

## EVENING NEWS.

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CHARLES W. PENROSE, EDITOR.

Wednesday, August 8, 1888.

### OBSTRUCTING ELECTIONS.

THE judges of election should be above partisanship. When in the discharge of their official duties they ought not to be influenced by any kind of party considerations. Challenges are allowed at the polls under the law. But this is not designed for the purpose of obstructing an election nor to encourage factional opposition. When judges see that challenges are interposed by emissaries of one party for the purpose of hindering voters belonging to another party, they should not assist in the nefarious work but quickly decide the challenges on the evidence presented.

It was apparent to everybody present on Monday, when the callow youth who had registered certain citizens and taken their oaths as to their qualifications, challenged them as aliens because they belonged to the People's Party and he was a "Liberal" feeling that such challenging was not in good faith but for the purpose of obstructing the election. He ought to have been set down upon instead of being encouraged. Any voter who honestly believes that a person attempting to vote is disqualified, may challenge the vote, and the judges ought to decide there and then, after hearing both sides, whether the challenge shall be sustained or not.

In every part of the United States, when a voter is challenged as to his citizenship, his affidavit is taken as evidence. If he commits perjury he can be punished for his crime. To compel citizens to go to their homes and search for naturalization papers that may be mislaid, in many instances, to deprive them of their right to vote. Particularly in this case when the time for closing the polls is approaching. There is no law requiring a naturalized citizen to produce his certificate at the polls. His name on the registry list is evidence of his citizenship. He has taken and subscribed to an oath to that effect. If it can be proven that he has sworn falsely, he can be prosecuted under section 27 of the election laws. The law provides the manner by which the citizenship or other qualifications of voters may be tested. It is to be done before the senior justice of the peace for the precinct where the voter resides. Objections in writing by a qualified voter must be heard up to the fifth day before the election. And after hearing both sides, the justice must send to the judges of election a list of all persons found to be disqualified, within three days prior to the election. And the judges must strike such names off the registry list.

The Utah Commission published a rule in August, 1887, that voters challenged in regard to their citizenship, if of foreign birth, shall either produce their papers or prove that such papers have been issued and lost or destroyed. Of course this is not law. It is not binding either upon the voters or the judges of election. But it shows that the Commission recognized the right of the voter to make affidavit when unable to produce his naturalization papers. On Monday, a well known citizen who is a voter and a candidate in the election to the office of Commissioner of the University lands, was challenged as to his naturalization and required to produce his papers. His office and status were self-evident to his citizenship. He went home to get his papers. Two hours without finding them. The City Attorney went with him to the Utah Commissioners who, after investigating the matter, gave it as their opinion that he should be allowed to vote on his own affidavit, similar to the facts. He voted, and should be allowed to do the same under similar circumstances.

It would be well enough for naturalized citizens to have their certificates ready for use when needed and to make a practice of taking them with them when they go to the polls on election days. One citizen obtained a certificate from the clerk of the district court that he had been naturalized, or perhaps wrongly have lost his vote. That is all wrong. A man cannot remember the date of his naturalization, or that a large number of persons have to apply for certificates, or the clerk has been nearly naturalized, or that the citizen is a naturalized citizen in another State or Territory, is any citizen under such circumstances to be prevented from voting when he is properly registered as a citizen duly qualified? Certainly not. The law does not contemplate any such absurdity.

What challenges to be allowed for, then? A non-resident may personate a resident; a citizen may have become disqualified after registration, or may have been bribed or have offered a bribe to a voter. Challenges for such cause would be proper. But it is evident that the law, by providing the means for testing the ordinary qualifications of voters before the judges of the peace, did not contemplate such challenges as were interposed on Monday for the purpose of obstructing the election and hindering lawful voters from casting their ballots.

When the judges of election see by the antics of obstructive and alien and animus of partisans that elections are being hindered in the exercise of the suffrage, they should not become parties to the offense. It is a misdeemeanor under Section 27 of the election laws to interfere with any voter in the free exercise of the franchise, and it is a felony for an election officer to neglect or fail to discharge any duty of his office.

These points should be well considered and understood by voters, and especially by men of influence and standing among the people. We should profit in future by the lessons of the past, and be prepared through experience for greater usefulness and more efficient service to the cause of liberty and right.

### TAKE TIME BY THE FORE-LOOK.

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Also it is proper that when a man has a vote he should use it. Whether there appears to be any special reason for violence or not, it is expected that the suffrage will be exercised. It is not conferred as an ornament or a favor. It is for use. It is a power of no value unless in operation. Every voter who does not cast a ballot at an election is guilty of a neglect of duty. And in these times such neglect is a betrayal of trust and of public and personal interests.

