

# The Hawaiian Star

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GEORGE F. HENSHALL .....MANAGER

TUESDAY.....FEBRUARY 16, 1909

### MISNAMED "CENTRALIZATION."

A good deal of rubbish is circulating throughout the country regarding centralization of municipal government as a remedy for maladministration, because a few communities, an inconsiderable proportion of the whole nation,—have, usually owing to emergencies, turned to some one unquestionably honorable and capable man and given him the reins of power. The cases are isolated and temporary, but of course they get all the attention,—a careless reader of current news on the divorce problem might easily conclude that "marriage is a failure" because of columns of divorce cases, unless he had the intelligence to consider the vast majority of homes that don't get into the papers at all, just as many people come to think that self-government is a failure because they hear a lot about San Francisco, New York, Minneapolis, Pittsburg and St. Louis, never thinking of thousands of other cities which are getting along very fairly.

Most of these "centralizations" of government, so far from being what is understood here by "government by commission" are in reality plans by which the direct power of the whole people is greatly increased. Take for example the "Des Moines" plan, much mentioned here as something superior to our present plan. It gives the people more direct power probably, than any other system ever tried. Under this system the mayor has large powers, it is true, and the four councilmen who with him constitute practically the whole government seem to represent a notable centralization of power. But the theory of the law is exactly the opposite from centralization: At any time, under the Des Moines system, the people may remove their mayor or any councilman by vote; they may repeal any ordinance the mayor and council enact, they reserve the right to approve all franchises and they place appointments practically in the hands of a civil service commission. To call these new systems "centralization" of government is absurd. They are, on the contrary, the most advanced efforts yet made to distribute the powers of government among the whole people. The mayor of Des Moines, and every councilman of Des Moines is, like the British ministry, answerable to the people all the time.

### JUDICIOUS INCENDIARISM.

It is rather late in the day to hold a fire inquest by newspaper on the burning of Booth's house five years ago. An honorable judge has said that any man has a right to burn his own house or procure the burning of it, if the fire does not catch anybody else's house. If the underwriters can even things up by making everybody pay higher rates of insurance, a fire for an hour is cheaper to live than a caretaker for a year to solve the problem of a house that will not bring in a profitable rental. Danger to the town, which according to the honorable judge is the only element of crime in one's burning his own house, can be avoided by watching the play of the winds. A house burning on Punchbowl or Pacific Heights might, in certain directions of the wind, scatter firebrands all over the city, but most of the year in Honolulu one can tell ninety-nine times out of a hundred for two or three hours ahead, or plenty of time to burn your house down, which way the wind is going to blow, or if a dead calm is to be expected. After taking due meteorological caution all that is required to make a complete success of the scheme is attention to the psychological essentials. Your fireing should be carefully selected so as to get a man or boy whom nobody would believe on oath in case he is caught. If these and other precautions that those engaged in speculative enterprise against predatory insurance companies will readily devise be taken, there will be a very good chance of proving up and collecting for a total loss of from five to one hundred per cent over the full value of the property destroyed.

### BOSTON'S BAD PLIGHT.

Now it is Boston, the Athens of learning and of democracy, the mother of the "town meeting" principle, which is in the hands of the municipal doctors. A cure is prescribed the nature of which is not yet known here, except that it is in the form of a new charter and a unique one. If it is of the latter description it can be neither a one-man power nor a government by commission charter, for anything that is unique can have no counterpart in, above or under the earth. This is what a Boston dispatch of the latter part of January says on the matter:

A scorching arraignment of nearly every branch of the municipal government of Boston, and a recommendation for a new and unique city charter, are contained in the report which the Finance Committee presented to the Massachusetts Legislature today. The report, a document of about 30,000 words, declares that the City Council is dominated by spoils-men, that municipal appropriations are strained to the limit in order to favor contractors or give employment to constituents, that some of the members use their official positions for pecuniary gain, and that both the aldermen and councilmen as legislative bodies are "intellectually and morally incapable of action in the interests of the citizens at large."

The commission also states that the number of municipal employees is excessively large, and that they practically control 10,000 "city hall" votes, thereby constituting a menace to good government.

