

THE THOMAS-WEST EXPOSURE.

IN a former article we made some comments upon the conduct of the two agents in Washington of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce—Governor A. L. Thomas and Hon. C. W. West. The article was incited by the incidental exposure of the sneaking perfidy of Mr. Thomas, exhibited before the House Committee on Territories on Wednesday. It seems necessary to make further allusion to the subject, and in order that no injustice may be done to any of the parties it is proper to place a review of the matter before our readers and leave them to judge of the merits of the controversy. This method is also suggested as the best mode of treatment, that the record of rascality made by prominent political demagogues and self-seekers may be preserved, and that examples of double-dealing dishonesty may prove a warning to future generations.

Arthur L. Thomas and Caleb W. West are the authorized agents of the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce. The former was paid \$500 by that body to repair to Washington and labor in behalf of the movement to secure a liberal appropriation for a suitable government building to be erected here, and to secure a portion of the Fort Douglas Reservation for a public park. Mr. West is the president of the Chamber and receives a salary, being a paid officer. That there may be no mistake about these gentlemen being the authorized agents of the association named, we here quote from a set of resolutions passed by it a few days ago in relation to the World's Fair:

"Be it resolved further, That copies of the foregoing be sent to Governor A. L. Thomas and Hon. C. W. West, now representing the Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce at Washington, D.C., whose support will assist us in carrying out the purposes of these resolutions, and request their concurrence and co-operation therein."

When the report was published in this city that Messrs. Thomas and West were using the influence and money of the Chamber of Commerce, which claims to be non-partisan, to urge the passage of legislation that would disfranchise numbers of its members, there was something akin to a sensation in the community, the commercial organization being specially agitated regarding it. The "Liberal" organ came to the rescue, as follows:

"Yesterday it [the *Herald*] had a purposed rumor from Washington, charging that Governor Thomas and ex-Governor West were, under the guise of speaking for the Chamber and

in the employ of the Chamber, trying to influence legislation against the Saints. It amounted to very little in the *Herald*, but when the *News* last evening echoed the same thing and gravely asserted that the matter should be investigated, that was proof that behind the *Herald* the *News* and the chiefs of the creed have determined if possible to prevent any Mormons from joining the Chamber. *It is enough to say that aside from the impossibility of Governor Thomas and ex-Governor West doing any such thing, the rules of the Chamber, which have never for one moment relaxed, explicitly forbid any reference to politics or any political work.* Those gentlemen are in Washington for a specific purpose, and that purpose is to enhance the business of this city by having a grand public building provided for, and to try to have the unsightly west side of the military reservation converted into a delightful resort for this people, and the mere intimation of their betraying their trust is an insult which their whole past lives are a protest against. The attack upon them is as cowardly as it is false."

It will be observed that the chief anti-"Mormon" organ asserts in effect that if the two individuals referred to did "influence legislation against the Saints," they were guilty of "betraying their trust," and, logically, of a dastardly piece of infamy.

In consequence of the reports and general sentiment on the subject, the directors of the Chamber of Commerce, on Friday, April 18, telegraphed to its two authorized agents to the effect that the *News* and *Herald* had charged them with influencing the legislation referred to. Whether the Chamber did it intentionally or not we are not prepared to say, but it is a fact that it misrepresented, this journal, which made no direct charge, the following being the language used:

"It is currently reported and widely believed here that Caleb W. West is operating secretly in Washington in the furtherance of pending Congressional legislation for the disfranchisement of all members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

In another part of the article we stated that we gave the parties the benefit of the doubt, and insisted that the rumor should not be taken as conclusive until proof was exhibited. As the report turns out to be true, however, this is of but little moment, except that it gave this paper the appearance of pronouncing unqualified judgment prematurely, when such was not the case.

So far as we know, the two gentlemen addressed made no direct reply to the directory of the Chamber, but used the chief anti-"Mormon" organ as their shute through which to convey their reply, the following appearing in its issue of April 18th, embodied in a long special from its "Washington Bureau:"

"The attention of Governor Thomas and ex-Governor West having been called today to the statements published in the *News* and *Herald* respecting their attitude towards the Cullom bill, they replied that it was no new thing for these papers to misrepresent their actions and motives, and said that this had been the uniform course of these sheets with respect to all public men opposed to their principles and methods. Both gentlemen, while expecting and intending to give further attention to the matters which occasioned their visit to Washington, reserve the right which every citizen has of acting independently on any proposed legislation."

The first point sought to be made in the foregoing is to the effect that the agents of the Chamber had been misrepresented on the subject at issue. The question now arises, taking this as Governor Thomas' statement—when did he utter a falsehood? Was it when making claim to being misrepresented, or now, when he admits having influenced the disfranchisement legislation?

The second point embodied in the extract is that two agents claim the right to take any position they please in influencing "any proposed legislation." That means that they claim the right to use the money paid them by the Chamber of Commerce to secure the disfranchisement of a number of its members and render the profession of that body to non-partisanship a glaring falsehood. It amounts to reserving the right to be guilty of what the *Tribune* calls "betraying a trust"—which is treachery.

For the purpose of making this expose complete, it is in order here to reproduce an excerpt from the speech delivered on Wednesday by Hon. John T. Caine before the committee on Territories, while the disfranchisement bill was under consideration. Mr. Caine said:

"An astonishing element in this matter is that the measure is seeking enactment without the endorsement of any party in Utah or the other Territories. Who wants such legislation? Who asks for it? No man who has any direct interest in this question. A few days ago I inquired of the governor of Utah, who is here, and he stated emphatically that he was taking no part and would not do so one way or another. Prominent men here from Utah are equally as reticent."

"At this point Delegate Dubois interrupted the speaker and said that Governor Thomas, ex-Governor West and members of the Utah Commission who were here all favored the bill and thought it should become a law; that Governor Thomas had made such a statement before two or three members of the committee."

"Mr. Caine replied he would only repeat what Governor Thomas had said to him, that he, Thomas, had talked the matter over and had decided to take no part either for or against the bill and then remarked