

IN DEFENSE OF GOV. WEST

Hugh McLain Takes Issue With The Times On Veto Proposition.

Editor Times:—
In an editorial in Saturday's Times, February 25, in commenting on Governor West's actions in vetoing bills, you use the following words:

"In his indiscriminate use of his veto power Governor West is proving a disappointment even to his friends and supporters; the evidence of playing politics and pandering to his personal pique and peeve is too glaring to admit of denial." You go on to say that his veto of the Port tide land bill was based on neither good sense, good logic or good law, but solely to vent his spleen on Senator Chase who stood sponsor for the proposed law.

Now, Mr. Maloney, I claim that no part of your article is borne out by facts; in the first place I challenge you to show in any instance where the governor indiscriminately used his veto power without giving careful and intelligent consideration to every bill that came before him.

In his veto of the Port tide land, as governor of the state where would he have shown any sense to have turned the entire tide land holdings of the state on Coos Bay, and all its inlets and all the other tide lands in the entire state that had port commissions over to the manipulations of local Port Commissions who would lease or refuse to lease them as their own sweet will dictated, and while I am on this subject Mr. Editor I fail to see where the actions of Port Commissions are infallible. The people of Portland have just succeeded in reorganizing their Port Commission after claiming all kinds of mismanagement and misuse of the powers conferred on them; if this is possible in one case it is possible in others.

Now about the law in the matter; in every case where the state claimed ownership between low and high water and the cases have been carried to the highest courts, the state has always won; for instance, on Lake Michigan in front of the City of Chicago and in San Francisco Bay in front of Oakland the railroads that claimed ownership for years were compelled to lease from the state. In his veto of this bill he showed good sense, good logic and good law, your article to the contrary notwithstanding.

In your article you say instead of deciding bills and laws and public problems in accordance with their merits governor West is indulging in "petty personal prejudice and peanut politics." I think when you wrote this you must have had the dictionary open at the letter P, for instance, playing, politics, pandering, personal, pique, peeve, problems, petty, prejudice, peanut, port, "enough words to convict anybody of any crime, but it takes more than words to make facts. Now let us see what the Oregonian of February 19th, says: "West wielding rod and House obeys. State printer flat salary bill passed. Rusk hides? Bedlam rules. Parliamentary law down-trodden to win for measure. Governor's threat tells. Executive measure condemning spendthrift legislation and predicting the slashing of funds is victor."

Now, Mr. Editor, this may be peanut politics according to your political creed but when the governor, practically alone can compel a hostile House and Senate to pass this bill, saving the state \$20,000 a year, it compels me to ask you where the peeve, pique and peanut politics comes in?

You say in your article there is a marked difference in the veto power between the American and British adaptation of popular rule, there is no veto in the English or Canadian parliament, what the people decide to have done is done forthwith and I would judge by this you hold the English way better than ours; if such is the case how can you reconcile this statement with this article that appears in this same issue of The Times:

Contempt for the House of Commons. "There is nothing noble or exalted in the history of the House of Commons. Indeed, a devil's advocate had he the requisite talent could easily deliver an oration as long and

as eloquent as any of Burke's or Sheridan's, taking as his subject the stupidity, cowardice and, until recent times, the corruption of the House of Commons.

"I confess I cannot call to mind a single occasion in its long and remarkable history when the House of Commons, as a whole, played a part either obviously heroic or conspicuously wise, but we all of us can recall hundreds of occasions when, heroism and wisdom being greatly needed, the House of Commons exhibited either selfish indifference, crass ignorance of the vulgar passion.—Augustine Birrell's "Essays and Addresses."

You say in your article it is unthinkable that the opinion of Governor West should be worth more than that of a majority of both Houses who have voted for the Port plan. Probably the following article from the Oregon Journal may enlighten you as to his reasons for disapproving so many bills.

A Legislative Legacy.

"At Salem the governor of Oregon is buried under an avalanche of bills, rushed through the Legislature in the last moments of the late session. No less than 233 measures were piled upon him by adjournment, and he had but five days in which to consider them.

Many of them are full of defects. Errors are unavoidable when bills are ground through a session like sausage through a mill. Some are trivial errors made by clerks, others are vital to the life of the measure and caused by hurried consideration.

They involve every kind of topic and set out regulations for every kind of human conduct and legal restriction. They affect social groups with some opposed and some favoring the proposed law. They are legislation stretching almost from the occident to the morning star and from the North Pole to the southern cross. To digest, investigate and invalidate or invalidate all this wilderness of bills and do it all within five days was the legacy left to the governor by the recent session.

