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FOR A REGISTRY LAW

Synopsis of the Bill Drawn Up by E. W. Bingham.

WILL PERFECT OUR VOTING SYSTEM

Emendations and Corrections of the First Tentative Effort—All Essential Details Given.

PORTLAND, Jan. 7.—(To the Editor.)—The following is a synopsis of the bill I have drafted for a registration law. It has been numerous copied and circulated, but I have improved and corrected it in several respects since the first draft at the suggestion of several persons. However, in its main features it is on the plan originally outlined in my communication in The Oregonian, June 2, 1896.

Every member of the legislature to whom I have submitted the bill seemed disposed to support it, without further amendment. Mr. James N. Davis and Mr. W. E. Thomas, members-elect from Multnomah county to the house, have undertaken to introduce it and secure its enactment in its present form, if possible, and I have turned it over to them.

That there may be a more correct and general understanding of its features, I ask you to print the following:

It is entitled "An act for the registration of electors, regulating the manner of conducting elections, providing for the prevention of and punishment for frauds affecting the suffrage, and to prevent illegal voting."

By section 1 it is made the duty of the county clerk of each county, between May 1 and December 15, 1897, and biennially thereafter, to procure the registration books and blanks required by the act, the county commissioners to audit and pay the reasonable and necessary bills so incurred.

Section 2 particularly specifies how the registration books shall be arranged, printed and bound, and a blank shows how they shall be ruled and printed, so that the act, compete for the work. The books and blanks are all ruled, printed alike, but in various sizes, for use throughout the state. Section 3 likewise provides for two blanks for use under the provisions of the act.

By section 4 the clerk of the county court in counties which have no county clerk shall act as county clerk.

By section 5 it is made the duty of every elector to register with the county clerk of his county between the first Monday in January, 1898, and 5 o'clock P. M. of May 15, 1898, and biennially thereafter between said times.

Section 6 makes it the duty of each county clerk, free of charge, to register the electors applying. If the clerk refuses to register an elector, he may by

mandamus compel the registration.

Section 7 sets forth the information the elector shall furnish, under oath, to the clerk, and what the clerk shall enter in the general register under the head of the particular precinct in which the elector resides. The information required and entered is as follows:

- First—The registration number of the elector.
- Second—The date of registration the elector.
- Third—The full name of the elector.
- Fourth—Leave a blank space in which the judges of election shall enter in the precinct register the poll-book number of each elector when he has voted.
- Fifth—The business or occupation of the elector.
- Sixth—The age of the elector in years.
- Seventh—The country of nativity.
- Eighth—If naturalized, the time, the place and court of naturalization or declaration, as evidenced by the legal proof thereof exhibited by the elector.
- Ninth—The actual and precise place of residence of the elector at the time of his registering, stating first the precinct, and in the country, the section, township and range; in cities or towns having streets, by specifying the name of the town or city, the street or other location of and dwelling-place of the elector, with the number of such dwelling, if the same has a number; if not, then with such description of the place that it can be readily ascertained and identified.

If the elector be not the head or proprietor of the house, then it must show that fact, and upon what floor thereof and what room such elector occupies in such house.

Tenth—The fact whether or not the elector desiring to be registered is able to write his name and mark his ballot, and if he cannot do both, then the nature of such disability must be entered.

Eleventh—The elector shall then, next following the afore-administered oath, sign his name in the presence of the clerk or of the deputy acting, in the general register, upon the same line where the preceding information is written, and the registering officer shall then sign his own name upon the said line, and add any remarks required by this act or appropriate thereto, for the information of the judges of election. If the elector

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registered by the clerk in person, he shall so sign his own name in attestation thereof, and if the elector is registered by a deputy, then, in addition to the name of the clerk, the particular deputy actually registering the elector shall sign his name at the length in attestation thereof. If the elector declares he is unable to mark his ballot or sign his name, he shall state why, and the clerk shall enter upon the register the reasons. If the elector's inability to sign is apparent in consequence of some physical infirmity, such as blindness or loss of limb incapacitating the elector from writing, he shall so state the fact. But if the disability is stated to be the illiteracy of the elector, the clerk shall in addition to stating that fact, enter as full a description of the physical peculiarities of the elector as possible, giving his height, approximate weight, complexion, color of hair and eyes, and any visible marks or scars and their location, and attest the same.

