

OPEN LETTER ABOUT OIL



George E. Black Gives his Views on the Oil Situation in Oklahoma.

I have been repeatedly asked, when visiting Oklahoma City, "How is the oil business?" The probable extension of development over the central and western portions of the state, where heretofore hopes have been vague and discouraging, is largely responsible for this vital interest, and believing that the times are ripe for a better understanding all around, I take the liberty of making the following statements:

In the first place the oil men realize that in this state they have been laboring in a wilderness of prejudice and misunderstanding. The oil men have been pictured as millionaire tax dodgers who spend their time in drunken orgies. A baser slander was never uttered. The men engaged in this business are our staunchest citizens, home owners, liberal and loyal to every interest of city and state. They resent nothing more keenly than the accusation that they are opposed to the public good. They rejoice, however, that such accusation made for political effect is falling short of its mark, because the people are beginning to realize that they themselves are shareholders in whatever profits accrue from the production of oil.

Leased Area of Oklahoma.
In an interesting article in last Sunday's Oklahoman the claim was made that three-fourths of the state is leased for oil and gas purposes. This perhaps is too high an estimate, although leasing activity has been extending out to the extreme western limits of Oklahoma. Vast sums of money have been paid to the farmers for their leases. The farmers are the only sure winners in the oil game and its greatest beneficiaries. However, if such development is to continue it must be because the period of hostility through which the state has passed shall be succeeded by one of friendly co-operation.

A Common Misunderstanding.
A misunderstanding has existed in the minds of the people on account of the false charge that the oil production of Oklahoma is controlled by the Standard Oil company. This is absurd, for only about 20 per cent is owned by the Standard. Burdens imposed on oil production do not hurt this organization, but discourage and injure the independent producers and the farmers who are our own good citizens. It is true a few men have made considerable money by producing oil, but two-thirds of them who

venture into this hazardous business fail. You never hear of the boys who fail. They quietly go to work and keep their story to themselves. Some winners foolishly vaunt their success and the impression goes out that it is an easy game. Not so, the fellow who stakes his all delving down into the bowels of the earth to bring forth this much needed product, which benefits all mankind merits our sympathy and respect. Many times a mortgage is placed on the home to carry on this work. Those who revile this class of men deserve the condemnation of all fair-minded men.

Contrast Here and Elsewhere.
In Canada and most other foreign countries a subsidy is actually paid on oil production. Of course the oil men here do not ask anything of this kind. They do believe that they are taxed too high. The taxes in Oklahoma are more than double the levies in any other state. They are willing and ready at all times to pay a reasonable and fair share. Unjust and excessive rates tend to drive out oil men just the same as similar injustice would tend to eliminate those engaged in any other industry. When it comes to the tax matters we are all about the same.

The Crux of the Matter.
Every oil man knows the 3 per cent tax upon oil production computed on the actual sale price of oil is much greater than the average taxpayer pays upon other classes of property. For instance, in your Sunday issue was another interesting article by Mr. Cornelius, county clerk of Oklahoma county, carefully written and accurate, in which he said:

"It is not generally known, perhaps, that the average cottage or bungalow in Oklahoma City is assessed conservatively at about \$1,200. A house and two lots assessed at this sum strikes a fairly good average of Oklahoma City homes." The rate, he says, "for all city, county school district and state taxes, is \$2.75 per hundred." The oil man coming here to this good city to buy homes finds these houses and lots assessed at \$1,200 are readily selling from \$2,500 to \$5,000. This is not unusual nor is it intended to criticize Oklahoma county. Real estate is assessed about the same way all over Oklahoma, but you see the oil men are paying taxes twice as great, for they are paying a higher rate and the rate is fixed upon the actual sale value. Even this is not all, for we are hit again by the state income tax. If we die in Oklahoma, the state makes another grab into our estate. The pipe line companies that purchase our oil

deduct 3 per cent, which they claim is to cover dirt and foreign substance in the oil, etc. We think this is an unjust charge, but we have to stand it gracefully. If the pipe line becomes congested and we are obliged to store our oil the tax assessor piles upon us another double tax. The taxing power is not through with us yet, for along comes the federal government and taxes our gross income, cracks down on us a corporate tax and reaches in and takes another handful out of our estate. Is it any wonder that many of the boys pack their tents and hike away to states that still recognize they ought to be allowed to hold out at least a meal ticket for themselves and their families?

Oil for Generations to Come.
It has been stated that the oil production is only temporary. This is made by persons who know nothing about the business. Pennsylvania has been producing oil for over half a century. Kansas, although oil was discovered about twenty-five years ago is now producing more oil than ever before, and Oklahoma formations are better and more promising than in those states. This state will be producing a lot of oil when every inhabitant now living is beneath the sod. The rapidity and progress made will depend upon the spirit and treatment accorded those who have the sportsmanship to take the chance. Why not boost the game along? Nothing helps so many and nothing puts new life and energy in a community like the discovery and development of oil. This is true because so much is expended on the laborers, the teamsters, machinists, merchants, supply men, lawyers, bankers and business men.

