

# ST. HELENS MIST

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THE COUNTY OFFICIAL PAPER

## TAKE CARE OF THE BRUTES.

The detail of the murder of a young stenographer in Portland last Monday, furnish plenty of material out of which the Legislature of Oregon should construct some laws which would prevent a recurrence of such a tragedy.

A young lady, earning her living and assisting in the support of a mother and some smaller children, is shot down as she enters her home. The assassin escapes, but previous circumstances of a would-be suitor following and threatening the young lady, leaves little doubt as to his identity. A few months ago this man, an elevator operator in the building where the young lady was employed undertook to press his suit and was rejected. He became insistent and so determined was he that he pulled a pistol and ordered the young lady to marry him or he would kill her. She escaped from him at the time and he was arrested, charged with carrying concealed weapons. After a hearing in the Municipal Court he was discharged and told to leave town, which he promised to do. The tragedy of Monday evening was the result. He secured a pistol. He followed the girl and murdered her. All this after the officers and the courts knew what his intentions were. The officers and Courts of Portland are at least partially responsible for the murder. Or if not the courts and officers, the law of the state is responsible. The recurrence of crimes of this nature, year after year, in various localities of the county all known to the officers and courts, should of itself be sufficient to cause exercise of the most severe remedies for prevention. When a man so far forgets himself or so wholly loses his sanity as to draw a weapon on a woman in order to compel marriage, he is not a safe man to be at large in any community at any time. When a man is brought before a Court charged with such an offense he is either crazy or a murderer. He should be taken care of. Such an offense committed by a man should be punishable with imprisonment of such duration that there would be no danger of the commission of murder. The loss of the life of one worthy young woman at the hands of one of these maniacs means more to the state than the cost of keeping all of that class for their natural lives. The penalty for threatening to coerce a woman to marry or live with a man against her wishes, when that threat is accompanied with the flourish of a deadly weapon, should be life imprisonment instead of an order to leave the city. The Portland murder is a disgrace to Oregon. By a proper enforcement of the laws, or the enactment of severe laws to deal with such cases and their strict enforcement such tragedies would be prevented. The Legislature of the State of Oregon has a chance to pass some laws that will stop them.

The prevention of one such murder is worth more to society than the hanging of a hundred brutes who commit them. An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

## AN EXPENSIVE LUXURY.

Somebody has blundered. Somebody in authority has made some awful mistakes. These facts are evident from the facts set up in the complaint of the S. P. & S. Ry. Co. against the Consolidated Contract Co. and Columbia County as filed in the Federal Court at Portland. An account of this suit as filed is given on the first page of this issue of the Mist and easily proves the assertion that a great blunder has been made. The question of who it was that made the blunder that will cost Columbia County many thousands of dollars seems to be pretty well settled when the facts as set forth in the complaint are compared with the records. State Highway Engineer Bowlby, and his corps of assistants prepared the specifications for the building of the Columbia Highway. The Consolidated Contract Co. bid on the job according to those specifications. The Contract Company claim to have done the work on the road from Clatskanie to Clatsop County line strictly in accordance with the terms of their contract and in compliance with the specifications as furnished by the State Highway Engineer. The great amount of money put into the work of building retaining walls along the road, of rock without mortar or cement, is apparently all wasted and the loss to the county will not only be the damages sustained by the railroad

company, if any, but the work will have to be done over again and done right. This work, which is conceded by people who have seen it as well as by the railroad officials to be of no practical value, proves what has been said before, that the State Highway Engineer has been a very expensive luxury to Columbia County since the work of building State Highways was started. Of course the charges that the contract company caused damages by blasting and throwing rocks on the tracks and right of way of the railroad company, cannot be entirely blamed on Major Bowlby. But there is no question but that considerable of the blame lies with him, because he has high salaried men along the line of work to look out for the interests of the county, and should it prove to be as is alleged in the complaint of the railroad company that negligence and carelessness caused a great damage to them, it will show that the interests of the county have not been properly looked after.

As has been often said of late, the work of the State Highway Engineer in Columbia County has been anything but satisfactory. It has been excessively expensive. It has not given results.

## PHYSICAL EXERCISE.

Physical exercise does much toward the development of the physique and strengthens the mind and broadens the intellect. It is conducive to health, and good health brings peace of mind and an ambition to do things. Many of the greatest men of the nation are regular in their physical exercises. The strain upon their mentality is so great that without some diversion they would collapse.

The particular brand of physical exercise displayed at the City Hall Wednesday night is not so much the desired kind, although a good boxing bout, shorn of professionalism and brute strength, is not so bad after all. Just what the boxing contests at the hall this week were, we are not in position to say as the representative of the Mist was not present. But speaking generally a system of physical exercise would do much for a great many people. School children are not the only ones who need physical exercises. We all need it and should have it. Encouragement should be given the fire boys in their undertaking. All out door sports should be encouraged and we old fellows should take active part in them. Then again when there are no attractions in the way of physical sports there is the wood pile and the garden left. At all events good physical exercises is needed by all and there is nothing so easy of attainment.

