

The News Record

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THURSDAY, **Editorial Page.** MAY 21

Referendum and Initiative Measures.

(Continued from last week.)
 For constitutional amendment providing that all dwelling houses, barns, sheds, out-houses, and all other appurtenances thereto; all machinery and buildings used exclusively for manufacturing purposes and appurtenances thereto; all fences, farm-machinery, and appliances used as such; all fruit trees, vines, shrubs, and all other improvements on farms; all livestock; all household furniture in use; and all tools owned by workmen and in use, shall be exempt from taxation in addition to exemptions now authorized by the Constitution. **Vote Yes or No**

322 Yes
 323 No

An open confession is good for the soul. We don't know about this, anymore than the Oregonian does and everyone who has read the editorials in that fountain of all wisdom, on this measure will agree with us that what the Oregonian doesn't know about methods of taxation would fill a big book. This proposed amendment is far and away the most important matter on the ballot. If it is adopted and works as claimed by its friends it will be a wonderful boon to the small taxpayer and to the state generally; if it works as many fear it might, it would do much harm. The main argument for it, aside from its ethical side, can be most plainly and quickly given by two or three Wallowa county illustrations: There is but one practical railroad right-of-way up Wallowa canyon and if there were two it would be financial folly to build two roads where one is enough. That is termed a natural monopoly. The O. R. & N., by virtue of special powers and privileges granted by the people, has possession of this natural monopoly and instead of using it for the benefit and convenience of the people whom equity decrees it should serve, the O. R. & N. uses it to deprive us of our natural and just right to the advantages of railroad facilities to market. It has the Wallowa county bottle corked more effectually than Hobson did the trick for the Spanish fleet at Santiago. Under present laws or at least system of assessment, Mr. Pace can put only a farm land valuation on this right of way. Under the single tax this right of way would be assessed at what it is worth as a railroad right of way, taking into consideration the fact that it is a natural monopoly, and that valuation would include all rolling stock, steel, buildings, etc., just the same as if they were actually there. Now don't misunderstand this. The single tax would not assess rolling stock, but a railroad right of way would be assessed just the same regardless of whether the road was in operation or not. The tax falls on VALUE not on acreage—value for the specific purpose the land is or should be used for. Under single tax, the assessor would be putting that right of way on the tax rolls at \$25,000 or \$30,000 a mile, maybe more. And maybe Mr. Harriman wouldn't decide the quicker that right of way paid its keep the better. Right? Sure. Does the assessor ask you how much returns per acre you are getting off your land? If a merchant had a ton of salt in his store and refused to sell a pound when all of us were dying for salt, would the tax assessor refuse to tax that salt. Another local example: There is in this valley a thousand acre tract of as fine land as lies outdoors, and it might as well be in the Desert of Sahara as far as any use is made of it. The tax on it is very low because the law says where anyone is lazy, or slothful, or so cunning as to not improve his farm you shall reward him by exempting him from taxation. Therefore there are no buildings on this tract and no sod turned. As soon as the little homesteaders round about build a barn, improve their livestock or set out a fruit tree, down swoops the assessor like a hawk on a sparrow, and Mr. Homesteader is assessed a heavy fine for his industry. Single tax would reverse that condition. Would that be fair? Third, there are the timber holdings of the big companies—but what's the use of talking about them. There isn't a child but knows of that wrong. In short the single taxers claim the real farmers would escape in Oregon from more than 50 per cent of his present taxes. They cite Manitoba and other Canadian Northwest provinces where the single tax has been in operation for several years and where agriculture as well as other pursuits, flourish like a green bay tree planted by living waters. As for manufacturers, you can't make them pay taxes no matter how much you assess them. He simply adds the tax to the price of the plow he sells you. But—the other fellows say all this is at best doubtful. The theory is all right. We admit the present system of taxation is rotten, but would the new work any better? And right there is the point. It would be up to the assessor, and the courts backing up the assessor. If they didn't, it would be hard on us little fellows. So we say, we don't know. We may take a chance. One thing sure, any other system can't be much worse than the present one.

For an amendment to Article II of the Constitution, giving the voters power to call a special election at any time to discharge any public officer and elect his successor. **Vote Yes or No**

324 Yes
 325 No

No. It gives too much power to a small minority, 25 per cent of public officers' constituents.

A bill for a law instructing members of the legislature to vote for and elect the candidates for United States Senator who receive the highest number of votes at the general election. **Vote Yes or No**

326 Yes
 327 No

Without a doubt, yes. It simply puts statement No. 1 into law, and will take it out of the power of political tricksters to nullify the people's will as was attempted by the Portland gang this spring.

For constitutional amendment giving the people power to make laws for election of public officers by majority vote instead of plurality; to provide that political parties

and voters' organizations shall be proportionably represented in all offices filled by the election of two or more persons, and that a voter shall vote for only one person for any office, and may indicate his second, third, etc., choice; and to provide for a simple method of precinct residence and registration. **Vote Yes or No**

328 Yes
 329 No

Certainly. It is the only common sense way. We elect by majorities in our lodges and this applies the same principle to general elections. Proportionable representation is also just. Just because there are 51 of us and only 49 of you, it should not follow that you have no voice at all in making laws.

