COUNTY BONDING ELECTION

The County Court Issues an Address to the Taxpayers.

WHAT THEY WANT $300,000 FOR.

Completion of the Joint City and County Building and Numerous Other Matters.

On March 15th a resolution was adopted by the county court providing for the citizens to be the second taxpayers of the county the question of shall negotiable coupon bonds of Salt Lake county to the amount of $300,000, in denomination of $1,000, payable twenty years after date, redeemable ten years after date, and bearing interest at the rate of five per cent per annum, be issued for the construction of the new county court house and additional poorhouse and infirmary buildings for Salt Lake county, and for making other permanent county improvements, and to fund the existing indebtedness of said county?" Such question to be determined at a special election called for that purpose and to take place on the 11th of the present month. For the general information of the public, the county court in this address will as briefly and concisely as possible state the conditions and emergencies which led to the adoption of this measure.

On January 1st of this year, and upon the assuming of the present county court, the reports of the county clerk and treasurer showed a balance on hand to the credit of the general fund of $3,510.93. After making the appropriations for December, 1892, and for January and February of this year, there was not only a deficiency, but there is now outstanding unpaid warrants to the amount of $7,416.92.

In this connection we direct attention to the fact that until the payment of taxes in the late fall there will be no material revenue with which to make good the deficiency thus shown and to meet the natural current expenses, but absolutely nothing with which to pay the county's proportion of the expense of prosecuting work on the joint building, equipping and furnishing the same, placing necessary betterments at the poor farm, improving roads and repairing and building bridges in the way of general permanent improvements. Of the first and most important of these prospective demands upon the county's treasury is that of prosecuting work upon the joint building.

In the latter part of 1889 amicable arrangements were made jointly by the authorities of Salt Lake City and the county court for the erection of a joint building suitable for the present necessities and future needs of the municipality and the county. As at first agreed upon, the building was to be erected upon ground owned by the city and located at the corner of First South and First East streets, and for a half interest therein the county paid to the city the sum of $41,250. After adopting plans, paying architects, making excavations and in part laying the foundations for the building at that place, it was decided to change the location to what is known as the Eighth Ward square, and to this end the county exchanged its interests in the former for a half interest in the latter site. The contract price for the building now in course of construction is $557,957, one-half of which amount is to be paid by the county, viz., $188,988.53. But since the commencement of the building a change was made in broadening and deepening the foundation, and the additional cost of labor, concrete, iron and other materials, in that respect, amounted to $2,970.27. Changes from sandstone to Minnesota granite in the columns at the entrance has caused an additional expense of $6000. A piece of ground in the adjoining block and immediately east of that upon which the joint building is being erected, and upon which it is intended to locate the heating and lighting plant, was purchased at an expense of $7,300, so that the cost of the building, without other changes, will be $412,716.27, the county's half amounting to $206,358.13, and of this amount the county has paid $97,370. Without doubt there will be other and further changes and additions entailing additional expenses as the building progresses.

The following are the court's estimates of the amounts yet necessary to complete, equip and furnish the joint building, and are based from the best information obtainable from consultation with city members of the building committee, the architects and from material men:

Yet due on contracts including alterations and additions	$ [illegible]
Paving streets on the four sides of the square, county's half	2,500.00
Furnishing Court House, county's half	20,000.00
Paving the square, county's half	14,000.00
Tinning flat on roof work, cutting in ceiling and ceiling joist, screws, nuts and washers	15,000.00
Elevators for four floors of the square, county's half	4,000.00
Electric wiring and fixtures, county's half	3,000.00
Total	$[illegible]

Expenditures in the establishment and paving up of new roads, and in maintaining and keeping in repair the established highways, and in repairing and building bridges, are almost wholly dependent upon an affirmative vote on the question of issuing bonds. The county court is of the opinion that no more has been appropriated for roads and bridges during the past series of years than should naturally be expended for like purposes during the present year and for a number of years yet to come. Much road work is immediately required in the western and southern parts of the county, and without it whole settlements will be left without wagon communication with the trading points at the critical time when frost goes out of the ground and which is generally accompanied by heavy rains. These people are among the promptest taxpayers and are certainly entitled to a fair share of the road work—the only character of public improvements which are directly beneficial to them. Economy prompts the opinion that all road and bridge work should be of the most permanent character, which means greater expense at the time but economy in the end. As rapidly as wooden bridges wear out, they should be replaced with iron structures builded upon stone buttresses.

