

Subgroup 6

Series 8

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403

STATE OF OREGON
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT.
SALEM.

May 22nd, 1912.

Prof. W. J. Kerr,

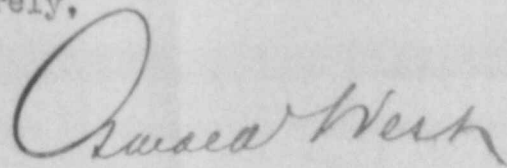
Pres. Oregon Agricultural College,

Corvallis, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing for your information an editorial
from Medford Mail Tribune, which was forwarded to me.

Very sincerely,



W/E

PROSTITUTING A PUBLIC OFFICE.

IN THE advertising development section of the May Sunset appears an advertisement written by C. E. Fisher for the Oregon Apple company of Corvallis, one of the numerous orchard unit selling propositions in which investment is offered the public.

This particular company has the same good opinion of itself as the Pharisee of old who thanked God that he was not like other men had of himself, for the article opens as follows:

"Thank the Lord for the honest men in the world! There are so many of the other sort in this busy business world of ours that when we find some of our brothers doing yeoman work holding down the honest beam of the scales we feel like passing the hat for fear their profits have not been adequate."

The hat is then passed as follows: "One third down, with dignified terms, no interest, and no taxes in the selling plan."

So far the proposition excites no more attention or comment than dozens of other propositions, get rich quick and legitimate, of similar class. The land is described as is nearly all other land so advertised, "by every test known to expert horticulturists and agronomists, ideal for orchard growing," and it may be. It is the following which commands attention: (The capitals are our own.)

"A number of Benton county business men, a United States Senator, a man high up in the railroad world, a **PRESIDENT AND THREE MEMBERS OF THE FACULTY OF A LARGE AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**, organized the Oregon Apple Company. * * *

"After a series of tests by H. D. SCUDDER, **EXPERT AGRONOMIST OF THE OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**, a report was submitted showing the soil was the richest red clay hill loam to be found anywhere in the state. * * *

"The services of an expert horticulturist, highly recommended by the **OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE** were secured. * * *

"Oaco Orchards are twenty miles south from Corvallis, home of the **OREGON AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE**. * * *

One wonders whether Oaco does not stand for O. A. C. Orchards, so closely allied is the public institution with this private speculation.

The president and three members of the faculty of a state institution organize a private company, in competition with other private companies, but use the power and prestige of their official connections to bolster up and finance their individual speculative scheme. The scientific college experts are probably also interested, lending the prestige of their official connections to their favorable reports upon their own property.

It is probable that the president and faculty of the Oregon Agricultural College would strenuously object to endorsing for advertising purposes other orchard selling schemes, and would not permit the use of their names on account of their official connections, in magazine articles asking for investments. Certainly they have not so endorsed any of the orchard schemes in the Rogue River valley, although Jackson county helps support their institution as well as Benton county.

Let us indeed "thank the Lord for the honest men in the world. * * * Our brothers doing yeomen work holding down the honest beam of the scales" and "pass the hat" for "the president and three members of the faculty" of the Oregon Agricultural College.

May 23, 1912.

My dear Governor:

I am glad to acknowledge receipt of your favor of the 22d instant enclosing a copy of the editorial, "Prostituting a Public Office", that appeared in a recent number of the Medford Mail Tribune. I am enclosing herewith copies of letters by Mr. B. W. Johnson, Manager of the Oregon Apple Co., sent by him to Mr. Putnam, Editor of the Tribune. I had not seen the advertisement that appeared in the Sunset Magazine until my attention was called to it by Mr. Johnson yesterday; neither did I know of any case in which either the Agricultural College or any person connected with it was being in any way used to advance the interests of this company. When the company was organized, several members of the faculty were given an opportunity to take stock. It was distinctly understood, however, at the time, that their names could not be used in advertising the company in any way that might subject the College to criticism or give the slightest ground for any suspicion that the official position of any one connected with the College was being used to promote any private interest. So far as the work of the College experts is concerned, they did no more for this company than they have done for different people throughout the entire State. The work, however, has always been in the open, and their reports submitted officially ~~for use~~ in the development of the agricultural interests of the State. In fact, the

(O. W. 2.)

investigation of the lands owned by the Oregon Apple Co. by the College soil expert was made before the company was organized, and, so far as I know, before any one connected with the College had any thought of investing in the company. Furthermore, when the company was organized and some of the members became interested in it, it was definitely agreed that the company property should not be advertised in Oregon, and that no effort should be made to seal the land to residents of this State. So far as I know, and I have made careful investigation since I received the editorial in question, no one has been guilty of any impropriety whatever, either in the investments they have made in the company mentioned, or in anything they have done in its interests.

I do not know how it would be possible for any greater care to be exercised than has been by the authorities of the Agricultural College to prevent the improper use of the institution or of the position of any person connected with it in connection with any private enterprise.

