

BERKELEY HERALD.

VOLUME IX

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA, SATURDAY, JULY 3, 1897

NUMBER 39

Bonds, or Special Tax?

Our comparatively recent experience in connection with this matter shows a wide divergence of opinion in regard to it. Attempts to secure the votes of the citizens in favor of issuing Bonds to secure money for much-needed improvements failed of success. As an alternative the question of a special tax was submitted, and the voters decided that that was the right method of procedure.

Every fair-minded person must give those who favored a special tax credit for honesty of conviction unless the contrary should be proved; and therefore we have no doubt that at least most of those who disapprove of Bonds and favor special tax act conscientiously. Yet we believe many such persons have no clear or strong convictions upon the subject and are open to reason.

While the question alluded to was submitted and decided, yet it cannot be said to have been decided finally; the same matter must, and will of necessity, present itself again, and, in view of that fact, we wish to present a few thoughts for consideration.

In the first place, we doubt if half a dozen of our citizens can be found who will deny the statement that our school facilities are totally inadequate to the actual needs. Our children and youth are crowded in a very undesirable manner into quarters entirely too small, while, in some cases, they are forced to occupy even sheds and out-houses which are not only very uncomfortable, but causes a feeling that it is to our discredit that such things should be. Those who are in what we call our High School are crowded together with grammar grades in the one building, and some of the pupils are actually compelled to occupy small and uncomfortable quarters outside the main building. The Principal has repeatedly called attention to this very unsatisfactory state of affairs, and has done all he could legitimately do to have better accommodations provided, but without success. That any intelligent person can fail to see the pressing need of a High School building passes our comprehension. We positively must have such a building before very long;—the necessity cannot be avoided. The matter will certainly come to an issue very soon.

This being the case, the question naturally arises, what is the best method to secure such a building? Of the two methods that have been proposed—issuing bonds or levying a special tax—the choice was made of levying a special tax. This we thought at the time, and still think, was a mistake, a short-sighted policy, because, first, the amount raised was entirely too small to secure the needed building or buildings; and, second, and consequently, was at best only a partial relief, still leaving one great need—a High School building—unprovided for. It was also unfair, in that it threw the burden entirely upon the present tax-payers in one single year, and compelled them to fully pay for improvements (as far as they went) which are intended for future generations, instead of arranging it so that we should bear our just part and allow others who will come in in the future to bear a just portion of the cost of benefits they expect to enjoy.

Do the taxpayers prefer to pay a heavy additional tax every now and then to erect permanent school buildings, thus themselves paying in a lump for advantages which new residents and another generation will enjoy;—do they prefer this to the better, more just and less burdensome plan of issuing bonds which will be paid gradually through a long series of years by themselves and others who will come afterwards? If they do, they are either unselfishly generous, or have not considered the subject carefully enough to decide properly.

Let us look the matter in the face in a candid, intelligent, business-like manner. We positively cannot afford to be much longer without a good High School building, at least—not to mention other school buildings which are also much needed. The funds to erect such a building must be secured by either a special tax or by issuing bonds. To secure enough by special tax would be an intolerable and unjust burden on present taxpayers, even if lawful. To secure it by issuing bonds, payable in twenty or more years, would enable us to get enough to erect proper buildings, and so distribute the liability of the taxpayers as to get enough to erect proper buildings, and so distribute the liability of the taxpayers as to make it easy to bear and would put part of the burden on future beneficiaries, which would be just and proper.

Which is the better plan? Can any intelligent person hesitate to answer?

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Do We Want Hawaii?

Who can answer this question when great minds differ? From the leading papers of the country one can gather reasons pro and con, and the reader's mind is swayed back and forth like the tree of the forest as he reads, unless he has settled the question in his own mind independently.

From the great dailies east of the Rocky Mountains arguments could be taken for and against annexing Hawaii (if you cannot pronounce it that way, say "Sandwich Islands"), and the few following may be given as samples:

"A great mistake."

"A group of Pacific Islands with a barbarous population."