The appropriations for roads and bridges were:

For 1888	$ [illegible]
For 1889	[illegible]
For 1890	[illegible]
For 1891	[illegible]
For 1892	[illegible]
For 1893	[illegible]
Total	$[illegible]

The next proposition to be submitted and one which the county court believes to be of great importance and to fair treatment to all classes, is the Poor Farm.

The present county poor farm consists of [illegible] acres, and from observation and investigation the county court believes that there is no occasion for any larger acreage. The inmates of the infirmary, both male and female, when not incapacitated by age and infirmities for manual labor, realize that they are county charges, invariably find excuse for refusing to perform the lightest of farm work. Hence we believe that no material good can come from any increase in the acreage of the poor farm for farming purposes. However, we realize that among the first considerations of the good citizen is to provide for the infirm poor, and as well as food, clothing and shelter, to furnish labor as the means of employment for such of the inmates of the poor house as are industriously inclined, but we do believe that the present poor farm of ten acres is ample to supply all such with opportunities to satisfy their needs and desires in this direction. On the other hand, the necessity for additional buildings is the most imperative. During the past two seasons, the poor house has been crowded to overflowing. With twelve sleeping rooms, at times there has been as many as forty-seven inmates (aside from the hired attendants) composed of thirty-five males and twelve females, some old and infirm, some deaf, others blind, some crippled and still others who are constant sufferers from chronic and incurable diseases.

"The general laws make no provision for the separate care of imbecile and idiotic persons, and, as a matter of course, many of this character are among the inmates. In some of the rooms there are as many as five cots, the rooms, 10x17 feet, contain five cots, being the sleeping department of five females. At times the hallways have done duty as sleeping rooms; such being the case can it be wondered that the October grand jury, after examining the poor house, reported to the district court as follows:

"There are thirty-eight inmates, a larger number than the present buildings should be required to accommodate, crowding the majority to the utmost. There were found in some of the rooms, 11x17 feet in size, as many as five persons occupying beds, which is crowding them too close. In the judgment of your committee, the present accommodations are entirely inadequate, and a farm comprising not less than 160 acres should be provided and buildings constructed thereon, for the proper comfort of these unfortunate people. The county of Salt Lake has increased materially in population since the erection of the present buildings, and your committee cannot resist strongly recommending the early action be taken to the procuring of ample ground and the construction of modern buildings, to be well ventilated, with proper provision for wards for the care of the sick. Your committee is informed that quite a number of cottages are rented in the city, owing to the limited quarters at the farm, for the needy, and provisions have to be purchased for them, all of which sustains the argument that the below work would be carried on in a more satisfactory manner and with less expense to the county, if all could be located at the poor farm."

In this connection the February, 1893, grand jury on the 23 of the present month reported to the district court as follows:

"The county poor house, although very much crowded, was found to be clean and well taken care of. The food furnished the inmates is plain but good, and the supplies were found to be of good quality. We are informed that an addition to the building is contemplated, which should not be delayed, as we found each of the sleeping rooms occupied by from three to five persons. We are informed that indigent persons have been given orders on stores for food which have been used otherwise. We would suggest that some cheap cottages be built on the poor farm and to prevent imposition such persons should be supplied with food by the superintendent of the poor-house."

