

## INVESTIGATION INTO THE USE OF MONEY IN THE SENATORIAL CONTEST HAS BEGUN

### LIGHT WILL NOW BE THROWN ON WRIGHT'S ACTIONS

The Investigation Starts Off and All the Truth Will Be Made Public.

### MUST FACE AN OFFICIAL ACCUSATION

The Facts of the Guilt Are Too Patent to Permit of Misconstruction and All the Proofs Are Ready for the Committee's Inspection.

CALL HEADQUARTERS, SACRAMENTO, Jan. 16.—There is to be an official investigation by the lower house of the Legislature of the charge that Howard E. Wright, Speaker of the Assembly, accepted \$1650 from U. S. Grant, through his political manager, Milton J. Green, in return for the promise that he would vote for Grant for United States Senator.

So much was decided upon to-day when a resolution was adopted by the Assembly authorizing the appointment of a committee to make the investigation. To be sure, the investigation was set on foot at the request of Mr. Wright himself, but to have done less would have been equivalent to a plea of guilty. Guilty or innocent, he was forced to demand an investigation and he did it with as good grace as was possible under the circumstances. Had he not done so the result would have been the same, for it was decided last night that whether or not Mr. Wright took the initiative an investigation would be ordered and the facts determined regardless of possible consequences to him.

All that has been charged against Mr. Wright in the columns of The Call is here again reiterated. The facts of his guilt are too patent to permit of misconstruction and the proofs are at hand and will be submitted to the committee. It may be that the facts would never have become public property had it not been that Wright refused to stay bought. After receiving money from Grant, through Milton Green, under an understanding that he would do all in his power to support Grant's Senatorial candidacy, Wright turned traitor and after coquetting for a few ballots he announced his final and fixed allegiance to the malodorous candidacy of D. M. Burns. It may be noted here that the amount and nature of the consideration held out to induce Wright to desert Grant and espouse the cause of Burns have not been alleged against him. That is a matter for future consideration.

When it became known to Green that Wright had taken Grant's money and then deserted him he gave evidence of a very natural indignation. He told the story of his wrongs to several persons, among others being two representatives of this paper, and was unsparring in his condemnation of a man who, having sold his honor, refused to abide by the bargain he had made. He called

Wright a confidence operator of high degree, a man without conscience or principle and a person who stood several degrees lower in the criminal scale than a common pickpocket.

Green related in detail how Wright had applied to Grant and his political managers for funds with which to conduct his (Wright's) campaign; how he had declared his willingness to support and vote for Grant, and how upon the expected understanding that he would do this Wright was first paid \$200, which sum was to be used by him to buy off a man named Pringle, who wanted the nomination for the Assembly in Wright's district. Other cash sums were given to Wright, amounting, so Green asserted, to more than one thousand dollars.

With this information to guide him, a representative of this paper went to Wright and flatly accused him of all that Green had charged. Wright confessed the truth of every charge made against him by Green. He made a clean breast of the whole disgusting transaction and added details and dates that had been overlooked or forgotten by the accuser. He then begged that the publication of the facts as he had confessed them and as Green had asserted them be suppressed, and offered, if this were done, to pull Dan Burns out of the Senatorial fight. Knowing that this paper is and has opposed Burns' candidacy, Wright sought to bribe it to silence by offering to aid it in defeating the man who had, by some potent means, induced him to desert Grant. It was an act worthy of the man who proposed it.

Here are the names of the Assemblymen to whom has been assigned the duty of ascertaining the truth or falsity of the charges against Speaker Wright:  
E. T. COSPER of Tulare, Chairman.  
W. S. MELLICK of Los Angeles.  
W. H. LA BAREE of Trinity.  
OWEN WADE of Napa.  
W. B. LARDNER of Placer.  
WILLIAM MEADE of Los Angeles.  
J. B. SANFORD of Mendocino.

There is every reason to believe that this committee, many of the members of which have taken prominent and active parts in matters important to the State at former sessions of the Legislature and have thus established for themselves a position above criticism, will act fairly with Mr. Wright as well as with his accusers. But one result can follow such an investigation. Speaker Wright will be forced to face an official accusation and the Assembly

### SPEAKER WRIGHT ADDS ANOTHER LIE TO HIS DISHONORABLE PUBLIC RECORD

The investigation which Howard E. Wright, Speaker of the Assembly, has called down upon himself has revealed this conscienceless politician in a new role of dishonor. Through his betrayal of his constituents and his treachery to his friends Wright has exposed a mire of political filth in which he is the offending figure. In attempting to justify his crowning act of disgrace Wright had consideration neither for his friends nor for men in high places. The Call has shown how he maliciously and utterly without warrant used the names of the Justices of the Supreme Court to bolster his falling fortunes.

