

County Clerk Arraigned By Dallas Observer

Gross Negligence or Incompetency Charged. Says Evidence is Not Lacking to Prove Charge

From Polk County Observer, Oct. 13
Some people are wanting to put Ed Smith back into the office because "he made a mighty good county clerk." This is admitted even by the democrats. But has any one noticed that the public's interests have suffered since Asa Robinson has been county clerk? Mr. Smith held the office for four terms and is now asking the voters to return him there just because he was a "good clerk." Mr. Robinson's claim for re-election are based on the same argument.—Polk County Itemizer.

The Observer, while cognizant of the existing conditions, had not intended giving publicity to what may properly be termed either incompetency or willful neglect in the conduct of the county clerk's office under the administration of Mr. Robinson, but since our esteemed democratic contemporary is bold enough to make the above inquiry, it reluctantly gives one of several instances wherein the "public's interests have suffered," and also to show that the present incumbent's claim for re-election cannot be based on the same argument advanced by Mr. Smith's friends for their candidate.

Supposing, Mr. Voter, you were in business, handling, practically speaking, about \$100,000 annually. Supposing, again, that you employed a bookkeeper and gave over to him the responsibility of keeping your accounts, and you remunerated that employe for such service for ten months, during which period he did not even put a scratch of a pen on your journal or ledger. Would you consider that employe a "good clerk?" And, then, after the expiration of ten months supposing this bookkeeper engaged another to write up your financial books, and besides your paying the man whom you hired to perform this service you were called upon to pay an additional fee to others for doing the work. Would you still call him a "good clerk?"

Supposing, too, that your regular employe bookkeeper during these months had simply kept all the financial accounts of your \$100,000 business on file, subject to possible loss or displacement, and not a matter of actual record, would you still persist in calling your employe a "good clerk?"

Books Not Written Up.

These are conditions which actually exist under Mr. Asa Robinson, Junior's administration of the clerkship of Polk county, and are susceptible to full and complete verification. Mr. Robinson entered upon his duties as county clerk on the first Monday of January, 1913, and although there was a great volume of financial business transacted not a single entry was made in the journal or ledger in the clerk's office until the month of November in that year, when Tracy Staats, county treasurer, was engaged to "write up" these books, for which service the county court allowed him \$50 at its December term, held on the first Wednesday of that month. Would this indicate that Mr. Robinson is a "good clerk?"

Following Mr. Staats' work on the clerk's books, practically the same policy was pursued, the financial records simply being filed, but not made of actual record by entry on the proper books. Then, when Insurance Commissioner Ferguson requested all counties within the state to expedite their books prior to their coming under his jurisdiction by reason of the adoption of a uniform system throughout Oregon, and Messrs. Crandall and Roberts, expert accountants, were employed by the county court to perform the necessary work, what condition obtained? These experts, much to their surprise, found that the books referred to were not "written up," and that entries for months past were lacking, this making it necessary for them to perform the clerk's work before they could commence experting his accounts. Then these experts practically took up the work of bookkeeping where Mr. Staats had left off. The county court paid Messrs. Crandall and Roberts something like \$275 for their services, a portion of which was for bookkeeping that should have been done in the clerk's office. Again, would this indicate that Mr. Robinson is a "good clerk?" Is he entitled to base his claims for re-election on this argument?

In the election of public servants qualification is the paramount issue, for coupled with qualification is economy, and the people's finances should be safeguarded as carefully and with the same exactness as one's private affairs.

Statements Are Substantiated.

Fearing that our esteemed contemporary, or its constituency, might charge inaccuracies or misrepresentations in The Observer's statements with regard to the manner in which the clerk's office has been conducted under its present official, it has secured incontrovertible evidence to prove its allegations of neglect, incompetency or to whatever cause the dilatoriness may be attributed. Under the new uniform system of bookkeeping by all counties of the state, county clerks are required to render to the insurance commissioner's office at the close of each month a statement of financial conditions. Following the close of business for last December, Polk county's report should have been filed in the office of Commissioner Ferguson within a few days, yet the detailed report did not reach that office until sometime in May, and then it was prepared by Crandall and Roberts, expert accountants in the employ of the county, which paid for the service, and this condition prevailed notwithstanding the fact that the insurance commissioner made repeated requests for the reports that he might audit and complete his compilation of figures. Well, again, we ask, does this constitute a "good clerk?"

Fails to Make Reports.

