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ABOUT THE STATE PRINTING

Bill for Proposed Law Provides That Present Arrangements Shall Continue Until 1909, and Is Apparently Drafted With the Purpose of Giving State Printer Duniway the Benefit of Two Years in the Pasture.

Reports are current of dissension arising among the members of the Typographical Union, No. 1, at the last Sunday meeting, which culminated in a division and, within a few votes, it is understood, of resulting in the complete rejection of the bill for the proposed law creating a state printing office, purchasing a site and the erection of a building for same; placing the state printer upon a flat salary; regulating the office; creating a state printing commission and appropriating funds for the operation of the office for the biennial period of 1909-1910. The supporters of the measure finally won out on an aye vote and the minority was obliged to submit to the will of the majority, at least for the time being. One of the principal causes of dissension, it is understood, was an alleged indiscretion on the part of the legislative committee in making public the draft of the bill before it had been approved by the main body of the union, which is taking the initiative in the matter, to which some of the members objected most strenuously on the ground that the committee overstepped its authority. Another, and more serious ground of complaint was that in asking for an appropriation of \$101,000, which was thought by some to be in excess of about \$30,000 of the actual amount required, there was a premeditated plot on foot to defeat the true object of the measure and place the printing office under the contract system which would inure to the benefit of a local publishing house and several other printing establishments in Portland.

plaining, in effect, that the figures embraced in the bill were merely tentative and not to be construed as being based upon the actual expenses of operating the plant. There still remains, however, a diversity of opinion among the members of the union, it is understood, as to the best system of regulating the office since, while the majority seem to favor the state ownership plan and the most salient features of the bill as drafted, others express favor to the contract system while still others believe the present system the best if placed under a revised schedule of rates.

These developments, which are brought out by practical printers who have worked in the state printer for years and are familiar with every little detail of the business, bring up the question of what amount of money is actually needed to pay the expenses of having the state printing done for the biennial period, and, since conditions are changing with the advent of each succeeding year with a consequent gradual increase of the cost of operation there are no figures upon which anything like an accurate estimate can be based. The secretary of state is the auditor of the accounts and expenses of the state printing office, and his report to the coming legislative session will state that it is a practicable impossibility to arrive at any accurate estimate of the probable cost of public printing for the ensuing two years.

Secretary of State Dunbar's biennial reports for the past six years show that, for the biennial period of 1901-02 the total cost was \$52,000; for the two years 1903-04, \$66,000, and for the last two years from January 1, 1905 to December 31, 1906, the total cost will aggregate about \$84,000. For the period 1903-04 there was an appropriation of \$50,000 and a deficiency of \$16,000, and for the period 1905-06 the appropriation of \$60,000 has long since

been exhausted and the estimated deficiency will amount to about \$24,000. Thus it will be seen that there is no system by which an intelligent forecast of the quantity of printing will be required, hence it is impossible to estimate the probable expense for the biennial period. In the past Secretary of State Dunbar has compiled a tabulated statement of the cost of printing, binding and paper for each year, with a view of estimating the expenses for the ensuing period, but his forthcoming biennial report, it is understood will not contain such statement because of its uselessness.

There are several causes for the gradual and healthy increase in the cost of printing, paper and binding during the past six years, and principal among these are cited the large number of initiative measures, authorized under the Initiative and Referendum clause of the constitution; the printing and binding of the direct primary nominating law and the double expense of printing due to this law which requires supplies for two elections instead of one, as formerly; the printing of the state board of health blanks; all of the materials for the state library commission, and the extravagance of the last legislature, which incurred a greater expense for printing than any previous session. There was an additional cost of \$1000 during the past two years for printing blanks, etc., for the superintendent of public instruction; the cost of printing and binding the assessment rolls for the several counties aggregated \$6000; the cost of printing initiative measures was \$6099, including paper and binding, and there was an additional expense of \$1000 for materials for the newly created agricultural societies.

Neither it is possible to draw a comparison in the cost of public printing with that of other states for the reason that the latter do not furnish the counties with assessment rolls, have no direct primary laws to contend with nor initiative measures to print and bind. The cost of paper also, owing to the steady increase of consumption over the supply, is gradually increasing every year and, altogether, it would be an extremely difficult matter to arrive at conclusions as to possible cost for the next two years with any degree of accuracy.

Another flaw which has been picked in the proposed new law is the clause which provides that (section 5) "The state printer shall do all of the public printing and binding required by the legislature, the supreme court, the governor, the several state officers, state institutions, or any board of commission created under the laws of this state," etc., in that no explicit interpretation of the term "public printing" is furnished. Under the present system of government in this state nearly all of the state institutions are obliged to pay for their printing out of their own funds and it is to their interest to keep their printing bill down to the lowest possible figure, whereas, it is argued, if they were permitted to have their printing done at the general expense of the state it would have a tendency to encourage carelessness on the part of the administration of the several institutions with the result the state printing account would run into enormous figures.

The new bill, as it now stands, contemplates placing the state printer upon a flat salary of \$2000 per year, and authorizes him to employ a bookkeeper, stenographer, and such foremen proof readers, mechanics and laborers as may be necessary to promptly and efficiently perform the duties of his office, and asks for a total appropriation of \$101,000 itemized as follows:

	1909	1910
For salary of state printer	\$ 3,000	\$ 3,000
For bookkeeper, stenographer, proof readers, foremen, printing and binding mechanics, and laborers	25,000	30,000
For incidentals, repairs and contingent expenses and ink	5,000	5,000
For printing and binding material	15,000	15,000
Total	\$48,000	\$53,000

The proposed act is to take effect from and after the second Monday in January, 1909. This fact alone, is regarded by the opposition to the measure as prima facie evidence that the bill is drawn in the interest of State Printer-elect Duniway in order to give him the benefit of at least two years of profit under the present system.

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