

TAXPAYERS LEAGUE ON BIG QUESTIONS

It Offers Some Advice as to How to Vote on Proposed Amendments to the City Charter at the Coming June Election.

OPPOSES TAXING WHOLE CITY FOR GULCH BRIDGES

Against Annexation Amendments and for Street Railway Franchise Changes, Better Security for the City's Money and Penalizing Failure to Pay the Assessments Promptly.

The following address was adopted by the members of the Taxpayers League at its meeting held at the city hall on the 17th inst. The legislative assembly of the state of Oregon, subject to the approval of the voters of the city of Portland, have proposed certain amendments to its charter. In order that the voters of the city may understand the purposes of said amendments, the Taxpayers League has prepared the following digest of its views upon each proposed amendment. There are two amendments proposed under which, if approved, a very considerable acreage will be added to the present territory of the city of Portland. On the latter they will be proposed under the two following questions:

"Shall Section 12 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended to include within the city, territory between Portland and St. Johns?"

"Shall Section 13 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended to include within the city, the territory between Portland and Mt. Taber?"

"Vote No" the Advice.

We advise voters to vote "no" on both questions for the following reasons:

The city territory comprises about 25,000 acres. We now have more territory than we can properly care for. There are constant demands which cannot be complied with for additional police and fire protection, lights, care of streets, etc., and we believe it is unwise to constantly expand the city's limits. No one at all familiar with the present limits of the city, but what knows there are hundreds of vacant acres in every direction. Until these are populated it would be folly to add to the burdens of the municipality.

Proposed Bridge Tax.

This is the most important in some respects of any amendment proposed and, as it is so drawn as to appeal to the personal interests of many voters, should be given very careful consideration. The question will appear upon the ballot in the following form:

"Shall Section 114 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended taxing whole city for bridges?"

We advise voters to vote "no" on this question.

In order that our reasons may be fully understood, a brief review of the proposed amendment as well as retrospect covering bridge improvements covered by the proposed amendment is necessary. The question as proposed is misleading. On the average, voters apparently present a question covering something to be done in the future, to establish a principle for future guidance.

Putting the Question.

To have presented the question frankly it should have been put as follows: "Shall Section 114 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended so as to provide for an annual levy of two mills to pay:

First, about the sum of \$120,000 for bridges already built and those in course of construction, and

Second, for bridges hereafter to be built in the city of Portland?"

The direct causes leading up to the proposed amendment were certain improvements inaugurated in south Portland under the charter.

The principle under which the proposed amendment is presented is that as every part of the city is interested in maintaining communication with every other part, when great natural obstacles, such as rivers, gulches or ravines exist, it is unfair and impracticable to cast the burden of such an improvement on adjacent or surrounding property, but that the entire city should be taxed and pay for it.

As an academic question there is unquestioned merit in this position, but under the existing facts, as we shall show, it has but little application. Even those taking this position do not contend it is incumbent upon the city to furnish the most convenient method to

each and every section of the city or that every street across a gulch should be bridged.

Convenience vs. Necessity.

So far as south Portland is concerned, if no bridges had ever been built, suitable means of communication existed. We do not claim that residents of some portions could go in a direct line to the center of the city, but they could go to and fro and over improved streets, and no duty, expressed or implied, is imposed on owners of property in other sections to pay for conveniences, not necessities. Hearing these facts in mind we will now show what was done.

Early in the year 1903 it was determined by the council to erect a bridge on First street across Marquam gulch, and in pursuance of the provisions of the charter, laid out a district containing lots and parcels of land which the council deemed specially benefited, said lots being in number 8,142. On October 1, 1903, a contract was let for the erection of a steel bridge at the point mentioned for \$49,629 and which was built and accepted by the city on September 29, 1904, for \$59,358.10. The preliminary assessment to pay for this improvement was advertised November 4, 1904. Objections were made to said assessment and the matter continued and cost computed from time to time because of various objections, but for the purpose as we have reason to believe of putting off the collection of the cost until the legislature would pass the act now being submitted.

Not until March 1, 1905, a contract for another steel bridge, crossing the same gulch, just 200 feet east of the first steel bridge, was let for the contract price of \$55,000, which actually cost not less than \$68,000. The district created for this improvement includes 8,142 lots. But a few hundred feet east of this bridge will be found improved streets furnishing ample communication between south Portland and the rest of the city.

Thurman Street Bridge.

On March 22, 1904, a contract for the building of a bridge on Thurman street was let for \$30,564 and was accepted March 23, 1905, for \$44,846.15. The district created for this improvement contained about 455 lots. It will be observed:

1. That each and all of these improvements were instituted by representatives from the wards in which the improvements are located.

