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Friday, March 4, 1904

A SCHEME FOR MEDFORD'S LOSS

Medford is to hold a special election on March 22 to vote on the proposition to sell the city light and water plants and turn that service over to a private company. The argument of the faction favoring the turning these public utilities over to a private corporation is that the light and water plants have been a source of loss to the city and they attribute much of the city's debt to that source. The truth is that these statements are not sustained by the facts of the case for had Medford been paying the price for lights and water that is paid in other towns the size of Medford where these utilities are owned by a private company the cost to the taxpayer's would have been far greater than it has been to them under municipal ownership.

To the profit side of the water plant must credited the fire hydrants, street sprinkling, sewer flushing and the fire drills. Under city ownership no charge is made for water for the sixty odd fire hydrants, the hundreds of thousands of gallons used for street sprinkling, and the quantities used for flushing sewers nor for that used by the hose companies for fire drills and cleaning apparatus and hose. The amount paid to a private company for all this water would at the end of each year make a hole in the taxpayer's pocket books. The Medford light and water plants have not yielded a direct profit to the city for the reason that such a large part of the service is required for public use, and the plant has been under the further handicap of having to be rebuilt, for when the city bought it at two prices from the private company formerly owning it there was not much to buy of real worth except the franchise, that had been given free of charge to the company by the city. The machinery in the station has been nearly all replaced with new and larger engines, pumps, generators, etc., making it practically a new first-class station. All the poles for the original light wires have been replaced and the wire system has been extended until it covers three times the area that it did when the city assumed control. Almost all the old water mains have been replaced by new and larger pipe and the system has been extended until it takes in all parts of the city.

Medford now has a first-class light and water plant, as good as any town in Oregon of its size and the city should retain possession of it. The cost of fuel may make it cheaper to the city to buy electric power to operate the machinery, but the plant should be held to supply power in case of a breakdown to the power and as a protection against possible exorbitant rates for electric power. The station should be moved to the southwest part of the city, where an underground sheet of water that comes down from the hills beyond can be readily tapped by means of

a shaft, which does not need to be down very deep, and a tunnel run each way from the shaft at right angles to the flow of water to give a storage reservoir. In taking electricity from a distant power station the current comes in at a high voltage and transformers are required to step down the current to a voltage that can be used on the pumping motor and the light system, and these transformers could be placed in the same building with the rest of the machinery. A pumping station located beyond the fair grounds would afford Medford a supply of water both in quality and quantity the equal of any town in Southern Oregon and it would not be expensive to install.

The trend of the times is for municipal ownership of public utilities and for Medford to dispose of its light and water plant is but to take a step backwards and one that the taxpayers will rue in the years to come. If the voters of Medford are alert to their interests they will vote the proposition down.

Jacksonville is now free of the smallpox which in a mild form has been prevalent in the town for the past three months, but the town is no sooner free from one disease than it is threatened with another disease. The mumps is now good for a run of the town, there now being several cases here, it being so severe that several adults have been quite sick with it. This disease was brought from Lower Applegate where it is quite prevalent. Long before the mumps have disappeared the measles will be in Jacksonville, for that disease is now on the Lower Applegate and in Medford. Both business and the schools have been seriously handicapped in Jacksonville this winter by the smallpox epidemic and now if the town is to suffer from the mumps, the measles and the other contagious diseases that may pass through the country it is a hard commentary on American indifference to the enforcement of sanitary laws. To be plain it does seem as though the average American is quite as lax as a Hindoo or a Chinaman in his easy going methods of controlling preventable diseases. Were the present quarantine laws enforced with rigor for one year there would be an end to smallpox, measles, whooping cough, mumps, scarlet fever, and diphtheria and the thousand of deaths and physical wrecks that are caused each year, together with the broken homes, sorrow and financial distress that follow in the wake of these diseases would be a thing of the past. Cholera has become extinct in the United States and yellow fever has had its last big epidemic for these diseases have been so effectively controlled that it was impossible for them to spread. The great fatality from these diseases aroused people until they would enforce rigorous quarantine regulations. Were the contagious diseases that now sweep over the land with the same regularity that seasons come and go as fatal as cholera they too would soon be stamped out, but as it is it will take several generations of education along sanitary lines before the preventable diseases that now make their annual harvest of death, sorrow and distress, will be eradicated from the land.

