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MOVE IN RIGHT DIRECTION

There never should have been two rival higher educational institutions in a small state like Oregon, but inasmuch as we have them, with an enormous expansion and consequent investment in plant and equipment necessitating huge annual appropriations, their unification under common control to eliminate duplication became imperative. After all the colleges exist to serve the people instead of the people to serve the institutions.

For many years the Capital Journal was the only newspaper in the state advocating unification, and while the adopted plan could have been much more drastic, it is a move in the right direction and the board is to be commended for final realization of the purpose for which it was created three years ago. Much of the credit for forcing consolidation must be given to Governor Meier, for it is a vital part of his program of economy.—Salem Capital Journal.

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COURT SAVES COUNTY 20 PER CENT TAX CUT

When the Oregon Voter stated that the Malheur county court effected a 20 per cent cut under the 1931 levy for 1932, in the article reprinted in The Journal last week, the story was only half told. The 1932 levy for Malheur county is \$559,446—the lowest in ten years.

A study of the annual summary of taxes by Assessor Andrew M. Graham reveals that the county court made the 20 1/2 per cent reduction in the face of great odds. Four heavy expense items, over which the court had no control, were loaded on the county in the following amounts:

Election expense	\$ 4,500
Care of Insane (charged by state)	7,000
Delinquent elementary school tax	20,000
High school tuition fund	10,000

Total \$41,500

Adding to the problem of how to effect a reduction in taxes, the valuation of the county had been reduced by a large sum. **Reductions were made in farm assessments.**

It is probable that no county court in Oregon made a more valiant fight for tax reduction. It was a winning fight. Noteworthy were the results. In his summary for the court the assessor shows:

Total taxes for 1931	\$741,930.49
Total taxes for 1932	559,446.90

Decrease for 1932 \$182,483.59

Achievement, indeed. But, how was this saving effected? For months, the court gave its effort to lowering the great cost of roads in Malheur county. It was no easy task, but finally the court transferred about 100 miles of expensive market road to the state highway department. (The state wanted but 50.) Then the court secured the building of the Central Oregon highway from Juntura to Harper and construction of three bridges, which will be erected this spring. More county road expense was charged off. Other items in the county budget were slashed wherever possible. Lower state tax did its share.

The court deserves the commendation of every taxpayer in Malheur county. It set a record in Malheur county tax finance.

Tax Comparisons (Caldwell News Tribune)

A summary of tax conditions in Malheur county, Oregon, shows the tax levy of that county for 1932 to be 20 per cent under the levy of 1931. It is related that the 1932 levy is the lowest in ten years.

We have no knowledge of how the economies indicated by the foregoing figures were brought about in our neighbor county just across the line, but taken at face value the reductions indicate a high degree of efficiency on the part of the Malheur county commissioners.

BEAUTIFY YOUR HOME GROUNDS

Landscaping in the past has been largely confined to estates and the more expensive town homes with only an occasional farm home included. During recent years there has been a great change in the attitude of home owners regarding the beautifying of homes. People are reading something about this work every day and the pressure is being evidenced by much greater interest in having attractive home grounds.

Rural communities are making it one of their major problems and while a few years ago practically all landscaping was done in cities and towns, now we find some of our most beautifully planted homes in the rural districts. Farm folks are seemingly beginning to realize that if any people have the opportunity for pretty homes, the farmers have. From the landscape standpoint, to have a nice home with beautiful surroundings does not mean an expensive planting.

Nothing adds more to the attractiveness of any home than plenty of lawn space. It also is easier and cheaper to care for lawns than shrubbery. Lawn surface should be smooth and solid with soil fertile enough to promote thick grass growth. The grass should be kept mowed and not allowed to go to seed. It is not good taste to break up the lawn with flower beds or many specimen trees and plants. We often see what would otherwise be a beautiful lawn spoiled by a fancily designed flower bed occupying a conspicuous place right in the center.

Shrubs should be used to fill in and bank the corners of the yard, along the angles of the walks, for hiding the foundation of the house and for softening the sharp angles of architecture. They also may serve as screens to hide unsightly objects. Hedges are usually planted as screens or division lines between lots.

Shrubs should be planted in groups rather than in straight rows, as it gives a more natural result. Do not crowd the shrubs, but give them sufficient space in which to develop and show their natural beauty. At planting time prune them back quite heavily, but after that be careful in pruning not to destroy the natural form of the plant. Keep the ground worked around the shrubbery. Do not let shrubs or plants dry out.

Annuals and perennials are invaluable in putting the finishing touches on home ground beautifying work. There are a great many varieties of each from which to select and the individual taste should be the guide, providing it does not call for plants unsuited to the climate.

Thought and interest rather than time and expense are really needed to keep this good work going until our American homes, from every angle, are the best in the world.

