

DR. MINGUS ON PORT MATTER

Makes Stinging Reply to J. W. Bennett's Argument For Amendment.

Dr. E. Mingus, member of the Port of Coos Bay Commission, to-day made a stinging reply to J. W. Bennett's argument favoring the amendment to the port charter, appearing in The Times yesterday. Dr. Mingus' statement is as follows:

EDITOR OF THE TIMES: Mr. Bennett's wordy argument in support of his initiative petition to limit the power of the Port Commissioners to the creation of a Port indebtedness of only \$50,000 can be boiled down to the following propositions:

1.—The amendment as proposed will restrict the power of the Port Commissioners, who under the present law have too much authority, and will give the people a chance to vote upon the amount and manner of the expenditure of Port funds, and

2.—It will bring about a healthy discussion of Port affairs whenever an indebtedness in excess of \$50,000 shall be vetoed upon.

As to the first proposition, I believe that under the present state of the law, Mr. Bennett's amendment gives nothing to the people in addition to what they already have. If the Commission resolves to buy five cents worth of stationery, the people under the present law may refer such action and decide whether or not the Commission needs the stationery, and whether or not the price is exorbitant, and if a majority of the voters decide that the Port should not make the purchase then it will be prevented from doing so. And any similar expenditure, plan or policy of the Commission may be referred to the people for decision in the same manner that Mr. Bennett may submit his present petition.

And more than that, suppose that there is one or more of the Commissioners who is dishonest or unfit for the position, then the people of the Port may exercise the recall and the people of the Port may oust the erring or incompetent member. So we see that not only the acts of the Commission, but the Commission itself is subject to the will of the people.

So that in the last analysis, we see that the Commissioners in reality have no power or authority at all, but that the power of the Commissioners is truly the power of the people. The Commission may formulate plans of improvement and if the people approve those plans, they may be carried into execution without the delay and expense of an election, but if the people do not approve of such plans, they can halt the Commission by the referendum, direct its action by the initiative, and remove its members, if necessary, by the recall.

Does Mr. Bennett by his amendment give any greater power to the people? No, for they could exercise no greater power.

Does this amendment in any way lessen the power of the Commission? No; for the power of the Commission is now subject to the will of the people, and no further restriction is proposed by the amendment.

Mr. Bennett would have one believe that the Commission might sneak some proposition through in a chamber proceedings. But he has no reason to think so, for the record of the present Commission has been at all times open to the press and public. But Mr. Bennett knows himself that such a course would be impossible. He knows that bonds would have to be advertised, and he knows that bond buyers would purchase bonds only after investigating the matter in a most public manner. Further than this, bond buyers would not purchase bonds, to the issuance of which any star chamber proceeding attached. What motive could the Commissioners have for concealing their plans? It would be only to their advantage to advise with the people who elected them, for if they did not, and their plans turned out successfully, there would be only censure for them.

The office of Commissioner has no salary attached and the members of this and future Commissions give their services to the public, while Mr. Bennett for a fee has given his services to clients to the detriment of the public. Are the people going to follow the man who sells out to an enemy of their interests, or the men who are giving, without compensation, of their time and energy to an advancement of their interests?

It is true that the Commission has not consulted Mr. Bennett, and that may be the reason of his complaint, but the fact is the Commission has consulted those men who were work-

ing to upbuild rather than tear down the community.

Mr. Bennett's further argument that his amendment would bring about a healthy discussion of Port affairs, is sound and worthy of notice, and if this were the only way that such discussion could be had, it would be an argument of great weight. But such discussion can be brought up in different ways. Instead of bringing either a lawsuit or an election, let Mr. Bennett or any other person, appear before the Commission with a protest as to their doings, or let him open a discussion in the press. And if of sufficient importance, let a referendum petition be filed and the same kind and character of discussion will result as Mr. Bennett suggests.

If the proposed amendment is no advantage to the people, let us see if it can be of any harm, and in this regard I claim:

1.—The amendment fails to provide for the calling of a special election, and so also does the existing law; there is, therefore, no authority for calling a special Port election. The result will be, that if the proposed amendment carries, any project will be delayed until a vote could be taken thereon at the next regular election. Then, if the project carries at the regular election, time must elapse for the selling of bonds etc., so that the earliest that any project could be launched would be three years from last Spring. Do the people want to wait that long to see Port development instituted? At the present time ships are dragging over our harbor shoals and complaining of insufficient depth of water.

2.—If the amendment is adopted it will give additional opportunity for lawsuits as to the validity of elections. The less machinery there is in the issuance of bonds makes the cleaner record, and the bonds with the cleaner records bring the best price.

3.—People will honestly differ as to plans and policies of improvements, and every election will have a substantial minority of people who desire no improvement or improvement in a different way. This substantial minority will also scare away bond buyers. What is the use of washing our linen before the audience of bond buyers who expect to purchase the bonds and want only clean water.

4.—The submission of questions under the proposed amendment will be an additional expense upon the Port.

5.—The procedure contemplated by the amendment will open the door to action against the public interests. It will give Mr. Bennett or any other person the chance to hinder, oppose and delay harbor improvement, by a campaign of insincerity. We all know that there is no greater argument in politics than one touching the pocket book of the taxpayer, and how easy for a man masquerading as the people's friends, as the watch dog of their pocket books, to, in fact, fight out a personal grudge, or, under salary, protect the Southern Oregon Company's pocket book rather than the pocket books of the people.

