

UPHOLD THE COMMISSION

(Continued from page 1.)

pose of delaying or thwarting the objects for which the Port Commission was organized. However, he said that those favoring amending the port law had advanced the claim that the Port Commission had never announced a definite policy and had changed their attitude on important propositions, especially as to whether a dredge should be hired or built. He said he personally understood that at first the Commission was unable to find a dredge that could be hired and were forced to figure on building their own, but that recently they had found that one could be hired. However, he wanted to hear members of the Port Commission discuss this.

W. P. Evans, president of the Port Commission, spoke next. He said that personally it did not matter to him whether the people here spent \$10 or \$10,000,000, only that when he was named as one of the men to do things for the port, it was hard to find one's hands tied and then later be criticised because they were not doing anything. He said that the policy and plans of the Commission had been set forth in the annual message or report of the Commission and reviewed some of it. So far as the dredge was concerned, he said at first they could not find any one to take the contract and then began figuring on building a dredge and were about to go ahead when the litigation that tied their hands was started. He said the question for Coos Bay to decide was whether it was going to be an important seaport or merely be a little harbor. If it is going to be a seaport, he said it would take money to do it. To raise the money, he said it was necessary to bond and the amount was to be determined by the improvement to be made, either \$100,000, \$200,000 or \$250,000. Here he was interrupted by someone calling out that \$500,000 was the right amount. Furthermore, he said that if Coos Bay

can't find five men who can be trusted with the work, then Coos Bay had better quit business. At any rate, he said he didn't want to see it slaughtered by doing the work in small jobs—piecemeal. He said he believed the sentiment was here to go ahead on the right basis, but it was sometimes necessary to show it more than others.

Dr. Mingus said the only question was as to the extent of the harbor that was going to be made here, the money question being entirely secondary and that it would take care of itself when the people agreed on the extent of the work they wanted to do. Relative to the dredge, he said Capt. Polhemus of the United States Engineers' office had advised him to have it done for the present by contract unless they had a very large amount of work. He said that the reason of this was that in operating a dredge, a certain amount of experience was necessary and this was generally costly.

Henry Sengstacken spoke briefly concerning the dredge matter and said that at first they could not secure anyone to do contract dredging at a reasonable rate and then they had figured on building their own dredge. Later, the Standard Dredging Company had offered to do the work for twelve cents or less per yard if given a \$150,000 worth of work or so. He said this would cut a fine channel from the bar to the Smith mill and that it would be quite a saving when it was considered that the Government paid 17½ cents per yard for its dredging here and that the company would take the bonds at par in payment for the work.

J. W. Bennett Talks.

J. W. Bennett was next called for and said that he wanted to be plainly understood that he was in favor of progress on Coos Bay. He said he had always favored building a fine harbor here and always would. He said that some of the things he did professionally in the interests of his clients he did not want to be charged up against him personally and considered to be his own views. However, in regard to the Chandler resolution he said he didn't think it was right for the 120 people assembled to try and dictate to the 2,600 voters in the port district. He said he had been one of the first three harbor commissioners named at a "mass meeting" attended by himself, Dr.

Tower and Eugene O'Connell years ago and of which a glowing account was given in the papers. He said that anybody on Coos Bay who has a grain of sense will help make a harbor here. However, he said that if the Commissioners here had followed the policy of the Port of Portland, they would not have encountered, probably, the difficulties they had. Furthermore, he said that the petition for the amendment was not a delay in the harbor work, regardless of who said that it was, because the courts would not decide the other cases meanwhile. Besides this, he said the action of the mass meeting would not affect the proposed amendment because it would be submitted at the November election—that it already had more than sufficient signers for this purpose. Then he said the people can decide about it. He said the amendment did not limit the expenditure to \$50,000, but merely required the commission to submit their project to the people and let them decide. If the project required \$100,000, \$200,000 or a larger amount and was right, he said the people would vote it. He said he considered the meeting premature—too long before the election to decide the matter. He said it didn't mean that he didn't trust the Commissioners, because he did—they were all friends of his—but that the future might bring Commissioners who were not as good. Here he told a story reflecting on some early history of one of the present Commissioners. Next he took up the litigation and denied that he had in any way delayed the suit. He said that the County Clerk had delayed the preparing of the transcript and that as soon as this was secured, the appeal had been made, five days before the legal time. He said it couldn't get on the docket until September and the date of final decision was indefinite.