It can really be seen from this that the poor house, aside from being wholly inadequate for the accommodation of the aged and infirm, the crippled, imbecile and idiotic persons, affords no possible room for the pauper sick. As a consequence, from twelve to twenty-four persons nearly sick, are almost constantly maintained at the various city hospitals at the county's expense, which for the year 1892, amounted to $1,397.45, and fully three-fourths of this amount could have been saved had there been proper quarters at the poor house for their accommodation. In addition to this, much aid is given in the way of fuel, supplies and house rent to persons in various parts of the county, many of whom own property free to the poor house, and would be there were it possible to find room for them. Of this class of paupers there has been as many as sixty-two at one time. Many persons have possibly think that the above statements are colored, but to all such we say, do examine the conditions. Now it is proposed by the County court to make no increase in the acreage of the poor farm, but to erect buildings of convenient, and suitable arrangement, and suitable and ample for the accommodation of all who may properly become county charges, buildings arranged for the separation of the sexes in different wards, appointed so as to furnish accommodations for such as require hospital treatment, and to the fullest extent, place walls between the sick and the well and provide separate apartments for those who would mend as contrasted for those who would sicken as paupers, so that it may become an infirmary in fact as well as in name.

However, the court has very recently been advised by competent authority that proper sanitation at the present poor house site is such as to preclude the advisability of erecting additional buildings thereon; and if these conditions are found to exist upon examination and report of reputable physicians and experts on drainage, the County court would certainly refuse to erect sanitary buildings and improvements at the present location, and would not hesitate to purchase other suitable grounds.

The appropriations for the pauper poor house and infirmary accounts were:

For 1888	$ [illegible]
For 1889	[illegible]
For 1890	[illegible]
For 1891	[illegible]
For 1892	[illegible]
For 1893	[illegible]
A loss in the year of	$ [illegible]

By way of

RECAPITULATION

We estimate as follows the demands that will be placed upon the County, if their force be authorized, as follows: Completing, furnishing and tinning the joint building, paving the square, walks and grounds thereof, together with the tunnel and heating plant, necessary to make the joint building and adjacent infirmary buildings and [illegible] $[illegible]

[illegible]

Total [illegible]

It is certainly not desirable at this time to increase the tax levy, and yet it would seem impossible to meet the current expense with the present revenue, and in addition to this, meet the extraordinary demands in prosecuting work on the joint building, increasing accommodations for the poor and in maintaining the public highways. As a matter of course, in an emergency such as this, the county can borrow money on the open market, or issue warrants, which the county attorney determines are interest bearing, but we do believe that the most satisfactory solution of the problem is in leaving the county, and to this end have submitted the question for your consideration. This means that the payment for these improvements shall be extended over a period of not less than ten nor more than twenty years, so that those who come after us to enjoy and to benefited by them shall at least share in the burden.

In conclusion we would add that Salt Lake county has no bonded indebtedness, and in event of an affirmative vote on the proposition at this time no further bonding of the county is permissible under the law until these bonds are fully paid off. In this connection we would call attention to section 1 of chapter 23 of the session laws of 1892, which reads as follows:

"No second or subsequent loan and issue of bonds made to secure the same shall be made or authorized by said county court as above provided, so long as the first loan and bonds, principal and interest, made, under the provisions of this act, shall remain unpaid."

Whatever shall be the result of this bond election, work must be continued on the joint building, additional buildings for the poor must be erected and certain highway work must be done. Hence, which do the people prefer? To bond the county and pay 5 per centum in ten or twelve years, or have the county borrow funds and issue warrants as needed and pay therefor 7 or 8 per cent?

As a matter of course these bonds, if voted, will only be issued from time to time as needed.

JAMES B. BLAIR,
Chairman of County Court.
JOHN P. CARLSON,
[Seal.] HERMAN HEMSEGER,
JOSEPH H. MORRIS,
Subscribers.
Attest: H. V. MERRY,
County Clerk.
CAUTION UNDWNE, Jr., Deputy.
SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, March 7th, 1893.

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From Provo and intermediate points [illegible]
From Milford, Juab, Nephi, Lehi, Tooele and intermediate points [illegible]
*From Terminus and Tooele [illegible]

DEPART.

For Eastern points [illegible]
For Butte, Portland, San Francisco and Cache Valley [illegible]
For Park City and Park City [illegible]
For Ogden, intermediate points and all points East [illegible]
For Provo and intermediate points [illegible]
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