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THE FORUM

SIGNATURES WRONG.

Two Men on Yesterday's Communication Withdraw Names.

La Grande, Dec. 10.—To the Editor—We desire to state to the public through your paper that we the undersigned placed our signatures to the article appearing in last night's Observer relative to the proposed change of charter at the solicitation of Mr. L. P. Day, without having read the same, and that we do not agree with the article nor do we endorse its contents.

Yours respectfully,
JAMES A. BUGG,
FRANK HARRIS.

MR. OLIVER ANSWERS AGAIN.

La Grande, Oregon, Dec. 9.—(To the Editor)—In yesterday's Observer, Mr. "Taxpayer" makes another effort to draw the attention of the voters away from the abominable provisions of the proposed charter, and makes a personal attack upon me, and by insinuations and innuendo tries to create the inference that litigation against the City has been the chief source of income with me. In answer to his questions, I will say that in all my long practice as an attorney at law I have had only three or four cases in which the City of La Grande was a party, and never a case against any other city. And in the La Grande cases, the city as a cor-

poration was only once the real defendant; the other cases, the O. R. & N and a corrupt construction company were the real defendants, the city being simply a necessary party under the law. It has always been my practice to serve as best I could the best public interests of the city where I make my home, and to vindicate the cause of my clients to the utmost of my ability especially when I know that their cause is just. I am one of the heavy taxpayers of La Grande, and have never been a tax-eater, and have contributed towards all public enterprises to the fullest extent of my ability. I challenge "Taxpayer" to say truthfully that much about himself.

When the fight was red hot in this city as to whether the unholy combination between the city council and the Warren Construction Co., would be permitted to bankrupt the town and many of its citizens, I took up the cause of the citizens and made the best fight I could for them. I succeeded in getting Hill & Co. of Spokane, one of the strongest and most reliable paving companies in the Northwest to submit a proposition to lay on Fourth street and other streets in La Grande a pavement exactly like that on Depot street and Adams avenue, for \$1.25 a yard, being a little over one-half of what the Warren Construction Co. was getting, but the City Council was so tied up with the Warren Construction Co., that it would not permit any other company to do business with the town. Mr. McMurry, an honest citizen of the town, tried to get the contract to make the grade and fill on O street west of Fourth at 40 cents per cu. yd. His proposition was turned down, and the contract let to the Warren Construction Co., at \$1.50 per cu. yd. I joined with numerous citizens of the town in protesting against such outrageous practice, which was nothing less than robbery of the citizens for the benefit of a foreign corporation, and I confess that I have not yet been able to understand the motives and influences that kept this company so solid with the City for so long a time.

I know nothing about who "Taxpayer" may be as he keeps his iden-

ity concealed, but since he has seen fit to sidestep the issue and appeal to prejudice, I will ask him a few questions:

What, if any, taxes do you pay in the City of La Grande? Were you any public officer of the City of La Grande during the time that the Warren Construction Co., had its hands in the public treasury? If you were a public servant of La Grande and of the Warren Construction Co., which corporation paid the most money for services rendered? If you were ever in the employ either of the city or of the Warren Construction Co., are you still on the pay roll of either corporation? If you are a property owner and live on an improved street, did you pay the Warren Construction Co. for such improvement, or did that company give it as a gratuity, or did you buy the property from some person who was forced to sell because of his inability to meet the enforced charge of the Warren Construction Co.? Do you know that the Circuit Court of Union County, on June 10, 1914, decided that the whole procedure for the improvement of upper Fourth street was null and void, and that such decision was never appealed from or set aside? Do you know that there is a case now pending in the Supreme Court challenging the validity of the pretended contract made with the Warren Construction Co., and if such contract is held void, that the Warren Construction Co., can never collect either from the City or abutting owners, unless the City voluntarily assumes such obligation through a charter provision? What special interest have you in trying to have the people of La Grande adopt this new charter with its vicious provisions before the Supreme Court hands down its decision in that case? If any change is desirable in the present city charter, would it not be the part of wisdom for the voters to wait until after the Supreme Court hands down its decision and see what, if any, changes in the present charter would be advisable? Is it wise for the voters to vote "yes" on a document containing 37 pages without being able to understand any of the three dozen changes

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made from the present charter? If you were entirely disinterested in this matter, would you not insist on having the proposed amendments submitted separately so that you could vote yes on the good provisions and vote no on the vicious ones, and not favor any "nigger in the wood-pile"?

Respectfully,
TURNER OLIVER.

Gresham Elects Councilmen.
Gresham, Or., Dec. 8.—At the city election yesterday three councilmen were elected—Ray H. Todd, George F. Haney and William Thorn. These represented the regular city ticket named by authority of the charter. Another ticket, with four names secured by petition, was defeated. Two hundred and fifty-five votes were cast.

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