

FACTS ABOUT NESMITH

Reasons Why Proposed New County Should Be Created on November 8 Next.

Some one has truly said: "The hope of the future greatest development in the inland empire lies in the evolution of the small farm and to the intense methods of agriculture." The tendency is strikingly in this direction throughout the Pacific Northwest. There is a gradual and continuous drift from other occupations to agriculture and horticulture, and the demand for smaller tracts of land suitable for family support and a profit is increasing, which means that ere another decade, through division of large realty holdings, development will be more rapid than during the past quarter century. The large counties, many of which contain more area than several of the states of the Union, will likewise be divided as population increases, the creation of which will have a further tendency to build up and develop the country, as is shown by the creation of Sherman, Morrow, Gilliam, Wheeler and Hood River counties. One glance at the map of Oregon will convince the most skeptical that the smaller counties develop the country. The most densely populated and most extensive development of our resources are to be found in the group of comparatively small counties, while the larger ones are sparsely settled and the resources almost wholly undeveloped. It is also true that an examination of the records will show the smaller counties to be maintained on a lesser tax than the larger ones, while it is a fact susceptible of the fullest demonstration that they have more mileage of and better highways, where conditions for working them are the same. Time was when Wasco embraced more than two-thirds of the entire state of Oregon, but increased population and a consequent desire for self government, in which the American people have been taught to believe, and which eliminates "taxation without representation," have now changed all this, for the betterment of individual conditions and the material advancement of the whole state. Local self government is the deal form of government, because the people of any locality are better qualified to administer their own affairs than persons who have no special interest in them or their affairs. This the framers of the Oregon Constitution contemplated when they wisely provided that any section of the State having an area of 400 square miles and a population of 1200 might become self governing through the creation of a new county.

Lines Follow Natural Divides.

The people of Southern Lane and Northern Douglas counties, numbering more than eight thousand, believing they are qualified to administer their own affairs more advantageously and more economically than comparative strangers to the respective communities, have prepared a bill under the local initiative and referendum asking that a new county to be known as Nesmith be created from portions of the counties mentioned, the lines being drawn in strict adherence to the topography and natural water-sheds of the territory, leaving vast resources and large population to both the older counties, and in each particular case, taking less value than area, the chief desire in this respect being to benefit the citizens of the proposed new county without working injury to either of the old counties or any resident thereof.

Would Convenience Many.

That the citizens of the proposed county of Nesmith are practically unanimously favorable to the measure is shown in the fact that 92 per cent signed a petition praying for its creation. And to further show the sentiment of the people of the state and their endeavor to build up a greater Oregon, it is only necessary to say that over 12,000 signed the petition for the initiation of this bill—which will be voted on November 8, 1910—being about thirty per cent more than the required number, which signatures were either voluntary or secured without an extraordinary amount of solicitation. The lines follow the natural divides as near as practicable, and to the center of population—Cottage Grove, the proposed temporary county seat—in the aggregate is "an easy down hill pull," this making it convenient for a large per cent of the rural citizens within the territory to transact business at that point, as is now their custom. There

is but one small mountain range to cross, and this by a low pass.

Erroneous Impressions.

Concerning the boundary lines of the proposed county of Nesmith there has been misrepresentation on the part of the opposition—meaning Lane and Douglas—and whether designedly or otherwise these misstatements have, to say the least, created a wrong impression in the minds of the uninformed. One erroneous statement is that, the north line is within four and one-half miles of Eugene, whereas it is 62 miles on an air line to the Lane county court house and eleven miles by railroad or wagon road, or exactly half way between Cottage Grove and Eugene by either mode of transportation. The dividing line is the center of an untravelable swale fully two miles in width and approximately seven miles in length, and wholly uninhabited. Between this swale and Eugene is a range of mountains.

