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BONDS BOOSTED AT PINE GROVE MEETING

The impression that was left, following a resolution circulated by the Hood River County Pomona Grange and purporting to be representative of that body, that the county Grange resolution was unqualifiedly opposed to the proposed \$350,000 road bond issue, was refuted at a meeting of citizens at Pine Grove Grange hall Friday night.

C. A. Reed, chairman of the Mount Hood Loop Road committee of the Pomona Grange, in addressing the meeting stated that an element of his fellows, while they believed in the proposed trunk highway through the valley, connecting the Columbia River and Mount Hood Loop Highways, and at the same time furnishing a community market route, were specifically opposed to the bond issue. Reed, along with A. W. Peters, another representative orchardist and Grange member, declared that those who viewed the location of the market route as erroneous were withholding support of the bond until they were convinced that no route, more feasible or practical, could be secured. They added that such conviction would convert them to a supporter of the bonds.

Indications were given at the meeting for the most part the element represented by Mr. Reed and Mr. Peters had been made to see the practical merits of the road as the trunk road. Friday afternoon, accompanied by S. Benson, ex-chairman of the State Highway Commission, who is an ardent supporter of the bond issue and who incidentally is the father of the construction of the Columbia Gorge Hotel, will become next year one of the largest taxpayers of Hood River county, a committee of citizens who oppose the route. Engineering rules necessitating the route chosen, were pointed out to them.

Mr. Benson, who was present for the meeting, was introduced by Howard Simons, master of the Pine Grove Grange and presiding officer, as the father of the Columbia River Highway. Mr. Benson recalled that he appeared before Hood River electors seven years ago, campaigning for the Columbia River Highway bonds. He cited how every man in the county was proud of the great scenic route, although some opposition had developed then, but Mr. Benson said that the present opportunity was far more important in that it would provide on a 50-50 basis with the state a trunk road through the valley itself. He pointed out that state funds available for county aid were limited and that such another opportunity might be far removed to the future.

"If you do not vote these bonds," he said, "you are making a very serious mistake and one for which you will be very sorry in the future."

A. J. Mason, spokesman for those who fought the Columbia River Highway bond issue and who is now a ring-leader among those who are unqualifiedly opposing the present road bond movement and who are proposing instead that the county spur the state's offer and bond to the limit for construction of roads located by home folk, created some sensations when he declared that the Mount Hood Loop would be built, whether Hood River county participated in the proposed program or not. He declared that the county could turn down the bond issue as now proposed, later select a route of their own choice and demand that the State Highway Commission meet them on a 50-50 basis. Portland citizens, Mr. Mason charged, will whip the Commission into line and force its members to meet the local terms.

John B. Yeon, member of the Highway Commission, although calmly and without display of passion, rebuked Mr. Mason, characterizing his scheme as evidence of smallness. He declared that he knew the Hood River standard of citizenship well enough to recognize that such a suggestion was by no means representative of the Hood River valley. Mr. Mason's veiled intimation of ulterior motives on the part of the State Highway Department, created keen indignation among members of the audience.

Mr. Yeon in his address declared that the construction of the trunk road would place the Hood River valley on the map. He cited how the proposed trunk road in connection with the forest portion of the Loop Highway and Columbia River Highway would place Hood River on a hot summer day within a two and a half hour journey of the snowbanks of Mount Hood. Mr. Yeon called attention of the audience to the fact that Hood River county, from state and federal governments had received \$2,500,000 of funds, when their expenditure to date reached only \$75,000.

"The tourist crop," said Mr. Yeon, "is a cash crop and one of the best in the country. Do you want to cultivate it? Ninety per cent of the population of Los Angeles came first as tourists of a few months. We will experience a similar growth of population here."

"It is the duty of every public spirited Hood River citizen to spend a week of his time between now and June 7 in working for this bond issue, in explaining it to his neighbors. After all the success of the bonds is merely a matter of education."

Mr. Yeon recalled how, when Multnomah county was floating her original bond issue for the Columbia River Highway and other paved routes, the plans were bitterly opposed by State Master Spence of the state Grange.

"Do not allow a little opposition to discourage you," he said. "If for no other reason, Mr. Yeon declared, Hood River citizens should support the bond issue because S. Benson was working for its support and pointing out the practicability of the plans for the trunk road. He recited how Mr. Benson had made possible the Columbia River Highway and how in a spirit of pioneering for the public good he had erected the Columbia Gorge hotel, on which he would be unable to realize a dollar profit."