Even a heaven-made charter will not save the city whose citizens ignore their duties and their powers with relation to their municipal interests. The same indifference on their part which makes the "multitude of counsellors" unsafe will leave the one-man power to grow into unbearable autocracy, with authority in details delegated to rogues, and the government by commission to degenerate into an equally obnoxious bureaucracy. Any community or body politic that desires good government can have it for the taking.

Aside from the discovery of the astounding condition of our local

laws which leads a judge to decide that it is no criminal offense for a man to burn his house down, it may be said that the Booth incident was never taken very seriously by the public. It was too long after the alleged offense anyhow, and the story upon which it was based was scarcely plausible. The really important feature of this ugly case, as far as the public is concerned, is the revelation of how easy an innocent citizen might be made a criminal defendant on faked, cooked up, or encouraged testimony.

The newspapers of the country are always publishing long lists of the contents of boxes placed in and under cornerstones of public buildings, but did anyone ever hear of finding any of these boxes and their contents of money and papers when public buildings are pulled down? Where do they all go?—Advertiser.

To the museums, perhaps. In the case of the old Sailors' Home, where the Yokohama Specie Bank's fine building is nearing completion, the contents of the box were reentered in the corner stone of the new building now occupied by the Seamen's Institute.

After watching the antics of the City and County government and paying the price, the average taxpayer must regret that there is no way provided by law to let out the governing functions by contract to the lowest responsible bidders. There would be a saving of at least fifty per cent and a remarkable increase in efficiency. What an advantage it would be, for instance, to have a police contractor who would consider public welfare and not politics; a road contractor for whom the political boss would have no terrors; and about three first-class men under bonds to do the work which is now vested in the quarreling mayor and board of supervisors.—Advertiser.

Three men from the Advertiser's stock list of tin gods, presumably, and it would not be three weeks before the Advertiser was misrepresenting them and giving them nicknames. But why should an Advertiser tin god be put under bonds?

## PLANS FOR WORK IN LEGISLATURE

(Continued from Page One.)

found a dozen others who were choosing their desks or depositing memoranda in drawers and otherwise getting acquainted with each other and their surroundings.

At 10 o'clock tomorrow morning the wheels begin to go around. During the morning organization will be accomplished and the message from the Governor is expected to be received. Holstein, as speaker, expects to have his committee announced before noon, which will be something of a record. Ellis Long will almost certainly be chairman of the Education Committee, his old job. "He did splendidly in this line before," said Holstein this morning.

Who will be speaker of the Judiciary Committee appears to be uncertain, though E. A. Douthitt is strongly urged for that position.

Rice seems to be as certain for the Vice-Speakership as is Holstein for the Speakership. To a great extent hold-over members of the House who were prominent in committee work in the last session will be chairman of such committees this year.

Much depends, in the House, as far as quickness of organization is concerned, on whether or not the rules of 1907 are adopted. It is expected that they will be, though there is the possibility of some changes being made, some committees added or some committees cut out.

With the adoption of rules and regular organization committees will notify the Senate and the Governor of the fact. The message of the Governor is awaited with lively interest.

There will probably be no afternoon session of either house tomorrow. Holstein believes that the most serious question to be handled by the Legislature this session is that of taxes, the matter of raising revenue to meet the expenses which are absolutely necessary.

In regard to the increase of the militia, while Holstein expresses no personal view, he remarks that it seems to be the feeling among many that with the presence of the Federal troops here, troops that are to be increased according to Army promises, the increase of the militia would be but an added burden of expense, though there are those who emphatically declare that such an attitude, if it exists, is dangerous, unpatriotic, churlish and unappreciative. In fact a little short of criminal negligence.

"I know of no other city or town in the islands that is going to ask for a municipal charter," Holstein laughingly remarked, "so I don't think there will be any municipal debate unless somebody wants to take away Honolulu's municipality, and I hope not, for I think it is a good thing."

There seems to be no immediate prospect of any special investigation committee, although members individually, some of them, have been examining the Nuuanu dam.

"I've made a thorough examination of everything concerned with the Nuuanu dam," says Representative Furtado, "and I don't want to hear anything more about it."

Holstein does not commit himself to any specific opinion as to the best way to raise revenue, though he looked hopeful when the matter of the increase of the percentage on incomes over a certain amount was suggested.