Very sincerely yours,

Gov. Oswald West,
Salem, Ore.

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Very sincerely yours,

Gov. Oswald West,
Salem, Ore.

(Copy)

Corvallis, Oregon,
May 22, 1912.

Editor Mail Tribune,
Medford, Ore.

Dear Sir:

I am enclosing a reply to your editorial of the 18th instant concerning an advertisement in Sunset. Personally, I have no desire to become involved in an extended discussion with reference to this matter, but felt that an explanation from me would exonerate the members of the faculty and relieve the College of further criticism. As a citizen of Corvallis, I have a deep interest in the institution, and am anxious that no act of mine should in any way cause an injustice to be done the school or any of its faculty members.

When the Oregon Apple Company was organized, four faculty members took stock along with some twenty other local citizens. They did not ask, and were not given, any advantage over other stockholders. Aside from the May advertisement in Sunset, no effort has been made to exploit our proposition in coast territory, but on the contrary, our sales have been pushed in the Eastern States, where practically all our purchasers reside. Ours is not a large proposition, and its original organizers were quite as much interested in the development of the fruit industry in this section along scientific lines as in any possible profits that might accrue to them later on. President Kerr draws no salary, and aside from attending the annual meetings, he gives no time to the company. Both he and Professor Scudder have all along taken the position that their connection with the company should not be exploited or used in any manner that might bring criticism on the institution.

Having been in the newspaper game at one time for several years, I am writing you thus fully, feeling certain that the enclosed article will be given space in your paper in order that any erroneous impression as to the College people gained through your editorial of the 18th may be corrected.

Very truly yours,

E. W. JOHNSON.

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May 22, 1912.

Editor Mail Tribune,
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Very truly yours,

B. V. JOHNSON.

The splendid success of the fruit industry in the Rogue River Valley has been an inspiration to the people of the Willamette Valley, and we should like your encouragement in our orchard development work. And now that the Sunset article has been explained, I feel certain that you agree with me that there is no room for criticism of the College or members of its faculty on that account.

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Respectfully,

B. W. JOHNSON.

Corvallis, Oregon,
May 22, 1912.

Editor Medford Mail Tribune,
Medford, Oregon.

Dear Sir:

Your editorial of May 18th concerning the advertisement of the Oregon Apple Company in the Sunset Magazine affects me as Sales Manager of the company's properties. Under my contract with the company, all the advertising is done at my expense, and it is entirely under my direction. Therefore, I am writing you in order that the situation may be understood and no injustice be done the Agricultural College or members of its faculty.

The advertisement in question was written by a staff writer of the Sunset Magazine, and was printed after it was submitted to me. Your editorial does not question the truth of any of the statements made in the advertisement, but raises the question of propriety in certain mentionings of members of the Oregon Agricultural College faculty. The soil report of the College Agronomist described in the advertisement was made to the company at its request, and used by it to make selections from lands on which it held options. The College makes similar tests and reports constantly for persons and companies throughout the State, and I saw no impropriety in quoting from this report, which was made before the company had fully determined to engage in orchard development.

It seems to have been a common practice for orchard owners to call upon College people to recommend a horticultural graduate to take charge of their orchards. This is evidenced by the frequent news items appearing in Portland and other State papers, stating the various positions secured by graduates upon faculty recommendations. Surely the College showed the Oregon Apple Company no unusual favor in recommending a College graduate to take charge of its development work.

There are more than a hundred members of the College faculty, and many of them are interested in orchard, dairy, or other farm operations throughout the State. Four happen to be stockholders in the Oregon Apple Company. I do not take it that you criticize College men for investing their savings in Oregon farm lands, or for otherwise assisting in developing the agricultural resources of the State, but rather condemn my action in approving an advertisement that mentions the College in connection with the orchards whose sales I direct. A. J. Johnson, Chairman of the company's Executive Committee, told me when the advertisement appeared, that the College men in the company did not like it. I had endeavored to anticipate their objections by directing that the advertisement read, "the president and three members of a large agricultural college", in referring to the people interested in the company, without naming the college; but the criticisms of yourself of the company officials, and the faculty stockholders indicate that it is impossible to meet every possible objection. In like manner, the article did not name Senator Bourne as a stockholder, but mentioned only "a United States Senator".

Since the company itself, and still less any individual stockholder, has nothing whatever to do with the advertising of the company properties, and this matter is entirely and exclusively in my hands and I pay all the advertising bills myself, all responsibility is mine. This is not an apology. I still fail to find anything in the advertisement that is untrue or improper, and I cannot see that I have violated the repeated injunctions of Dr. Kerr that the names of himself and of the other College men in the company be not used in any way that might subject the College to criticism. The company is a substantial, responsible concern, and any association with it is distinctly creditable.

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