On February 28, 1914, the commissioner addressed "Mr. Asa B. Robinson, Jr., County Clerk, Polk County, Oregon," as follows: "Dear Sir: It is now practically the first of March and we have not received from you the outstanding warrants for a year county as of December 31, 1913. Nor have we received reports nos. 2 and 3 as of date January 31, 1914. May we inquire just when we may expect same? It is very essential that we receive these reports promptly and we urge upon you the necessity of having same made up and mailed to us immediately."

In reply to the above, on March 4, 1914, Mr. Robinson wrote the following letter to Mr. Ferguson: "In reply to yours of February 28 will say that we have had three weeks circuit court in the month of February and there has been too much extra work without any extra help, and we expect to get the books caught up by next week, and end you in all the reports up to date."

Commissioner Is Insistent.

The expectations of the over-worked county clerk, however, were not realized, and the reports were not forthcoming, so twenty-one days after Mr. Robinson had written the commissioner, or on March 25, 1914, Insurance Commissioner Ferguson again addressed the Polk county clerk as follows, omitting the address:

"I have written you several times regarding the amount of your outstanding warrants as of December 31, 1913, and January 31, 1914, but so far, you have failed to receive the courtesy of a reply. Your reports on forms Nos. 2 and 3 for the month of February are also very much past due. I have been very patient with you in this matter, but I must now insist that this subject be given your immediate attention and the information we have asked for together with your February reports be mailed to this office without further delay."

If you need assistance in the way of completing these reports, if you will advise us, we will be very glad to send some one to aid you."

The matter was getting serious for the clerk, and although his books were not in shape to compile the reports, he made a stab at the figures wanted in the following letter, under date of March 25, 1914: "The amount of outstanding warrants in general fund as of December 31, 1913, is as follows: General fund, \$2694.79 and general road fund, \$234.58. Total, \$2929.37. We will have other reports ready to mail in to you in a few days."

Reports Made by Experts.

The reports were finally made out, as previously stated, by Crandall and Roberts, and did not get into the office of the commissioner until May, more than four months late. And this is the Itemizer's estimate of a "good clerk."

During the months that the tax payers' bookkeeping was being grossly neglected, Mr. Robinson had two deputy clerks in his office, or one more than Ed. M. Smith ever had during his incumbency. And there were no important matters, to say nothing of book-keeping, pigeon-holed by Mr. Smith, either. If our esteemed democratic contemporary believes such a record makes Mr. Robinson a "good clerk," or the equal of his republican opponent in the approaching election, its estimate of efficiency and economy in public service is certainly considerably wanting. What the experts found by their investigations is material for another story. It is not, however, intended to here intimate that gross irregularities existed, because while there were irregularities they were the result of negligence rather than from any other cause. And the same is found to be true in the investigation by Insurance Commissioner Ferguson's agents, now under way.

If we may be permitted to reiterate previous statements, Ed. M. Smith is given credit for being the best county

clerk Polk ever had. No man ever had reason to charge him with neglect of duty or incompetency in office. There are hundreds of persons throughout Polk county today, some of whom are his political opponents, who stand ready to testify to this indisputable fact through their personal business contact with him, and many more who must acknowledge that for promptness, accuracy and accommodation he was ever there with the goods.

Post Office Time Card

Office hours: Daily, except Sunday, 8 a. m. to 6:30 p. m.

Mail arrives, from Salem 8:50 a. m., 5:35 p. m. Mail arrives from Dallas, 8:50 a. m., and 3:35 p. m. Mail closes for Salem, 9:00 a. m., 1 p. m. and 5:00 p. m. Mail closes for Dallas 9:00 a. m. and 5:00 p. m. Mail closes for Black Rock 11:00 a. m. Mail arrives from Black Rock 2 p. m.

SUNDAY ONLY

Mail arrives from Salem, 8:50 a. m. Mail closes for Salem, 9:00 a. m. Office hours: Sunday only, 9:30 to 10:30 a. m. Effective September 4, 1914. IRA C. MEHLING, Postmaster Falls City, Polk Co., Ore.

The European war situation, in the opinion of military experts both in this country and in such of those of Europe whose opinions have escaped the severe censorship, indicate that the involved powers are likely to be in a prolonged death struggle. The theory of a short and decisive war seems now to be abandoned, and unless conditions materially change the experts say the contests will be prolonged, but none hazards a guess as to how long.

After City Marshal

A petition containing between thirty and forty names asking for the removal of Marshal Tupper was presented to the city council Thursday evening and referred to the police committee. It is generally thought that the council will not grant the wish of the petitioners.—Independence Monitor.

Abstracts of title promptly furnished. Rates reasonable. Brown & Sibley, 610 Mill St., Dallas, Or.

