

NEW SECRETARY WELL QUALIFIED

Short Sketch of Ben Oleott Who Will Succeed Frank B. Benson—Extended Experience in Banking and Accounting.

SALEM, April 15.—Ben Oleott, who will on Monday be appointed secretary of state by Governor West, is well qualified for the position. He is an expert accountant, and a master of office detail and system. He is a member of the state commission of bankers, and stands high in the esteem of banking men. For the last few years he has claimed Bend, Or., as his home. He has a ranch in Crook county, of which that little town is the metropolis, and he has been engaged in putting it under irrigation. He has made a study of irrigation, and will be a valuable member on the desert land board and other boards of which the secretary of state is a member, by virtue of his position.

Short Sketch of Life.

Ben Oleott is a young man—being the same age as Governor West—37. He was born in Kellsburg, Ill., and there received his education—a business education. He came to Salem from Kellsburg in 1899, and was given employment by William Brown & Co., dealers in hops and wool. Afterwards he accepted employment in the banking house of Ladd & Bush.

Becoming attracted by the gold excitement in British Columbia, he severed his connection with the bank. After prospecting and mining for awhile in the king's dominion, he returned to his home at Kellsburg and entered the banking business with his father. The venture was a successful one, but his father in a few years because of advanced age, desired to retire from active business, and the institution was sold.

Returns to the West.

Oleott returned to the west, and this time it was the gold fields in Alaska that lured him, and he entered the service of Captain Barnett, who founded the town of Fairbanks. Captain Barnett started what was known as the Fairbanks company, and Oleott looked after his banking and mining interests.

After two years in Alaska, he returned to Salem and purchased a farm in Crook county, near the town of Bend, and he has claimed that place as his home. Shortly after purchasing the farm, J. Thorburn Ross, president of the Title Guaranty & Trust Co. of Portland, was indicted for stealing the state's school money, and Governor Chamberlain appointed Oleott as the accountant to represent the state in settling the affairs of the institution.

After settling the affairs of the institution with the state, the surety company which went on Ross' bond desired his services in settling its affairs with the bank, and he entered its services, and upon the completion of his work he accepted a position with Ladd & Tilton. He was offered a permanent position in this institution, but declined it.

Managed West's Campaign.

He continued to do expert accounting and to look after the affairs of his ranch. For 20 years or more he has been a warm personal friend of Governor West, and when he received his nomination for governor thought a reputation in politics, he volunteered his services to him during his campaign and became his manager. He conducted a whirlwind campaign for the governor, with the result that he was elected.

Heads Are Likely to Fall.

Oleott's appointment will doubtless mean a great many changes in the state house. The secretary of state is now today of the state house and grounds. He employs a great deal of help. Whether there will be any changes in the heads of any of the institutions it is too early to predict, but some are freely talked of today. At any rate material changes in the direction of affairs at Salem are bound to result through Mr. Benson's death.

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