

\$1.50
Per Annum.

AN OPEN LETTER TO S. P. DONNELLY.

Montpelier, Idaho, Feb. 14, 1901.

S. P. DONNELLY, State Senator,
Boise City, Idaho.

DEAR SIR:—When senate bill No. 30, introduced by you, which provides for a reduction in the number of regents of the state university from nine to five, came up last Monday for consideration, you were reported by the Boise dailies as having used the following language, publicly, on the floor of the state senate:

"There has been a scandal in connection with the board of regents of the university and if this bill shall be enacted into law it will be possible to make such changes as will keep the disagreeable facts to which I have alluded, from becoming common property. It would save the state from disgrace. The senate can do so by passing this bill.

"The question of number can not affect the interests of the institution, providing high minded men are chosen. As a matter of economy the number should be decreased. But, as I have said, there are other reasons. I have stated one of them. Another is that a reorganization of the board will, I believe, operate to remove the institution from politics, a consummation that every good citizen should most earnestly wish for."

As the Boise papers have been uniformly fair and accurate in their accounts of what happens during the legislative sessions, I assume that you were correctly quoted.

It will be evident to everyone that to allow your assertions to pass by without challenging their accuracy, would be a serious reflection on the present board of regents, of which I have the honor of being a member. Whether the board as a whole, or any of its members individually, are responsible for the conditions, you allege exists, makes no difference. Nor does it matter whether any of them are in ignorance of the matters you charge. If such things are, or have been, allowed by the board, they should be the subject of an investigation.

Further on you infer that that state institution has been conducted with reference to political advantage in favor, presumably, of some person. This is another serious allegation that should be looked into.

So far as my knowledge goes, I challenge the accuracy of any of the statements credited to you concerning the board of regents. If I am in ignorance as to the doings of the board or its officers, I would like to know it, and if the board has been derelict or crooked in its dealings with the university and the state, the people of Idaho ought to know it, and since you have implied as much you ought to proceed to furnish the proofs. It's up to you, Mr. Donnelly.

As regards the merits of your bill, the only redeeming feature it has is from an economical point of view. It would lessen somewhat the expense of the regents'

meeting, which is now about \$1600 for two years. This could be cut down to perhaps \$1000.

"There are other reasons" you say. Yes, I fear that is too true, but they are not such reasons, according to my information, that one might infer from your remarks. If these reasons are such as would tend to elevate and advance the interests of the University, why did you not give them? Surely, nothing that has for its object the good, of such a magnificent institution, could possibly tend to injure anyone.

As for myself, and I believe I am voicing the sentiment of every member of the board, it is immaterial whether I longer serve as a regent or not. I have tried to discharge the trust imposed to the best of my ability, and with a sense of honesty that does not admit of imputation without questioning. The president of the board, in his report to the governor, gave his co-workers credit for their fidelity and unstinted support to the advancement of the University. We cannot admit of an impeachment of his words without proof.

In conclusion I want to call your attention to a few facts, viz:

The University has the largest enrollment now in its history.

Every department of the institution is working in perfect harmony.

The faculty is second to none in the west in point of ability.

The University is more popular and better known all over the state than ever before.

During the past two years the regents have completed the unfinished portions of the building, the estimated cost of which, including the changes in plans made by the board, was \$18,000, for the sum of \$14,000, the amount allowed by the legislature.

During the past two years, the University has been run on \$17,600, which includes regents' expenses, a smaller amount per capita, estimated on students attending, than ever before and there in no deficit.

The University has been placed in a position whereby it can, and is, doing more and better work for both the people and the students, than ever before.

Do you think in the light of such a record, the board, or any of its members, fear an investigation? Not much.

"Lay on McDuff,
And woe be unto him who
Shall first cry 'enough.'"

Respectfully submitted with the kindest of feelings, for your earnest consideration,

Very Truly
CHAS. E. HARRIS.

Member of the board of Regents, of the University of Idaho.

Representative Brennan was up from Boise Sunday.

Messrs. Wm. Hunter and Frank Jones were in Star valley this week cattle buying.

The past week has been a continuation of the cold snap, which has existed for a month past.

Dr. Poynter was in Boise a few days this week.