

THE AMADOR LEDGER

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FOR PRESIDENT WILLIAM MCKINLEY, of Ohio. FOR VICE-PRESIDENT THEODORE ROOSEVELT, of New York.

LANDLESS VOTERS AND A SEWER SYSTEM.

In the columns of the LEDGER of last week there appeared an article by R. Webb purporting to be a fair view of the incorporation and sewer questions as he sees them from his standpoint, which, of course, is that of a heavy real estate owner in Jackson.

Mr. Webb is a man of generally sound judgment in business affairs, a practical economist and a successful financier and his judgment will have great weight in the coming contest, hence if his views are one-sided, or illiberal, or mistaken, it is of great importance that his article be answered and the answer ought to be clear, forcible, and directly pertinent to the issue.

While we do not feel confident to meet these requirements fully without more thorough investigation of the case in all its aspects, a few thoughts and facts occur to us which may be applicable and of value in reaching a reasonable and just decision.

And, first, to get at the merits of the case, it is necessary to treat of an idea which is deemed totally irrelevant and impertinent in the case, that is, whether the non-landlord class should exercise the right of suffrage.

Our readers no doubt noticed that the shrewd author of the article referred to, picks this question out of the box, as it were, reads it, declines to answer and lays it down with the wise remark that, as "the law gives" that class the right to discuss the question and vote on it, each must let his own conscience decide whether he will meddle with it or not.

What a struggle is here proposed for each individual voter, who happens to be landless, between the legal right to vote and duty of self-abnegation!! If one were disposed to be facetious, he would devote a column to picturing the mental strain of half the population of our usually placid town, when this momentous question was first hurled in our midst—the bosoms of the non-property owners rent with conflicting emotions!! (perhaps). But several days have elapsed and by this time each of the aforesaid individual voters may have signed a truce with his conscience, if that faculty was disposed to trouble him.

He will have decided that it is right to talk and vote on all public questions, or that it is not right to talk and vote, and in the former case that he will do so, or in the latter that he will not do so, and in either case carry an approving conscience; or he may just reverse this and then in either case suffer remorse, or, finally, he may have decided that the question is too profound for him or that he won't bother with it at present.

And so, as the acute stage is presumably over, we may dismiss the mooted question with one remark. Mr. Webb somewhat sadly says: "The law gives them the right." That is not exact. The law simply confirms to them the "inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," and, says the great Declaration, to secure these blessings governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

The "consent" was to be a real and active consent not a passive and negative one, and hence it is the duty of all, regardless of the lands or goods and chattels they may or may not possess, to "work and vote" on this question, and what has to be decided in the forum of each man's conscience is not whether he will do anything at all, but what he will do and which side he will take according to justice and good conscience. Let us lay forever aside the old and barbarous doctrine that a man when he acquires property, acquires, thereby, political rights he did not before possess, and consider it definitely settled that character, intelligence and ability are worthy of the highest consideration and that equal political rights are not to be questioned in this free republic.

Mr. Webb says those in favor of incorporation "seem to have gone into it blindly," but if that is true, it would not contribute much to their enlightenment to restrict the discussion of the question to land-lords who may be too busy collecting rents and paying taxes to study the question thoroughly and take an impartial view.

Now as to the imputation of slandering the town, it amounts to nothing. The simple truth is: Jackson has no efficient sewer system. It needs one and the need is imperative. If that be slander, make the most of it.

It is easy to see how the author of the article in the

"Dispatch" was made to reach an absurd conclusion by a mere typographical error, and no doubt he will be able to explain satisfactorily, but Mr. Webb asserts "without fear of successful contradiction" that it would cost \$100,000 to provide Jackson with a sewer system. If the gentleman had more knowledge and experience in relation to sewerage he would have less confidence in his estimate and would not make such an assertion for "fear of contradiction." It is very certain that if Jackson were once surveyed by a competent civil engineer, for such a purpose, and a system which would be amply sufficient for the town laid out, mapped, and advertised for contract, those who understand such work would think it the richest streak of pay ground they ever struck at less than a third of that sum.