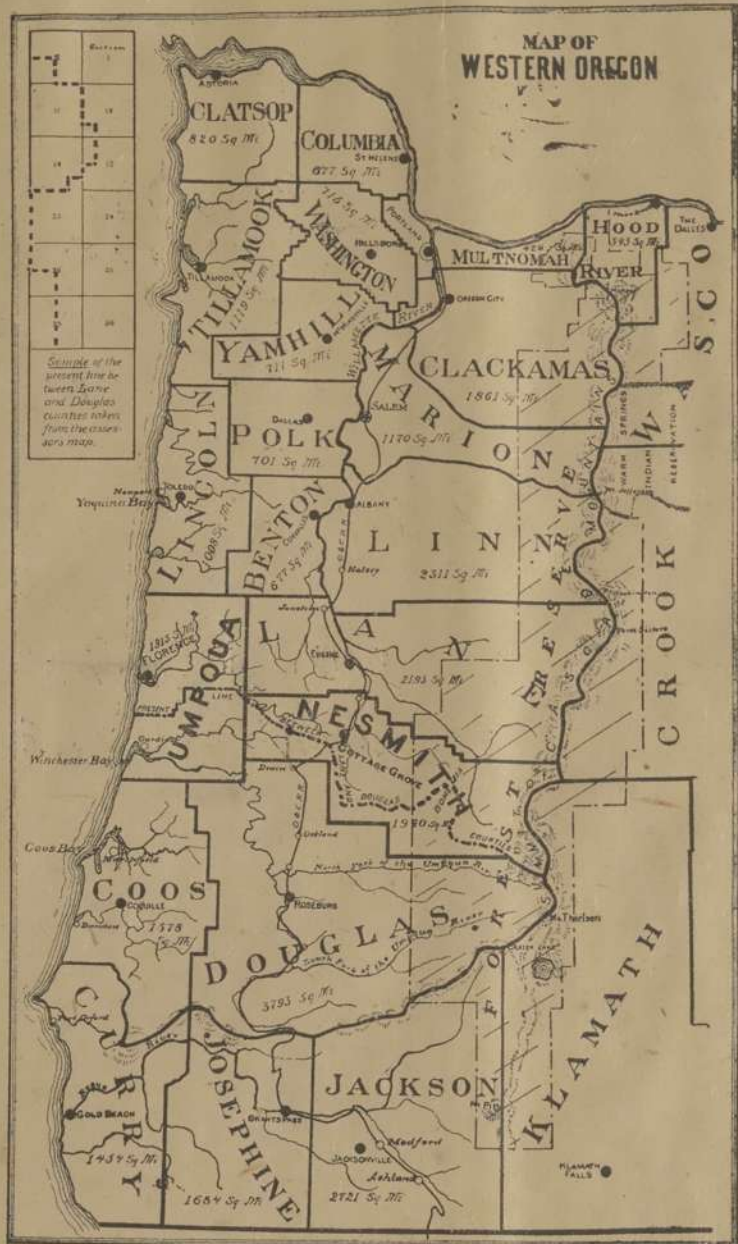
Another deviation from the facts is the assertion that the south line is in the middle of the North Umpqua river, and that a considerable portion of the Umpqua valley, east of Roseburg, is included in the proposed new county. The facts are, as shown by the map of proposed Nesmith county, and also by the bill, the south boundary line is not within two miles of the North Umpqua river, leaving the inhabitable portion of the valley to the county of Douglas. And at no place does the line touch any point east of Roseburg. The nearest point to the city of Roseburg from the new county would be about 20 miles on an air line, and the territory sought is naturally tributary to the center of population within the proposed new county.

As Regards Timber Taken.

With reference to the shape of the proposed new county, as well as the shape of the area remaining to the existing counties, let it be said that the streams, valleys and ridges all have an east and west course or a southeast and northwest course; that all main lines of travel must follow these valleys, which lead to the main towns as at present existing; that there would be no justification of any design that would violate this cardinal principle which governs the building up of community interests. The creation of Nesmith county would take only 468 square miles of territory from Douglas county, of which 209 is in the National Forest Reserve, and from which Douglas receives no revenue except from 61 square miles of private holdings. It is contended by some of the opponents to the measure that the proposed county has taken valuable timber into its boundaries for the sole purpose of deriving revenue when the government shall have disposed of the ripe product, but it is a well known fact that every county in which a National Forest Reserve is situated gets its proportion of the 25 per cent awarded by the government, from sales made in that reserve, regardless of the location of the timber thus sold. To make this clear to the reader let it be stated that Nesmith county would take about 20 per cent of the joint timber area of Lane and Douglas counties within the reserve, and therefore the new county would receive 20 per cent of the money that would otherwise go to the two old counties. Crook and Klamath, or any other county whose area extends into the National Forest Reserve, also participates in the revenue derived from sales. And this condition obtains no matter in which of the counties the sales are made.