He lied about the Justices of the Supreme Court, and on the following day he lied about one of his closest friends, W. J. Pringle. In attempting to explain what he had done with the money he had received from U. S. Grant Jr, through Milton J. Green, the Speaker of the Assembly declared that he had paid W. J. Pringle \$200 to withdraw from the fight for the Assembly in the Fifty-first Assembly District. Wright and Pringle were contestants for the Republican nomination, which was an equivalent to an election in that district.

Wright has demonstrated himself to be the most dangerous sort of a liar. He sometimes falsifies on a slender basis of the truth. While the struggle for the Republican nomination for the Assembly in the Fifty-first District was in progress Wright not only paid Pringle \$200, but \$250. This is the truth, as Mr. Pringle frankly and candidly admitted yesterday. But Wright has attempted to besmirch the reputation of his political opponent and personal friend by declaring that the money was paid to buy Pringle to retire from the fight.

Mr. Pringle, who has won an enviable reputation as Councilman in Oakland, naturally resents the attack upon his integrity. He admits that Wright paid him \$250 and that he withdrew from the contest. The money, he says, was part payment for his campaign expenses, but his withdrawal was for an altogether different reason, as he explains in the statement that will follow. Mr. Pringle's first denial that he had received any money from Wright was due to a misunderstanding. Mr. Pringle wished to convey emphatically at that time the impression that he had not received a dollar from Wright or any one else to retire from the fight.

The statement of Pringle is as follows:

"I again say that I have never been offered money by any one as a consideration for withdrawing from the contest for Assemblyman from the Fifty-first District. I did withdraw in order to assist my friend, Frank C. Jordan, who was a candidate for County Clerk, and to whom I was under obligations, knowing that the office to which he aspired was very much more important to him than mine to me.

"Through the action of mutual friends I received from Howard Wright \$250, a portion of the expenses I had already incurred in the campaign. My canvass of the district, together with my printing, cards, expenses for buggies, previously ordered, and house meetings, brought the amount, in all, to over \$300. In expending this sum I realized that the nomination practically meant election, and as a consequence I devoted my energies to winning out at the primary.

"I never for one moment would have listened to any monetary offer to withdraw from any political contest, and I hope my public record has been such as to satisfy the community in this regard.

"The facts are that my withdrawal—as every one knows who was connected with the workings of the campaign—was purely in the interests of harmony and to aid in electing Frank Jordan County Clerk. He had been very kind to me, assisting me greatly in the Council fight, it having been my first experience in politics, and I had repeatedly said that if my candidacy in any way would be a stumbling-block to him I would withdraw.

"It soon became apparent that Wright's personal friends felt piqued at my candidacy, and might make it an issue in the Seventh Ward by supporting the opposition ticket, as I was tied up with the Jordan-Melvin ticket. I knew the primary would be a very close one, and so, although I was urged by many to stay in the race, I decided to step out, in order to devote my full strength to the Jordan interests.

"Some of our mutual friends who were helping in the campaign agreed with me that this was the proper course to pursue, as it would bring us support from Berkeley and prevent further opposition in the Seventh Ward. These are the facts."

will be called upon to clear itself and punish the offender in such manner as may be deemed wise and expedient.

The initial work of the committee certainly gives promise of speedy and thorough work. The committee met in room 73 of the Capitol building at 5 p. m., all the members being present.

Chairman Cosper said that several applications had been made to him for the position of stenographer and clerk of the committee, and that he desired to study particularly the qualifications of the stenographer, but was ready to receive any suggestions that might be

made by the members of the committee. After some discussion the matter was left to the chairman to select the reporter and also the clerk.

Mr. Mellick said that he desired to push the investigation night and day until they had completed their work; that the committee should outline the course intended to be pursued, and then push it to an early completion.

Chairman Cosper suggested that the committee meet in executive session and then the matter could be discussed by the members as to what scope the investigation should take under the resolution, but the majority of the members were opposed to an executive session.