The contracts for the repair of the Umattilla light ship and the Santa Catalina, with the contract for the construction of the Monticello, are all accredited by the Portland papers as having been secured by the Willamette Iron & Steel Co. So far as the actual contracts entered into this is true, but it is also true that the St. Helens Shipbuilding Co. figured in all of these contracts to a considerable extent, in fact to such an extent that the Monticello will be entirely constructed at St. Helens while all the wood work on the light ship and the Santa Catalina will be done by the St. Helens Co. Of course the securing of the work is the principal thing to St. Helens people, but it would seem that we should also be entitled to whatever advertising goes with the fact that the local company is one of the big ship contracting firms of Oregon. Especially in wood work and wood ships.

When buying goods "made in America" it is advisable to go a little further, be a little patriotic and Buy Goods at Home. It is good to buy goods made in America but it is even better to buy goods from home merchants. By buying American goods you keep your money in circulation in America. But by buying goods from our local merchants you keep money in circulation at home. Every man and woman talks patriotism and likes to be considered patriotic. Christmas is coming on, the time of the year when there is lots of buying. Everyone should practice that patriotism by buying from the home merchants. It is money saved in the long run.

Much of the welfare of this country is in the hands of the young men on the farms. If they remain there and prosper the country will prosper in like manner. But if they forsake the fields and rush off to the overcrowded cities it will be a sledgehammer blow to the weal of the nation.

Dispatches tell us that Joe Knowles, the primitive man who spent 30 days in the wilds of the Oregon forests last summer, has been married. It would not be surprising now to see several of the young St. Helens fellows try the primitive stunt next summer.

The Germans and the Allies appear to be on the opposite sides of the same snag.

## MISMANAGING CITIES.

Many an Oregon Municipal Debt Grows Because of Lack of Budget System.

Guessing at the amount of money needed for the ensuing year has been a common practice among Oregon cities, towns, and villages, with the result that the guess became the tax levy for the year, says Don C. Sowers, professor of municipalities at the University of Oregon, who's putting out a series entitled "Short Talks for Busy Officials," for the free use of city officials throughout Oregon. Forty city officials have already asked for the series.

The same guessing has been true of county courts, according to Professor Sowers, whose principal business it is to assist Oregon municipalities to get on a better business basis, and whose work is given by the University without charge.

"The two facts available as a basis for determining the levy for the coming year have been the levies made the previous year and the balances remaining in the various funds," says Professor Sowers. The council has not known:

"a—Whether last year's appropriation had been spent economically and wisely;

"b—How much of the supplies purchased the previous year were still on hand;

"c—How much it cost to maintain each of the various offices and departments;

"d—How much would be needed to conduct each office or department for the following year;

"e—How much equipment would have to be purchased for each and all departments; how much would be needed for new buildings; how much new activities would cost;

"f—What was the total amount needed to conduct the city's business efficiently.

"After the tax levy was guessed at, the various council committees and officials would authorize expenditures payable from the various funds until the funds were exhausted, and after that warrants were issued that were stamped 'Not paid for want of funds.' By this system annual deficits occurred and the city debt increased year by year. This system has been going on for many years in Oregon and elsewhere, until now many cities have outstanding warrants amounting to from a few thousand dollars to more than one hundred thousand dollars in some cases."

A budget system is the remedy advocated by Professor Sowers for what he characterizes as a most un-businesslike procedure.

## TALES OF TOLL OF WAR.

Determined Effort to Alleviate Suffering, Results in Death of Hero of the Battlefield.

Those who have prophesized that the European war will so brutalize and harden men to the thought of human distress and suffering that the world's work of charity and reform will be set back half a century, should consider such a story as the following, told by a British soldier returned from the Aisne, through the columns of the London Standard. It is undoubtedly only representative of a thousand tales that are never told:

"Near our trenches there were a lot of wounded and their cries for water were pitiful. In the trenches was a quiet chap of the Engineers, who could stand it no longer. He collected all the water-bottles he could lay hold of, and said he was going out. The air was thick with shell and rifle fire, and to show yourself at all was to sign your death-warrant. That chap knew it as well as we did, but that was not going to stop him. He got to see the first man all right and gave him a swig from a bottle. No sooner did he show himself than the Germans opened fire. After attending to the first man he crawled along the ground to others until he was about a quarter of a mile away from us. Then he stood up and zigzagged toward another batch of wounded, but that was the end of him. The German fire got hotter and hotter. He was hit badly, and with just a slight upward fling of his arms he dropt to earth like the hero he was.

Later he was picked up with the wounded, but he was as dead as they make them out there. The wounded men for whose sake he had risked and lost his life thought a lot of him and were greatly cut up at his death. One of them who was hit so hard that he could never see another Sunday said to me as we passed the Engineer chap, who lay with a smile on his white face and had more bullets in him than would set a battalion sharpshooters up in business for themselves. 'He was a rare good one, he was. It's something worth living for to have seen a deed like that, and now that I have seen it I don't care what becomes of me.' That's what we all felt about it."

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