"We will give a hearty welcome to the Territory of Hawaii."

"We have no interests that the possession of Hawaii would help us to protect or further."

"* * * Its acquisition would vastly increase our responsibilities, expenses and dangers."

"The value of the Islands is manifold."

"A great departure from all our traditions and experiences, * * * taking a population of mixed races."

"It can be of no possible use to the people of this country."

"Hawaii should be annexed because we need it."

"The gain to our producers and manufacturers would be far greater by the annexation of Cuba than by the taking in of Hawaii."

"On business grounds alone the proposed annexation commends itself to every clear-headed American."

"It is a policy open to the most serious objections."

"It would place the United States in permanent possession of a region which is capable of almost unlimited trade development and with which the whole future of American commerce in the Pacific is vitally associated."

Thus speak the leaders of thought and reflectors of public opinion, which induces us to believe that public opinion needs some "annexing" on this subject, for it is, at present, not even in friendly confederacy.

In the meantime certain very plain facts are patent to every thinking person; among them may be noted the following:

1. The Hawaiian Islands cannot long remain as they are. The government has not enough inherent strength to maintain itself or to protect itself from peaceful or forceful invasion. Those fitted to govern are comparatively few, and are divided as to nationality, and Englishmen and Americans will always be jealous of power. The Japanese also undoubtedly have both eyes on the Islands, and there is little doubt that their

plans contain the intention of full control if not outright annexation in the not very distant future. Shipload after shipload of Japanese would enter the Islands, and, when they fill the land, the final step would be easy, unless prevented by some stronger nation. But that would lead to serious trouble.

In short, as a matter of fact, Hawaii must, before very long, pass under the control of the United States, England or Japan. Its government cannot long maintain itself without the aid of some of these or some other strong power, and the only real question is, which nation shall control?

2. The second plain fact is, that the present government of Hawaii is American, and prefers and protection of the United States. Seeing the absolute necessity of union with some strong government, Hawaii by her representatives, desires and seeks union with this country, believing that to be for the best interests of the Islands. They choose the flag of the United States, and earnestly desire to live under its protection and the laws it represents.

3. As the choice lies between assuming control of the Islands and seeing that control pass to some European or Asiatic power, it is a plain fact that United States control is infinitely preferable and to the best interests of this country.

From a military point of view it is preferable. This country is not seeking to acquire foreign territory; but when a particular piece of territory must, perforce, pass under the control of some other power, and its control by any other power would be disadvantageous to our own, then, as a matter of good policy, this government should take charge, especially when the government of that strategic point desires and urges it.

From a commercial point of view it is preferable. This is so plainly a fact, and has been so long known to our people, that we need not dwell upon it.

And we need not fear concerning the class of population on the Islands. The terms of annexation can be so fixed that the undesirable portion of the population will not be free and unrestricted citizens of the United States proper. On the whole, we have more to gain than lose by annexation.

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Camping Joys.

The camping season is here, and so are we. We are here because we cannot afford to go camping. The camping season is here because it is the right time of the year. (This piece of philosophy we give to the public free of charge.)

But we have been camping in the past, and even now, without a glass, see the free and happy Berkeleyans, old and young, as they sit on the ground or old log, rub the smoke out of their eyes, sleep on the ground, flip spiders off their necks, pick bugs out of their ears and hair, eat flap-jacks, spin yarns, and do all those other things that make camping a joy and delight.

And we would be there if we could. For this we would leave our little bed, take off our stiff collar, abandon the home table, tallow our face, and "give to the winds our fears." Oh, for the shady forest, the trout-stream, the lazy loafing after hard work, the leafy bed and sound sleep!

Even the small boys are out "on their own hook," so to speak. Three such youngsters from Berkeley have for a week been camping, all by themselves, on the bank of San Pablo creek, up in the canyon. They did not want any old folks with them, and decided to enjoy a period of unrestricted liberty in the wilds of the foothills. We are the father of two of them, and we are glad they chose this form of recreation rather than an expedition to shoot Indians and buffaloes.