And it is a good thing to get into the regular habit of voting. There are good habits and bad habits. When we form the habit of doing our duty its performance becomes easy, as a matter of course. Election duty is no exception. Every live citizen must take some interest in politics, at any rate in the politics of his locality. He is part of the body politic and is affected by every public measure. He should make himself acquainted with the merits of every public question and the qualifications of every candidate for public office, that he may cast his ballot intelligently.

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If you put Kilauea in head lines to this letter with the volcano in small caps, I am afraid nearly all your readers will "skip" it, for the reason that the particular spot of earth called Kilauea has been nearly naturalized, or that the citizen is a naturalized citizen in another State or Territory, is any citizen under such circumstances to be prevented from voting when he is properly registered as a citizen duly qualified? Certainly not. The law does not contemplate any such absurdity.

What challenges to be allowed for, then? A non-resident may personate a resident; a citizen may have become disqualified after registration, or may have been bribed or have offered a bribe to a voter. Challenges for such cause would be proper. But it is evident that the law, by providing the means for testing the ordinary qualifications of voters before the judges of the peace, did not contemplate such challenges as were interposed on Monday for the purpose of obstructing the election and hindering lawful voters from casting their ballots.

When the judges of election see by the antics of obstructive and alien and animus of partisans that elections are being hindered in the exercise of the suffrage, they should not become parties to the offense. It is a misdeemeanor under Section 27 of the election laws to interfere with any voter in the free exercise of the franchise, and it is a felony for an election officer to neglect or fail to discharge any duty of his office.

These points should be well considered and understood by voters, and especially by men of influence and standing among the people. We should profit in future by the lessons of the past, and be prepared through experience for greater usefulness and more efficient service to the cause of liberty and right.

At the election just over, quite a number of citizens were unable to vote because their names were not on the registration list. They had registered for the municipal election last February, but not for the general election this August. If they had taken notice of the reminders which were published in the daily papers they would not have found themselves in this condition.

We now call their attention to the fact that another election will soon be held. A Delegate to Congress will have to be elected in November. The law provides that registration for that election shall commence on the second Monday in September, every other year. This is the "other year." It continues

during the week. Therefore every citizen desiring to vote and who can take the registration oath, if his name is not now on the list should bear this in mind.

Due notice will be given by the registration officers when and where citizens can register, and the November election. Some, no doubt, will reach their homes before that time. Others have never registered, for some reason or other, or through negligence and without any reason at all. Changes of residence will occur. There will be an opportunity for every citizen to vote at the delegate election and are not barred by statute, to become qualified.

We speak of this in time so that preparation may be made in season. It is important that a full vote be polled in November. There are many reasons for this. Among them are these:

A "Liberal" candidate will be put forward every year for a few months before to back to back with a large number of ballots. He will probably be one of the bogus Democrats who figure as the genuine article once in four years. For political purposes all the support possible will be given for him, to make a show at the national capital. Republicans, Greenbackers, Prohibitionists, Whiskeyites, tag, rag and bait will fuse, and all be counted as Democrats because of their votes for the "Liberal" candidate posing as one of the Democrats. Well, the People's Party should come to the front and show up such a majority that the vote of the opposition will be nothing to brag of or to be proud of, but will be too insignificant in comparison to make any kind of capital out of.

Then, the People cannot afford to throw away any chances. Apathy, negligence, the idea that others will vote in sufficient number to carry the election, have cost the People some school districts and some precincts. This ought to be experience enough in that direction. All the votes of the party are needed at every election of every kind.

Also it is proper that when a man has a vote he should use it. Whether there appears to be any special reason for violence or not, it is expected that the suffrage will be exercised. It is not conferred as an ornament or a favor. It is for use. It is a power of no value unless in operation. Every voter who does not cast a ballot at an election is guilty of a neglect of duty. And in these times such neglect is a betrayal of trust and of public and personal interests.

And it is a good thing to get into the regular habit of voting. There are good habits and bad habits. When we form the habit of doing our duty its performance becomes easy, as a matter of course. Election duty is no exception. Every live citizen must take some interest in politics, at any rate in the politics of his locality. He is part of the body politic and is affected by every public measure. He should make himself acquainted with the merits of every public question and the qualifications of every candidate for public office, that he may cast his ballot intelligently.

No citizen should suffer himself to be led away by clamor, by misrepresentation, by false enthusiasm or by any influence that appeals to passion, prejudice or personalities. "Freedom and reason make us men." Let us be good. Then for