

GOVERNOR JUDSON HARMON OF OHIO

By A. V. ABERNETHY

COLUMBUS, O.—[Special]—When the bribery charges against members of the Ohio general assembly exploded with the suddenness and force of a bomb and sent scores on a hunt for lawyers Governor Judson Harmon took the same view of the personality of guilt that he did when he reported to President Roosevelt that Paul Morton, a member of his cabinet, had been guilty of granting rebates while an officer of the Santa Fe railroad. "Guilt is always personal," said Harmon to Roosevelt, and he resigned his commission to investigate rebating because Teddy was inclined to shield Morton.

A few hours after the bribery charges were filed the Ohio executive sent out an order that no man should be spared in the legislative hoodluming investigation. Party and even personal friendships must be set aside, the governor said, and the entire situation cleaned up.

Throughout nineteen years of continuous control Republican state administrations, when charges of irregularities were made involving members of their party, assumed the attitude: "They are our thieves, and we must defend them." There is an Ohio statute which grants immunity to every

citizen and been demanding and pleading for in vain for decades.

The supremely important achievements of the Ohio Democracy under the leadership of Governor Harmon may be divided into transactions and legislations, first, for the elimination of graft; second, such reform in the tax system as will protect the taxpayer from the tax spender and will compel corporations to stop dodging taxes and pay along with all individual property owners; third, the application of business methods and economy in public expenditures, and, fourth, the enactment of purely non-partisan laws for the benefit of the entire people, irrespective of political parties, and designed to make rule by interest seeking corporations extremely difficult and rule by the people easy.

After he became governor two years ago Mr. Harmon quietly began his investigation of the methods by which public money had been looted by Republican state treasurers. He learned they put interest earnings in their pockets. There followed in rapid order suits against the estate and bondsmen of W. S. McKinnon, former state treasurer, for \$116,785 and interest thereon; against former State Treasurer I. B. Cameron and his bondsmen for \$211,721 and interest thereon. They were

vote for a Republican for United States senator if the people by their votes declared for a Republican," the governor told this committee during the conference. "I would be proud to do it. I would simply be doing the will of the people." One of the committee suggested the Oregon plan was undemocratic. The executive replied, "It's the very essence of Democracy to put the government back into the hands of the people and let them say whom they want for United States senator."

Governor Harmon took a new tack and had a similar measure offered in the house, the Wyman bill. That body passed it and sent it to the senate, where the governor finally got sufficient Republican votes to save it.

Ohioans had demonstrations recently that their judiciary, one of the most sacred institutions of a free government, had been invaded by party bosses in their inordinate thirst for power. Instead of being places where the people could turn to invoke the penalties of the criminal statutes on those who had offended certain courts were being used, in cases where men of vast political power were concerned, to shield violators from the vengeance of the law.

But the general assembly took a long step forward from boss domination of the courts by enacting a bill providing in the future that all Ohio judges, from the dignified gowned justices of the supreme court down to the humble laymen who sit as justices of the peace, shall be elected on tickets absolutely free from party emblem or device. Nominations may be made by conventions, but the power of bosses to control nominations was broken by a clause in the bill which says that nominations may be made by petitions. There is not another such law in the United States.

Ohio has been hampered by the crude, unwieldy machinery of a constitution which was adopted in 1851, and the subject of making a new or amending law is the biggest and most important proposition that has come before a Buckeye general assembly in many years. Selfish hands were being outstretched to get control of the constitutional convention to be held in 1912 when Governor Harmon took charge of the arrangements for it and succeeded in getting through the general assembly a bill which will remove the delegates from political influence and make them responsible to the people only. So well did he manage the campaign that Ohio will set a precedent for all other states to follow when they come to rewrite their organic laws. Nominations of delegates will be made by petition only, and nominees will be elected on ballots absolutely free from party device or emblem or any form of party designation. The liquor question, which has been a sore spot in Ohio for sixty years, will be finally settled when the new constitution is adopted.

