

*Virginia City Territorial Enterprise*  
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### ***The Removal of the Capital***

EDITORS ENTERPRISE: I have just returned from the Capital, where I have been a Legislative spectator for a while. The strongest conviction which the experience of my visit forced upon my mind was, that the Capital ought to be removed from Carson City.

I think you would be of my opinion if you could see with your own eyes, and hear with your own ears, the doings of the Legislature for a few days.

My first and best reason for thinking the Capital ought to be removed is, that while it remains in Carson, the Legislative Assembly is beyond the pale of newspaper criticism—beyond its restraining influence, and consequently beyond the jurisdiction of the people, in a manner, since the people are left in ignorance of what their servants are doing, and cannot protest against their acts until it is too late. Your reports of proceedings take up as much room in the city papers as can well be spared, I suppose, and they are ample enough for all intents and purposes—or rather, they would be, if the Virginia newspapers could stay in Carson and criticize these proceedings, and also the members, editorially, occasionally.

A mere skeleton report carries but an indifferent conception of the transactions of a Legislative body to the minds of the people. For instance, in the style and after the manner of one of these synopses: Mr. Stewart gave notice of a bill entitled an Act to audit the claim of D. J. Gasherie. A day or so afterward, we learn that according to former notice, Mr. Stewart introduced his bill. You hear of it again in some committee report. And again, as having been reported “favorably” by a Committee of the Whole. Next, your report says Mr. Stewart’s bill passed by so many ayes, and so many noes. The work is done; none of your readers have the slightest idea what Mr. Gasherie’s claim was for, and neither does one of them imagine himself even remotely interested in knowing anything about it. Yet the chief portion of your readers, I take it, were very particularly interested in that bill—because they will have to contribute money from their own pockets to pay Mr. Gasherie’s claim; and they were further interested, on general principles, because the passage of that bill inflicted a great wrong upon the Territory.

Now, if the Legislature had been in session in Virginia, under the eyes of the press, instead of those of six or seven idle lobby members, I doubt if Mr. Stewart would have introduced the bill; I doubt if the Committee of the Whole would have presumed to consider it; I know the House and the Council would not have passed it. When Mr. Elliott rose in his place and objected that this was a bill to provide payment of a sum out of the Territorial Treasury, amounting to between \$1,800 and \$1,900, for the maintenance by Sheriff Gasherie, of several Ormsby county paupers, the newspapers would have promptly seconded him in the suggestion that Ormsby county maintain her own paupers, and pay the bill out of her own pocket. And when Mr. Stewart acknowledged the justness of the suggestion, but said Ormsby had bankrupted herself by purchasing a set of fine county buildings, and must therefore beg this favor at the hands of the people of the whole Territory, the newspapers would have known all about it, would

have demurred, and the members, with a sense of responsibility thus forced upon them would have intentionally voted no upon the bill, instead of voting aye without really knowing, perhaps, what particular measure was before the House.

Moreover, several other outrageous laws, already passed, could never have been passed in Virginia. Twenty thousand dollars of the people's money have been asked for to build a seminary in Carson City and present it to two of her citizens—a private affair, and no more public in its character than Mr. Chauvel's fencing school here, and no more deserving of a Territorial appropriation of \$20,000. Members were not wanting to vote for the measure, and to advocate it strongly. The bill would even have passed, probably, if Messrs. Clagett, and Elliott had withheld their earnest opposition to it. Yet a bill to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a public mining college—a polytechnic school—has excited small interest among the members. They forget that a mining education can be best acquired here in the Territory—they forget, also, that the Seminary could offer no inducements of a similar nature, since our citizens, for many years to come, will prefer to educate their daughters at the inexpensive and efficient seminaries of Benicia, San Jose, and Santa Clara.

The Seminary bill was resurrected on Saturday, consolidated with the Polytechnic bill, \$30,000 of public money added, and again brought before the Legislature. So—\$20,000 for a building, and a tax of 1 percent on \$30,000,000 of property, for “sundries.” A crowd of young gentlemen and ladies in one building might affect the matter of public morals more than that of public education, I think. The school is not located, in the bill, but the Ormsby delegation propose to have it established in Carson. The Governor is to appoint the trustees, and they are to fix upon a location, I believe. A mining school in a town fifteen miles from a mine, would be a beneficial thing, in the abstract. Yet this \$50,000 bill may pass, after all. So may the act to purchase Mr. Curry's prison for \$80,000 more—\$130,000 to Carson, by way of compensation for the stream of iniquitous private franchises which has been flowing from one or two members of her delegation during the entire session. Could these bills, unmodified, pass, if the people could be thoroughly posted as to their merits, by the press? I suppose not.

Clagett, Brumfield, Elliott, and two or three other intelligent, industrious and upright members have saved the credit of the Lower House, and protected the interests of the people, in nearly every case where it has been done at all—but they have received no commendation for it; neither have idle members, and members of easy integrity, been censured. It is because the people have been left in the dark as to who they ought to praise and who they ought to blame.

It was urged, last session, that Storey County was disposed to stow away, in her ravenous maw, everything that came in her way. That argument lost her the Capital, by one vote—that argument, and one other, which was a written pledge, on the part of Ormsby county, that if the Capital were permitted to remain in Carson, halls should be furnished for the use of the Legislature, free of charge. Storey County offered to erect capital buildings at her own expense, and move the officers and other governmental appurtenances within her lines, also at her own expense. Let Storey County make that proposition today, and it will be accepted. It is Ormsby County, now that is striving with extraordinary energy, to swallow all public benefits—not Storey. And Ormsby has failed to redeem her pledge—for she has charged the Legislature \$500 for the use of her courthouse, and after making the contract, is now dissatisfied because the granting of a greater sum is refused her.

Four members of one branch of the Legislature support the Specific Contract bill because it will result to their personal advantage, in sums varying from \$1,000 to \$4,000. More than that number have supported private franchises on personal pecuniary grounds. One member would

vote \$20,000 to the Seminary because he would reap an advantage, in dollars and cents, from the passage of the bill. Inasmuch as these statements come from the gentlemen referred to, themselves, they are entitled to full credence. If there could be a merit attached to a wrong motive, I think that merit might be considered to be the small amount of intelligence required to keep from telling about it. But all Legislators are not diplomats. Would it not be well to place the Assembly where the press, and through the press the people, could look after it?

Mr. Clagett gave notice, on Saturday, of an Act to remove the Capital, and the bill will probably be formally introduced today (Monday). If the people of Storey County want the seat of government in their midst, let them signify it promptly and cordially.

A LOOKER-ON