The city of Stockton put in its mains, which are of a capacity of at least three times what Jackson would need; at least five times as long, and buried at some points about 18 feet deep, combined with an extensive and costly pumping plant, for about \$85,000. The whole sewer system of Stockton on nearly all the streets has cost, according to the official records, about \$190,000. The city is two miles square, with streets crossing at right angles every 303 feet. There are about thirty streets running each way two miles long, or about 120 miles of streets. Of course not all these streets are yet severed but a large proportion of them is and at the cost above named—\$190,000. The records show that six inch pipe, used on many streets, is furnished and put down complete, all work done at 25 cents a foot in some cases. One contract for 10,368 feet, six-inch pipe, was at 35 1/2 cents per lineal foot, the pipe being laid several feet deep. Eight inch pipe, laid five to ten feet deep, was 40 cents. One whole sewer district comprising 302 lots and nearly two miles of sewers cost \$8,279.84. This includes thirty-five manholes, with brick walls, iron covers, and all work done complete. These facts will show that the estimate of \$100,000 is as blind a guess as any which the writer of the article in the "Dispatch" could have made.

The Stockton contracts are in many cases for pipe laid from ten feet to fifteen feet below the surface; but the mains in Jackson can be laid in the creek with very little ditching, or none. Competent men say \$20,000 is an outside estimate for all the sewer which need be furnished at public expense.

The county should provide a main down the Middle Fork to carry sewage from the hospital to a point far enough below town that the outlet would not be a source of danger or annoyance. Let town and county combine and divide the expense in such a way as may be just.

The expense of sewerage Jackson is not such a formidable objection as has been imagined. Indeed this much needed improvement, if made in an economical manner, would not be felt as a burden at all, and would add vastly to the healthfulness, the comfort and the reputation of the county seat.

EPIDEMIC ENDED.

There have been no new cases of the smallpox for two weeks, and the epidemic is now considered at an end. All who are quarantined are nearly well and it is believed that by September 10th, at farthest, the last case will have been pronounced cured.

The village of Mill Valley, after a lively battle, voted to incorporate as a city of the sixth class. The fight was fast and furious, but those in favor of incorporation secured thirty-seven more votes than the opposition.

CHARLES DENBY, an old-time staunch Democrat, is out for McKinley. His letter, which bristles with sharp points that pierce Mr. Bryan's armor through and through, appears in this issue. We hope it will be carefully read by our patrons.

DEMOCRATIC reports from the Empire State indicate that the party will be torn to tatters. Richard Croker and David B. Hill, both of them "big injuus" in the Democratic camp, have locked horns, and it is said that a compromise is impossible and that the party will suffer from one end of the State to the other.

Table with columns: DOCUMENTS RECORDED, BORN, DIED. Includes names like Joseph Gagliardo, Daniel Johnson, and dates.

BANK OF AMADOR COUNTY. Capital Stock \$50,000. President: Henry Eudry. Vice-President: S. G. Spagnoli. Secretary and Cashier: Frederick Eudry.