Distances to County Seats.

The Bohemia Mining district is situated in both Lane and Douglas counties, thirty-five miles from Cottage Grove, the logical base of the proposed Nesmith county. There are several hundred inhabitants in this district, and the number is constantly increasing. Naturally there is more or less litigation here, as in all districts of its character. Roseburg, the county seat of Douglas county, is 55 miles from Cottage Grove, and Eugene is 22 miles in the opposite direction. Litigants, witnesses, jurors and other people having business at either of the county seats named, of necessity have to travel to Cottage Grove, and go by train to their respective destinations, entailing ad-



Map of Western Oregon, Showing Proposed Nesmith

EXPLANATORY.—The dotted line from the northwest to the southeast corners of Nesmith county shows the present boundary line between Lane and Douglas. The diagonal lines westward from the summit of the Cascades indicate the National Forest Reserve in the several counties from Hood River to Klamath and Jackson. The so-called "steps" in the north boundary line of Nesmith are for the purpose of following section and township lines on mountain ranges, rather than following the crooks and turns of the mountains. The "jog" to the north, south of Eugene and north of Creswell, was made by petition from the residents and property owners of the territory so taken, praying for admission to proposed the new county of Nesmith.

ditional expense, not to mention the consumption of time. For every person going from this district to Roseburg on court business, figuring at ten cents per mile each way, costs \$11.00 more than it would to transact the same business at the proposed county seat of the proposed Nesmith county, while to go to Eugene on a like errand costs \$4.40 more. These people are fifty-seven miles from Eugene and ninety miles from Roseburg, whereas the distance to Cottage Grove is but thirty-five miles. Think of it! In order for the inhabitants of the Bohemia district to reach Roseburg it is necessary to travel a distance equal to one-third the distance across the state, and to get to Eugene a distance equal to one-fifth the distance across the state.

Vastness of Lane and Douglas.

The county of Lane is situated at the head of the Willamette valley and has an area of 4,380 square miles, equal to about 2,800,000 acres. Douglas county, bounded on the north by the low crest of the Calapoia mountains, and on the south by spurs of the Canyon mountains, has 4,861 square miles, or approximately 3,000,000 acres. From these figures the reader will readily comprehend the vastness of these counties, either of which nearly equals the area of the state of Connecticut, and are larger than several states of the union. The Willamette valley, an empire in itself, which some day will be the home of two millions of prosperous, happy and contented people, and the name and fame of which garden spot is known throughout the civilized world—150 miles in length and having an average width of 60 miles—contains about 5,000,000 acres, or approximately two-fifths more than either Lane or Douglas counties.

Larger Than 10 Other Counties.

Their joint area, it will be observed from figures given above, is 9,241 square miles, while the joint area of ten other counties in Oregon is but 8,746. Clatsop, with 820 square miles; Columbia, with 677; Washington, with 715; Yamhill, with 711; Polk, with 701; Tillamook, with 1,119; Marion, with 1,170; Clackamas, with 1,861; Multnomah, with 429; and Hood River, with 543, combined lack 455 square miles of having an area equal to that of Lane and Douglas jointly. And yet the people find it to their interest to maintain these ten separate county organizations.

Ponder these facts, for facts they are, and render your decision at the polls on November 8, 1910.

Capable of Maintaining County.

The country within Nesmith county is capable of maintaining an organization

PEOPLE MUST DECIDE

Legislature Has No Authority to Create Counties or Change Existing Lines.

The opposition to the creation of counties having raised the contention that such measures "should be left to the legislature," it may be interesting to the voters of the state to know that, according to the evidence herewith produced, it would be unconstitutional for that body to create a county or change the boundaries of any existing county.

Senator Bingham of this district, after an exhaustive investigation of the subject, and after having submitted the case of proposed Nesmith county to one of the most distinguished jurists of the state, writes as follows:

"Cottage Grove will put into circulation a petition for creation of Nesmith county. The county will be formed of portions of Lane and Douglas—the larger part from Lane. It will be easy to get names enough for the initiative petition, and the electors of the state will probably grant it. THE OREGONIAN WILL SUPPORT IT, as far as it can."

