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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 1896

FROM REPRESENTATIVE COON.

Our editorial space is taken up today with a communication from Hon. T. R. Coon, a representative in the last legislature. THE CHRONICLE is very glad to have these expressions of opinions from its readers, and while it does not concur in all of Mr. Coon's opinions, yet it is glad to give the requested space for their publication. As the campaign is beginning, the editor requests that contributions on interesting topics will be sent him, as no matter whether the views expressed be in accord with the policy of this paper, if the communications are written in an honest, truth-seeking spirit, they will willingly be published. Mr. Coon's letter is as follows:

EDITOR CHRONICLE:

I take it for granted that THE CHRONICLE will give space for a few political comments by one who would protest against a tame submission to the so-called "Portland gang" in the political affairs of the state. I know full well that there are a few papers in Oregon that "stand pat" with the political bosses as in duty bound. Many persons can read the sophistries and half-truths of these organs of the ring without being misled; but it must be that many will eat anything that is set before them, else the bill or fare, so regularly set out by certain papers, would hardly pay enough to balance the cook's wages.

Now, the Oregon ring, with Mr. Simon as ring-master, had "a little plan," which it was presumed the last legislature would promptly carry out; but when "Simon said thumbs up," nearly all in the senate responded with alacrity, for did not the boss say "thumbs up?" But when the house was directed to show thumbs up a lot of "perverse," rascally representatives of the people actually wouldn't do as some people figured all along that they would do. The thumbs were "short" in the count. The Political Mutual Benefit Association of the state of Oregon stood confronted with a lot of clinched fists. The ring forthwith turned loose the bloodhounds of the hiring press, hoping to finish the opposition into submission. They said: "Don't you 'perfidious' fools know that we run things here in Oregon? Haven't we said that our wishes must be respected under all circumstances? and is it not a plain case that there is only one man in Oregon that we can trust as United States senator? and is not Mr. Dolph 'our man?'" Neither hounds, nor love, nor money, could win over the four votes needed by the ring; but as it turned out, the Simon ring received the most beautiful thrashing it has ever received in Oregon. The wailing of the bosses and the yelping of the hounds have not yet ceased to echo and re-echo among the hills of fair Oregon.

Considerable effort is being put forth by the Oregonian and two or three "partners in crime" to punish those members of the last legislature who "held up" the ring. Tables are gotten up and ingenious statements constructed tending to give the "black eye" to these perverse members. No liar is so contemptible as he who tells only a part of the truth. The true record is the whole record; but this would not answer the purpose.

If the ring had permitted it, the attempt of those who tried to reduce ex-

penses would have succeeded at the last session of the legislature. The records of the house and senate will show many such instances. But why make so much ado about some small appropriations attached to certain bills? The great bulk of the appropriations over which the fight for retrenchment has to be made is contained in the general appropriation bill. This bill being made up in the committee of the whole, the record of which does not go upon the journal, it is difficult for the people to find out who favors retrenchment and who does not. When the house proposed retrenchment the senate, seeing perhaps that the villainous "thirty" were largely for economy, would promptly refuse to concur. Of course economy would be highly improper under such circumstances. If the penitentiary could be made self-supporting; if the insane asylum could be managed so as to exclude a large number who are not insane at all, or who have been smuggled into this place of refuge to save trouble and expense to their relatives; if the state printing office could be given a much less amount of printing to do, and the extra pay of some state officers abolished, along with the useless commissions, the people would get some actual relief. There is no doubt that the state normal schools cause much more expense than the actual amount given them, because they must "join the combination" or get left. For economic reasons alone the people can't afford these institutions. But the ring would not like to see them go, for to abandon them would be to reduce its power to control.

It ought to be gratifying to all anti-ring people to note that the machine politicians manifest so plainly a wholesome dread lest the people will, through their representatives in the next legislature, once more refuse to be "held up." Once more there will be an order like this: "Simon says thumbs up!" Once more the attempt will be made to seat Mr. Dolph in the U. S. senate, and the ring will again assert its right to rule or ruin.

A senatorial contest affords grand opportunities for shrewd managers and ring-masters. But how long must the people submit to the present system. To show how the last legislature regarded the system, permit me to quote as follows. House Journal p. 93:

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION, NO. 17.
Whereas, there is a growing belief among the people that the election of United States senators by the legislatures of the different states is the occasion of much corruption, as well as interference with legislative business; and whereas, under the present system, it is easy for the money power and corporate interests to defeat for that high office those who refuse to become subservient thereto; and whereas, the choice of the poor man, out of money and without employment, is entitled to equal respect with of any other person, therefore be it

Resolved, That our senators and representatives in congress are requested to use all honorable means to secure the adoption of an amendment to the constitution of the United States, authorizing the election of United States senator by the direct vote of the people. Be it further

Resolved, That the secretary of state be, and is hereby, instructed to forward to each of our senators and representatives at Washington, D. C., a copy of these resolutions.

Those voting aye were: Messrs. Baker, Barkley, Beach, Boothby, Bridges, Buckman, Burke, Burleigh, Calvert, Cardwell, Cleaton, Cole, Conn Coon, Cooper, Craiz, Curtis, David, Davis, Gates, Gullid, Gurdane, Hillegas, Hofer, Hope, Hoffman, Jeffrey, Key, Lester, Lyle, McGree, Mintie, Moorehead, Nealon, Patterson, Paxton, Rhineason, Shtrum, Stewart, Smith of Clackamas, Smith of Polk, Smith of Linn, Templeton, Thompson, Yates, Young, Mr. Speaker—47. Nays: Messrs. Blundell, Daly, Gowdy, McCracken, Myers, Sehlbrede, Smith of Josephine, Stanley—8. Absent: Messrs. Dunn, Long, Scott, Tigard and Wright—5.

Senate Journal p. 129:
Senator McGinn moved to refer House Concurrent Resolution No. 17 to the committee on revision of laws. The ayes and nays were called and the vote was: Those voting aye were: Senators Bancroft, Brownell, Calbreath, Car-

ter, Dawson, Denny, Gesner, Gowan, Hobson, Maxwell, McGinn, Patterson, Price, Steiwer, Woodard and Mr. President—16. Nays: Senators Beckley, Cogswell, Holt, Huston, Johnson, King, McAlister, Raley, Smith of Clatsop, Smith of Sherman, and Vanderburg. Absent: Senators Alley, Butler and McClung.

So long as senators are elected by the legislature, so long will matters of legislation be blocked by the contending elements, and the interests of the people sacrificed by unscrupulous politicians. The next senatorial fight will be fought without scruple by the ring against the

people, who must show a solid front or meet inglorious defeat. "The war is already begun." Are we cattle, or are we men.
T. R. Coon.
Hood River, Feb. 10, 1896.

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