COMMENTS BY CLARK WOOD

Culbertson continues to explain contract bridge, when the average lady player is quite capable of doing so for the benefit of her partner.

One might hazard the observation that charity is sweet when it's wheat charity.

A certain exiled communist says that Stalin regime is tottering. Nevertheless, it was able not so long ago to do a Trotsky.

Scientist has discovered that the human body is a real radiator. The difference is that it seems to require anti-freeze both winter and summer.

PUBLIC FORUM

(The Journal will publish signed letters of its readers in Public Forum. The Journal does not necessarily agree with the opinions expressed. Anonymous communications and those attacking personalities will not be published.)

REASON FOR PROTEST

Nyssa, March 11.—(To the Public)—I was disappointed to read that the salaries of the Nyssa school teachers were reduced 12 per cent.

In a meeting of the Malheur County Taxpayers league, to which the school boards of Ontario, Vale and Nyssa high school districts were invited for a conference, it was plainly brought out, that the present salaries have been and are out of line with the ability of the taxpayers to meet same and convincing figures were submitted, that these towns already are the highest and among the eight highest taxed towns out of 160 in our state. The cost of food and clothing compared with pre-depression years has come down from 30 to 50 per cent, and other expenses more or less reduced make it apparent that a 20 per cent reduction in the cost of living is rather a conservative figure.

Furthermore the gross, and more so the net income of the farmers, is below that of prewar days. In fact many are operating at a loss, notwithstanding drastic curtailment of expenses. This state reflects on business and on all who are directly or indirectly dependent upon agriculture. The unjust valuation put on farm lands for assessment purposes, compared with the assessed valuation of other property makes it doubly hard for the farmer to pay his taxes.

Therefore the Taxpayers League passed a resolution in the meeting referred to above, recommending a 20 per cent reduction in the salary budget for the coming year. The demands of the League have been ignored.

Defending their action the members of our schoolboard, I suppose take the stand that a larger reduction would impair the efficiency of the school. This defense does not apply to these times since thousands of educated people walk the streets and would be glad to accept salaries we thought to be just. It is the school superintendent's job to primarily improve education to the highest possible level and see to it that he and his staff of teachers are well paid. Granting this, the school board must always keep in mind that the money has to be raised from among the people in their district that is, practically all of it, and they know from actual experience that in the past we already have done all we could and that in these times drastic reductions

in all our expenses our necessary to save many homes.

Bear in mind that no appreciable increase in farm prices is in sight, that our whole economic system has broken down, and that all of us have to make sacrifices during these unbalanced conditions, for an indefinite time to come, before a better system is in operation. With this in mind, the board had a right to insist upon a 20 per cent reduction, and at that no sacrifice was asked. It got started with the consolidation of the University and the Oregon State college. In time our high school curricula must undergo changes that will simplify education and make it less expensive. Thanking you.

P. TENSEN.

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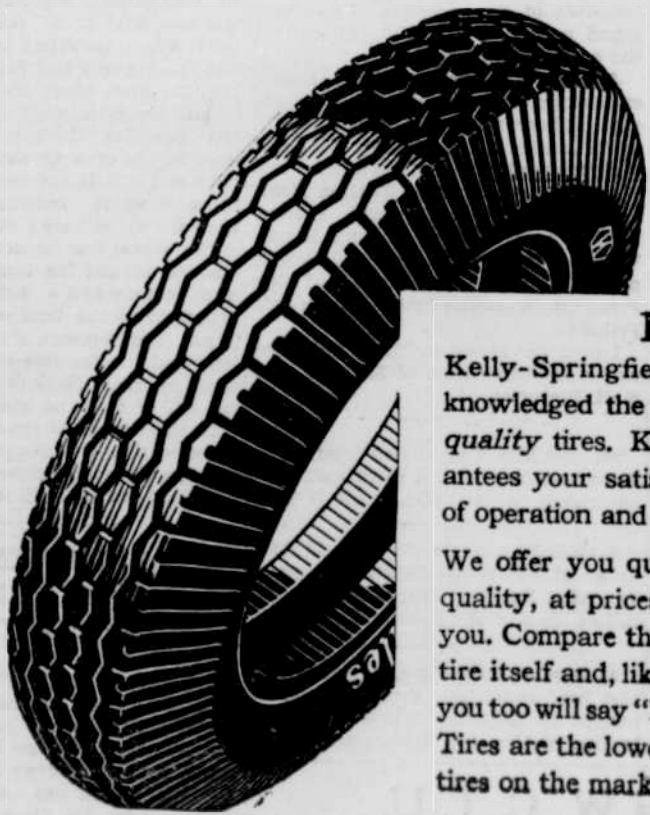
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