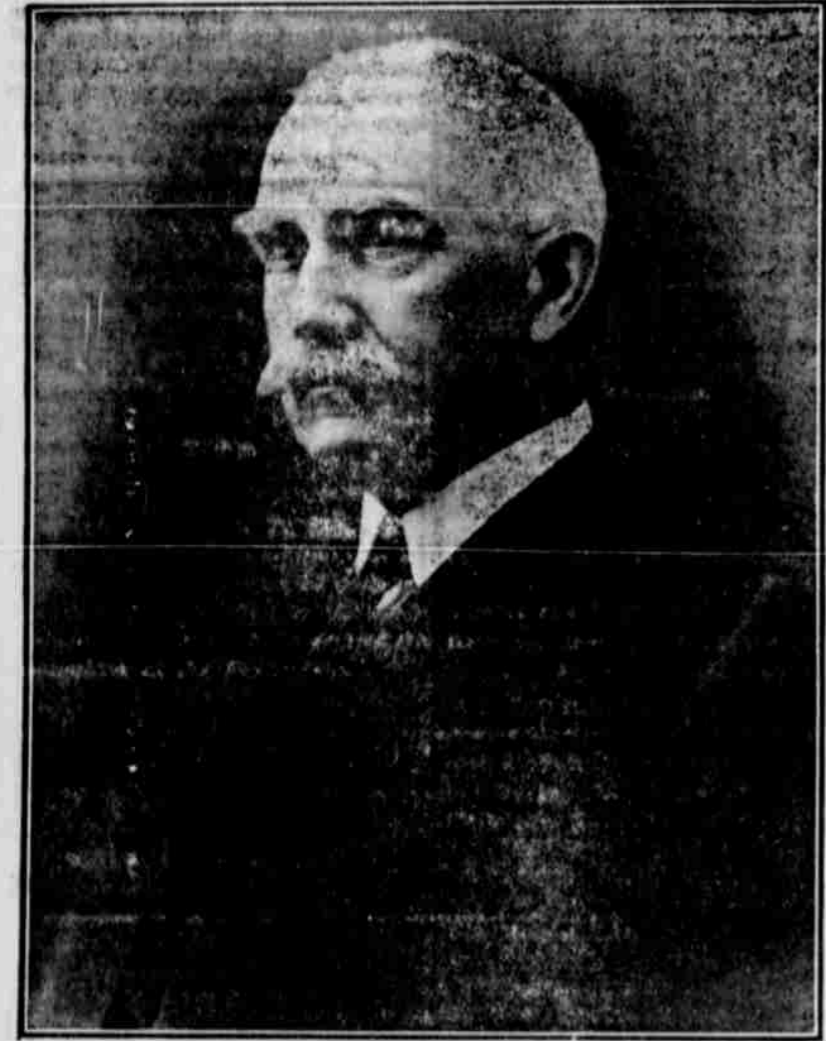
The state when Governor Harmon grasped the reins of government had nineteen penal, reformatory and benevolent institutions, with the responsibility of governing them divided among nineteen separate boards of trustees, three members to a board. They were so conducted as to secure neither economy nor best results.

These trusteeships, all honorable positions and eagerly sought after, had been used as a sort of currency to purchase nominations and to repay the boys who had delivered votes in conventions. The trustees appointed superintendents and all subordinates, and these combined to furnish the dynamic power for the steam roller which the late Mark Hanna and Boss George B. Cox used to crush the life out of rebellions against the rule of the G. O. P. machine.

Governor Harmon's idea was that "the establishments which a Christian state maintains for charity are sacred and that every selfish purpose should perish at their doors."

Acting on this principle, the governor framed and forced through the general assembly a bill placing all employees of the institutions ranking below superintendent under civil service rules. The nineteen separate boards of trustees

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HON. JUDSON HARMON, GOVERNOR OF OHIO.

one who testifies before a legislative committee, and this law, together with a whitewash brush, had prevented any Republican law violator from being haled before a court of justice.

Naturally there was a great rush by distraught members for legislative immunity. But Governor Harmon promptly pulled the plug of the immunity bathtub and prevented any one bathing in its soothing waters by insisting that no legislative investigating committee be appointed and that the inquest of the grand jury be the only probe.

Indictments were returned against seven members of the general assembly and the sergeant-at-arms of the senate, and these cases will take the same course as that of the most humble citizen who becomes involved in criminal charges. A coterie of Democrats who had been fighting the governor's bills were among the members indicted.

In less than three years of his administration Governor Harmon has made a record of accomplishment unparalleled in the history of Ohio politics. He has wrought more progress for the people than was accomplished in the forty years that preceded him. There has been written into the statutes legislation that the enlightened

Republicans. Another graft investigation brought forth the exposure, prosecution and conviction of Mark Slater, former Republican state printer, on graft charges in lesser degree; the settlement of an interest claim of over \$5,700 on funds carried in the bank for former Republican State Auditor Walter D. Guilbert and the filing of a claim for over \$31,000 with the receiver of a defunct bank at Columbus as an interest charge on funds carried in that bank by Mr. Guilbert as auditor.

These revelations during the governor's first term awakened the civic conscience and paved the way for his subsequent re-election. The Democrats captured the general assembly at the same time.

Then Governor Harmon renewed his efforts in behalf of certain bills two Republican general assemblies denied him.

The most notable achievement accomplished by the executive during the legislative session was the enactment of the Wyman bill, including the Oregon plan of nominating and electing United States senators.

A conference committee was appointed to frame a compromise senatorial nomination and election bill. "I would

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Total	\$550,096.29

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Surplus and undivided profits	10,797.39
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