



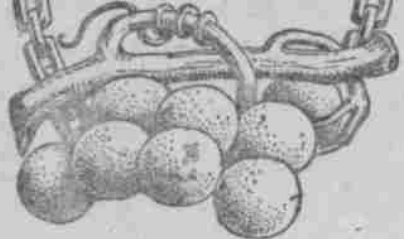
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COMPELLED TO RETURN COIN

(The Oregonian.)

Oswald West, Democratic nominee for Governor, not only collected mileage and witness fees from the government for his recent trip to Washington, but he also charged and collected from the state mileage as Railroad Commissioner for making the same trip. From the government West claimed and collected \$365.20 in mileage and fees for going to Washington last January. At the same time he charged and collected from the state \$253 for railroad fare and other expenses for making the same trip. While he later returned to the state treasury \$315.20 of the amount collected from the government, he did not make this restoration until he had been accused by certain Federal officials of being a "grafter."

Visit Really Political.

West went to Washington last January, ostensibly on business connected with Oregon Railroad Commission, of which he was a member under appointment by Chamberlain. At the same time he appeared before a committee in the House of Representatives in the interest of a bill then

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pending and materially affecting the interests of the settlers on public lands in the Siletz Indian reservation. As a matter of fact, the real mission of West in visiting Washington on this occasion was apparently to consummate the deal with Bourne and Chamberlain by which it was arranged that he (West) was to be the Democratic nominee for Governor in the contest now pending in this state.

Before leaving for Washington West was served with a subpoena commanding him to appear in this city as a witness for the government in the trial of Binger Hermann, which was then about to be called. After reaching the national capital, he wrote the United States district attorney explaining that if he should be notified a few days in advance he would return to Oregon and testify as desired. The requested notice was served and West returned.

Later West appeared in the Federal court as a witness against Hermann. On his discharge by the district attorney as a witness West went before the clerk of the court and claimed mileage from Portland to Washington and return, amounting in the aggregate to \$365.20. Upon making the required affidavit, attesting the facts that he was called back from Washington and that it would be necessary for him to return to Washington to complete the business he was engaged in, West received the full amount of \$365.20 in payment of his claim.

Vouchers Tell Tale.

On the day that he collected from the government, this money to which he was not entitled, he was charged by certain Federal officials, who had witnessed the incident, with taking money to which he was not entitled. Two days later he turned into the state treasury all but \$50 of the amount he had accepted from the government under an oath which was inconsistent with the facts in the case. The facts are that West did not return to Washington after returning to this state to testify in the Hermann case. As a matter of fact, having been served with the necessary papers in this city, West, who was then a resident of Salem, was entitled to mileage from the government only from Salem to Portland and return, which, with his fees as a witness, would not have amounted to more than \$11 or \$14.

Records at the State House in Salem show that West for this identical trip charged and collected from the state \$253. Vouchers for this amount are on file in the office of the secretary of state. There are two vouchers, one for the O. R. & N. company for a round-trip ticket from Portland to Washington, D. C., and the other is West's own voucher for meals, hotel bills, etc.

The "public business" upon which West was ostensibly called to Washington, according to the statement in his own voucher, was "In re Wells Fargo & Company rates, old reports and car demurrage rules."

It was for these alleged services that the taxpayers footed the expense bills of his trip, yet it is known that the major portion of his time was devoted to lobbying for the Siletz homesteader's bill and other matters political. The statement "In re Wells-Fargo & Co. rates, old reports and car demurrage rules" causes state house attaches who are familiar with the Chamberlain-West game of politics, to wink at one another and the whole incident is regarded as a huge joke in official circles. It is the prevailing opinion that West's mission to Washington had nothing whatever to do with the official business of the Railroad Commission, but that he simply seized the opportunity to make the trip at the expense of the taxpayers.

The records show that West attempted to "double shoot" the game by charging and collecting mileage and expenses from both the state and the government for the very same trip. That he was not personally actually paid for this service, may be attributed to the fact that attaches of the Federal offices in this city openly charged West with being a "grafter" in that he was seeking to collect money to which he had no title from the government. It is very pertinent to the situation to note that West made no pretenses of turning over to the state treasury any part of the mileage he had obtained illegally from the government until after he had been called to account by the government officials for his grasping and questionable methods. Even then he turned over to the state \$50 less than he had mulcted from the government, contending that he was entitled to that amount for "hotel bills" and "incidental expenses." The question naturally arises: Was West not collected for these same expense items from both the state and the government?

It is a perfectly logical assumption that West intended to keep the mileage and witness fees he obtained improperly from the government as well as his mileage and expenses obtained from the state as Railroad Commissioner, but for the fact that he was "caught" in the palpable act of fleeing the government by several officers of the government and his attention called to the fact. If it had not been for this timely discovery, there is no question but that West would have kept every cent of the money collected from the state and government for the very same errand. Otherwise, why did he undertake to square himself by turning over to the state treasury any part of the funds he had collected from the government under what amounts to a false oath.

So far as West's claim against the government is concerned, he was entitled only to the collection of mileage from Salem to Portland and return, including witness fees and not exceeding \$14. This is true for the reason that the subpoena compelling his

attendance as a witness in the Hermann trial was served on him in Portland, before he had gone to Washington. That is all he ever was entitled to from the government. In addition to making a false oath to get \$365.20 from the government, West got his fingers into the state treasury at the same time by collecting mileage and expenses for the same trip from the state in his official capacity as railroad commissioner. Only the alertness of officials at the Federal building saved to the taxpayers the \$315.20 West actually turned into the state treasury from the funds he collected from the government.

As a matter of fact, if West was entitled to mileage from the government at all, he was entitled to the total amount. The \$365.20 in that event, was his own personal property. The fact that he turned over \$315.20 or any other part of the original amount to the state amounts to a confession on his part that he did not at any time a valid claim to the money. Following this unusual transaction a step further, if West was not entitled to this money from the government, then surely the state should not have received it. It was altogether a transaction between West and the United States government. If he had no legal claims to the money surely the state did not. It should have been returned to the same agency from which it was obtained irregularly. The state had no claim to it, and the fact that West turned the money into the state treasury in no sense minimized his offense against the government. If West was not entitled to the money, then the government surely was entitled to the funds for it was from that source the funds were abstracted improperly and illegally.

The foregoing facts may be substantiated by any person interested if he will refer to the records in the Federal court in this city and the office of secretary of state at Salem. Attempted juggling or misstatement of facts in this particular instance will prove futile. West's paper even admits that he collected \$365.20 from the government. The fact could not be denied. The records prove it.

What the public would like to know is: Was West entitled to the mileage and fees he collected from the government? If so, why did he turn any part of it over to the state? Why was not the money restored to the government to which it belonged? Why did West charge against and collect from the state travel pay and expenses for making the same trip?

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