2. That no one outside of the respective districts had any voice as to whether the bridges were to be built or not, where located, the number, cost or character.

3. That under no possible circumstances can it be claimed that as a general means of communication two bridges 200 feet apart were required in south Portland.

4. That if the entire city was to have been charged with the cost, then taxpayers of the entire city should have had the opportunity to have been heard.

So much for the particular features of the case. We, however, submit as a matter of fact that there is no similarity of conditions between the building of bridges by the city as a whole crossing a river which absolutely divides it into two parts, between which there can be no communication without the use of bridges or ferries, and bridges, fills or elevated passageways crossing gulches in various portions of the city.

Furthermore, if the proposed policy is adopted he would be bold, indeed, to set the limits of the extension of the proposed doctrine.

We further submit, as it was the intention of the promoters of these bridges to cast the cost thereof on the city, it would have been fair to have allowed these improvements to await the adoption of this law, and to have given other portions of the city an opportunity in the immediate future to have obtained bridges.

The Two-Mill Levy.

The salient features of the proposed amendment is as follows:

1. Commencing next year to levy a special tax annually of 2 mills, to go

into a special bridge fund, to be used for paying for the construction of bridges in the city other than across the Willamette river, the estimated cost of which should not exceed \$15,000. This fund also to be used for paying for any bridge or bridges not across the Willamette river, which were constructed in and by said city during the year 1904, or which are now under course of construction under contract with said city, and which have not been paid for prior to January 1, 1906.

2. Upon the completion and acceptance of each such bridge warrants are to be issued for the payment thereof out of the special bridge fund, but no liability can be incurred in any one year for a greater amount than would be produced by a 2-mill levy.

3. The street railway companies are not to be released from paying their proportion of the cost of said bridges as provided by the ordinances and franchises of the city.

As the taxable property of the city is in round numbers about \$50,000,000 and the cost of these bridges now constructed and under course of construction, the interest thereon can be easily figured, each voter can easily ascertain the amount of tax that will be required to be paid in order to pay for the bridges now constructed and under construction.

We also desire to call the attention of the taxpayers of this city to the fact that if this amendment be adopted it will arbitrarily and irrevocably increase the tax rate each year by 2 mills and it would mean, through taxes for special purposes such as this, should be carefully considered, otherwise, the levy will eventually become very oppressive.

Another Proposed Amendment.

This is an amendment to section 105, under which, subject to the terms and conditions of the charter, street railway companies may build connecting lines of railway to shorten or make more convenient their operation upon streets not already occupied by railway tracks, providing, that such connecting lines shall not in any one instance exceed 1,200 feet or five blocks in length.

This provision was originally framed as a part of the present charter, but by some means was mistaken so that it was not printed therein. The question will appear upon the ballot in the following form:

"Shall section 105 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended? (Street Railway Franchise)"

We advise voters to vote "yes" on this question. Our reasons for it are that as time goes on, and even now, certain portions of streets in the city are and will become badly congested and means of relief must be found, and furthermore, anything that will shorten or make more convenient the operation of the street railways is beneficial, providing it is done under proper safeguards.

Amendment to Section 200.

Providing the character of securities which can be given by banks of deposit for city moneys.

The proposed amendment does away with the giving of surety companies' bonds for city property and provides in lieu thereof that bonds of the city of Portland to the face value of the amount of deposit, or bonds of any city, county, municipality, or school district within the state of Oregon, or well recognized railroad or street railway bonds, the interest upon which has not been in default for a period of six years prior to the offering of such bonds as security, and the market value of which is such that the net returns from the bonds is not greater than 5 per cent per annum, may be used as security, provided, that if the character of securities is used the market value of the same shall not be less than 1 1/2 times the amount of the city deposits. This question will appear upon the ballot in the following form:

"Shall section 200 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended? (Security for city funds)"

"Vote Yes"

We advise voters to vote "yes" on this question. Our reasons for doing so are as follows:

In the first place, it will have a tendency to strengthen the value of the bonds of the city.

In the second place, we believe that any character of security should be such as can be easily realized on and without having to commence law suits to collect the same.

Owing to provision respecting sinking funds of various kinds, the amount of city money on hand will increase and we do not believe that a surety company furnishes the proper kind of security for such a deposit. This we state without any reflection upon the financial ability of surety companies as such, but because of the fact bonds of that kind are generally technical in their character, and the simplest and best form of security, and that most easily liquidated should be the character taken by the city for city moneys.

Municipal Court Clerk.

By this amendment it is proposed to change section 331 of the charter so as to provide that the municipal judge instead of the executive board shall appoint the clerk of the police department, who shall be removed by the municipal

ALL THE COMPANY WILL BE HER GUESTS

Popular Miss Shepard to Entertain Columbians on Anniversary of Eighteenth Birthday.

