

COOS BAY TIMES

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WEEKLY.

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OFFICIAL PAPER OF COOS COUNTY.

THE NEW CHARTER

THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE appointed by the mayor to prepare an amended charter for the city of Marshfield has completed its labors and the result of its deliberations is now in the hands of the city council. The task was an arduous one. That it was carefully conscientiously and capably performed goes without saying. With the committee it was a combined labor of love and duty. The committee was one that was thoroughly representative of the city. In many municipalities such a task is delegated to high priced attorneys and when so performed the work accomplished by this committee represents thousands of dollars. The committee is entitled to and will receive the thanks of the entire city.

The editor of The Times has not examined the new charter, but the care and diligence of the committee is evidenced in the letter accompanying the draft of the charter, and published in The Times last evening. Later the entire charter will doubtless be printed in full and submitted to the electorate of the city for consideration, discussion and approval.

The institution of a board of public works is a most excellent provision. It is something that while superficial in a village government is necessary in a city and its importance increases with the growth of the municipality.

The provisions of the chapter on finance, revenue and taxation are merely suggested in the letter and this feature is too important to be passed or an opinion formulated without reading the entire chapter.

In its letter the committee refers in detail to the chapter on public service corporations. This is one of the most important features of the new charter and that it was so regarded by the committee is evident in its letter. The Times, however, cannot agree with the committee in its conclusions that the franchises of public service corporations should not be submitted to the people of the city for approval by popular vote.

The streets are not the property of the owners of the lots abutting thereon but belong to the people of the entire city. This being true, and it cannot be successfully denied, the people of the entire city should have a voice in their disposition. The committee says in its letter submitting the charter that "while there was much in favor of submitting such matters to popular vote" rather than leave it in the hands of the council and the abutting property owners, "yet taking everything into consideration, which presented itself to us, we concluded that property owners are vitally interested in the progress and welfare of the city and no meritorious franchise would likely be lost through any unreasonable conduct on their part." This statement takes the rather unusual position of presuming that the property owners are likely to act against their selfish interests and instincts. Selfishness requires no protection. It is the franchise that seeks unfair advantage from which the people require protection. A few individual property owners may be benefited by a franchise that levies tribute on the whole community. Franchises for public utilities of all kinds and character are the property of the whole people and as such the whole people should be permitted to have their say as to the terms on which they are granted.

The committee sagely states in its letter that it "did not deem it wise to commit the city through its charter to a restrictive sphere of conduct and thereby lose the benefit of more advanced and practical ideas of municipal franchises." This is a golden truth and practical position. The tendency of modern thought is, however, more toward restricting the power of legislative bodies and less toward restricting the power of the people. This provision in the charter restricts the power of the people and places the franchise where it is now and where it is in all old time charters in the hands of the city council and a limited number of interested property owners.

It is gratuitous to say that the final power already exists in the people by the exercise of their suffrage in the selection of the members of the city council. Modern conception of the powers delegated to the representatives of the people is that these representatives are there to do at all times the will of the people and subject at all times to the approval of the people. It is evident from the committee's letter that this matter was considered but the preponderance of judgment was for following precedent. Theoretically the position of the committee that "it remains with the council to see that all franchises, grants and privileges contain the proper provisions for the safeguarding of the public's interests and reposing special confidence in the good judgment of the persons who fill the offices of mayor and councilmen to meet individual request for franchises upon their particular merits" sounds good, but it is the rock on which American city government has been almost wrecked. It has caused a trail of graft from New York to San Francisco. With such a nearby and recent example of the futility of reposing absolute confidence in city councils as the San Francisco experience, Marshfield should profit. Franchises must go to the people for approval. Any other course is flying in the face of an almost universal experience of failure, fraud and shame.

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SEND GRIMES TO MEETING

Selected By Chamber of Commerce to Attend Convention at Burns.

At a meeting of the executive committee of the Marshfield Chamber of Commerce this morning, the question of having a representative at the convention of the Oregon-Idaho Development congress in Burns July 1 and 2, was taken up. Dr. J. T. McCormac was first elected but had to decline. Mayor E. E. Straw was next selected but he said that his business would not permit his absence at that time. Finally it was left with President McCormac to select a representative. He promptly chose Wm. Grimes who will leave here about June 25th to attend the meeting. The August convention of the organization is to be held on Coos Bay.

At this morning's meeting, Dr. E. Mings, chairman of the dredge committee, submitted a detailed report of the operations of the dredge Oregon while operating on private funds. There is a balance of about \$5,000 in the fund of which \$1,500 will go to the Chamber of Commerce to defray special expenses of that organization in connection with the dredge. The balance will be refunded to the subscribers to the original fund. These subscribers who had filling done by the dredge will be charged with the same at the regular rate and this amount will be deducted from the refund to them. Generally the subscribers will receive about twenty per cent refund as soon as all the money due for filling can be collected.

TO COLLECT INCOME TAX

Amendment to Constitution Proposed By Senator Brown of Nebraska.

(By Associated Press.)
WASHINGTON, D. C., June 17.—"That congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes upon income without apportionment among the several states according to population," is the subject of an amendment to the constitution proposed in a resolution submitted to the Senate today by Senator Brown. The resolution provides for the submission of the question to the legislature of the several states for their approval as suggested by President Taft. It will be referred to the Committee on Finance.

NOTICE TO BOAT MEN.

A meeting of the Coos Bay Motor Boat Club will be held at the offices of Drs. Gale and Bartle in North Bend, Friday evening, June 18, to arrange for a regatta to be held by the club near Marshfield as a feature of the Fourth of July celebration. Marshfield boat men are especially urged to attend and all motor boatmen on the Bay and inlets are also invited to be present.
FRANK WOOD, President.

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NOTICE TO POULTRY OWNERS.

Owners of chickens and other poultry are hereby notified that fowls must not be allowed to run at large within the city limits of Marshfield.

Further violation of the ordinance prohibiting this will be promptly punished, the offender being liable to fine or imprisonment or both.

Dated Marshfield, Ore., June 16, 1909.
J. W. CARTER,
City Marshal.

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