Relative to the later suit, he said the Commissioners had started it by agreement and filed all the papers the same day, involving a half acre belonging to Pat Hennessey. He said that the hundreds of others of tide land owners who had much more at stake had not been given a chance and that he had intervened in behalf of Jane Chadwick. He said this case could not be decided before November.

Then he again took up the initiative matter and took a rap at the newspaper reports concerning some things, saying that they were not always accurate. He said he had personally started it because he thought the present law gives too much power to the Commission and that his amendment would bring this power home to the people.

Improving Inlets.

He also questioned the policy of the Port Commission concerning the improvement of the inlets. He said it wasn't right to take the general tax money of the port for improving some particular inlet. He said the improving of each inlet should be done by the abutting property owners at their own expense. He did not touch upon what benefit the farmers and ranchers on the inlets would receive from the general port tax they pay if none of it is to be used on the inlets.

He also criticised the Port Commission for transacting their business in secret sessions.

In closing he said again that the initiative petition would not delay the harbor work because they could expend up to \$50,000 meanwhile, and that if the amendment carried, a proper request for bonds would be voted by the people. He said the future would thank the men responsible for such a debt restriction. Furthermore, he said that even the constitution of the United States had been amended and consequently he could see no harm in amending the charter of the Port of Coos Bay. He urged every one to forget their personal feeling and work together for the advancement of Coos Bay.

McKnight Raps Bennett.

C. F. McKnight spoke in favor of the Chandler resolution and said that he could not agree with Mr. Bennett regarding the delays. He said that it was plain that the proposed Bennett amendment was unnecessary, would delay projects and was expensive. He said that the initiative and referendum and recall now furnished the ends sought by the amendments without entailing the delays of the latter. He said that everytime a special election for a bond issue was called it was necessary to give ninety days notice and then the district would be at the expense of the election. He said he was glad to see J. W. Bennett shouldering the matter himself this time instead of putting it on to Mr. Smith or somebody else. Regarding the Hennessey suit, he said Mr. Bennett had misstated the facts. He said that he and Mr. Peck had personally requested Mr. Bennett and all owners of tide lands to come into the suit, the only string or condition attached being that they would agree to hasten it through as rapidly as possible.

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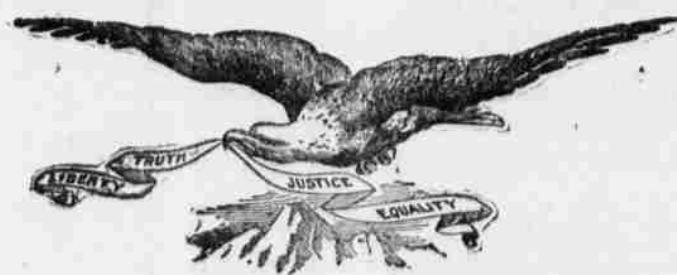
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sible. Furthermore, regarding the charge of undue haste, he said the suit had been under consideration for months before it was filed. In closing, he said it was wrong to tie the hands of the Commissioners and suspect them of wrong before they had committed it, especially when there was a remedy at hand.

Mills Gives Views.

C. J. Mills spoke briefly and said that he and the corporations he represented were opposed to the Bennett amendment. He said he regarded the Commissioners as a commission and not a bunch of clerks, and that consequently they must have certain powers. He said they should be supported until they do wrong. Furthermore, he thought it was not right to limit them to such a small amount as to be almost useless. He called attention to the fact that his corporations had been among the few to pay the port tax this year without protest because they wanted the harbor developed.

Then the resolution was put and carried and the meeting adjourned.

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