Stewart Issues Reply to Letter from President of County Fruit Growers

(Editor's note: In an effort to give full coverage to the dispute between Jackson county orchardists and the State Tax Commission over the taxation of orchard trees, the Mail Tribune has published several letters from various principals in the controversy. The latest is a letter from State Tax Commissioner Sam Stewart, addressed to the president of the Fruit Growers League of Jackson County, in reply to a lengthy statement over his signature which was published on Oct. 23. Pertinent excerpts from the letter follow.)

Mr. Paul Culbertson, President
Fruit Growers League of
Jackson County
Medford, Oregon

Dear Mr. Culbertson:

A newspaper article appearing in the Sunday, October 23, issue of the Medford Mail-Tribune concerning the controversy in Jackson County has just come to my attention. That article, according to the Editor's note, was prepared to some extent as a reply to my letter to Mr. William Smith, which apparently had been printed previously in the newspaper.

In my opinion, no useful purpose would be served by answering your allegations point by point. However, it should be pointed out that your article paints the Commission as entirely black and yourselves as entirely white. An example will suffice to demonstrate this:

You state that, "The Tax Commission offered the fruit growers 'a deal' lowering their assessments very materially. The fruit growers told the Commission that they would not be a party to such a deal." The facts are that on May 31, this Commission issued an order to the Jackson County Board of Equalization which provided that the board "shall assess the value of orchard trees at the same percentage of true cash value as other real property and include same in the assessment of real property upon which such trees are located." You will note that this order does not contain any provisions which could even remotely be construed as an order to use any particular values. The minutes of the Jackson County Board of Equalization on July 12 state in relevant part as follows:

"Board of Equalization reconvened at 10:30 a.m.—July 12, 1955 for the purpose of discussing before the Fruit Growers, and other interested parties the results of the Board's meeting with the State Tax Commission in Salem on Monday, July 11, 1955.

"They reported that in addition to conferring with the full board all morning, they returned at 1 p.m. and presented a counter proposal to determine assessed values of orchards rather than to accept figures suggested by the state appraisers which value was reported to be $300 and $225 per acre.

"Mr. Keating stated the counter proposal carried the following suggestions:

"All producing orchard trees carry an appraised value of: pears, $100 per acre; stone fruit, $75 per acre; apples, $50 per acre; grafted trees up to 7 years, no value; new plantings up to 12 years, no value; nuts, no value.

"Mr. Keating stated this orchard tree value accepted by the Tax Commission was to be placed on the 1955-56 tax roll; but that this value did not reflect the true value. He said it will only be through the efforts of the assessor's office and orchard owners that a fair value can eventually be established. The Board recommended that a committee be set up consisting of growers, real estate men, deputies from the assessor's office, and any appraisers from the State Tax Commission whose assistance might be needed.

"The State Tax Commission after due consideration, accepted the counter proposal as submitted by the Jackson County Board of Tax Equalization.

"Members of the Board stated that their reason for suggesting a counter-proposal as a basis for arriving at an assessed value on orchard trees was to give local orchardists a chance to confer with the assessor on their individual orchards and thereby arrive at a fair figure. They had been ordered to get them on the rolls this year and their plan would give the assessor the authority to correct discrepancies and give him a chance to work out the problems of each orchardist with the individul concerned.

"Mr. Keating emphasized it was the desire of the Board that the Jackson County people work out their own problems and not require the State Tax Commission to come in and place an arbitrary assessment on orchard property. Mr. Cook stated again that their counter proposal was designed to give the growers a chance to sit down with the assessor and work out a true cash value, and it was their feeling that they would far rather have the orchardist put a value on than to turn the job over to the Tax Commission. Mr. Bohnert and Mr. Cook both pointed out that if the local officials, with the cooperation of the orchardists or without it did not place a reasonable value on orchard trees the State Tax Commission would use their own figures which might or might not reflect true value. Mr. Cook state the Board felt they had honestly worked out a plan to help the orchardists.

"Orchardists finally stated through agreement with Mr. Reter that they would not cooperate with any plan until the Attorney General's opinion is determined to be legal." (See Vol. 39, Pages 669, 670 and 671.)

What conclusions can be validly drawn from the foregoing?

(1) The Commission suggested to the board that compliance could be had with its order by accepting the values achieved by Commission appraisal personnel;

(2) That the board felt that compliance with the Commission's order could be substantially achieved by using different values;

(3) That the Commission agreed that the board was free to use those values IF they thought the values were more correct than this Commission's values;

(4) That the orchardists refused to cooperate with the board.

It follows that no deal was offered by this Commission, and no refusal to accept a deal was made by the orchardists to this Commission.

Why do you not mention in your article that at the Jackson County Board of Equalization meeting of July 17, two days after the meeting above mentioned, Mr. Reter of your group suggested, "that the board attempt to bargain with the State Tax Commission." (See Vol. 39, Page 673, of Minutes of Jackson County Board of Equalization) You represent that we, as a Commission, made an offer of a deal which you and your organization refused to countenance, yet here, in the minutes of the Board of Equalization, was advice by a spokesman of your organization to the board to try again to bargain with this Commission.