A long discussion ensued as to the particular matter to be investigated. The members all agreed that the charge was specific as to Speaker Wright, but as to the other matters contained in the resolution some doubt existed as to what method should be pursued.

It was decided to start the investigation by subpoenaing the following witnesses to appear before the committee at such time as the committee should adjourn: U. S. Grant Jr., Milton J. Green, Dan M. Burns, Howard E. Wright, L. L. Levinge, W. S. Leake, Richard Colver, H. James, E. F. Moran. Mr. Mellick made a motion to that effect, seconded by Mr. Sanford, and it was carried unanimously.

The chairman suggested that a larger room would be provided for the next meeting. The committee then adjourned until to-morrow at 2:30 o'clock p. m. This evening Chairman Cosper appointed John C. Wray clerk of the committee.

Now that the investigation has been inaugurated it is to be hoped that the work of the committee will result in bringing to light the reprehensible and sometimes criminal methods that have marked the conduct of the Senatorial campaign of Mr. Grant and Colonel Burns. If this is done there is some likelihood that a man may be selected to represent California in the upper house of Congress who will not be a discredit to the State.

### The Jones-Wardell Contest.

CALL HEADQUARTERS, SACRAMENTO, Jan. 16.—Leon Jones' contest of Justice S. Wardell's seat in the Assembly was inaugurated before the Assembly's Committee on Elections this evening and in the two precincts counted Jones gained two votes. As only thirteen votes separate the rivals the gain is an important one. Assemblyman Frank Powers appeared for the contestant, Leon Jones, and ex-Senator Henry C. Gesford acted for Assemblyman Wardell. All ballots were critically examined and objections were frequently made. The ballots were brought to the capital by Registrar William J. Biggy and his deputy, L. J. Welch. On adjournment the ballots were sealed in a safe and representatives of the contestant, contestee, the Registrar and the committee were posted to watch the sealed safe in which they were inclosed. The committee will continue its count at 9 o'clock to-morrow morning.

### HOWARD E. WRIGHT BRANDED AS A KNAVE AND A SCOUNDREL

The Mask Under Which He Has Long Been Masquerading Is Now Torn Off.

### CREDITORS DEFRAUDED OF THOUSANDS

Denied Under Oath a Debt to John Blair and Then Swore in His Petition for Insolvency That the Money Was Justly Due.

CALL HEADQUARTERS, SACRAMENTO, Jan. 16.—Howard E. Wright, Speaker of the Assembly, has not only disgraced the high and honorable public position which he holds, but the facts go to show that his business and commercial transactions are characterized by dishonesty. The evidence clearly establishes, to the satisfaction of any unprejudiced mind, that this party, Howard E. Wright, is a combination of knave and scoundrel, the like of which is seldom reproduced.

For some time this man Wright has been masquerading before the people as a would-be reformer and an honorable man. But the mask has been torn from his face and he is now being exposed to the public in his true colors. The cloak of the hypocrite has been taken from his shoulders and Howard E. Wright is being presented for what he is.

For these exposures that are being made Wright has no one to blame but himself. The record he has made, the misconduct and dishonesty he has been guilty of, is all that is being laid before the reading public.

For everything that is or has been printed there is ample justification, for this person is Speaker of the California Assembly, one of the most honorable positions that can be held by any citizen of the State. Charges have been made affecting his standing as a member of the Legislature and going to show that he accepted money and promised to vote for a certain candidate for United States Senator. He has risen on the floor of the Assembly and, assuming an air of injured innocence, like the true hypocrite that he is, he has declared that he is an honest man.

But there is here in Sacramento a gentleman who states that Howard E. Wright is one of the most dishonorable and despicable characters he has ever met with in all his long life and business career. That gentleman is John Blair, a member of the W. B. Knights Company, one of the best-known business houses in this part of the State and the largest house of its kind—hides and tanning—on the coast.

John Blair is one of Sacramento's respected citizens. Everybody here knows him as a man who would be the last person in the world to do or say anything that would tarnish the character or reputation of a fellow citizen without ample cause and justification.

John Blair states that Wright is a knave and scoundrel, and he has the facts behind him to back up his assertion. He holds the paper—notes of hand

—of the Wright person for \$21,000 approximately, and Wright not only has arranged matters so that it is not possible for Mr. Blair to realize a dollar on the overdue notes, but he indicates no intention of ever liquidating the indebtedness.

