

The Herald and News

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Entered as second class matter at the post office at Klamath Falls, Ore., on August 20, 1906, under act of Congress, March 3, 1879

SERVICES:
ASSOCIATED PRESS UNITED PRESS
AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS
Serving Southern Oregon And Northern California

Subscription Rates

CARRIER	
1 MONTH	\$ 1.50
6 MONTHS	\$ 9.00
1 YEAR	\$18.00
MAIL	
1 MONTH	\$ 1.50
6 MONTHS	\$ 8.50
1 YEAR	\$15.00

Editor's Note: Due to the nature of the "Letter to the Editor" by Bill Creswell (carried below), it was felt that members of the Klamath County Court and the District Attorney should be given an opportunity to present their side of the issue simultaneously with the release of this letter. All letters on this controversy are carried below in these columns.

County Engineer?

Klamath Falls (To the Editor)—The coming of the New Year is somewhat like a hangover, you hope that the things that were bungled and embarrassing aren't repeated during the coming 12 months, yet the foginess of one's memories makes one wonder, were they really blunders or was there a purpose behind them.

It is with this in mind that I would like to clear the fuzziness from the minds of the Klamath County Court in regard to their administrative methods.

I have reference to the matter of Warren D. Rodgers and his appointment to the office of county engineer on August 1, and his recent resignation on December 3, 1959. Having been a resident of Klamath County and a taxpayer for many years, it was with extreme interest that I followed the appointment of a successor to Bill Canton upon his retirement from the office of county engineer. All of us know the tremendous responsibility and knowledge that is required when one individual has access to \$1,200,000 worth of the taxpayers' money, this being the county road budget. What has stuck in my craw after learning the facts is, do Judge Bob Walker and Commissioners Frank Ganong and Ed Gowen.

The facts are these. On August 3, 1959, in an article published in the Herald and News, announcement was made that Warren D. Rodgers had been appointed as Klamath County engineer, and I quote, "The county court spent almost two months screening applicants for the position vacated when veteran engineer Bill Canton retired in May. . . . at least seven or eight applications were received, and three were interviewed. The court announced its choice Friday."

Further states that, "He (Mr. Rodgers) was graduated in 1945 with a bachelor of science degree in highway engineering from Arizona State, worked for three years as a field engineer and computer with the Arizona Highway Department, went to a materials testing school for a year, worked for Arizona testing laboratories and then opened his own irrigation engineering business in Phoenix."

These facts were given to the Herald and News by Mr. Rodgers as background material, but County Surveyor Lyle Smith was doubtful about this background when he asked Mr. Rodgers personally if he was registered in the state of Oregon. Mr. Rodgers replied that he wasn't but that he was registered in Arizona.

Smith then consulted Art Beddoe, Klamath County district attorney and legal counsel for the court as to the legality of an individual serving as county engineer without being registered in the state of Oregon. Mr. Beddoe said he would check into the matter and that was all that was said at that time.

When October 2 rolled around and Mr. Rodgers was again asked by Smith if he was registered, he replied that there had been a few snags and he was sure that it would be authorized soon. At this time, sensing something "fishy," Joe Westvold, a partner of Smith's in private practice, wrote a letter on October 2, 1959 to the State Board of Engineering Examiners in Portland requesting the status of Rodgers.

A reply to that letter was received on October 14, by Smith and Westvold, from Paul D. Christerson, secretary of the above mentioned state board of examiners and I quote, "We appreciate receiving your letter of October 2nd and wish to thank you for the information concerning Warren D. Rodgers. We have written the Klamath County Court, advising them of the illegality of hiring a non-registered engineer to serve as county engineer and hope that this matter will be rectified."

After receiving this report, Smith and Westvold went a few steps further in their duty of protecting their profession and the taxpayers of Klamath County by writing to the Board of Technical Registration for information on Rodgers. These letters were not written until the 22nd day of October, awaiting action of the court as a result of the letter that Paul Christerson had written informing the court of the illegality of having an unreg-

tered engineer in the position of county engineer.

As no action was taken, the letters were mailed. On the 2nd of November, 1959, Smith and Westvold received the following letter from Arizona State University, and I quote, "We are unable to locate any record of attendance for a Warren D. Rodgers. We have never offered a degree in highway engineering." The other reply from the Arizona State Board of Technical Registration in Phoenix, I quote, "In response to your letter of recent date, we have checked your files and found that we do not have Mr. Warren D. Rodgers registered as a professional engineer." With these facts, Smith and Westvold met with the court on Wednesday, November 4, and presented them to Walker, Ganong and Gowen.

Now, let's retrace our steps for just a moment. This I realize has taken quite a bit of space, but the facts should be known and they should be straight and complete.

First of all, the court stated that it had spent almost two months screening applicants for the job of managing and dispensing \$1,200,000 of your and my tax money. Most of the references that Mr. Rodgers used in applying for the position, and stated to the Herald and News in the announcement article, with the exception of having spent a few months at the Arizona Testing Laboratories and State Highway Department, were found to be untrue.

