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"Harmony in
Diversity"

PORTLAND CITY CLUB BULLETIN

"Active
Citizenship"

VOLUME II

PORTLAND, OREGON, JUNE 9, 1922

NUMBER 37

FRIDAY, JUNE 9

Hotel Benson, 12:10 Sharp

GET-ACQUAINTED DAY

SPEAKER

JUDGE GEORGE D. ALDEN

Massachusetts Barrister, Ellison-White Lecturer

SUBJECT

"This and That About Citizenship"

Every new member of the City Club, and every old member whose absence from meetings has placed him on the role of a stranger is requested by the Membership and Reception Committees to attend Friday. These Committees are prepared for some real action on the receiving line.

Judge Alden, the brilliant and popular lecturer, will speak on problems of vital interest in the development of present-day citizenship. Members who attended the meeting last week say it was the best of the year. Take the same tip for Friday.

Monday, June 12: Meeting of the President's "Cabinet."

Chamber of Commerce, 6:00

Dinner meeting for Officers and Members of all City Club Committees.

Friday, June 16: Speaker, Edgar H. Sensenich.

Tyrolean Room, Hotel Benson

A renewal of Old Time and a lecture on Present-day Economics.

Friday, June 23: Speaker, Dr. Edward T. Devine. Ladies' Day Luncheon
Oregon Social Workers to be invited.

Friday, June 30: Speaker, J. Duncan Speath

Princeton University

Friday, July 7: Speaker, R. M. Wenley

University of Michigan

REPORT ON SCHOOL BOND AND TAXATION MEASURES

WHEREAS, The City Club has adopted the report of its special committee, which approves the school bond and taxation measures, and which recommends for the consideration of the School Board definite policies intended to insure efficiency in the administration of the funds to be derived from the above measures, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That City Club members take an active interest in making the improvement of Portland's public schools one of the major features of City Club work; and, that the City Club Education Committee be specially instructed to keep the Club informed, on the progress made in the application of the policies recommended.

(The following report of the Committee appointed to study the school bond and taxation measures was read and adopted, Friday, June 2nd. The members of the Committee are: John C. Veatch, chairman, A. L. Andrus, A. F. Bittner, James Cormack, John Laing, Richard W. Montague and Edward O. Sisson. Other City Club members working with the Committee were: James J. Sayer, representing the Association of Builders and Contractors, and W. G. Holford, of the Society of Architects.)

TO THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS:—Your committee appointed to report upon the proposed

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CHANGE OF ADDRESS JUNE 1

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"To inform its members and the community in public matters and to arouse them to a realization of the obligations of citizenship."

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School Measures Report

Continued from page one

\$3,000,000 bond issue and the \$1,000,000 special tax levy for School District No. 1, Multnomah County, Oregon, to be submitted at the election on June 17, 1922, submits the following report:

We have made a survey of the condition of the school district, examined all the statements available relative to the present financial situation and needs of the district; we have held conferences with the school board and its individual members; the school clerk; the school superintendent; the committee of architects, the representatives of the association of builders and contractors, and others, for the purpose of analysing the situation from every possible angle, to find out whether the request of the board is really urgent, whether the building program as proposed is absolutely necessary, whether a smaller sum would meet the needs, whether the money if voted would be wisely spent under competent supervision, and whether the board has a definite, specific program which is adequate. As a result we find the following facts and conditions:

Continued on page three

DR. REBEC SPEAKS

One of the most inspirational messages ever given before the City Club was the one presented last Friday by Dr. George Rebec, a fellow member and director of the University of Oregon, Portland, Center. Space will not permit a detailed resume of his talk on "The Educational Situation Confronting Our Democracy," suffice to say that his earnest and spirited attack on the general tendencies of the time to cut down educational standards in this country, won nearly two minutes continuous applause from his audience. Dr. Rebec traced business, agricultural, governmental and cultural growth to show where, today, there is a constantly increasing demand for scientific and cultural training in the schools. His talk was, indirectly, a strong argument for the endorsement of the school bond and taxation measures to be voted on June 17.

The Annual Field Rally of the Boy Scouts will be held at Multnomah Field on Saturday, June 10th, at 1 o'clock. City Club members are especially invited to attend. No charge for admission.

Needs are Summarized

1. Ten thousand of the present 38,000 school children are poorly housed, many in portables and in buildings which are fire traps.

2. The housing of children in portables is a menace to the health of the children because such buildings cannot be properly heated, lighted, or ventilated. While the immediate cost of such buildings is relatively small, they are but temporary make-shifts and in the long run are more expensive than permanent structures. The building of portables is to be and should be abandoned.

3. In addition to the present over-crowded and inadequate accommodation, provision must be made for the steady increase of 2,500 pupils per school year.

4. The main source of revenue for the school district is a tax levy which by law is limited to $6\frac{1}{2}$ mills of the assessed valuation. Unlike other taxing bodies, which are permitted to increase their levy from year to year by six per cent of the preceding levy, which has enabled them to increase their levy with increased expenditures, the effect of the $6\frac{1}{2}$ mill limitation on school district has been in the opposite direction, due to a decrease in the assessed valuation. As a result, notwithstanding a great increase in school population, as well as an increase in the unit cost of operation and maintenance, the revenues of the district have actually diminished.

5. This increased cost in maintenance and operation with a decreased income has compelled the district to use all available funds in maintenance and operation and has left no funds for permanent building except that derived through special levies. From the best estimates available, the school district is now \$8,000,000 behind an adequate building program for its present needs. Moreover, the present revenue is not sufficient to take care of the actual operation and maintenance of the district without a serious curtailment of essential educational functions.

