

OPPOSED TO STATE BONDS

State Treasurer Thomas Kay Writes Knowingly

In answer to many requests for an expression as to the proposed initiative bill to amend the constitution, which will provide for the bonding of the state for irrigation, drainage and rural credits, not to exceed two per cent (which would mean \$18,000,000), have to say that I am opposed to the proposed measure for several reasons.

The proposition to initiate this amendment first comes from the Irrigation congress which met in Portland in December, and, therefore, came from people particularly interested in reclaiming desert lands. A similar measure, which came from the same source, was put on the ballot two years ago, which provided for bonding the state for irrigation and road building; the latter being the more popular issue of the two, yet the amendment did not carry in a single county in the state, it being defeated by one hundred thirty-five thousand (135,000) against as for forty-nine thousand (49,000) for.

There is a popular demand for some system of rural credits and the people interested in irrigation have taken advantage of this, and propose to amend the constitution, which will link together the bonding of the state for irrigation, drainage and rural credits, thinking the latter issue will carry the former one through.

Now, in my opinion, there is absolutely no demand at this time for the state bonding itself for irrigation purposes, inasmuch as there are now on the market thousands of acres of reclaimed lands ready for settlement, for which there is absolutely no sale. In proof of this, I have to say that three years ago the state appropriated \$450,000 to reclaim 22,500 acres of land, known as the Tumalo project. There were 7000 acres of tillable amount owned by settlers on the ground, who had vested water rights, together with parties who had contracts in the old Columbia Southern Company, which the state permitted the renewal of; they receiving credit for same on new contracts for the amount paid the Columbia Southern Company. This leaves 15,500 acres of land reclaimed by the state for sale, of which there have been sold less than 1000 acres, although it has been on the market for nearly two years. This land is favorably located and is considered first class, yet the Desert Land board is unable to find purchasers for it. There are over 1500 acres of patented lands, or listed for patents, in the Central Oregon Irrigation Company for sale. And still further, of the 15,000 acres of reclaimed lands in the government project in Umatilla county, there are about 5300 acres actually being cultivated; the rest being in the hands of speculators or the title remaining with the government. There are likewise thousands of acres of reclaimed lands for sale in the hands of private companies and everyone who is familiar with these matters knows that there is absolutely no demand for these lands.

This being the case, then what legitimate demand is there for bonding the state for reclaiming more. The only demand comes from people or communities who would be benefited by the expenditure of large sums of money in their localities, or, further, from people who would secure positions in connection with carrying on of the work, and it simply amounts to a proposition to borrow money and expend it in order to make good times.

Some claim the reason these lands are not sold is because the terms are not liberal enough. The terms are 10 per cent down and ten per cent per year for nine years, with interest at six per cent, and these are what I would consider liberal terms. Again, some people maintain that these lands can be irrigated for \$15 per acre, which contention is not well founded, as none of the Carey projects have ever been reclaimed on the original estimates. The Columbia Southern Company originally figured it could reclaim and sell these lands at a profit, for \$14.75 per acre, which was the amount charged for them. This company failed and the state reclaimed the lands, at a cost of nearly \$40 per acre; that being the state lien price for water. The cost of the government project in Umatilla county is \$60 per acre and this project is favorably located. The value of the land when sold by speculators is added to the lien cost.

I understand this proposition has received considerable encouragement from some large bankers, who state that in case the state would guarantee the bonds they would sell like "hot cakes." This, no doubt, is true, inasmuch as the banks are teeming over with funds which they are willing to loan on good bonds, at four or five per cent interest, yet, under present conditions, they are not willing to loan these moneys in the ordinary channels for a much higher rate of interest. At the present time it is hard to secure funds for legitimate business propositions at less than seven or eight per cent, and in Eastern Oregon, for less than 10 per cent interest.

I will venture the assertion that none of these bankers would invest a dollar in irrigation bonds, at any rate of interest, unless the state was back of them, and if the state would have had to pay both principal and interest, inasmuch as practically all of them have been failures.

The population of Oregon is less than 800,000 and the area is ninety-five thousand square miles, or 61,000,000 acres of land, which is greater than the combined area of the states of New York and Pennsylvania, with over 18,000,000 people. There are three acres of tillable land today in the state of Oregon for every acre in cultivation, not counting desert lands, so what demand is there for the state bonding itself and spending large sums to reclaim more lands, with all these tillable lands lying idle and thousands of acres of irrigated lands on the market?

All subdivisions of the state, such as counties, cities and school districts, can bond themselves and many of them are now bonded to the limit. Therefore, to provide for state bonds would simply amount to re-bonding the same property and adding to the already excessive burden of taxation.

The state of Oregon is one of the few states which has no bonded indebtedness. In case the constitution is amended whereby we can bond for one purpose it will not be long until it is bonded for many purposes, and once the bars are thrown down it will be but a few years until we have tens of millions of dollars worth of state bonds, which will add greatly to our already high taxes and will not be conducive to good results.

Section 20, Article 4 of the state constitution provides that "Every act shall embrace but one subject, and matters properly connected therewith, which subject shall be expressed in the title."

