

# The Santiam News

Politically Independent

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T. L. DUGGER  
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

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## THE ASSEMBLY QUESTION

Without doubt, the republican party or, at least, a part of it, will hold a state assembly, for the purpose of dictating to the primary voters of that party, whom it shall nominate for state office. Some of the counties will hold like assemblies, for a similar purpose in the selection of county candidates. The only logical explanation of this movement is, the promoters of the assembly think the average voter has not sense enough to select proper candidates and they, kindly, propose telling who is and who is not the proper candidate.

This interference with the prerogative of the primary voter, is simply a gross insult to his intelligence. It is equivalent to saying, we (the assemblyites) are men of superior political sagacity and because of this fact, we are more competent to select the men who shall conduct the affairs of state than you of the common herd. We will select the nominees while you, plebeians, may have the privilege of walking up to the polls and voting for whom we tell you to vote.

There may have been a time when the voters of Oregon were so grossly ignorant that they would submit to this sort of dictation, but that day is of the past. The average voter of to-day, thinks he knows his own mind concerning matters political, just about as well before as after he has read Judge George's effusion defending the assembly plan.

The feature of our present primary law, to which Judge George, the Oregonian and other advocates of the assembly most strenuously object, is Statement No. One, to which the candidate for the legislature may subscribe or not, just as he chooses. An United States senator selected by a legislature pledged through Statement One, is not to the liking of the advocates of the assembly. He has secured his election without any help from this bunch and, therefore, is under no obligations to them. They cannot dictate to the senator whom he shall recommend for the various appointive federal offices nor what particular measure of legislation in congress he shall support or oppose. In fact, they can have no more influence over the action of the senator in congress, than any other citizen. This loss of power and influence in the politics of the state, is exceedingly bitter and humiliating to these dethroned bosses, and it is only natural that they should strive to regain their lost prestige.

The assembly is the method they have devised, to regain their lost power. Let the people beware. Should the assembly be successful in its designs and its candidates nominated and elected, the most corrupt political era of Oregon's history will soon ensue. Being able to break down the provisions of the primary law, these same bosses will not cease their endeavors, until every vestige of reform laws are eliminated from our statute books.

The Oregonian, in its tirades against the direct primary law, including the statement takes a sort of gnomish delight in referring to Senators Bourne and Chamberlain as products thereof. It points out no particular acts on their part, which justifies its oft-times derisive allusions; yet refers to them as a sort of disgraceful result of the people's selection.

Senators Bourne and Chamberlain, doubtless, have their faults. They are but human. Their senatorial acts do not, probably, suit the Oregonian and its crowd of malcontents, for they endeavor, at times at least, to do the will of their constituents—the people. Anyway they suit the people and stand about as high in the councils of the nation as did ex-Senators McBride, Simon or Fulton—products of the old method of electing senators.

The people can be assured of one fact, and that is: No man who is an advocate of the assembly is, at heart, friendly to the interests of the people. He would restrict and curtail the power of the people if he could. He has a selfish purpose, either for himself or his friends, in view and is, at heart, opposed to popular government. He is unwilling to submit to the will of the majority and, if possible, will overcome or set aside that will, by underhand schemes and plots, of which the proposed assembly is an instance.

Perhaps our direct primary law can be made more efficient and more satisfactory to, even the Judge George class of politicians, by proper amendment. If so, time and experience will bring it about. Likewise may our initiative method of law making be made more satisfactory. But this cannot be done if these laws are evaded, completely set aside or abused. If defects exist, correct them. Instead of devising schemes to evade, let us busy our brains in correcting features of the laws which, experience may teach us, are defective.

Oregon is leading the nation in originating reform legislation and the success, which has crowned our efforts, is causing other states to sit up and take notice. The popular election of United States senators will not be adopted, as a whole, until there are a majority of the members of that branch of congress who feel themselves obligated to the people, rather than to the bosses, trusts, railroads etc. Oregon has pointed a way to bring that result about. Shall we abandon the proud position of leading the nation in reformatory laws, at the behest of a few disgruntled bosses and repudiated politicians? Every man with a spark of love for popular government, in his heart, will respond with a most emphatic No next November.

