There must be unification of power and a corresponding responsibility in a small body of men. Usually the members of this body constitute the only elective officers. In most cases they are elected at large. The commissioners act collectively in a directive and legislative capacity and individually in an executive capacity. The usual way is to divide the work of city administration into departments and give to each commissioner supervision over one of these departments. The mayor, generally, is little more than the first among peers, one of a body of which he is the presiding officer. In a few cities, especially those of Texas and Oklahoma, this idea has not been closely followed, and in some instances the veto power has been retained. The general consensus of expert opinion considers this a weakness and a dangerous deviation from the principle. The idea of unification of powers is very important and most of the commission cities have been consistent in this regard and have made the commission the only elective officers; put upon them full responsibility, one which they cannot shirk and of which they are constantly conscious.

Plan Popular and Successful

Unquestionably the plan has proven popular. It spreads with great rapidity, especially where one city takes the lead and nearby cities have an opportunity to closely study its operation and actual results. A better physical administration has re-

sulted, with the same or a lesser expenditure of money; a sure test of efficiency. Moreover, it is a fact that in not a single commission governed city has there been reported a serious allegation of graft. Any such instance, even if only alleged and not proven, would have been seized upon by the opponents of the plan and magnified and exploited to the limit. Significant also is the fact that not a single city has gone back to the old plan, though the devotees of the old political machine order have made repeated efforts to that end. Under the commission plan the professional politician has faded into the haze of discarded fetichism.

With this movement of constructive reaction there seems to have come an unusual receptiveness of mind. It begets a seeking for the best, for the services of experts, for every possible help. These mean investigation and study, which in turn mean improvement.

Los Angeles brought a number of municipal experts to that city to discuss their proposed new charter. Houston sent a commissioner to Germany to study and report on the world-famous municipal governments developed there. Oakland called in the services of the civil service commission of Chicago. The bureau of municipal research of New York has made exhaustive "surveys" for over forty cities prior to the drafting of a new charter.

Close students of civic affairs had come to the conclusion that there were too many cooks engaged in making their municipal broth. With many officials, inadequately endowed with power and only partially responsible for their acts, it was too difficult to separate the efficient from the inefficient; to place responsibility for failure or to give credit for good work. The commission plan has changed all this. With responsibility has come improvement in administrative methods and purposes; for results count and those made accountable have of necessity replaced shipshod with careful methods and provided a simple, mobile, workable form of organization.

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