You have attempted to create in the minds of the public of Jackson County sympathy for your position. This Commission is proud of the fact that it has not been willing to suborn truth for falsity in order to insure that our position in this matter prevails, either with the courts or with the public of Jackson County.

Very truly yours,
Samuel B. Stewart
Commissioner.

cc: Medford Mail-Tribune

As We Live

By ELIZABETH HURLOCK, PH.D.

Exaggeration Doesn't Bring Desired Results

By Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Ph.D.

A person who exaggerates, usually does so to attract attention and win the favor of others. He is not intentionally lying to them, all he is doing is "embroidering" the truth so it will be more effective.

Dr. Hurlock

Like everything else, exaggerating is apt to develop into a habit. In time, the person will not know he is exaggerating, and like any other habit, once it reaches habit-level from constant use it is carried out without conscious attention.

The exaggerations are likely to get stronger and stronger. At first, there is merely a slight distortion of the truth. Once the person realizes this is effective, he makes the exaggeration a trifle stronger until what he says is actually out of all proportion to the real story.

How, you may ask, can a person know if he is exaggerating or not? The answer is by being more critical about everything he says. If he stops to think what he is planning to say or has just said and then checks it against the truth, he will quickly discover whether it is distorted or not.

Worth Time and Effort

This is well worth the time and effort of anyone who suspects he is subject to exaggerating. Exaggerations may have greater attention value and may serve to win more favorable impressions, but there is always the possibility they will be recognized for what they are—distortions of the truth.

Most people are not kindly disposed toward those who exaggerate the truth. Without realizing that it is often an unintentional fault, they thing the person has little regard for truth. In this way, exaggeration defeats its own purpose and loses the good impression the person was so anxious to create.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Stuffiness: "What do people mean when they refer to someone as 'stuffy' and what causes a person to be 'stuffy'?" Curious.

(A) "Stuffiness," when applied to people, means much the same as "self-righteousness." A stuffy person is usually so impressed with himself, or tries to make others believe he is, that he annoys them by his critical attitude of superiority. Strange as it may seem, "stuffiness" is usually a defensive reaction, used by people who feel insecure.

Interest in business: "My wife has absolutely no interest in business. Whenever I try to talk over with her something that happens in the office, she tells me I should leave my business in the office. I feel that wives should share their husbands' business problems just as husbands should share their wives' home problems." A Husband.

(A) I agree with you, but many wives do not see it this way. They want their husbands to advise and help them when problems arise in the home but they, in turn, turn a deaf ear when the husband wants to talk about his business problems. If your wife is not interested in your business, she will not be of much help to you in that way. You will do well to find a co-worker who can be your confidante.

Absorption in Children: "Don't you think a wife makes a great mistake when she becomes more absorbed in her children than in her husband?" Critical.

(A) A woman who becomes so absorbed in her children that she scarcely knows her husband exists has a good chance of losing him. Such a wife is very foolish.

NUCLEAR PRIZE — American scientist Polykarp Kusch (above) of Columbia University, N. Y., shared the 1955 Nobel Prize for nuclear research with another American scientist, Willis Lamb of Stanford University.

Marion Man Fatally Injured in Accident

Salem — (U.P.) — Peter Paris Threlkel, 61, of Marion was fatally injured Friday night when his car plunged from Cloverdale into a creek near Marion, south of Salem.

He died in an ambulance en route to Santiam Memorial hospital at Stayton.

RETURN TO DUTY—Princess Margaret makes her first appearance since her decision not to wed Group Capt. Peter Townsend as she enters St Paul's Cathedral in London to attend a rededication service. She is accompanied by Robert Mathews, dean of St. Paul's. The service was held on the 50th anniversary of the death of Dr. Thomas John Barnardo, who founded a group of homes for British foundlings.

VEGETABLE, MEAT LOAF

New York —(U.P.)— Give added flavor and food value to meat loaf by adding vegetables. The average-sized meat loaf calls for 1½ pounds of ground lean beef. To this amount, add ¾-cup each of finely chopped celery, green pepper, onion and fresh tomato, 2/3 cup of fine dry bread crumbs, 2 teaspoons of salt, 1 teaspoon of dry mustard, ¼ teaspoon of ground black pepper, and 2 lightly beaten eggs. Shape in a greased 9x5x3-inch loaf pan. Bake in a preheated moderate oven (350 degrees) 1 hour, or until done. Yield 10 servings.

Long Distance Phone Equipment Installed

Portland — (U.P.)—Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company announced a new development in long distance switching equipment, costing $2,000,000 went into operation here Saturday.

The electronic equipment, capable of handling 12,000 calls an hour, is part of a program intended ultimately to permit customers to dial any point in the United States or Canada.