Who did they write to about Mr. Rodgers? What were they doing for two months, and what were the credentials of the other, "at least seven or eight applicants" like?

Secondly, why did the court when notified by the secretary of the State Board of Engineering Examiners that they had illegally appointed an unlicensed engineer not take action, even though their legal counsel District Attorney Art Beddoe, knew of the matter some two months previously? Just second guessing, it appears that the court's legal counsel needs some brushing up, or is this just my imagination?

More facts . . . and the plot deepens. . . . On November 2, Mr. Rodgers was injured in an automobile accident. In the Herald and News edition of November 3, it "was reported that Rodgers was in good condition and his injuries consisted principally of bruises and abrasions." Remember now, on the following day, Lyle Smith and Joe Westvold had appeared before the judge and two commissioners with their reports on Rodgers, yet not until the 19th day of December, 1959, was there a word printed about Warren D. Rodgers being fired or quitting. In fact, Mr. Rodgers handed in his resignation to District Attorney Art Beddoe on December 3, but was reported by the court as having resigned the 12th.

In other words, this man who was illegally serving in one of Klamath County's most important positions was not fired, asked to quit or even in any way reprimanded for his actions by the court, who knew full well all of the above mentioned situations, but reigned because he was physically incapacitated because of the serious nature of his injuries, or was his used as a coverup for the court's blunder?

What I want to know is just who's kidding who? Is this the kind of administration we as taxpayers should expect in a county as fine as ours. What's going on up there in the courthouse. First they hire a man who isn't what he says he is and when Judge Walker and his commissioners hear, after being told by the state board about it, they do nothing but say we'll work on it.

Second, why did Mr. Beddoe fail

to inform the Herald and News of Mr. Rodgers' resignation for 16 days, from the 3rd of December till the 19th, as quoted in the article in the paper?

These are things that I feel should be cleared up and brought to the attention of the taxpayers and residents of this county. We received one of the most honest jobs from Mr. Bill Canton that you could find anywhere and it was with regret that many of us watched him retire. I'm sure everyone in the Basin was anxiously awaiting a capable replacement for Bill, and then this situation has been unfolded.

Let's keep our eyes and ears open as to future developments and hope the court wakes up from its old year hangover and faces the New Year with enthusiasm to do the job that was expected of them when they were elected and appointed to their jobs.

Bill Creswell,
Route 3, Box 226

Court's Reply

Klamath Falls (To the Editor)—In reference to Mr. Creswell's letter on Warren D. Rodgers, the members of the court, Judge Walker not being available, have the following to state.

Mr. Rodgers was employed by the court with the understanding that he would in all haste become registered in Oregon and that he was qualified so to do. He served the county in a satisfactory manner for a period of three months and eight days, the first day being July 25 and the last November 2. He did not act in any capacity for the county nor was he paid for any period after the information was presented to the court by Smith and Westvold that indicated Rodgers would be unable to become licensed in Oregon.

Mr. Creswell asks why the court did not take action when notified by the board of examiners that the engineer must be a registered man. When the court was notified of the law relating to registration of county engineers by the State Board of Engineering Examiners, this notification being their first knowledge of this requirement, the court changed his status to assistant to county engineer. Rodgers was notified of this action, and the resolution was filed with the county clerk and is recorded in the commissioners journal.

Mr. Creswell states that he had access to \$1,200,000 worth of taxpayers' money. All disbursements for the road department as is the case with all other departments are authorized by the county court. Mr. Rodgers did not have access to these funds.

Mr. Creswell questions the time between November 4 when Smith and Westvold presented their information and December 19 when Rodgers' resignation was received. As pointed out above Rodgers did not act for the county nor was he paid by the county during this period. He was asked for his resignation on the first day he was able to present himself to the court after this information developed.

Ed Gowen,
County Commissioner
Frank P. Ganong,
County Commissioner

D. A.'s Reply

Klamath Falls (To the Editor)—Statement regarding letter to the editor signed by Bill Creswell regarding Warren D. Rodgers:

Creswell's letter states that Lyle Smith consulted with me and infers that a legal opinion from my office was asked with reference to the legality of an individual serving this county as engineer without being registered in the State of Oregon. Never at any time has Mr. Smith consulted with me with reference to that matter or any other matter.

The only conversation that I have ever had with Mr. Smith with reference to the position of County Engineer was merely a casual comment or two in passing Mr. Smith in the hallway of the courthouse, at which time Mr. Smith asked me if a County Engineer had to be registered in the State of Oregon as a professional engineer, and at that time Mr. Smith was told that it was my impression that the County Engineer did have to be a registered engineer, but that I had never had occasion to check the statutes with reference to it, and could not say with certainty. At no time has Mr. Smith ever discussed Warren Rodgers with me or his qualifications.

Mr. Creswell's letter further asks this question: "Secondly, why did the court when notified by the secretary of the State Board of Engineering Examiners that they had illegally appointed an unlicensed engineer not take action, even though their legal counsel, District Attorney Art Beddoe, knew of the matter some two months previously?"