M. U. Bue, representing the citizens of the Upper Valley, who express support of the bond issue practically unanimously, cited how Hood River county, although one of the smallest in the state, has been particularly fortunate in securing state funds in the construction of roads that relieved the valley from former isolation. He treated the proposal of the Pomona Grange resolution to decline the offer of state aid and locate the road by county efforts as impossible and impractical. Mr. Bue recalled how several years ago an effort was launched to secure bonds for a valley trunk route. About 100 orchardists, he said, were approached on the matter of location. A visualization, he said, of their suggestions for the location of the trunk road would have produced something similar to a cubist's picture of Oom Paul's whiskers. Truman Butler declared that those opposing the bonds on the matter of location, in a measure had lost their sense of proportion.

"We haven't stopped to consider the personnel of the men in charge. No one can question their integrity. We must yield to their decision."

Mr. Butler stated that he had the greatest consideration for citizens who were prone to oppose the bond issue because of the burden of high taxes. He cited the oppressiveness of the nationwide burden of high taxes, but declared that the bond issue, as a matter of cold business analysis should receive the support of Hood River citizens as a matter of public investment that would bring in dividends.

E. O. Blanchard asked to correct an impression that had been left by Mr. Mason, who preceded him on the floor.

The latter had intimated that the rights of way would cost a greater sum than anticipated. Mr. Mason said that much was made of the gift of orchardists whose places would merely be crossed by the highway, but he maintained that growers who would sacrifice many trees, would demand heavy payment. Mr. Blanchard has just returned for a visit with officials to the place of F. A. Masseu, Willow Flat grower, whose place will be traversed for some distance by the road. He told Mr. Masseu's offer to donate a right of way. Mr. Blanchard denied the feeling of suspicion that was being manifested from an element of citizens who intimate ulterior motives of State Highway officials.

During the course of the meeting questions were asked by Roy D. Smith and Aug. Guignard. It was also brought out that those opposing the location of the road thought that it should pass through Parkdale, Odell and Van Horn, valley shipping points, instead of merely skirting them. State Highway Engineer Dunn, who declared that J. H. Scott, locating engineer, recognized as one of the best men on the coast for such work, had placed the route in the only place from an engineering standpoint. The valley centers were omitted, he said, in order to avoid adverse grade and to eliminate congestion at the market centers during harvest season. He cited that the small towns of the Willamette valley between Portland and Salem now expressed the wish that they were slightly removed from the main traffic.

J. H. Fredrick, who arranged for the meeting, closed the Pine Grove session. He stated that he had been authorized by H. F. Davidson and J. R. Nunnemaker, two of the valley's heaviest taxpayers, to announce their hearty support of the road on the Scott survey.

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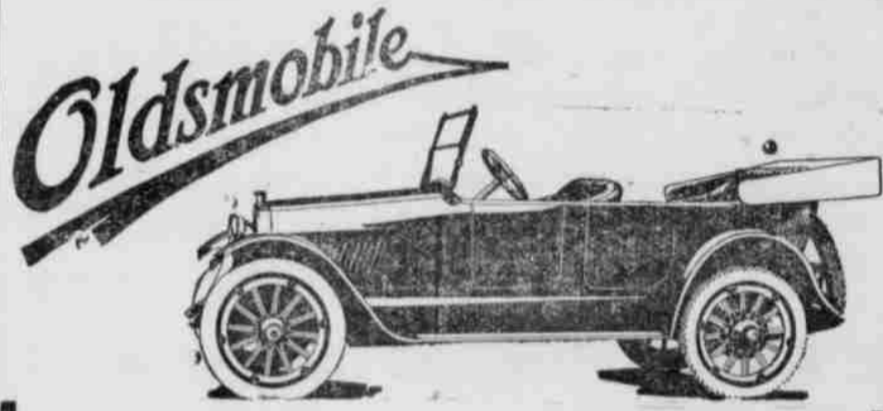
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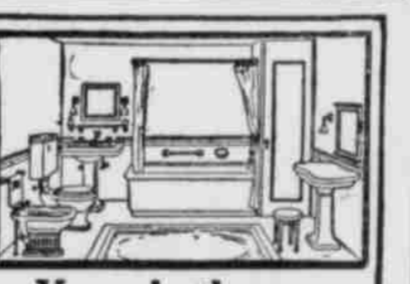


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