## LARGE VS SMALL COUNTIES

Among the thirty or more measures the electors of Oregon will pass upon next fall, will be some half-dozen new county schemes. With the merits of the various divisions, a vast majority of the voters of Oregon can know but little, except in a general way. They will simply have to guess which is the better way to vote. In case there is no opposition to the establishment of a new county, the voter can readily cast his ballot in the affirmative. But where there is opposition, the voter, not directly acquainted with the various conditions of the counties effected, will simply have to shut his eyes and go it blind.

As a rule, the government of the small county can be and is administered more economically than in the larger ones. There is less opportunity for graft and each portion can come more intimately in touch with the governing powers. Nor are the salaries paid officers so large, barring counties containing large cities, therefore men will not be so eager to serve the people, efficiently.

On the other hand the large and populous county can pay larger official salaries, and may, therefore, be supposed to secure more competent officials.

When the boundaries of most Oregon counties were fixed, the population was sparse, not more than 40,000 or 50,000 in the entire state. The pioneer civilization of those days did not require such roads and bridges as at the present; nor did the courts need to meet so frequently. The chief mode of traveling, was on horseback and a trail was a sufficient highway.

Now, Oregon has a population of nearly one million souls. Aside from Multnomah, there are several counties, the population of either of which, is equal to that of the entire state or territory, when the counties were organized. It is but reasonable that the people should desire that county boundaries should be fixed to suit conditions of the present. Even should a county be reduced to the amount of territory required by the state constitution—400 square miles, it would yet be large, as compared with counties of the eastern states. All of our large counties, as they become more densely populated, may expect their boundaries to be reduced, for the reason that political boundary lines are and should be fixed to suit the convenience of the people.

Yet, in some instances, when a town becomes affected with a desire to become a county seat, when there is no general desire on the part of the people outside of the immediate confines of such towns, the electors of the state at large should be cautious in creating a new county, when there is no just or economic demand therefor.

As a matter of fact, only the people of the districts effected can vote intelligently upon questions of this character. They, only, are the people interested and have a right to control such matters. It is evident that a county can be divided, under the present method of procedure, when a majority of the people of such county are opposed to division. What can the people of the Willamette valley know of the conditions effecting an Eastern Oregon county? Yet they will be asked, next fall, to pass upon the merits of just such cases. But, for that matter, the average voter can know but little of the merits of two candidates for an office, for one of which he must vote. There is more or less guess work in elections anyway. The elector may cast his ballot for a man or measure, thinking he is conserving societies best interests when, afterward, he finds that he has voted on the wrong side.

It is the duty of the elector to obtain as much light as possible and, laying aside personal prejudice or favoritism, use his best judgment in casting his ballot; not only upon these county division matters, but for all candidates for office and matters effecting the public welfare.

Of course, the normal school towns think that there is merit in having the state support a high school for their respective towns; for that is what the so-called normals amount to—nothing more. Scio erected her own school building and pays her teachers for the grade departments and the county pays the teachers for the high school departments. The state has erected large school buildings at Monmouth, Ashland and Weston. Cannot the counties wherein these buildings are located pay the teachers? If not, why not?

President Taft's administration is now one year and three months gone. If there was any doubt, when he was inaugurated, that he was owned and controlled by the "interests," there is none now. The people will simply have to bear with him for two years and nine months more and then endeavor to elect a president who will serve THEIR interests.

President Taft should be commended for his efforts to reform court procedure. The fact that a criminal, if he has money, can keep his case before the courts, year after year, on technicalities, appeals, etc., goes far towards destroying respect for them in the minds of the people. This disrespect for the courts is, probably, the primary cause of lynchings.

If the next congress is Democratic, it cannot do less nor worse than the present congress has done. The legislation which has been enacted, aside from the appropriation bills, has not been desired by the people. Only the trusts and manufacturing interests have been conserved.

The Willamette valley will give the Jim Hill electric railway lines a warm welcome and plenty of patronage when they come. He cannot get busy too quick to suit the people.

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### Administrator's Notice

Notice is hereby given that the undersigned has been duly appointed administrator of the estate of Susannah Crabtree, deceased, by the County Court of Linn County, Oregon. All persons having claims against said estate are hereby notified to present the same to the undersigned at his residence at Kingston, Oregon, within six months from this date duly verified as by law required.

Dated this 9th day of April 1910.  
J. K. WEATHERFORD, P. P. CRABTREE,  
Attorney for Adm. Administrator.

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