

Oregon Scout.

AMOS K. JONES, EDITOR.
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 1890.

THE MUNICIPAL FARCE.

It will seem to the average citizen who takes the trouble to investigate that the manner in which the city government is conducted is very peculiar and amounts to nothing more or less than a farce. By reference to the account of the council proceedings, published elsewhere in this paper, it will be seen that at a special meeting held recently the object of which was not stated in the mayor's call, matters of vital importance to the taxpayers were brought up and acted upon, and orders issued by a minority vote of the members of the council present, in defiance of all law, justice, equity and common sense. The spectacle is presented of two councilmen, who were sworn to look after the interests of the city to the best of their ability, calmly looking on at the proceeding and refusing to vote, evidently fearing to offend somebody, while an outrage was being perpetrated and a precedent established which if not checked must result in ruin and bankruptcy to the city. The spectacle is presented of a mayor deciding a ballot when only two councilmen have voted and five councilmen are present. The spectacle is presented of a councilman fiercely contending and voting for a measure in which he is financially interested—a measure which he should know if he does not know, is unlawful.

The spectacle is not a pleasant one, to be sure, but what is going to be done about it? We feel confident that it will continue unless checked by the vigorous denunciation and opposition of the people at large. We believe that in preference to such a state of affairs it would be cheaper and better to abandon the city government altogether. We have no hesitancy in saying that any officer who wilfully prostitutes his office should be impeached and prosecuted, and any member of the council who is afraid to express his honest convictions and vote accordingly cannot serve his constituents better than by handing in his resignation. THE SCOUT will ever be found watching the interests of the people and next week will probably have occasion to ventilate this matter from top to bottom.

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR OREGON.

The grandest opportunity Oregon will have to show to the world the extent of her varied resources will be at the coming World's Fair at Chicago. Preparations should now be inaugurated, making this display one which will present the possibilities which lie within our State. People who have very vague ideas of what Oregon is and what she will be, would there have an opportunity of witnessing for themselves what can be produced in this State. Few States in the Union can represent industries more varied. The rich soil of our valleys is capable of producing an agricultural display equal to any of the States, while a mineral display can be made second to none.

One of the main incentives to the rapid settlement of Kansas, Nebraska and the Dakotas can be traced to the magnificent display given by these States at fairs and expositions held at Kansas City, Omaha and other points along the Missouri river. Farmers from Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Missouri here beheld with wonder the products of the new States across the Missouri, and not a few then and there decided to cast their fortunes with these growing empires. No other States in the Union can show a history of more rapid development than the three above named, which was brought about by their showing to the outside world the capabilities of their soil. Oregon can do the same thing. She can place on display products which will make the eyes of the German as well as the Yankee stick out farther than when they first beheld the mammoth displays of corn, wheat, oats and potatoes, grown in the soil across the Missouri. Every dollar expended in this manner will yield five in return. Let us begin early for the preparation of a display which will be worthy of a State destined to occupy a place in the front.

CHURCH PROPERTY.

The question of the taxation of church property, says the Willamette Farmer, is being argued with considerable force by many of our best citizens and taxpayers, many of them being church members. The accumulation of property by rich and powerful church corporations is attracting

the attention of everyone who desires the welfare of his country, and petitions are being circulated and signed extensively throughout the State, asking our coming legislature to amend the laws that these vast accumulations of the best property in the land may be compelled to bear its just proportion of the public burden. Unless the acquisition of property by church corporations is soon curtailed we believe there will be trouble in camp. The exemption of the millions of church property from the tax roll simply increases the rate borne by private property, and indirectly does that which the Constitution forbids, that is, taxes private property for church purposes. For instance, in a community which has half a million dollars' worth of property, including one hundred thousand belonging to churches, the exemption of that one hundred thousand from taxation causes the remaining four hundred thousand to pay one fifth more taxes than they would if the hundred thousand paid its proportion of the tax, and consequently, every individual paying a dollar taxes pays twenty cents to support churches. Now, when we consider the vast accumulations of the rich and powerful churches, it is enough to create some alarm. If our law-makers would do something to benefit those who most need help, they would increase the amount of general exemption on household furniture from \$300 to \$500 and strike out the exemption of church property for all over \$500. This would give poor churches and poor people a chance to breathe. Then with the swindle of the deducting of indebtedness repealed we would have a pretty good tax law.

ROE REAPPEARS.

And Further Explains the Reasons for His Attitude Toward the Hunt Road.

SUMMERVILLE, Or., Sept. 15, 1890.
EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:—

In your issue of the 11th inst., in which you were kind enough to publish my letter correcting a number of errors in a previous issue, in comments on the same, you fall into several more mistakes in regard to the same subject, the Hunt railroad.

I do not wish to believe you do this knowingly, but if it is continued, I shall be compelled to believe it is intentional.

