

FALLACIES OF GOVERNMENT

CONTRIBUTOR DISCUSSES COMMISSION FORM.

Criticizes Size of "Miscellaneous Fund of City.

La Grande, March 5.—Editor Observer: Up to date there has not been much advanced by the advocates of a hurried change to the commission form of city government except a lot of assertions, assumptions and glittering generalities. These have been repeated again and again but no evidence of their correctness has been submitted. One writer asserts that "Our present municipal government is inefficient, insufficient, and insincere." I do not quite agree with him there. I think we have at present an administration that is above the average. That the majority of the present council are able and honest men who are sincere in their desire to bring order out of chaos and that they will succeed if given a little more time. I believe that there is at least one department that is efficient and above reproach, as I will explain later on.

Neither do I agree with him when he says "The administration officers are practically responsible to no one." Some of them, at times, act as though they looked at it that way, but they are certainly responsible to the voters and taxpayers of the city. If they are not, then nobody, from the president down is responsible and our republican form of government is a sham and a farce. There are plenty of ways to make them realize their responsibility if we only go at it in the right way. We are told that "A good system will not be managed by insincere men, and neither can a bad system be made a good one by honest men." I suspect that there is a misprint somewhere among that. If there is not, both statement are utterly untenable, for we can not admit that the creature is necessarily greater than the creator and his good systems can

not be put to bad use by evil and designing men and vice versa.

What assurance have we that insincere men will never be in office under the new system? Is there any way of telling without fall whether a man is sincere or not? Our penitentiaries are full of living proofs that the best of our systems of government and business can and will be misused. Entirely too much weight is laid on the system and form by the friends of the new form. System or form counts for very little as anyone must know who has had any contact with the world. The form of a note or bond for instance, is secondary to the reliability and reputation of the man who signs it.

There is much evidence that a corporation form can be misused. The National Cash Register company for instance whose officers were recently sentenced to jail, and the commission men (no joke intended—who were recently fined in Portland. To the south of us are Mexico and several smaller countries all of which have the same system of form of government as the United States. Strange to say, it does not prevent them from having wicked, inefficient and unscrupulous men in even the highest offices, nor from revolutions and turmoil without end, while we, under the same system, have peace and prosperity.

Responsibility, inefficiency and guilt are always personal, but shifting them on to the system is cheaper and easier than bearing them. In New York City and in Portland, the chief of police is appointed by the mayor and authority centralized to that extent, but it has certainly not helped the situation any. The responsibility lies far more with the officials and the public than with the system. If the system is everything, how is it that one department of our city government is never found fault with while all the rest are?

I have lived in and near La Grande for twenty-odd years but do not recollect of ever hearing anybody kicking about our fire department. I've heard all the other departments criticized and even cursed. Now, why should there be such a difference? I think the reason is perfectly plain, though few have thought of it. It is the one department that is on a truly democratic basis.

There is never any effort to cover up its work. All its actions are known to the public and it therefore must do about the right thing to keep the confidence of the public. Unlike many other public servants, the fire ladies respond instantly to a call of duty, and unlike some others, they are not offended when their attention is called to their plain duty. They do not look at you as if you were trying to interfere with their private affairs. They have no favorites, either, they respond as quickly to the call of the humblest of us as to the foremost among us. One part of the town is as important to them as any other part. They do not have to be prodded every time there is anything to do, they are always ready for their duties. They seem to realize that they are the servants and not the masters of the public. They are easily approached, no introductions and no red tape is needed. They are there for the protection of the public and not for its secret exploitation. When they accept appointment they expect to do their duty whenever called upon. If they refused to get up and go to a fire, not even the friends of the new form would have the nerve to blame it on to the system that is in use. Will some of them please rise and explain why the system excuses neglect of duty in all other servants of the city, but not in our fire department?

It stands to reason that if all other departments were run more along these lines they would be more popular too.

The annual financial statement published in your issue of Feb. 26th is along these lines and our city officials deserve credit for the same. There is probably only one item that any fairminded taxpayer would object to. It is the last one among the expenditures of administration department. An item of \$7,451.96 is a little too large to be classed as miscellaneous. The taxpayers are entitled to know within a few hundred dollars of what is done with their money.

If the issue were solely between "boodle politics" and "business science" the latter would certainly be preferable, but that is not stating the issue fairly. All the good suggestions about publicity, etc., made by your correspondent and others, apply with equal force to our present system. His argument of the water pipe will not hold water any better than the pipe he mentions would. Under the circumstances, as he states them a prudent man if he were as badly in debt as the city is, would probably shut off the water, and get his supply from his nearest neighbor for a while. At any rate, he would not rip out the entire line of pipe on his property but would only remove a small piece with the hole where it had been leaking. That would be much nearer true economy than any other plan would be. Much more might be said along the same lines but I fear I am encroaching too much on your space and on the time and patience of the public. In a few days I may have some more to say on these and kindred subjects.

J. H. BLUMENSTIEN

JAPAN AND PORTLAND WINNERS.

Freshman Girl and Boy Take Honors at Inter-Class Oratory Meet.

