

The River Press

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OFFICIAL PAPER OF CHOUTEAU COUNTY

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WEDNESDAY, JAN. 8, 1913.

REMEMBER THE TAXPAYERS

It is hoped the members of the Montana legislative assembly will go slow in the matter of increasing public expenditures. At several former sessions large additions to the cost of government were made by some of the laws that were enacted, and it would be well to bear in mind that the taxpayer foots the bill and should receive proper consideration.

In an exhibit of state finances recently made public, it is estimated that during the next two years the state revenue will fall short of necessary expenditures to the amount of about \$300,000; but notwithstanding this prospective deficit there will be efforts to increase public expenses by new legislation without regard to the effect upon citizens who supply the funds. Officials of the several state institutions are said to have in view legislative provision for expenditures that will increase the deficit to more than a million dollars.

When the state constitution was adopted, the citizens of Montana were assured that the general state tax should not exceed 2 1/2 mills, and that when taxable property in Montana reached a value of \$300,000,000, the levy should not exceed 1 1/2 mills. The lower rate would have gone into effect two years ago, but in response to the urgent solicitation of the state authorities, the voters amended this constitutional provision and allowed the 2 1/2 mill tax limit to remain in force until the assessment reaches the sum of \$500,000,000. This was done to avert what was alleged to be a great injury to state educational institutions by cutting down their annual income.

A few years ago the state inadvertently became a party to a bond issue made by one of the educational institutions, and the taxpayers were asked to protect the credit of the commonwealth by voluntarily assuming the obligation. The request met with an affirmative response, and an annual tax levy of one fourth of a mill for the state bond fund has since been in effect.

At the last general election, the voters authorized the purchase of the Warm Springs asylum for the purpose of converting it into a state institution, these accommodations for unfortunate being absolutely necessary. This expenditure will call for another addition of one-fourth of a mill to the state tax levy, making a total of three mills upon each dollar of assessed valuation—or double the rate contemplated in the constitutional provision originally adopted.

A protest against increased public expenses and suggestions that a more conservative course be followed are frequently met with the allegation that the complainant lacks public spirit. At the risk of incurring such criticism, the River Press holds that the interests of the taxpayer should be kept in view when any increase in public expenditures is proposed. Extravagance in the conduct of the public business should be curbed. The creation of unnecessary salaried offices, excessive pay for services performed, propositions to make Montana public institutions the equals or superiors of similar institutions in more populous and more wealthy states—these are some of the causes of large expenditures of public funds. The Montana taxpayer generally is a liberal minded citizen, but the tax burden should not be increased without careful consideration of the various interests affected.

WOULD IMPROVE LEGISLATION.

Crude legislation is one of the serious evils against which good government has to contend in the United States. Bills are introduced that have been ill-considered and are expressed in ambiguous language.

When enacted into law, they frequently breed trouble from the inability of citizens or administrators to feel sure as to their purport and scope and throw heavy burdens of needless litigation on the courts.

The consequence is loss and delay to the community, failure to secure needed legislation and undesired censure for the judiciary, says the Spokesman-Review.

An obvious remedy for this evil, for which legislators are not wholly at fault, is to have an official body of men to whom every proposer of legis-

lation should submit his bill and have it drafted by them in such language as to render obscurity, misunderstanding and consequent litigation humanly impossible.

Wisconsin has such an organization. It is called the reference department of the legislature and is a scientifically organized bureau whose services are at the command of lawmakers in drafting bills that they intend to introduce and to urge for enactment into laws.

This bureau has proved helpful to the legislators and valuable to the state. It puts men of constructive capacity at the task of shaping and wording legislative measures.

It reduces to a minimum the liability to failure on the part of legislators to secure the results they seek for the public benefit.

Set up in this state, with proper adjustment to local requirements, it should help toward obtaining intelligently conceived and clearly expressed laws.

In Defense of Blue-Eyed Men.

Recalling Mark Twain's catalogue of lies as of three sorts—lies, damned lies and statistics—we rise to a defense of the blue-eyed men who are said to figure by a large majority in the annals of crime, and are thus accused of being more criminally disposed than men with gray, brown or dark eyes.

On investigation this will be found to be another mare's nest with the egg in it at least as big and barren as an empty beer keg.

When it is considered that seven out of ten men in the United States are blessed with blue eyes, "statistics" will beyond a doubt indicate that most crime is committed by men with eyes of that color; more of anything else is "committed," useful labor, kind acts, great and important works, literary and musical masterpieces, matrimony, the day's drudgery and suicide.

This is a blue-eyed nation. Whole counties full of people in some southern states, where the first Anglo-Saxon immigration is little mixed, are sandy-haired and light-eyed. The inflow of Latin races hasn't yet had time to darken the original "blond" type, tremendously augmented between 1840 and 1880 by millions of immigrant Germans and Irish and Swedes.

In a race of blue-eyed people, they will naturally exhibit their proportion in all the elements of society, good or bad.

This tendency of statistics (undigested) to misrepresent was again shown just a few weeks ago, when another declaration was set forth "that most of the crimes were committed by bachelors." Most of the crimes are committed by young men under 25. Young men under 25 are generally unmarried. So you may touch the fuse for blowing up mare's nest No. 2.

Short Courses For Farmers.