The statement you make on authority of the "committee" that I sold the right-of-way to the U. P. Co., is not true. I never sold anything to the U. P. Co., nor advised my neighbors to. I did sell the right-of-way through a part of my place to the Railway Extension Co., but I did not "advise" my neighbors to. They are all capable of attending to their own business.

The statement that I knew at the time I would be asked to give or sell the right-of-way to the Hunt road, is also untrue. I knew nothing of the kind, for the Hunt road was not located through my place at that time, and all rumors I heard were to the effect that it would go west of my place. In regard to me not allowing the grade to be made through my place though offered a "bond" to insure me against all damages, I will say this; every man acquainted with railroad methods knows if he gets any damages, it is much the surest plan to have a settlement before the company gets possession of the right-of-way, as then he must begin suit against them and their attorneys can prolong the case almost indefinitely.

In relation to the "bond" you so positively state I was offered, that offer consisted of a statement by Mr. Rinehart that he thought he could get twenty-five or thirty men to sign a bond guaranteeing that I would get what the court would award as damages.

It is hardly necessary to call attention to the fact that such a bond would be worthless, for when a court gives an award in such cases, the money must be paid before possession can be taken. Therefore such bond would be absolutely of no value in this case, and the object of the offer is obvious to every one.

If I had sold or granted the right-of-way, it would have been on condition that no work should be done until near the time the road led would be needed, which we all know would not be for some time, as the building of a railroad across the Blue mountains cannot be accomplished much short of two years. As to my discrimination in favor of a company which you say has ever been an oppression of the people, I will call your attention to the fact that you do not know either the angle or distance either road runs through my place, and in saying I discriminate against one road, you are making an assertion without foundation or fact to warrant them. I observed there was great rejoicing over the arrangement

to bring a branch of this same oppressing energy into your town.

As to the example Hutchinson Bros., and myself might have set to the persons beyond Summerville, why did they not set the example? They were appealed to for right-of-way long before I was.

It is hardly necessary to mention that all this talk about a few men stopping the building of this road, is the veriest nonsense, as the law provides a way to settle all these matters.

I dislike to be drawn into this discussion, but your misstatements if not corrected would mislead a portion of the public.

You claim I believe, that you are in favor of fair play, justice, truth, right &c., so please do not misrepresent me any more. If you wish any further information about my affairs apply to me and I will give you the facts.

Respectfully,
J. L. ROE.

UNION COUNTY SCHOOLS.

A Trenchant Criticism on the Manner of Conducting Them.

EDITOR OREGON SCOUT:—
Will you allow me space in your paper for a few remarks on the schools of Union county?

It is often remarked, and we believe it to be a fact, "as the teacher so is the school;" but why not say as the county superintendent so are the schools? The success of the school is due to the individual teacher, while the success of the schools are due to the county superintendent. I have been teaching in Union and Baker counties for the past six years, and I have been honored with one visit from the superintendent, and I have never received any rules, regulations or outline of study from the superintendent. The reason of this I suppose is the superintendent has no such orders or regulations to give. It is true that the emoluments of the office of the superintendent is such a beggarly sum that he cannot more than pay his stationery bills, therefore if he goes to the expense of getting up any mode by which there will be any system in conducting the different schools of the county, it must necessarily come out of his pocket. It seems as if the legislators deem the office of county superintendent a useless one which could be dispensed with just as well as not, thereby saving a little expense to each county. Just as long as the office is looked upon in such a light as this, parents and school officers need not expect any grand results from the public schools. We have teachers in Union county from many of the different States. They come here and find no systematic plans of conducting the schools, consequently each one has to go ahead with his own method, and often it is so widely different from the previous method that it takes the pupils at least three months to understand just what the new teacher does want him to do, then after the three months is out, this teacher and his new method departs, and the next teacher comes in with something altogether different. He cannot tell what his predecessor has done. Now, if the county board would make an outline of study for each grade, just what must be accomplished each term and require these outlines to be posted in the school room, and then visit the schools and see that the teachers are carrying out the outlines, it would not be many years until Oregon would stand at the head of the list of successful school management. Then, no difference from what State a teacher might come, he would know just what is required of him.

I would not be understood as advocating that each teacher is to use the same words, manner and mode of instruction, but aim at the same point and "get there." What kind of an general would the United States have if generals from England, France, Spain, Germany and Russia were permitted to come to America and take command of a division and each conduct a campaign according to the tactics of his individual country? We know that they could not possibly accomplish anything. Just so with the teacher's profession, and until the teachers of Union, as well as other counties, are organized into one body and all act at the county superintendent's command we may expect to just plod slowly on in the same old rut; and when we change from one school to another we may expect to start in the work just as ignorant of the results obtained by the previous teacher, as if there had never been a school taught in the district. How long are the school affairs to remain in this condition?
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