Money to loan on approved real estate security. If you have money to loan, let me find a borrower for you. Phone 1621, Dallas, Oregon. Walter L. Tooe, Jr.

Catarrh Cannot Be Cured

with LOCAL APPLICATIONS, as they cannot reach the seat of the disease. Catarrh is a blood or constitutional disease, and in order to cure it you must take internal remedies. Hall's Catarrh Cure is taken internally, and acts directly upon the blood and mucous surfaces. Hall's Catarrh Cure is not a quick medicine. It was prescribed by one of the best physicians in this country for years and is a regular prescription. It is composed of the best tonics known, combined with the best blood purifiers, acting directly on the mucous surfaces. The perfect combination of the two ingredients is what produces such wonderful results in curing catarrh. Send for testimonials, free. F. J. CHENEY & CO., Props., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists, price 75c. Take Hall's Family Pills for constipation.

Notice to Electric Light Users

All persons owing the Falls City Electric Light Co. for service prior to April 1, 1914, will please pay the amount to D. L. Wood at The News office.



HOME-MADE CANDIES ELLIS'

Professional Cards

PHYSICIAN
W. B. Officer, M. D.
Physician and Surgeon
Office over Thompson's drug store. Mutual phone 291. Phone Night Call 441

PHYSICIAN
F. M. HELLWARTH
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON
Office one door east of P. O. Office and Residence Phone 368 Falls City, Oregon

ATTORNEY
JAS. G. HELTZEL,
Attorney at Law
Practice in all the State courts. Suite 11 Bush-Breyman Bldg. phone 295 Salem, Oregon

FUNERAL DIRECTOR
R. L. CHAPMAN
Funeral Director
We attend to all work promptly. Dallas and Falls City, Or.

Business Cards

HOTEL
Falls City Hotel
Sample Rooms
Best Accommodations
F. Droeg, Proprietor

BARBER SHOPS
Bohle's Barber Shops
Falls City, Oregon
Where you can get a 'Shave, Hair Cut, Bath or 'Shine'
Agent for Dallas Steam Laundry
Bundles forwarded Tuesday evening

MONUMENTS
G. L. HAWKIN
MARBLE AND GRANITE MONUMENTS
Dallas, Oregon

PHONE 91
The Oregon
C. W. Matthews, Proprietor

PHONE 127
The Idaho
CHAS. MIX, Proprietor

Notice to News Subscribers
A blue-pencil cross mark on this notice means that your subscription to The News has expired and needs fixing. Do it now.

REAL ESTATE
F. K. Hubbard Realty Company
Real Estate bought, sold, and exchanged. Collections, Insurance, Abstracts. Notarial work; Legal Documents Prepared. Office, in the Falls City News office.

Extra copies of The News are printed each week, and will be sent to any address desired, postpaid, for 2 cents per copy.
Walter L. Tooe, Jr., Lawyer, Nat'l Bank Bld'g., Dallas, Ph. e: 1 Man 1621.

HERE ARE TRUE FACTS

Read through this LETTER and see if it is not fair then THINK OUT YOUR OWN OPINION

By JOHN B. TURNER, Attorney and Ex-Councilman, Salem, Ore., Sept. 21

FOR a statement concerning the effect of the dry policy on Salem, and in answer to the article by E. B. Lockhart, published in the Salem Statesman, August 23, 1914, and in the New Republic under date of September 11, 1914, I submit the following:
December 1, 1913, Salem closed her fifteen saloons, three restaurants, two wholesale houses and withdrew liquor permits from eight drug stores, thus denying herself the annual revenue of \$15,400. The saloons employed sixty-five men, the restaurants twenty-five. Together they had a payroll of \$5,700 per month. Practically all those who conducted saloons and those employed by the saloons and restaurants have left town. All the buildings occupied a year ago by saloons are vacant, except six that have been occupied by tenants who left another building vacant, moving only to better their location. Several of the best buildings in town have their windows boarded up to serve as billboards. There are now more than five hundred modern dwellings for rent in Salem.
Rental returns have greatly depreciated. Store property on State Street, which for five years had rented for \$185 per month, was re-leased within four months after the city went "dry" for two years at the rate of \$110 per month. This is but a fair sample of the reduction all through the business section on property that was up for re-leasing or renting since the city went "dry."

BUSINESS UNBEARABLE.

Every merchant in town, except one—a radical Prohl, has complained of the poor business done this year, and in order to keep going has dispensed with all their surplus help, thus throwing a good many clerks out of their regular monthly stipend. Many of these have now left Salem, seeking work some place else. Three shoe stores have been closed, two by the sheriff and one voluntarily. One of the largest dry goods stores has been sued for the first time in its twenty years' existence. Salem has been the closing of fourteen places of business, other than saloons, since the first of January, 1914. Does this look like big improvement?