Section 8 requires the clerk to then enter the same information in the separate precinct register, which is alphabetically indexed and arranged, for the use of the judges conducting the election in that precinct. The elector signs both books, if he is able to write his name.

Section 9 provides that any elector who is unable for any reason to register with the county clerk between January and May 15th, biennially, may do so by filling up the blank "A," signing it three times and swearing to the same, and by having two freeholders of the county sign and swear to the second affidavit thereon, to the effect that they are personally acquainted with the elector and his residence, as stated, and by filling the same with the county clerk within the 4½ months allowed for registering. Upon registering the elector, the clerk will paste one of the signatures of the elector in each registration book.

Section 10 provides a blank, "B," whereby an elector who, after registering, has changed his residence before election, may conveniently have his registration canceled, and by using the blank "A" have himself re-registered in his proper precinct.

Section 11 prescribes that no elector shall register a second time until his former registration is canceled, and none but electors shall register at all.

Section 12 provides the respective county clerks shall close their registers at 5 o'clock p. m., on May 15, 1898, and biennially thereafter.

Section 13 makes the registers all public records, and all citizens are allowed to inspect the same and make copies or extracts therefrom, free of charge.

Section 14 provides that, notwithstanding the elector is registered in the precinct in which he applies to vote, he may be challenged, whereupon he must take the oath prescribed in blank "A," and sign the same, if able, and in the discretion of the judges he may be required to produce one or more freeholders of the county to subscribe to the second oath on the blank, identifying the elector and his residence, but they cannot require more than six such witnesses.

Section 15 obviates the objections of the supreme court of Oregon, announced in its design entitled White vs. Commissioners, 13 Or., 317 (10 Pac., 484), construing the registration acts of 1885 unconstitutional. Upon the advice of many persons, I reduced the number of witnesses necessary to enable an elector not registered to vote, from twelve freeholders to six freeholders. This I think is an all-important section. Although I thought, under section 790, (3) of Hill's Laws of Oregon, the judges had the right to issue subpoenas, I added the authority, upon suggestion. This section requires an elector who is not registered in the precinct in which he applies to vote, to sign (if able) an oath, and produce before the judges six freeholders of the county, and have them take and subscribe the second oath on the same blank "A," to the effect that they are each personally acquainted with the elector and his residence, as stated in his oath above, and believe his other statements to be true. For the purposes of the act, the judges may issue subpoenas and administer oaths.

Section 16 directs the separate precinct registers to be forwarded by each county clerk to the respective polling-places as other election supplies are sent, under the present Australian ballot law.

Section 17 is penal, and punishes willful violations of the act, as in the act of

1891, by fine not less than \$500, or imprisonment in the penitentiary not less than one year.

I hope the bill will be enacted.
E. W. BINGHAM.

BLOWN TO SEA IN A SMALL YAWL.

The Disastrous Coasting Voyage of Two Mariners.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., Jan. 8.—As the United States revenue cutter Boutwell was approaching the mouth of St. John's river late last evening the lookout discovered a cat-rigged boat flying a signal of distress. One of the Boutwell's boats sent to investigate found a sailor in the bottom of the yawl. He was unconscious and his mouth was on his naked forearm as though he had tried to drink his own blood.

He proved to be Captain Charles Herman, of Providence, R. I. On November 21, accompanied by Charles Gladding, he set out in the yawl Cochecho for a cruise along the coast of Florida. When they left Charleston on December 26, they were blown out to sea. Their provisions and water were soon exhausted.

Last Friday, Herman thinks it was, the lighthouse of Anastasia island was sighted. By this time Gladding was crazy, and put off for shore in a boat attached to the Cochecho, and undoubtedly was lost. Herman remembers nothing else, and must have become unconscious shortly after Gladding left. The Cochecho then drifted up the coast with its unconscious master until discovered by the Boutwell.

Herman weighed 180 pounds when he left Providence. He now weighs only 110, and is so weak he can hardly raise his head.

STATE OF OHIO, CITY OF TOLEDO,
LUCAS COUNTY, } ss.

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FRANK J. CHENEY.

Sworn to before me and subscribed in my presence, this 6th day of December, A. D. 1896.

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