A popular member of the Columbia theatre stock company is Miss Iva Shepard, who made her first appearance with that organization at Logan, the



Miss Iva Shepard.

point, in "Quo Vadis." She has since played parts in "Old Heidelberg," "Joan D'Arc," "Thelma," "A Contented Woman" and "Woman Against Woman."

Miss Shepard's name in private life is Shafer, her father being N. L. Shafer, advertising manager of the Chicago "Tribune" company. She takes the name Shepard from her grandfather, who was a member of Joseph Jefferson's company in 1858.

Miss Shepard will celebrate her 18th birthday Monday afternoon, when the Columbia company will be guests at her home, 554 Third street. The young woman has every promise of a bright career.

Judge at his pleasure, and advance his salary from \$75 to \$100 per month.

This question will appear upon the ballot in the following form:

"Shall section 311 of the charter of the city of Portland be amended? (Appointment and salary of the clerk of municipal court)"

We advise voters to vote "NO" on this question. We do this for the following reasons:

In the first place we believe a qualified man can be obtained for the amount now fixed by the charter, and secondly, we do not believe that it is wise to amend the charter in any way accepting it be really essential.

Delinquent Assessments.

By this change it is proposed to amend section 467 so as to provide a penalty of 15 per cent if an assessment for an improvement is not paid within 30 days after the date of the entry of the assessment in the docket of city liens.

We advise voters to vote "YES" on this question.

Under the section of the charter now drawn a delinquent bears interest only at the legal rate of six per cent, and as this is the only penalty provided for non-payment, in many cases it operates as an inducement for people to contest assessments, which they would otherwise pay, and as a consequence has a tendency to increase the cost of improvements by forcing contractors to bid on a basis of a contest and their not receiving their money within the time they should.

We are not advocating the claims of any contractor, but where they do their work properly they should receive their money promptly, as it is to every one's benefit that such be the case.

Decreasing Cost of Advertising.

By this amendment it is proposed to change sections 394, 395 and 405 so as to do away with the advertising in the city of the assessments of the appointment of costs of the assessments therefor made against the property. As ample provision is made for postal card notices, and as the reason why this advertising should be continued through the ordinary taxes. The charter will provide, as amended, for the publishing of a notice of the proposed improvement, and describing it and the territory covered, the whole cost of the improvement, that the assessment has been apportioned and is on file in the office of the Auditor and subject to examination, and that objections to such apportionment may be made in writing to the council and filed with the auditor within 10 days from the date of the first publication of the notice, and will further provide that after the assessment has been declared notice shall again be given by publishing for five consecutive weeks a notice specifying the improvement for which the assessment is levied, the cost thereof, the boundaries of the district, the number and title of the ordinance declaring the assessment, and that the same is due and payable, the time it shall bear interest, and the time when the same shall be delinquent, and further provides that a notice of the assessment shall be sent to each and every owner, or to his agent, whose property is assessed.

We would further state that the legislature also passed an act supplemental to this one by which the sheriff is compelled to take the names and addresses of taxpayers and place the same on the stubs retained in his office when taxes are paid. By so doing the address of practically every taxpayer will be known.

We advise voters to vote "YES" on this amendment.

TAXPAYERS LEAGUE.
By LEO FRISBE,
Vice-president,
LOUIS GOLDENBATH,
Secretary.

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REV. MR. SMYTHE CAN'T DISTINGUISH COLORS

Preacher Who Wanted to Be a Railroad Man Fails to Pass Eye Test.

Inability to distinguish colors has caused the failure of Rev. C. M. Smythe to become a railroad brakeman. He failed to pass the examinations.

Until recently Mr. Smythe was pastor of a Congregational church on the East side. He caused something of a sensation by announcing that he would resign in order to secure employment on the railroad. He did not intend to abandon the ministry permanently, he said, but desired to return to railroad work for a few years.

He accepted a position as passenger brakeman with the Oregon Railroad & Navigation company and was one of Conductor William Dunn's crew running into Pendleton. He finally discovered that he was unable to distinguish colors, and failed to pass the eye test.

Daily Exclamations We Hear.

How often do you hear the remark, oh how my eyes do ache; my eyes feel awfully tired; I have a burning pain right in my eye ball and similar exclamations. If one stops to consider, in nine cases out of ten this is perhaps the beginning of some serious eye trouble. Is it wise under such circumstances to wait and permit trouble to come along whereas the same can be stopped in its incipency? If the sufferer will consult a skillful optician, get his eyes tested, and accurately fitted, he will undoubtedly in a short period overcome the distressing ailment. D. Chambers of 129 Seventh street is an optician highly recommended by the leading oculists and physicians in Portland and one who stands high among his profession, and one who will render at all times skillful service.

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