Now I will show you how Mr. Lockhart fixed up his prohibition article. The \$20,000 public market building had the roof on before the town went dry. The only work that has been done on the building this year was the lathing of the first story and the plastering of one room, which is now occupied by four stalls, constituting the public market. The \$40,000 insurance block is being built by Geo. F. Rodgers under a permit which gives the estimated valuation at \$30,000, and for which the contract was less for less than \$13,000.

BUILDING DURING DRY PERIOD.

Compare these facts with Mr. Lockhart's statement:

For the last wet year the building permits from January to August, inclusive, totaled \$388,925, and from the first of November, 1913, to the twentieth day of September, 1914, \$268,160. I start with November first in order to show some real prohibition facts. During the campaign of 1913 J. G. Voget, a howling prohibitionist, published a statement that if the town went dry he would build sixteen new houses. So immediately after the election in November, 1913, he procured from the City Recorder sixteen permits, and under those sixteen permits he began the construction of nine houses of three and four rooms each. Only two were completed far enough to receive the windows and doors, and they have never been finished. No work of any kind has been done on these frames since last December.

I met Mr. Lockhart last Saturday night in Mr. Bechtel's real estate office, whom he was trying to induce to give him an exaggerated statement as to

business in real estate, and I asked him if he had deliberately lied about the building permits, and he said the boy who had given him the figures had made a mistake, and in his Statesman Sunday morning he makes a statement that the figures of \$415,055 in his article published in the Statesman August 23 should have been \$219,160. He found his mistake mightily quick after he knew I had a check on the building permits.

CITY IMPROVEMENTS STOPPED.

The \$9,000 fire engine was purchased early in 1913, after the money had been appropriated by the City Council in 1912. The Capital Journal, the evening paper, changed its location and installed a new press, the Statesman is in the same old quarters, and the only new things it has are a telegraph operator and some type metal. One new church, costing \$500, has been built since the town went dry. The Capital Business College is at the old stand, while Williamette University is still looking forward to "the greatest year in her history." Let it be noted that the enrollment at the grammar schools opening day 1913 was 1519, and for the same day this year 1459. It would seem that closing the door of the saloons meant closing the door of the schools.

CHERRY FAIR AND WHO MADE IT.

During the campaign of 1913 a statement was published, purporting to come from the Ministerial Association, to the effect that if the people would vote dry they would establish a coffee club for those who could not afford to belong to the Ilihee, Elks or Moose, and that the churches would finance the Cherry Fair to the extent of the usual support from the saloons. The Board of Trade, which had always conducted the Cherry Fair, being unable to obtain any aid from the Ministerial Association, refused to go on with the Fair. The Cherrians, an organization of 109 (no prohibitionists), rather than see a year pass without a Cherry Fair, became the sponsors. Each member gave a week of his time and \$5 in money in order to have a Fair. The attendance was about one-half what it was in 1913. Not a concession took in enough to pay expenses. You can take it from one who knows, the Cherrians will never again finance a Cherry Fair.

DECREASED BANK DEPOSITS.

The amount of deposits in Salem banks shows a decrease of \$399,942.69 since the town went dry, and this in spite of the fact that \$485,000 received for bonds sold in Boston was on deposit in the banks in January, 1914, statement. This money was distributed to Salem people and left here. It was used to pay a refund on sewer assessments and to cover warrants outstanding.

NO WAGES TO GO.

A leading schoolman told me that he did not know how the children would be equipped this year, but that he expected many of them would have to be aided with books, owing to the fact that so many parents have been unable to secure work this summer. The contractor mentioned by Mr. Lockhart I have been unable to find. A prominent—but why continue? The list could be extended indefinitely.

I have shown enough to those who will see. Clarence True Wilson is reported to have said in a prohibition speech that Salem last year had sixteen policemen and this year had only one. Common sense would tell anyone this statement was false. Just remember that it is the hypocrite, "the wolf in sheep's clothing," that always gets your goat.

I regret very much the necessity of making public to the world the business condition of Salem, because I expect to live here for several years to come, but with the hope that others may be saved I cast the city's future a sacrifice upon the altar of the State of Oregon.

Are you going to vote to kill the Hop Industry, to bring about these conditions? Don't you feel that times are hard enough now?

HOP GROWERS AND DEALERS ASSOCIATION OF OREGON (PAID ADVERTISEMENT.)