The farmers' short courses to be held January 22-30 at the Montana agricultural college at Bozeman offer unusual opportunities to the farmers of the state. Such men as Joe Wing, P. G. Holden, Dr. Worst and others will be there and every one should make it a point to hear them. There is no better authority in America today than Joseph E. Wing, who is a practical farmer, an interesting writer and an expert sheep man. Tuesday morning, January 28, he will lecture on the sheep industry and how to make the flock more profitable. In the afternoon he will talk on the farm home. Wednesday morning he will talk up alfalfa, one of his hobbies, and Wednesday afternoon will discuss further problems of flock husbandry. The courses include instruction in horticulture, agronomy, animal husbandry, dairying, home science, etc.

Pointed Paragraphs

We hate to have our friends pity us and think them hard hearted if they don't.

Next to being a millionaire comes the ability to spend your last nickel like one.

The one redeeming feature of Chicago's new magazine for poets is that there is no law compelling any one to read it.

An expert says that the automobile is not displacing the horse. That, indeed, would be rank ingratitude to man's best friend.

A New York motorist used maple syrup in mistake for lubricating oil on his machine; and a sweet time he had of it, too.

Want Parcel Post Stamps.

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4.—By direction of Postmaster General Hitchcock, the bureau of engraving and printing increased today its daily output of parcel post stamps from 5,000,000 to 10,000,000. From virtually every section of the country requisitions by mail and by telegraph are being made for more distinctive parcel stamps. Post-office officials are positive that no danger of a tie-up of the service exists because of the exhaustion of the supply of stamps, as a sufficient reserve is on hand here.

Reports from postmasters from various parts of the United States indicate a tremendous increase in business because of the parcel post, but no serious congestion is reported.

MONTANA NEWS BRIEFLETS

A Budget of Readable Short Items From Various Parts of the State.

HELENA, Jan. 2.—The state land office turned in to the treasurer's office today the sum of \$60,529.51, which was the income derived since the middle of December when the last settlement was made. Such a sum for the business of a fortnight shows better than any other the immense volume of business done in this state in raw land.

BUTTE, Jan. 3.—George Winters, a diamond drill operator in the Raven mine, was instantly killed yesterday. He had placed a number of rock cores upon a rack especially constructed for the purpose, and then in a moment of hurry bumped against one corner of the rack with his shoulder. The mass collapsed and the cores crushed him breaking his neck.

HELENA, Jan. 3.—That the banks of Montana which are under the jurisdiction of the state bank examiners have been prosperous between the call of September 4 and that of November is shown by the statement of State bank examiner F. E. Hoss. In the time named their total resources have increased four and a third million dollars.

BUTTE, Jan. 3.—To save enough money in one year to furnish the new county court house was an important phase of the idea entertained yesterday by the members of the board of county commissioners, when an order was issued upon all county officials that from January 2, 1913, and on, no deputies other than those allowed by law will be paid out of the county's funds. The commissioners figure that in this manner the county's expense will be reduced approximately \$38,000 per year.

HELENA, Jan. 4.—Approval of the commutation of the sentence of Albert J. Beckman, "Montana's Jean Val Jean," granted by Acting Governor Leighton in November, was the last act of the board of pardons that retired tonight. The approval is subject to the condition that Beckman leave the state and never return.

GREAT FALLS, Jan. 4.—After a few hours illness of acute gastritis, Andrew P. McAnelly, a well-known attorney of Cascade county, died at his home in Bolt at an early hour this morning. He was taken ill after retiring Friday night and the physician who was called reached his bedside 10 minutes before he died. Mr. McAnelly had been in Montana 30 years residing in Red Lodge and Big Timber before coming to Cascade county 17 years ago.

BUTTE, Jan. 6.—As a result of a two days' war being waged between cattle and sheep owners on the ranges near Feeley, just south of Butte, 120 sheep have been killed by cyanide poisoning. John Anderson, whose band of 2,000 wools has been attacked, has appealed to the authorities.

HAMILTON, Jan. 6.—William Alexander Pound, 15 months old child of Mr. and Mrs. H. C. Pound of this place, was instantly killed when the water front in the kitchen range exploded. The child was sitting in a chair near the front of the stove and his little body was crushed against the wall. Pieces of the stove were driven through the kitchen wall and whole kitchen was wrecked.

BUTTE, Jan. 6.—Mike Miller today was placed under arrest here, charged with having obtained furs valued at \$1,200. Miller is alleged to have represented himself as the agent for L. N. Lewis & Co. of Pocatello, buying furs throughout the country. Miller, instead of shipping the furs to that firm, it is alleged, would send that company worthless skins and retain the valuable ones for himself. He was arrested in an express company office as he was about to receipt for a consignment of furs worth several hundred dollars.

Montana's Coal Output.

HELENA, Jan. 4.—Despite the fact that in 1911 and 1912 Montana produced 6,057,186 tons of coal, exceeding by 545,261 tons the production for any previous two-year period, the demands of the state are not being exclusively supplied by its own mines, according to the biennial report of State Coal Mining inspector J. B. McDermott.

"The year witnessed the largest yield from our coal mines in our history," writes Mr. McDermott, "and we are not supplying our own demands from the product of Montana coal mines. Those of our coal operators who have in some measure anticipated the wants and demands of the public and developed their mines, are in a position today to fill large orders and are getting the lion's share of the trade; if the smaller operators would push development and keep it in advance of production, especially during the warmer months when there is less demand for the coal, the production would be greater and more men would be employed during the rush season. The mines outside the state would not be able to enter and compete for local or home trade."

Carbon, Cascade and Musselshell counties produce the bulk of the coal in Montana.

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