Cleanest Money Made.
Oil development puts a smile on every one's face, for it hurts no one, but benefits all. Why not let the oil man go over and drill a well in the next county without so heavy penalizing him if he succeeds in getting oil in making everyone else around him happy? The Standard Oil company can stand your gaff because it can raise the price to the consumer, or bear down a little harder on its producers, but the 80 per cent of us who are Oklahomans and want to boost the game along ask the fair-minded citizens of this great undeveloped state to join in helping to drive out ignorance, prejudice and unfairness, and those who seek to spread the seeds of slander, class hatred and discontent.

THE MOST EXPENSIVE ELECTION IN MISSOURI

Topeka, Kansas, Oct. 28.—The general election in Kansas this year will be the most expensive in the history of the state, according to estimates made in the office of the secretary of state. For the first time double election boards will be used in many counties and in each of these counties two sets of ballots will be necessary, thus calling for a considerable increase in expenditures. It has been estimated that the increased cost for judges and clerks alone in these counties will approximate \$15,000. What the expense for extra printing will be cannot be estimated because conditions vary in different counties, it was said.

The law passed by the last state legislature provides that in every election precinct where 250 or more votes were cast in the last state election, double election boards shall be used and in those precincts two sets of ballots must be furnished, one for state and national officers and another for county and township officers. It was estimated that in 621 of the 2,475 voting precincts in the state the double system would be used in the November election.

In Shawnee county it has been estimated that 78,000 ballots will be necessary for 20,000 voters. This condition is said to be typical of the larger counties in the state where most of the 621 larger voting precincts are located.

Memories.
"There's a voice now stilled forever
That in sweetness only spoke,
And whispered words of courage
With a faith that never broke."

On the stroke of midnight, October 9, 1916, the spirit of Minta, beloved wife of B. A. Holloway, started on its long unknown flight back to God who first inspired it with life and light. To remain at rest 'neath the mercy seat until the last great day the morn of the resurrection when with all that glorious uncountable throng it will shine forth with the most radiating countenance.

Pure, loving and loyal and even in sickness and sorrow calm, serene and hopeful—she possessed the qualities that are conducive to inspire trust and a desire to do the will of her Savior in the hearts of all who come in contact with her. A more dutiful and encouraging wife, a more self-sacrificing, loving mother, a more devoted, faithful friend can never be found.

We sometimes wonder why God with his all-superior knowledge should



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take one so good and sweet and leave the many seemingly worthless beings, who apparently are only stumbling blocks in the pathway of the innocent. Then on second thought we see God's wisdom and mercy in this as in all else. The unprepared are given just one more chance to gain eternal life—the good and pure are always ready. This noble woman was ready and waiting. To her there was no "Valley of Fear." Through the valley of the shadow—she must pass—the dark river she knew she must cross—but to her they held no horrors—of death she was absolutely fearless.

For one year she has known her days were numbered—and more than once she has said "that just on the other side was oh! such sweet peace and rest for both mind and body. An unknown land to explore, loved ones with which she would be reunited and best of all the ones that she left behind would find her with outstretched arms waiting to plot them over."

So sweet and so gracious, so thoughtful and kind, life will not be the same without her. But husband, children and brother, let us make the effort, let us live the life she so desired for us, and in the end, God will reward and bless us.

"Mild and gentle as she was brave,
The sweetest love of her life she gave
To the simple things."
HER FRIEND.

LETTER BOXES ON STREET CARS.
Will Manager Putnam Call the Hand of Kansas City Street Car Co., Kansas City, Mo., Oct. 28.—Plans

providing for letter boxes on all street cars in Kansas City were completed here recently by Baylis Steel, postmaster of Kansas City and the president of the local street railway company. The project as outlined provides for a letter box on the front end of every car. The boxes are to be placed on the outside of the cars and the cars will stop at any block to receive mail when signaled. The privilege is to be extended to first class mail only and no packages will be received.

It is planned to have receiving points at which the mail will be collected every trip. Letters will be received between 10:30 in the morning and 9:30 at night.

Post office officials assert the plan should prove a success in Kansas City. It has been tried in several other cities and operated advantageously according to the local postal department. Some fear, however, is expressed that the system will retard the car service.

With the adoption of the plan the street cars will be placed in the same category with trains carrying mail

and will be entitled to protection from the federal government in the event of a strike or any disaster, according to the belief expressed by some officials.

At a late hour last night Manager Putnam of the Ardmore Traction company had not decided whether he would install such service on local cars, but had the matter under advisement.

Benevolent Society Distributes Food.
Friday and Saturday the benevolent society was busy distributing the meat and other things donated by the Shriners, and yesterday morning Mrs. Kahn and Mrs. Curtis were happy that they had been able to supply some people who might have been hungry today but for their help.

The officers of the Benevolent Society are all ardent "Shriners" now and cannot express their thanks for what they have received from the generous Masons who compose the Shrine.

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