This is the reason why John Blair thinks that the Speaker of the California Assembly is a scoundrel and a knave. Mr. Blair told the story of Wright's duplicity and dishonesty to a Call representative yesterday afternoon at his place of business on Front street. In plain, straightforward language, without any attempt to make the case stronger than the facts really warranted, Mr. Blair related the tale.

"You see, it was this way. L. G. Harvey was a partner of H. E. Wright in the real estate business at 529 Montgomery street, San Francisco. Harvey, whom I consider an honorable man, was indebted to me in quite a sum, and I went to San Francisco to see about it. I called on Harvey and he promptly exhibited to me the books of the firm which, upon examination, I found showed that Wright was not only overdrawn, but he had obtained money in other ways until he was indebted to Harvey in the sum of \$21,000. For this sum Wright had given Harvey his notes. Harvey turned these notes over to me as security for his indebtedness to me.

"Some time, either just before or just after this, Harvey had informed a member of Wright's family of this indebtedness, and this greatly displeased him, for it seems that Wright had not told them anything about it. The result was, the firm broke up.

"In December, 1896, before the notes were outlawed, I instructed my attorneys, Carson & Savage, of San Francisco, to institute suit against Wright in the Superior Court of San Francisco to collect the amount of the notes.

"I hired a searcher of the records to examine into Wright's affairs and he found that Wright had transferred all of his property to his wife and after I instituted the suit he voluntarily went through insolvency in order to defraud me of my money.

"No, I never expect to receive one dollar of my money. Wright has some wealthy relatives who are very close to him and I thought perhaps they might compromise his debt, but they never did.

"I think in the light of facts when I say that this man Wright is a scoundrel I tell only the truth and in exposing him a service is being done in the protection that is thereby afforded the general public from further imposition at the hands of this knave.

"L. G. Harvey, I think, is a victim of the wiles of this man Wright, for he has been almost ruined by him. I do not think that Harvey is a dishonest man at all. But when Wright goes down on one side of the street honest men should pass on the other side, for

### CHARGES AGAINST WRIGHT TO BE INVESTIGATED.

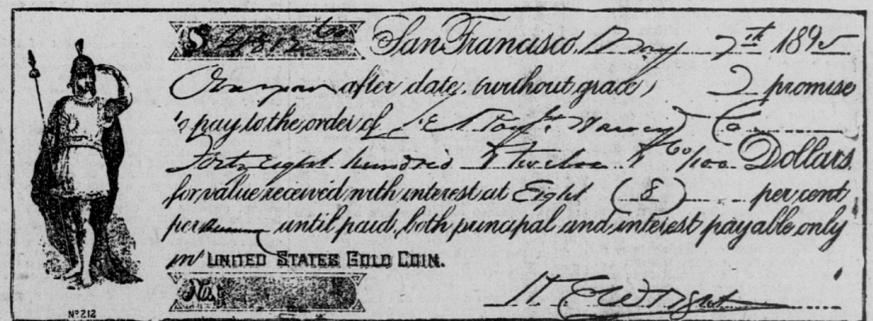
WHEREAS, Direct charges have been made that improper means have been used to influence the action of Hon. Howard E. Wright, a member of and Speaker of the Assembly, in the election of a United States Senator by the Legislature; and

WHEREAS, It has been charged that some persons have used and are using illegal methods to influence the action of members of the Assembly in said election; and

WHEREAS, it has been indirectly charged that members of the Assembly have been improperly influenced in their votes for United States Senator; and

WHEREAS, Such charges have been given wide publicity and should be investigated to the end that if found to be true, the guilty should be punished; and if found to be untrue, the originator thereof should be punished; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That a select committee of seven members of the Assembly be appointed by the Speaker pro tem, to immediately and fully, thoroughly and carefully investigate each and all of said charges, whether direct or indirect, and also to investigate in like manner the methods used to influence members of the Assembly in their votes for a United States Senator, and that said committee have full power to send for persons, books, telegrams and papers, and to employ a clerk and stenographer, and that it have leave to sit during the session of the Assembly, and that said committee report fully as speedily as possible, with such recommendations as it may deem proper.



One of the Notes of Hand H. E. Wright Gave to His Business Associate, L. G. Harvey, in Settlement of a Debt of \$21,000, Upon Which Note Suit Was Instituted, and, Pending the Legal Proceedings to Collect It, Wright Transferred His Property to His Wife and Went Through Insolvency.