

Miramar, Calif. March 13, 1914.

Mr. C. A. McGrew,

San Diego, Dun,

San Diego, Calif.

My dear McGrew:-

Yesterday I met one of Charlie Colliers friends and asked him what they had been doing to Collier, and what they were going to do with him. He told me that Collier had gone to smash financially and that there was a movement to run him for Congress. Of course you know more about both of these things than I do.

I was thinking that there was material here for a real first class and very interesting human interest story.

I remember Collier when he was a bright vigorous boy just entering into law practice;--his early ambition and effort to be a congressman -- his accidental entrance into the real estate business by reason of his contesting the validity of taxes ^{levied} under which certain lands had been sold by the state, and later his meteoric career with his real estate and construction companies. He once told me that his previous years personal expense, other than business, was \$50,000.

When the Exposition project was started, I attended the first meeting, and told the parties assembled that the job was too big a one for San Diego. After the meeting and decision, I told some of the men that Collier was the only man in town I knew of who could carry through the bluff, if it could be carried through at all. Collier has since told me that I was to blame for his taking on the job, and that therefore I ought to have helped him.

However, the story of Colliers triumphs and defeats, the story of the most perfect type of the genius booster, might be well

worth a column , and some reference to the betrayals he has suffered and the sacrifices he has made would take off the sting and add a touch of the sympathetic if not of the pathetic. Still I should think the object of the story would be only to furnish good reading matter without regard to politics or a local factional strife.

Either Hardy or Wangenheim both, with whom I have been talking on other business, told me that Moody had added an even fifty percent to the tax assessment values, and that one of the purposes of this was to permit the voting of the million and a half of bonds to complete the Moreno payment, so that Spreckels would have that much more money to spend on the Arizona Railroad. From what they said it appeared to me that but for the first sale of the water system Spreckels would have had to lay down and that there would have been no chance for the immediate completion of the road.

I advised Wangenheim that if Spreckels should fail to place his bonds on the Eastern market, that at eighty cents it ought to be possible now to place them, or most of them, in San Diego. I told ~~them~~ ^{him} that in an extreme emergency of this kind I would, without regard to Spreckels attitude, try to give some assistance.

It seems to me that it would be an interesting item of news to make comments on the probable future of the million and a half bond issue, and the project of the community, through its individuals furnishing money for such bonds and stocks that could not be sold easily elsewhere. It would not be at all bad for San Diego if San Diegans became the actual owners of the railroad. Spreckels has shown such weakness either in the matter of finances or expeditious management that it may well be possible that the completion of the Arizona Railroad will depend upon other men than Spreckels.

In fact it is just possible that Spreckels may be an exaggerated Collier.

Of course I presume that in the future as in the past the Sun will ignore the Spreckels personal attitude toward the Sun and myself.

Some weeks ago, before the rains, just after the first water bond election, Hardy and I were talking about the future water supply. Hardy declared that we were going to get through alright. I called to his attention at our last meeting, the actual impounding of water that had taken place during the last two great rain storms. He said, "We are not out of the woods at all yet," and that our reliance is still on the pumping proposition. When I spoke of the La Mesa project to build a dam at the old mission site, and the flooding of Fanita he told me not to worry at all, and that that project would not be allowed to go through, and that the El Capitan site must be developed for the city. I judge from this that the tax payers league are alive to the situation and that soon enough there will be a locking of horns between the city and the La Mesa water district.

I was asked to join the tax payers league. I sent a check for the membership, but with it a letter stating that I would not sign the membership roll until I knew more of the persons and the direction that the association was going to take politically.

I have received from time to time, drafts of the charter that the league was preparing, and have been asked for opinions. Personally I am better pleased with the leagues charter than what I have read of the Councils Advisory Committee charter. I urged a large council which should have purely legislative functions, and ~~should~~ ^{which} have nothing to do with the administration, and that the mayor should be clothed with almost absolute power to appoint and remove, and that the city manager or that the board of city managers should have large salaries, large enough to allow the mayor to obtain the highest quality of administrative ability.

I also urged both committees to prepare to spend a good

deal of money for the next three or four years in preparing a perfectly fair and equal appraisalment of all property. The inequalities in the city's assessments today are an absurdity. Some assessments that I know of are higher than the actual values of the property, while others are less than ten percent of what the property has been actually sold for.

Hardy said that he wanted to meet you and lay before you the tax leagues charter. I told him that I was not going to even enter the office of the Sun, or take any part whatever in the campaign. However I advised Hardy that when his charter was reported it should be to the two evening papers, and that he should try to get you to give him a full page on which the charter itself should appear, an appeal to the public and arguments on the subject.

Hardy stated that Wangenheim wanted to submit the two charters to the people and then elect a board of free-holders unpledged. The Tax Payers League will not consent to this. They propose to ^{submit} their charter and candidates for the free-holder election, pledged to the tax leaguers particular charter.

Hardy would be glad to come and see you at any time and lay out the tax leaguers scheme.

By inference in the several interviews and letters that I have received, I judge that it is the project of the tax leaguers to displace the Chamber of Commerce in the matter of political and business leadership in the City. The Chamber of Commerce is recognized as being a body pack^{ed} and controlled by Spreckels and the public service corporations.

The principle and most note-worthy clause in the constitution of the tax leaguers is that no one of its members shall be interested as an owner, officer or employe of any public service corporation, and that any tax league member after his membership becoming

so interested in a public service corporation would thereby automatically cease to be a member of the tax league.

I take it that Hardy is the leading spirit in the tax league, and that Irwin and Simon Levi are his leading ^{disciplinants} ~~spirits~~.

It is probable that a good deal, if not all of the information in this letter (if there is any information) was given to me in a confidential way, although it was of course given to me on account of my connection with the Sun, and therefore I ask you not to quote this letter to anyone, not even to persons named in it.

It is needless I think now for me to tell you that my personal preferences will have and should have not the least weight with you.

Yours sincerely,

T. W. SCRIPPS.