6.—This amendment would tend to weaken the Commission as it would practically eliminate the responsibility of individual members. Human experience teaches us that men are ordinarily careful as they are to be held responsible. To get the best from your Commission, you should make them responsible and not allow them to shift that responsibility to the public.

7.—The adoption of this amendment will be an endorsement of a systematic personal fight made by J. W. Bennett against the Commission.

Let us review somewhat the course of Mr. Bennett and see what his action has been: We remember the personal fight of Mr. Bennett made against the appointment of the present Commissioners; when the Commissioners proposed to issue bonds, we heard no objections from Mr. Bennett, but found that he had knocked the proposition to the Portland banks, to whom naturally bond buyers would refer; next we find him soliciting parties to become plaintiffs in the Port suit; then the Port suit is brought without notice to the Commission, but the papers are served at the hour of opening bids; again we see Mr. Bennett's impersonal attitude manifested in a letter to the Commission in reply to one asking him to agree to an advancement of the Port case, in which he says:

"So far as I am concerned, I would say that it is my opinion that under the present management of the Commission, the public interest would suffer less by postponing the case, until it was possible to get rid of certain members of the Commission, etc." "On the contrary, the longer the present Commission is kept from doing what they would like to do the better it will be for the general public, etc."

Now the Port case is drawing to a close and something else must be done to prevent action, so the present

petition is presented which Mr. Bennett hopes to make popular.

This is only a part of the record and bearing of Mr. Bennett toward the Port Commission. At the recent Chamber of Commerce meeting he said he was friendly with each of the present Commissioners and had nothing against the Commission, that his action had at all times been impersonal. But does his course bear out his remarks? Do the expressions contained in the above-quoted letter bear any earmarks of such friendly attitude to the Commission?

Do the people of this Port favor that kind of a policy of obstruction, and do they wish to adopt this amendment and thereby approve the course of Mr. Bennett which has resulted in the Commission being farther away to-day from any actual improvement than it was on the day of its organization? If this community wishes to encourage that kind of citizenship, and desires to advertise to the world that we are under the domination of one man and subject to his will, making no progress without his permission, then let the proposed amendment be adopted.

Mr. Bennett, in his argument, attacks the present Port Commission, and in so doing displays his personal animus; his attack, however, is without either truth or merit. In the issuance of the bonds last fall Mr. Bennett will find the matter fully discussed in the columns of both The Times and the Coast Mail; more than that, a prospectus of the issue, several copies thereof, were left at his bank for reference and distribution. Every meeting of the Commission has been open to the public; the meetings are held at a regular time on regular days, and we would be glad to have Mr. Bennett present at every meeting.

I wish it distinctly understood that as a Commissioner, I am not objecting to the amendment; it will make my work easier, and I will be relieved of responsibility; but as a citizen, it is my honest and sincere belief that, in the interests of progress and development of the Port, the amendment should be defeated.

NOTICE.

It is especially desired that every member of the Christian Church be present next Sunday morning at 11 o'clock, to hear the report of the State convention. Visitors will also be welcome.

A. O. WALKER, Minister.

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BRIEFS OF BANDON.

News of City-by-the-Sea As Told By The Recorder.

C. M. Spencer will move his office into the room just vacated by the Bank of Bandon. L. J. Radley will also have his private office in the same room.

Mrs. S. S. Little has bought the property of S. E. Olds, near the east boundary of the old town limits and she and Mr. Little will occupy the same soon.

Alfred Johnson, the Coquille sawmill man came up from San Francisco on the Finfield, but returned again at once, having received a telegram that his wife, who is in the city, was very ill.

Miss Nellie Jensen died yesterday as a result of spinal trouble. She was sick only about two days and had been in good health up to that time, but suddenly became violently ill and soon succumbed to the terrible disease.

A. McNair of Tillamook, David McNair of Myrtle Point, and A. McNair of Bandon left on the last Elizabeth for San Francisco; from there they will go to Loyolito, Cal., to see their brothers and sister, this being the first time they have all been together for forty years. While there they took in the Jeffries and Johnson fight in Reno.

The Coquille Valley Bottling Co., at Bandon, is a new corporation which has been launched out into business in the last few days. G. T. Treadgold is president, A. D. Morse treasurer and L. Anselmo superintendent and general manager. The corporation is capitalized at \$50,000 and assumed the charge of the old Bandon Brewery plant on July 1st. The new incorporation will conduct the bottling works, brewery, ice and cold storage plant and soda manufacturing plant on an up-to-date business basis.

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9:00 a. m.	3:30 p. m.	9:15 a. m.	3:45 p. m.
9:30 a. m.	4:00 p. m.	9:45 a. m.	4:15 p. m.
10:00 a. m.	4:30 p. m.	10:15 a. m.	4:45 p. m.
10:30 a. m.	5:00 p. m.	10:45 a. m.	5:00 p. m.
11:00 a. m.	5:30 p. m.	11:15 a. m.	5:30 p. m.
11:45 a. m.	6:00 p. m.	11:45 a. m.	6:00 p. m.
12:30 p. m.	6:30 p. m.	12:30 p. m.	6:30 p. m.
1:00 p. m.	7:00 p. m.	1:15 p. m.	7:00 p. m.
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