As to committees of the House, Holstein stated this morning that he could not say until after caucus, though he felt certain in regard to Ellis Long

as chairman of the Education Committee.

Republican Senators, caucusing yesterday afternoon, decided on the following officers for the Upper House: W. O. Smith, of Oahu, President; S. E. Kalama, of Maui, Vice-President; William Savidge of Oahu, Clerk; Victor of Hawaii, Hilo, Messenger, and Rev. John Kallo of Maui, Chaplain. The Senatorial committees will be: Public Health: Coelho, Fairchild and Harvey. Education: Robinson, Brown and McCarthy. Enrollment, Revision and Printing: Brown, Quinn and McCarthy. Accounts: Quinn, Robertson and Woods.

Rules: Kalama, Knudsen and Baker. Ways and Means: Fairchild, Coelho and Moore.

Judiciary: Knudsen, Chillingworth and Makekahu. Public Expenditure: Chillingworth, Kalama and Makekahu. Public Lands: Kalama, Knudsen and Woods.

There promises to be a small row at the start-off in the matter of the discussion of water supply legislation, at least as far as a goodly number of the members of both houses are concerned. If their publicly expressed opinions are not changed on the floors of the respective law factories.

And all on account Superintendent of Public Works Marston Campbell going to make an address under the auspices of the Civic Federation in the makai pavilion of the Young Hotel roof garden this evening, on water-works, going fully into the question of public water supply.

"Going to hear Campbell talk water supply before the Civic Federation in the Young roof garden tonight?" asked one Representative of another while walking to the Executive building this morning.

"Certainly not," said the gentleman addressed, "if legislation is required for a proper water supply, and it probably is, it is the place of the Superintendent of Public Work to appear before the Legislature or before a committee of the Legislature to make known the needs, and not to go officially recognizing an unauthorized go-between like the so-called Civic Federation whose executive committee nobody knows unless it is composed of a couple of men on Merchant street."

"I was just wondering if you'd go," said the first, "for I'm not going, and I know of a good number who will stay away for the reason you have just stated."

These statements were made in the presence of a press representative. The executive committee of the Civic Federation has extended an invitation to members of the Legislature and others to be present this evening.

Opinions expressed today, other than those quoted, were to the effect that the Civic Federation "has a nerve" to ask Legislators to go to them to listen, and that if the institution desires legislation it is the place of the institution to go to the Legislature where it will continue to do business, waterworks and otherwise, at the old stand.

There are other legislators who say their brethren who criticize are too sensitive.

## PLAY AT OAHU COLLEGE

Rehearsals of two plays to be given by the Punahou Dramatic Club in Chas. R. Bishop Hall next Saturday evening, February 20th, give promise of an evening of pleasure such as that enjoyed by those who attended the concert

given by the Glee Clubs of the Oahu College last week.

The curtain raiser, "Miss Civilization" has snap and go from start to finish and the humorous as well as the serious side of the life of a professional burglar is cleverly worked out by the leader of the gang, Rexford Hitchcock, and his comrades Watson Ballentyne and Will Desha. The chief has difficulties of his own in controlling the vivacious appetites of "Keddy," a Bowery tough, and his chum, both of whom are excessively fond of pies "like mother used to make."

The capture of the burglars by strategy is accomplished by the American girl, Alice Lardner, who, undaunted uses her quickness of wit to defend her sick mother and her property until the arrival of Captain Lucas (Alfred Young) with a posse. Edith Smith, who has played popular roles before in the Dramatic Club productions is cast for the part of Miss Civilization.

The "Romancers" is a dainty story of love in a garden. The schemes and plots of the lovers and the counter plans of dotting fathers involve them all in an intricate tangle that provokes laughter from curtain to curtain.

Reynold McGrew and Lemna Wadman will play the parts of the lovelorn son and daughter and Bert Gibb and Guy Rothwell will do the match-making while attempting to prevent it. The third party in the double affair proves to be an adventurous swordsman, Rexford Hitchcock who stirs the caldron of trouble till it boils.

Several novelties between acts have been introduced and players and friends look forward to an enjoyable evening.

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