State of Oregon, Senate Chamber, Salem, Jan. 20, 1909.—Dr. Aubre, Cottage Grove, Oregon; My dear Sir: Replying to your esteemed favor of the 18th inst., relative to the proposed creation of a new county out of portions of Lane and Douglas counties, I have the honor to say that from the first time that my attention was called to this matter up to the present hour I have always entertained very grave doubts as to the Constitutionality of the proposition. This doubt was, and is, based upon the decision of the Supreme Court in the "Port of Columbia case." Not satisfied with my own conceptions in the premises, however, I have called to my assistance the very best legal talent in the State of Oregon and am not at all surprised to learn from the lips of such distinguished Jurists as Supreme Justice Bean, and other learned attorneys, that the Constitution of the State of Oregon prohibits the legislature from changing county lines or creating new counties.

May I add that I have endeavored to make these investigations, and to cause others to be made, in that spirit of fairness which should actuate any man who has such a large army of old-time friends as I have in Cottage Grove and vicinity. Am always glad to hear from you. Very respectfully,

I. H. BINGHAM.

There are only two ways in which a county may be created, namely, by the legislature or the people, and, according to this authority, the legislature has no power to act in the premises, and hence it remains with the people to decide all questions pertaining to county division, or the changing of county lines.

In this particular case, the bill to create Nesmith county has been before the legislature, and was there defeated, not because the measure lacked merit, but because the legislature was influenced against it by politicians and lobbyists from purely selfish motives. If the legislature cannot, or will not, pass meritorious measures such as the Nesmith county proposition is conceded to be, who but the people shall decide them?

FACTS FROM THE RECORDS

How Creation of Nesmith County Would Affect Lane and Douglas Counties.

LANE COUNTY.		DOUGLAS COUNTY.	
Total area of Lane county, square miles.....	4,380	Total area of Douglas county, square miles.....	4,861
Area taken by Nesmith, square miles.....	1,472	Area taken by Nesmith, square miles.....	468
Leaving Lane, in square miles.....	2,908	Leaving in Douglas, square miles.....	4,393
Per cent of area taken by Nesmith.....	33.6	Per cent of area taken by Nesmith.....	9.3
The population, total of Lane.....	41,956	Population total of Douglas.....	22,212
Taken by Nesmith.....	7,680	Taken by Nesmith.....	976
Leaving in Lane.....	34,276	Leaving in Douglas.....	21,236
Per cent of population taken.....	18.3	Per cent of population taken.....	4.4
Total assessed valuation of Lane.....	\$22,006,920	Total assessed valuation of Douglas.....	\$27,275,740
Taken by Nesmith.....	4,004,273	Taken by Nesmith.....	1,305,302
Leaving in Lane.....	18,002,647	Leaving in Douglas.....	25,970,438
Per cent of value taken.....	.22 plus	Per cent of value taken.....	4.7
Present average assessed value in Lane county, square miles.....	\$ 5,024	Present average assessed value in Douglas, square miles.....	5,611
The average assessed value area taken.....	2,720	Average assessed value area taken.....	2,790
The average assessed value of area left in Lane.....	6,190	Average assessed value area left.....	5,910
The average value per capita in Lane county is.....	524	Average value per capita in Douglas.....	1,228
Average value per capita taken.....	521	Average value per capita taken.....	1,337
Average value per capita left.....	525	Average value per capita left.....	1,222
Number of miles of county road taken from Lane county.....	360	Number of miles of county road taken from Douglas county.....	34

New Counties Develop the State.

The constitution of the state especially provides for the creation of new counties by the direct vote of the people and not otherwise. There are but two ways of creating counties, i. e., by the legislature or by a vote of the people, and if left to the former, which is generally dominated by selfish policies of county seat politicians, history would undoubtedly repeat itself, and Oregon would get a new county about every 20 years. The creation of new counties builds up new cities, new industries, new centers of wealth, develops and

enhances the value of realty within that territory, increased population, and hence must prove an important factor in the making of a Greater Oregon.

Lane and Douglas Miners Urge County

Miners and operators in the Bohemia district met at Cottage Grove this week and passed strong resolutions in favor of the creation of Nesmith county. The proposition is backed almost solidly by the inhabitants to be included in the county, Eugene and Roseburg to the contrary notwithstanding. — Cottage Grove Sentinel.