Central Point, encouraged by the success of the Jacksonville board of trade in securing a morning mail service between Jacksonville and Medford, will make an effort to secure an improvement to mail service for that place and which will also bring a betterment of the mail service of the 11 post offices that receive their mail through Central Point. Under the present schedule the southbound midnight train and the northbound early morning trains of the Southern Pacific leave no mail for Central Point, only the noon southbound and the afternoon northbound trains leaving mail at that place, the mails by the night trains being transferred to these trains. This delays all

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mail that comes from the north and the south by the night trains to the next day noon. In addition to the 12 hours delay to Central Point mail it causes a delay of 24 hours to mail for Eagle Point and the 10 other postoffices that receive their mail by way of Central Point, for the stage for these places leaves early in the morning. As the railroad company has no night operator at Central Point there is no one to receive the mails from the trains. As the postoffice department would not likely pay for a special carrier to meet both night trains the plan is to ask that the Portland and north mail coming by the midnight train be carried on to Medford and then brought back with the San Francisco and south mail on the 4:19 a. m. train and left off at Central Point, the special carrier to care for it until the postoffice is opened. This additional mail service for Central Point is an imperative need for the residents of all Upper Rogue River Valley and there is no doubt but what the postoffice department will grant so reasonable a request which would give such needed improvement to the mail service of the 12 postoffices at the small expense to the department of one trip a day to a carrier from the depot to the Central Point postoffice.

Once more Jacksonville is to have respectable, passable sidewalks for the councilmen have undertaken an active crusade for this much needed public improvement and there is every reason to expect that in the near future Jacksonville will have sidewalks that will be a credit to the town and not a disgrace as has lately been the case. During the recent heavy rains Jacksonville has been almost without sidewalks for even the plank and stone walks on the business streets were merely a succession of lakes and islands, the sinking in places of the board and the stones causing pools of water that were frequently shoetop deep. Then another defect that it is proposed to remedy is the removal of the numerous steps, declivities and holes that are in the sidewalks for in addition to these obstructions making it very uncomfortable for pedestrians they are dangerous and may cause some person to be seriously injured and a damage suit against the city. Good sidewalks are one of the best advertisements a town can have for strangers judge largely a town's standing and prosperity by its sidewalks.

There are evidently some teachers in Jackson county who have no conception of patriotism and their duty to instal it in the minds of the youth who are in their charge, or else they are woefully lazy and want an excuse to dismiss their school at every opportunity possible, for in several districts in this county no school was held on Washington's Birthday, the teachers taking advantage of the day as a legal holiday. The Sentinel does not hold that the regular lessons should be held on that day, but the day

should not be wasted, for it is a most fitting occasion for teaching patriotism by bringing to the minds of the children the patriotism of Washington, whose fealty to his country and the public weal is an example that all Americans should heed and follow. The rapid spread of anarchism that is producing the modern Goths and Vandals of America must be checked, and not by the bayonet as in Europe where armed force but makes it grow the more, but by educating the boys and the girls to love the Stars and the Stripes and to know and to appreciate the grand government for which Washington strived so unselfishly to aid in founding. The more patriotism is taught in the schools the less need is there for soldiers and police. To the credit of the greater number of schools of Jackson county fine programs of patriotic exercises were had on Washington's Birthday that were entered into with a will by the children and the teachers and which were witnessed by many patrons of the school. And Washington's birthday is a good day to renew the patriotism of the older people for many of us need to be reminded of our duty to our country and to safeguard our liberties, and teachers do well in getting the patrons of their schools to attend all patriotic exercises.

A dispatch in the Oregonian from Washington announces that A. M. Woodford has been confirmed by the senate as postmaster at Medford to succeed Geo. F. Merriman, whose term of office expired in January and who was not a candidate for reappointment. Mr. Woodford is a capable, careful man and he will be quite sure to make an efficient postmaster and his appointment will give general satisfaction to the citizens of Medford.

Mr. John Develin of Applegate was in Jacksonville Wednesday. Mr. Develin takes lively interest in the Japanese-Russian war for he is an old man-of-war himself, serving three years and three months in the United States navy in the early '50s. He served for two years in the American East Indian squadron and was a blue jacket on the San Jacinto, a steam frigate of 84 guns and having a crew of 350 men and 40 marines, and which was one of the crack fighting ships of Uncle Sam's navy. The squadron was under the command of Commodore Armstrong, who succeeded Commodore Perry, the American officer who forced Japan to open her ports to foreign trade and thus paved the way for the wonderful progress that that remarkable people have made. In 1855 Commodore Armstrong called at Yokohama with his squadron having aboard the San Jacinto Consul General Harris, the first representative of the United States to the court of Japan, and who was escorted to Tokio by a detachment of marines and blue-jackets. Mr. Develin was not with the party that visited the Mikado's capitol but he saw much of the Japanese and he has great faith in their fighting qualities, and as sailors he thinks that they will rank very close to American or British tars. Of the outcome of the present war Mr. Develin is of the opinion that the Japs will be the victors.