

# ST. HELENS MIST

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THE COUNTY OFFICIAL PAPER

## ANOTHER MAN NEEDED.

Charge of incompetency, inefficiency, extravagance and carelessness have been made at various times and from various quarters against the State Highway Engineer's department. Especially is this so in Columbia County. Papers in different parts of the state have taken up the charges and the people all over the state are fairly well conversant with the facts. In all these charges and insinuations the work in Columbia County is pointed to as the most marked example of incompetence and extravagance of any other although some of the other counties have the same complaint to make. In a recent issue of the Tax Liberator, a magazine published at Roseburg by the Oregon Rational Tax Reform Association, something of a detailed statement of affairs in this county as relating to the State Highway Engineer's office was published. The statements in that paper were reprinted in other papers and were read by thousands of people all over the state. The editor of that paper while in St. Helens recently made the statement that Major Bowlby, State Highway Engineer, had said that he could refute every statement contained in the Liberator, and that he, the editor, had invited the Major to make denials of the charges. So far as can be ascertained no denials have been made to anybody and it must therefore be taken as confessed as true that what the Tax Liberator said about the work in this county was the real state of affairs. But in order to further satisfy the people of the state at large and of this county, a special committee of taxpayers of Columbia County was appointed to examine the records of the work of the State Highway Engineer and to report their findings, whatever they may be. This committee has met and examined the reports of Major Bowlby and his first assistant, Mr. Griswold and that report shows that it would be a rather hard job for Major Bowlby to convince the people that he had not made a bad blunder and bunglesome job of his work in this county. The report of the committee has been made and that report has been taken from the records. The members of that committee are among the most honorable and upright citizens of the State of Oregon. Each one is a taxpayer and went into the work of investigation with an open mind, determined to ascertain the truth of the matter, and they have performed their work well.

Under all the circumstances and in face of the charges against Major Bowlby which remain unanswered by him, in the face of the records of this county as shown by the report of a committee of taxpayers, it would certainly seem that the State Highway Commission should select another man for the position of State Highway Engineer.

## SALARIES.

One of the Multnomah County Legislators proposes to introduce a bill at the coming session of the Legislature providing for a general reduction of 20 per cent in the salaries of all state and county officers. All of which goes to show that this particular legislator is making a play to the grandstand instead of trying to make an earnest effort to economize where economy is needed. His bill to reduce all salaries will perhaps get as far as the clerk's desk.

The salaries of officers of the various counties in Oregon are based on anything but scientific principles. In some of the smaller counties, sparsely settled and with limited assessable valuation, the officers receive more salary than in some of the larger counties. Heretofore in the fixing of the salaries of county officers, politics has been the ruling factor and until such time as there is a system adopted making the salaries uniform all over the state, based on some scientific principles, such as population, assessed valuation, etc., the salaries will not be reduced very generally. As a matter of fact it would be most unwise to attempt to make a general reduction of a particular percentage because it would work a hardship on the officers in some of the counties while in others it would be just about right.

The principal objection to the scheme is however, that such a course would only result in more politics and would not definitely fix anything. There would be more inconsis-

tencies than at present, and each year would find some log rolling at the legislative session whereby undesirable and expensive legislation would be enacted at the expense of the people.

If the Multnomah legislator would perform a real service he would introduce and pass a law making the salaries all over the state uniform, based on something other than politics.

## BROKEN PROMISES.

A real service is being performed by Mrs. Mildred Watts, of Scappoose, in her endeavors to set before the people of the county, the exact relations between the State Highway Commission and Columbia County. Last week she published a letter from State Treasurer Kay, which has opened the eyes of a considerable number of the taxpayers of the county. This week she sends in a letter from Major Bowlby which is even more interesting than was the Kay letter. Analysis of the letter from Major Bowlby only proves what has been often said before, that the promises made by the State Highway Commission, through its highway engineer, are not to be relied upon in any particular. Promises are easily made by the Major when he desires to have his own way about a particular matter, and those same promises are more easily forgotten by him when he gets what he wants. So many promises have been made to the people of Columbia County by the State Highway Engineer and his assistant Griswold, that have not been kept, that there no longer abides in the minds of the people any faith in any of them. Mrs. Watts is absolutely correct when she says it was the principal argument during the campaign for road bonds and also for the recall of the county court, that as soon as the county graded the roads the State would take them over, hard surface and maintain them. Now see what Major Bowlby says about it. "The only assurance that I have given the people of Columbia County relative to this matter has been that they could expect to be treated the same as Jackson County and Clatsop County when the County Court fulfills its obligations and promises." This statement coming from a man occupying the position of State Highway Engineer who has under his authority the expenditure, or expects to have, millions of dollars of the taxpayers hard earned money, should be sufficient to condemn him for all time as unworthy the confidence of the people.

The idea of Major Bowlby making a statement that he has not said on many occasions and to hundreds of people that when the county finished grading the roads the state would take them over, hard surface and maintain them. It needs only to be called to the attention of the people to place that statement where it properly belongs.

Then he says the people of Columbia County could expect to be treated the same as Jackson and Clatsop counties. We do not know what promises were made to the people of those counties by him, but if the reports that the only hard surfacing received by Clatsop County from the State was paid for by the funds which the State Commission promised to repay the county for the expense of surveying, are true, then all the hard surfacing we may expect will be paid for by the \$18,000 which the State Highway Commission owes us for paying for the useless and extravagant surveys made under the direction of Major Bowlby. If this be true then he is perhaps correct when he says that if Columbia County receives the same treatment that has been accorded Clatsop County he will take the \$18,000 rightfully due us from the State and hard surface three or four miles the coming year. When that is done it will be good night. A reading of the letter from the Major, which is published in another column of this paper, cannot fail to disclose the fact that Major Bowlby is dealing with the people of this county as he would with a flock of simpletons and fools. He will probably find out before many months have passed that his opinion of Columbia County folks will have changed considerably.

## BE AN OPTIMIST.

There is no denying the fact that business has been on the decline for some months but for all that the conditions in St. Helens are fairly satisfactory. Our mills and factories have been running continuously and the products have found ready sale both at home and in other portions of the country. With the coming spring, indications are that conditions generally will change for the better. The financiers say so, and the big papers are saying so and some of the big manufacturers are saying so. But in all their predictions there is a chorus of uncertainty and there will be uncertainty so long as the present Democratic policies are continued. It takes a real optimist nowadays to predict good times and believe what he says, but optimism at this stage has considerable to do with conditions. Let us all be optimists.

## ADVERTISED LETTERS.

Letters remaining in the St. Helens, Oregon postoffice for the week ending December 19, 1914.  
Mrs. George Harvey.  
V. H. Mathewson.  
P. Peterson.  
Letters unclaimed by January 2, 1915, will be sent to the dead letter office.

IVA E. DODD, P. M.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

We have taken over the A. P. Larson dairy and farm, and have taken charge of same. We take this method of thanking our patrons for their favors and continuance of their orders, and hope to be able to please in every respect. We also want the favors of new customers, and will aim to give the very best milk and cream that can be had, in the most sanitary way. We will make our prices reasonable as can be had. Prompt delivery and satisfaction guaranteed in every respect. Phone us your orders at all times. Phone No. 107-6.

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