ED. LEDGER:—I propose in this article to deal with the question of sewerage. It is because incorporation holds out the hope of securing a general sewer system, that the advocates of that movement are urging the people to vote Jackson into a city. A few years back the only sewer system known in Jackson was the antiquated method of cess-pools in the natural soil. It was believed at that time that if the thickly settled portions of town could only find an outlet for the sewerage in the creeks, the question of improved sanitation would be solved. Since then many of the business houses, public buildings and private residences have made the creek channels the dumping places for sewage; and now there is a greater howl about unsatisfactory sewerage than there was under the primitive regime. The strangest part of it is that those who have enjoyed the privilege of sending down their refuse for the benefit of others, are almost a unit in favor of incorporation. Do they begin to realize that existing conditions cannot continue; that they will be called upon ere long to take care of their sewage upon their own premises; and hence start the cry of incorporation and a general sewer system. No figures are given as to the probable cost. They estimate the expense in the same way they estimate the property value—by guesswork. Why leave the public in the dark on the vital question of cost? Why not have some reputable civil engineer investigate the matter and submit plans and figures. That would be the straightforward course. But no; citizens are asked to vote incorporation first, and study the consequences afterward. They are called upon to vote a few more men into office; whether they can accomplish anything in the line of permanent improvement is an after consideration. Would any reasonable man conduct his private business on such a know-nothing basis? The prevailing idea about a sewer system seems to be that main pipes should be laid along the three creeks, with a junction below the meeting place of the forks; that connecting sewers should be laid along the various streets at a depth of about a foot from the surface; leaving each individual property owner to connect with the street pipes at his own expense. The cost of sewer pipe, the expense of digging trenches and cementing joints, according to the view is about 35¢ to 40¢. Such a method, making no provision for ventilation, manholes nor surface drainage, would be a waste of money, and in no way tend to promote the health of the town. It has been estimated by those who have given the subject close study, that a proper system for a city of eighteen thousand inhabitants will cost at the rate of \$20 per capita, the city covering an area of 250 acres. These figures are for an English city, where labor and material may be estimated at a much lower basis than here. The town site of Jackson covers 640 acres; and even the proposed abbreviated municipality covers about 350 acres. In face of these facts, and also that every foot of right of way for sewer pipes through the creek channels would have to be acquired by gift or purchase from private owners, the cost of anything like an efficient system safely be placed at double the per capita given for the more compact English city. This would make \$100,000 for the total cost. Let us roughly estimate the main sewers to be laid by the authorities at \$75,000, leaving \$25,000 to be borne by the individual property owners in making connections. How is this money to be raised? There are only two ways to raise funds for such improvements. First, by the issue of bonds extending over a period of years—say 20 years. This would necessitate a sinking fund of \$3750 each year to meet the maturing bonds. Incorporated as a city five per cent, and it is doubtful if money could be borrowed at such a rate. This would make the first annual payment of interest amount to \$3750; making a total of \$7500 to be raised the first year to pay first installment of principal and interest. Let us see what sort of a tax rate that would impose upon the property owners in the newly-fledged city for the first year of municipal honors: For running expenses .075 For sinking fund .100 For interest .100 Total per \$100 .275 In addition to this, there is the \$25,000 for connecting pipes. Reckoning 250 houses, this would give an average of \$100 for each connection. This expense would fall especially heavy upon the small holders in the sparsely settled districts. Where long distances have to be run to reach the main pipe, the cost would in many instances reach double the sum named. Every property holder along the line would be compelled to inaugurate the new system, under penalty, as the Dispatch has aptly put it, of having the property condemned as a nuisance. That means that it could not be occupied until connected with the sewer system. But supposing the construction of the sewer system is attempted without the issuance of bonds. How would that affect the property holders? The following clauses from the law providing for the government of incorporated towns will explain this matter: "The expense incurred in making and repairing sewers in any street shall be paid one-fourth by the owner of the lands on one side of said street; one-fourth by the owner of the land on the other side of the street, and one-half by the city or town out of the sewer fund. . . . The amount of said expense shall become a lien upon said lands, which shall take precedence of all other liens." As 15 cents on the \$100 is the maximum levy for a sewer fund, out of which one-half the expense of sewers must be paid, it will be seen that sewer building by this method must slow. A 15 cent levy would raise only \$602.50 per year; a sum altogether too insignificant to admit of even a start being made in the direction of a general sewer system. If any attempt were made to put this plan into operation, it would simply mean to many of the property owners along the line of improvement ruin by a shorter route than by the bond method. The truth is Jackson is far too small in population and too poor in taxable

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