This constitutional provision was intended to protect the members of the legislature, and on initiative bills, the general public from having to vote for a bill or appropriation which they do not endorse, in order to vote for one in which they are in favor. Or, in other words, to keep from putting a "rider" on a good measure.

Irrigation and drainage, being the two methods of reclaiming waste lands, could properly be included in one measure, but rural credits, having nothing in common with the other two subjects, should not be included in the same bill.

I believe in some system of rural credits and think I am entitled to the privilege of voting for that measure without having to vote for bonding the state for irrigation and drainage, which I am not in favor of at this time.

THOS. B. KAY.

SENATOR LANE OPPOSES STANDING ARMY

Senator Lane made a formal statement of his attitude on military legislation as follows, in Washington:

"I am opposed to the creation of a large standing army, which in addition to being a burden on the people I fear will later be used to override the liberties and rights of the citizens of this country.

"I will favor and endeavor to secure an amendment to the bill to enlist from 500,000 to 1,000,000 men (now idle) for periods of from six to nine months, pay them ruling wages and employ them in building highways across and throughout the country, at the same time training them in rudimentary military tactics say two days each week. By pursuing this course we could turn back into private life about 1,000,000 healthy young men each year who would not be ruined by life in barracks and we would secure the roads which are badly needed.

"One man in a trench armed with a machine gun can defeat 100 men marching in dress parade order against him, and the old order of "hay-foot-straw-foot" style of military drilling has gone never to return.

"In regard to the navy, I would say that so many millions of dollars have been frittered away and lost by paying extortionate overcharges for an inferior quality of armor plate for battleships, and for munitions of war to private contractors that I am not in favor of throwing away another dollar in that way. We have expended hundreds of millions for preparedness and have been left defenseless.

"I would favor a bill providing for the construction of government owned and operated plants for the manufacture of all vessels and armor plate, powder, mines, aeroplanes and other means of defense such as we need to safeguard this country from invasion.

"I believe we should place the

country in a condition to protect itself from invasion, but not for aggressive warfare or the invasion of any other country. In order to do this we do not need \$17,000,000 super dreadnoughts, which become out of date and useless in a few years, but should construct powerful coast defense vessels, submarines, aeroplanes, hydroplanes and mines, and place other large guns at all important and accessible places along our coasts, all of which, as I said before, should be constructed in government plants only, and at the lowest possible cost to the people of this country.

"During the present war now raging in Europe, we have not been neutral but have furnished hundreds of millions of dollars worth of death-dealing devices to some of the warring nations which have been used to kill the people of other friendly countries who are at peace with us. They resent our conduct and I fear after the war is over they (if they are in position to do so), will demand an explanation and perhaps reparation from us, and the innocent may be made to suffer for the acts of those who have profited from the nefarious traffic."

REMOVING STUMPS BY CHAR-PITTING

Of the various methods of removing stumps none seem to prove more economical or efficient than the char-pitting method of burning them, according to Geo. A. Nelson, county agriculturist of Waiikikum county, Wash., who has used the method to good advantage in his county.

In preparing the stump for burning the bark should be removed from the base, and on stumps it is necessary to remove some of the dirt. Thus the fire may be started so near the bottom that it will start burning under the main part of the stump and the roots. Any kind of wood that forms good coals may be used. It should be cut short and stood up around the stump or laid on its side. The wood may be piled so as to start the fire entirely around the stump or in one place, as may be desired. The former method will burn the stump out more rapidly, but takes more wood and more time to prepare. After the wood is placed it may be covered with fern or any other similar material, and a thin layer of dirt should be placed over it, with the exception of leaving a place large enough to start the fire. Only

a light coating of three or four inches of dirt should be put over the fire, and this should not be piled against the stump over 18 inches high. As the wood burns down the fire will break through the dirt in places, and it will then be necessary to pile more dirt upon such places. As the fire burns into the stump more dirt should be shoveled over it. Should the fire burn higher on the stump than where the dirt is piled it should be put out, instead of trying to cover it by piling the dirt higher. The fire should be covered at all times and never be allowed to burn into an open blaze, as when it does much of the fuel is burned up and the heat lost. The object is to confine the heat. When this is properly done it becomes intensely hot around the base of the stump. As the main part of the stump is burned out care should be taken to keep the roots covered properly so they will all burn out.

Another method of char-pitting stumps that has been recommended by the University of Idaho, is to saw the stump off as near to the ground as possible, and skid it up on its base from two to four inches, using stones for this purpose. Then in the summer, when it is dry, a fire can be

started between the two parts of the stump. The two burning surfaces radiate heat upon each other and thus maintain continuous combustion. The top of the stump gradually settles down, burning the roots out. Only soil that contains a considerable amount of clay is suitable for char pitting; sandy or gravel soils are not adapted to the work. This method has proven equally successful in Waiikikum county on both hill and bottom land. It has proven especially successful on the reclaimed tidelands. The quality of the stumps and the nature of this soil makes it especially adapted to the char-pitting method.

COURT PROCEEDINGS.

Friday, February 18, 1916. 11th Judicial day. Officers all present except Commissioner Weed. Due proclamation being made, and it appearing to the Court that there are no matters awaiting consideration, adjournment was had, without day.

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