That statement allegedly by Mr. Creswell is entirely false. The question of Mr. Rodgers' qualification was never brought to my attention until I was consulted on the matter by the County Court shortly after they had received the above-referred to information from the State Board of Engineering Examiners, upon which the County Court immediately acted.

Mr. Creswell's letter further states, "Second, why did Mr. Beddoe fail to inform the Herald and News of Mr. Rodgers' resignation for 16 days, from the 3rd of December till the 19th, as quoted in the article in the paper?"

As a matter of fact, Mr. Rodgers did not resign his position as Assistant County Engineer on the 3rd day of December, 1959. At that time, Mr. Rodgers brought to me a rough draft of what appeared to be a letter of resignation from his post as Assistant County Engineer and asked me to examine it. Mr. Rodgers, at that time, was recovering from a serious brain injury which resulted from an automobile accident in the early part of November and was, as a result of this injury, not sufficiently in control of his faculties to submit such a letter or transact any other business or to defend himself against any accusations, and so at that time I asked Mr. Rodgers to wait until he had further recuperated before submitting his letter. It was not until the latter date that his faculties were sufficiently normal to enable him to do so.

Art Beddoe,
District Attorney

The Almanac

United Press International
Today is Friday, Jan. 15, the 15th day of the year, with 351 more days in 1960.

The moon is in its full phase. The morning stars are Mars, Jupiter and Venus.

On this day in history:
In 1831, the first practical American built locomotive made its first run in South Carolina.

In 1870, for the first time in political history, a cartoon appeared with a donkey symbolizing the Democratic Party.

In 1919, the famous concert pianist Ignace Jan Paderewski became the first premier of Poland.

In 1922, the Irish Free State was established.

In 1943, workmen completed the Pentagon building.
In 1953, President Truman made the American people farewell over a nationwide radio and television, being the first outgoing president to do so.

A thought for today: In his first message to Congress in 1945, President Truman said, "The responsibility of the great states is to serve and not to dominate the world."

Quotes

United Press International
CHICAGO — Lar Daly, perennial unsuccessful candidate for mayor of Chicago and state and national offices, disclosing that he wants to run in 17 presidential primaries:
"I wrote letters to all the 16 states and to the District of Columbia, where presidential primaries are held. I didn't get answers from some of them."

MADISON, Wis. — American history as reported in the new Soviet encyclopedia, excerpts from which are to be published by the Wisconsin Historical Society:
"Wilson's 14 points represented a capitalistic plot, the New Deal was a sop thrown to the masses to keep them from revolting, the Marshall Plan was dollar imperialism in disguise. . . ."



Bible Prophecies

Many Jews and non-Jews see in Zionism the fulfillment of Bible prophecies. "Why Zionism Must Fail" is the title of the public address to be given this Sunday, January 17, at 3 p.m. in Kingdom

Mariners Meeting

Peace Memorial Mariners will meet at 6:30 p.m. Monday, January 18. Newcomers to the church are invited to call the Stan McClellans at TU 2-4021 if they are interested in attending the Mariners' meetings.

There will be the usual planned potluck dinner, following which new officers for the coming year will be installed.

Salvation Army

Lt. Col. William E. Parkhouse of San Francisco will be the principal speaker for the annual meeting of the Salvation Army, Monday, January 18, at the Winema Hotel.

Colonel Parkhouse is responsible for the organization and maintenance of all youth programs of the Salvation Army for the Western Territory. There will be installation of the officers at this meeting. Installing officer will be Lt. Col. John Erickson of Portland. Colonel Erickson is in charge of the Oregon and Southern Idaho Division of which Klamath Falls is one of his centers of supervision. The public is invited to attend this meeting.

Circles Meet

Circles of the Women's Association of Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church will meet as follows: Forsythe, 9 a.m. Friday, January 22, at the home of Mrs. Levertta Moore, 4255 Frieda; Travaille, 9 a.m. Friday, January 22, at the home of Mrs. Margaret Saunders, 4100 Summers Lane and Mackenzie at 12:30 p.m. Friday, January 22, at the home of Mrs. Warner Kimball, 4678 Crosby.

The first family night of the new year will be held Saturday, January 23, beginning with a potluck supper at 6:30 p.m. Deacons will be in charge. Following dinner, there will be Bible pictures and scripture readings entitled, "The Christ Story." Families are urged to attend.

Peace Memorial

The following meeting dates have been announced for organizations within the Peace Memorial Presbyterian Church: Senior Westminster Fellowship will meet Sunday, January 17, at 7 p.m. in the church lounge. All senior high age young people are invited.

The first meeting of Evangelism Callers will be in the church, Thursday, January 28, at 7:30. There will be a meeting of the Session and Christian Education Committee Friday, January 15, at 7:30 p.m. in the church.

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Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 833 North Ninth Street. Questions will be answered by the speaker, O. W. "Hall," a local minister. Following both meetings are free and no collection will be taken.

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