A bill for a law to limit the amount of money candidates and other persons may contribute or spend in election campaigns; declaring what shall constitute concealing use of money and undue influence in elections and punishing the same; prohibiting attempts on election day to persuade any voter to vote for or against any candidate or candidates or any measure submitted to the people; to protect the purity of the ballot; furnishing information to voters concerning candidates and parties, partly at public expense, and providing for the manner of conducting election contests. **Vote Yes or No**

330 Yes
 331 No

No. As the News Record has heretofore stated, the title of the measure is a misnomer. It should be called a bill to quadruple the present excessive profits of the state printer. Instead of lessening, it would increase many fold the average expense of candidates.

For an act prohibiting, after August 25th, 1908, fishing for salmon or sturgeon at any time, by any means, except hook and line, in the Sandy River or any of its tributaries, or in the Columbia River, or any of its tributaries, at any place up stream from its confluence with the Sandy River, or with hook and line during the spawning season. **Vote Yes or No**

332 Yes
 333 No

This is a scheme to monopolize fishing privileges and not in the interest of conserving the fish supply. **Vote No.**

For constitutional amendment providing for the choosing of jurors and grand jurors, and that no person can be charged in the circuit courts with the commission of a crime or a misdemeanor except upon indictment found by a grand jury, except when a court holds an indictment to be defective, the district attorney may file an amended indictment. **Vote Yes or No**

334 Yes
 335 No

From the best information the News Record can gather this is a meritorious measure. It throws safeguards around the rights of every man.

A bill for an act to create the county of Hood River out of the western portion of Wasco County; providing for its organization and fixing the salaries of the officers thereof. **Vote Yes or No**

336 Yes
 337 No

No, and again no. How would you like to have Wasco county people cutting up Wallowa county into two or a half dozen small counties, doubling and tripling our taxes. Whether Wasco county should be divided or not is the business of the people of Wasco county and the majority there are opposed to it.

Supreme Court Amendment

In the News Record last week, we stated our opinion on the proposed constitutional amendment increasing the number of judges of the supreme court to five, and the transfer of the probate business from the county courts to the circuit courts. We approve of the latter but will vote no because of our personal opinion on the question of increase of judges. The News Record is in receipt of a letter from a prominent attorney of La Grande giving a strong argument for the measure, and as we always wish to present both sides, it is here published:

"I have just read your comment on the measures to be voted upon by the people at the June election, and concur in your views on all except the judiciary bill. The last legislature gave us two supreme court commissioners so as to relieve the Court from overwork, and they are doing good work now. But this was only a makeshift of last until the people can amend the constitution permitting five judges. The judiciary bill is intended to accomplish this, and to transfer the probate business to the circuit court. There is no more intricate department of the law than that relating to the settlement of estates. At present this is in the hands of the county court. But it is seldom that the county judge is a lawyer or knows anything about legal procedure. The result is that this very important branch of the law is administered in a careless and haphazard manner and many valuable estates lost or squandered. It is the opinion of the bar throughout the state that the circuit court should be given jurisdiction over probate matters. This is the purpose of the bill to be voted upon. It was prepared, I understand, by the State Bar association and was submitted to the supreme court judges for their approval before it was submitted to the last legislature, and was after careful consideration approved by the legislature and submitted to the people. I think it ought to pass."

Division of County.

The last measure on the ballot is an object lesson to Wallowa county voters. Just as sure as human a tire remains unchanged a measure for the division of Wallowa county into two counties will be on the ballot two years from now, if on June 1 next the county seat is voted to Wallowa town.

This is not stated in an attempt to make votes for Enterprise out of a remote possibility. It is a statement of absolute fact. All that is required to put it on the ballot are petitions containing a small per cent of registered voters, and the will to have those petitions circulated. The rest is easy. We ask the voters of this county, if under the circumstances, the will would be lacking. And everybody knows it is no trouble to get all the signatures necessary on a petition for any purpose whatsoever.

So we state without fear of successful contradiction that if the county seat is voted on June 1 to Wallowa, way off on one side of the county, the question of the division of Wallowa county will be put on the ballot in 1910, and the people of Linn, and Lane, and other remote places, will be allowed to dictate whether our taxes for county purposes shall be doubled or not.

Eagle Cap.

From Elgin Recorder
 Eagle Cap is the name of a new journal published by the Wallowa county high school. The first copy reached our desk this week and it is credit to the progressiveness of that educational institution. The journal compares with those issued by the best colleges and universities of the Northwest and speaks volumes for those in charge of it. The business firms of the county are standing liberally behind it in the way of advertising.

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Information Concerning Eighth Grade Final Examinations.
 1. Dates: (a) January 23, 24, 1908; (b) May 14, 15, 1908; (c) June 11, 12, 1908.
 2. Program:
 a. Thursdays—Arithmetic, Writing, History and Civil Government.
 b. Fridays—Grammar, Physiology, Geography and Spelling.
 3. Sources of Questions:
 a. Geography—State Course of Study, Redway and Hibon's Natural School Geography.
 b. Spelling—Eighty per cent from Reed's Word Lessons, and twenty per cent from manuscript in Language.
 c. Writing—Specimens of penmanship as indicated in copied matter and from manuscript in Language.
 d. Language—Buehler's Modern English Grammar, no diagramming.
 e. Civil Government—United States Constitution.
 f. History—List of topics from History Outline in State Course of Study and Current Events.
 Notice: Teachers preparing classes for examinations will please notify county superintendent 30 days before examination according to law.
J. W. KIRNS,
 County Superintendent of Schools.