Eliminations Not Desired

To meet the situation for the coming year, the school board has proposed to eliminate certain activities as follows: swimming, music, adult and Americanization education, short commercial courses, cooking, drawing, gardens, manual training, and sewing. We feel that this is disastrous. Even prior to this elimination, our schools were below par in these subjects. Standard school practice begins manual training in the fifth and sixth grades. Portland schools did so until the first impulse of the retrenchment wave

struck. At present the work begins in the seventh grade. It is now to be thrown overboard entirely.

These subjects are not "frills," as many seem to think. They have great and special values, first, their power to arouse and sustain the energy and interest of the children. The classes in the special subjects, especially tool work for boys and domestic science for girls, probably have the highest degree of attention of any subjects in the curriculum. Many a boy is saved from failure in his whole school career by the appeal of the manual training work. Besides, these subjects yield not only a considerable degree of very practical training, but also genuine intellectual culture.

Music Is Great Need

Music and drawing should need no defense. The idea that these subjects are newfangled is absurd. They both figured in the education of the Greeks and in all the best educational systems down to the present time. The human and national value of music is incomparable, nothing can take its place. No branch of the curriculum can rival music in the contribution to patriotism and to the finer culture of humanity. The United States is now behind nearly every other great civilized nation in music. Shall we fall still further to the rear and shall Portland lead the retreat?

Adult education is to be surrendered. This is a plain disaster. It is true that the children, both native and foreign born, must come first, but no words can describe the loss and injury caused by depriving thousands of foreign speaking men and women of their best and perhaps only means of fitting themselves for the citizenship which they are seeking with us.

Due to the increased attendance and decreased revenues and the absolute necessity of making care of the actual operation and maintenance will be followed by a still greater restriction of program. The number of pupils per teacher will be increased and thus the efficiency of the class room work greatly impaired.

Recommendation

In view of these conditions, a real emergency exists in the affairs of our public schools, therefore, we recommend the support of the \$1,000,000 tax levy and the authorization of the sale of \$3,000,000 serial bonds to be used as the money is required. The \$1,000,000 derived from the tax is to be entirely absorbed in restoring the subjects now eliminated from the curriculum, in providing for the annual increase in students,

for the repair, maintenance and preservation, and possible additions to present buildings. The \$3,000,000 to be obtained from the sale of bonds can only partly cover the present building needs and is intended to be used in construction where the present need is most pressing.

The committee, after supplying a model budget form, has obtained from the school board a complete budget, showing in detail the proposed expenditure of the money to be derived through the tax and bond issues, and it is herewith submitted as a part of this report.

Policies are Outlined

Notwithstanding the above report and recommendation, we are conscious of the fact that there is a widespread feeling on the part of the public that these funds, if voted, will not be handled according to the most approved business methods. To create in the public mind confidence that this money will be properly administered and to add to the efficiency of the schools generally, the committee feels that the School Board should go definitely on record as approving in principle the policies hereinafter outlined:

1. The present plan whereby the chairmanship of the board changes more often than once a year, and the membership of all committees is subject to change with the chairmanship, is incompatible with any continuity or efficiency of administration.

2. Before any money is expended or final plans adopted there should be made a careful survey of school needs, followed by a program as exact and definite as possible, covering a period of at least five years with a definite undertaking to maintain a substantial continuity of program and operation.

3. All estimates of proposed expenditures should be made in detail and by persons of both general and technical competence. These estimates should be made public in such form and under such conditions as would enable them to be generally understood by all citizens. Adherence to these estimates should be maintained as closely as possible and at all times.

4. As a correlative to the above, a full and informative budget, segregating capital expenditures from those in the nature of maintenance and operation, with a comparative statement of expenditures for future years, should be published in advance. Where possible there should ciently; be of sufficient capacity to do all or also be indicated the relation between estimates and subsequent expenditures for the same amount.

5. The board should consider suggestions coming from and co-operate with an advisory committee of citizens and representatives of the civic and educational organizations of the city.

6. The educational head should have voice in and contact with all problems of the executive departments touching upon school operation, administration, management or construction.

Architect Should Supervise Properties Department

7. The head of the properties department should have related technical training, including thorough architectural and engineering training and competence suited to this work. He should be given full authority to execute the policy of the board, and that policy once declared, his management and administration conformable to it should not be interfered with.

8. The board should carefully consider the method of distributing the work of planning and superintending the construction of the various school buildings among local architects competent to deal with school structures, in order to provide emulation in efficiency and comeliness, the entire operation to be supervised by a consulting architect. Whether this plan or that of putting the whole department of school properties in charge of one supervising architect-engineer is adopted, no pains should be spared to secure first-class ability in the technical head.

9. An accounting department should supervise expenditures in all departments and keep up an adequate cost accounting system. Progress reports should be made with reasonable frequency, which should distinctly show adherence to or departures from previous estimates and budget tables.

10. There should be a continuance of a maintenance department that shall function efficiently repair work, and provide such records as will keep it in accurate touch with the structural and physical details of all school buildings and equipment. The organization of this department and its capacity should not be kept at such a point that it shall attempt to do work at a greater cost than \$500 per item, or bid against the general contractor. Subterfuges in piecemeal work so that the \$500 maximum limit plan be evaded, shall not be encouraged. Cost accounting methods should be applied to all work in this department.

(*Note.*—The above report was published in full by the *Oregon Voter*, Saturday, June 3, and contains the budget for the expenditure of the \$1,000,000 to be derived from the tax levy.)