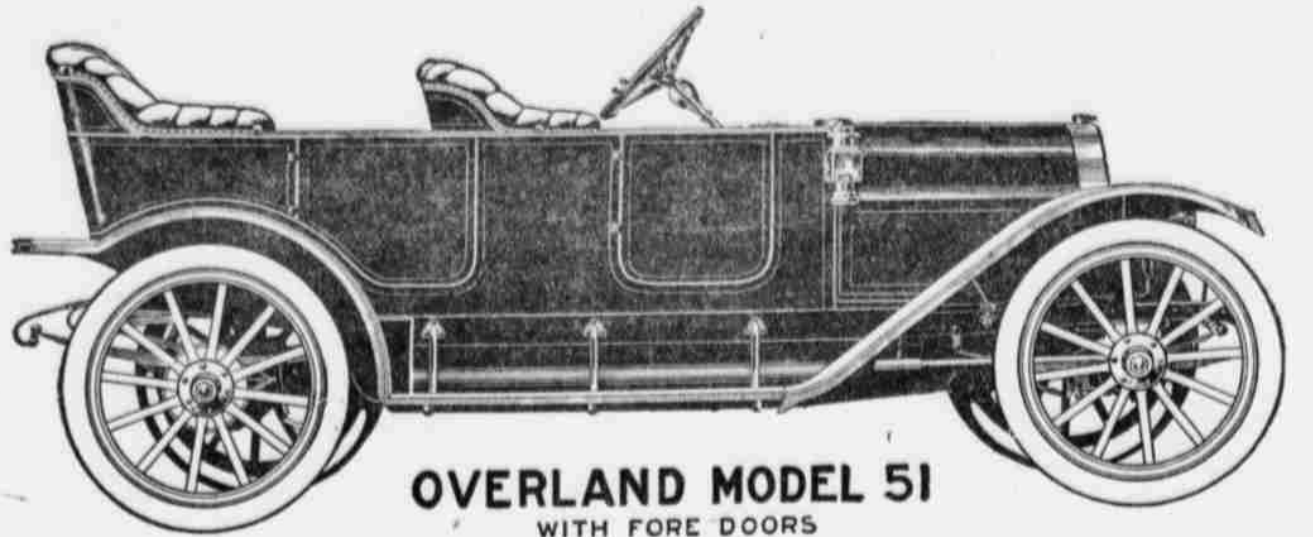
The state aid bill came to him with a phraseology that made it inoperative. It was one of the vital measures of the session and yet its passage was impotent. The publicity immigration bill passed without safeguards for spending the money. A bill referring to county treasurers' invalidated indictments in the Thurn Ross case, and was killed by executive negative. A bill appropriated \$5,000 for fighting bubonic plague but failed to state who was to receive the money. A bill professing to fix the standard of purity of linseed oil failed to provide what the standard must be.

With 725 bills introduced and but 40 days for consideration accuracy gave way to inaccuracy and blunders ran riot. Defects stalked through the lawmaking like death on a white horse. Legislating went serenely on with the accuracy of a scatter gun. To discover the blunders, to pass upon the advisability of measures, to listen to and decided between the controversies of those urging or opposing approval of bills and to do it all in five days—this was the legacy left by the legislature to the executive department.

And still, they say that only legislatures should be allowed to legislate, and that the citizens haven't time or sense enough to make laws." Now, Mr. Editor, one word more about this port tide land bill. Who had Senator Chase introduce this bill. Was it a bill of general interest to the community, was it endorsed by the Chamber of Commerce. Would the passage of this bill in any way affect litigation that is at the present time in the courts, if so, to whose benefit.

Now in regard to Senator Chase. You charge that Governor West vents his personal spite on him. This charge is in line with the rest of your article, not borne out by facts. Personally, I have the highest regard for Senator Chase, but as a representative of Coos county in the state Senate, he accomplished very little. He was not classed as one of the progressives in the Senate, but was always classed in the Bowerman camp and the Senate record shows Bowerman on every occasion did everything in his power to harass the present state administration, this probably is the reason that Senator Chase thought the governor had a personal feeling against him, but why should Governor West show any more consideration to Senator Chase than to Senator Oliver, a warm personal friend of Governor West and one of the three democratic senators—his pet measure was vetoed, just the same it plainly shows that personal feeling does not influence the governor.

HUGH McLAIN.

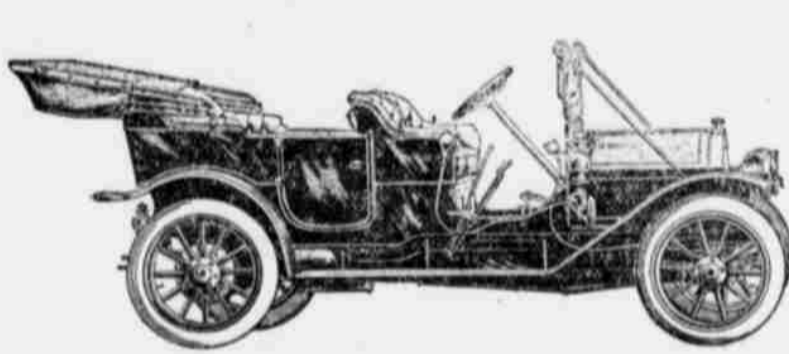


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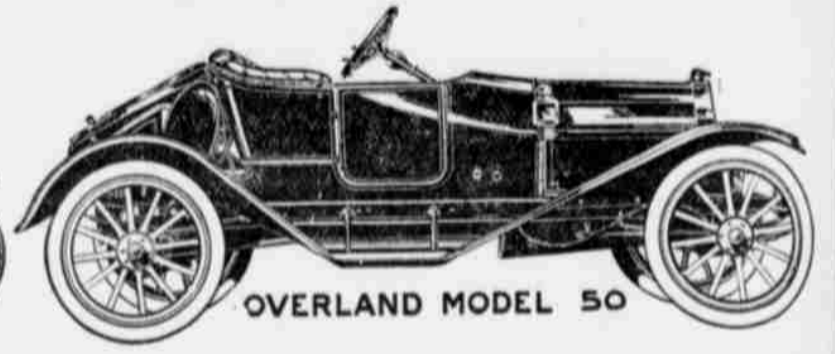
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