Oregon Agricultural College Corvallis, Ore., Corvallis, Ore. March 3.—Freshman from Japan and Portland carried off the honors of the Inter-Class Oratorical and Declamation contest at the Oregon Agricultural college. Miss Kareen Hansen of Portland capturing the audience with a fine presentation of "Claudius and Cynthia," in the girls' contest, and Nao Uyel of Oyodo, Japan, gave by far the best original oration his subject being "The Spirit of the New Japan."

R. R. Davis, Hillsboro, won second place in the oratorical contest for the juniors with a eulogy on Lincoln. Arthur R. Chase, Corvallis gave the seniors third place with the most original oration, on "The Farmer of the Future."

Anne Rutledge, Evanston, Ill. was a close second to Miss Hansen giving the sophomores second in the declamation with "How the LaRue Stakes were Lost." Hazel Holt, Boston Mass., a junior, took third place with Kipling's "East and West."

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CHANGE FOR TENNIS CRAFT

No Rule to Restrain From Commercializing Game.

TERM AMATEUR IS PUZZLING

Efforts to Define Professional Led to Wrangling at Recent Meeting of National Lawn Tennis Association, but No Decision.

Lawn tennis players who are "wise" and have a leaning to commercialism can make the most of their opportunities during the coming season and play in the tournaments where transportation and free board are offered, whether it be by a club or a hotel. It is likely to be the last year for this sort of petty craft. Under the amateur definition which the United States National Lawn Tennis association placed on its records at the annual meeting in New York recently the only thing that operates against a player being an amateur seems to be employment by a merchant of sporting goods in the lawn tennis department.

By a strange freak of legislation the delegates voted a new constitution and bylaws to supersede the old, which practically were identical with the laws under which the association has been directed for more than twenty years with one unimportant exception. The great opportunity of enacting effective laws to govern the game, which is becoming more widespread every year and attracting the youth of the country, was completely lost in the mists of argumental fog and uncertain verbiage.

The clause in the section defining an amateur which would have prevented the stigma of accepting valuable gratuities if not money would surely have been passed had slight changes been made in its wording which would have made it as effective in operation. It appeared that the majority of the delegates were in favor of legislation of this sort.

But they split on the question of legitimate clubs entertaining players. Karl Behr was quick to see this and endeavored to have the objectionable features amended. Lyle E. Mahan and other members of the revision committee were given time to submit a change. The result of their labors was so hopelessly involved that Behr's efforts and the objectionable clause, which was the crux of the whole structure, tumbled together. This clause, which was stricken from the amateur definition, read as follows:

"Has never accepted from any hotel, club or similar organization at which or in connection with which a tennis tournament is being held, transportation or money for transportation or board, lodging or other general living accommodations or money to cover any or all of the same, or any secret or exceptional reduced rate in connection with such tournament. The interpretation of this rule shall not prevent a player from taking advantage of a reasonable special rate from such hotel, club or similar organization if such special rate is properly announced and is open to any one entering the tennis tournament."

Two remarkably strong points developed in favor of such a clause as the above being incorporated in the American rules. England has recently enacted such a law, and the International federation, which meets in Paris next month, contemplates similar action in its efforts to standardize all of the laws and rules for all nations.

Henry W. Stocum, the chairman of the revision committee, struck a true note when he stated that an American amateur might find himself debarred from foreign tournaments because of the laxity of the American rule in this respect, and after the meeting it was remarked that a question of this character had once been diplomatically insinuated by England as to a player on the United States Davis cup team, who probably because of this, did not take part in the matches.

The one thing that impressed those who attended the thirty-second annual meeting of the association was the fact that the voting of proxies no longer falls into the hands of one or two prominent officials. It was much split up, the western and southern clubs standing fairly well together in voting upon most matters, with a sprinkling of the smaller eastern clubs giving them the balance of power.

On several occasions the line of demarcation appeared almost fractional, the west voting against the old guard of the east. It is likely that this peculiar feature will rather increase than diminish, as the clubs throughout the country are becoming interested and educated in the government of the game.

In connection with the awarding of the national all comers' championship to Newport again Bob Wrenn repeated the fact that the governors of the ca-

sino are aware that the tournament must be given a splendid setting in order to continue it there. The grounds have been scientifically surveyed, so that a greater number of courts will be available next August.

Senators Trying Out Collegian. Infielder Zach Erhard, a student at Columbia university, New York, and a native of that city, has been signed for a trial by the Washington club.

JONES NEW YALE COACH.

Old Eli Player is Selected to Head Football Staff This Season. Howard Jones, Yale 1908, Sheffield, was recently appointed head coach of the Yale football team for the year 1913. Jones will take up his duties at the spring practice and will have complete charge of the team in the playing season next fall. The appointment is for one year. Jones' home is in South Orange, N. J. He coached at Syracuse university the year of his graduation from Yale, spent the fall of 1909 with the Yale team, coached Ohio State in 1910 and since then has been each fall with the team of his alma mater at New Haven.

Southee Now a Rhodes Scholar. E. A. Southee of Sydney, who has a brilliant record as an all round jumper, will be one of the Australian Rhodes scholars to enter Oxford university.

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