

LEIGH HUNT'S GREAT SCHEME

To Put Seattle Post-Intelligencer Put of Business.

Rise, Fall and Rise Again of a Shrewd Business Plan, Manager and Politician.

The life story of Leigh S. J. Hunt, who announces that he will shortly establish a metropolitan daily paper in Seattle reads like a romance. The cunning treatment he has received from the fickle goddess of fortune furnishes a theme which only the pen of a Dumas could properly embellish.

In the middle '80s Hunt arrived in Seattle from Iowa. He bought the Post-Intelligencer, which was not much of a paper then, for \$27,000. In a few weeks he sold a third interest in it for \$20,000. Soon he had stock in the Puget Sound National, then as now the leading financial institution of the city, and from that on until 1893, when the panic came, everything he touched turned to gold.

In those brief years he boomed Kirkland, a suburb of Seattle, as the place where a mammoth iron works would be built. He was the leading spirit in the planning and placing on the market of West Seattle, where he said the Union Pacific intended establishing terminals. He bought the first cable line built in Seattle, and capped the climax by investing heavily in the Monte Cristo mining district. He also organized a bank.

Hundreds of people invested in Hunt's schemes. The man was looked upon as a wonder. Laboring people by the scores went in with him. As managing director of the Post-Intelligencer, he built up a political ring that controlled the Territory of Washington, and eventually the state. Associated with him in politics were such giants as John C. Haines, Frederick James Grant and George H. Heilbron who have passed to the great beyond, John H. McGraw, whom Hunt made governor of the state, and who will probably be his friend and ally now that he has decided to return to Seattle, and a host of less well known men, all of whom were shrewd politicians, and whose word was law in the state. His policy was to make King county the dominant factor in the state and he succeeded, which his successors have failed lamentably to do.

Hunt made senators, governors and congressmen. He dictated the municipal government of Seattle with a red hot iron. His word was law and his powerful influential newspaper kept in subjection those who would have risen in revolt. He enjoyed all the power that one man could reasonably hope to have, and apparently it was to last for all time. But the panic came. Almost in a night every dollar which Hunt had on earth was swept away. His property was a drug on the market and his bank was insolvent. Those who had followed his schemes and invested their money in them went down with him. The only consolation they had was that the one time magnate was as poor as they.

Shaking the dust of Seattle from his feet in 1894, Hunt went to Korea. There he obtained important mining concessions from the king, and for six years has been at work recouping his losses. His old time luck returned and his wealth is now reckoned in the millions. The earth yielded at his touch and gave up gold in fabulous amounts. In all this time he never returned to Seattle.

Some months ago he returned to the American continent and landed at Vancouver, B. C. Instead of stopping at the hotel he went to New York and from there to London. Everywhere he met men whom he had induced to invest money in his schemes in Seattle. He made good their losses with interest. Among the men whom he thus repaid was James S. Clarkson, the well known Iowa politician. Hunt went on to London in connection with his mining business and returned. He hurried across the continent to Seattle.

In New York, prior to leaving for London, he stated that he intended starting a newspaper in Seattle, and when he reached here on his return his old-time associates and friends greeted him with open arms. He took a suite of six rooms at the Butler, engaged a lot of Japanese and colored servants to wait upon him, and then walked over to the First National Bank where he deposited an immense sum of money, together with a list of the names of the men who had lost money through his schemes in the old days. Every claim was outlawed, but Hunt instructed his bankers to pay every cent to the last farthing. President Hoge, of the bank, sent for one man who held Hunt's outlawed note for \$40,000.

"How much will you take for it?" he asked.

The man hesitated. Two years ago he would have rejoiced to get \$20 for it.

"Well, I don't know," he began. "I guess."

"Well," put in Mr. Hoge, brusquely, "there is a check for the face value of

the note, with interest to date. Will that satisfy you?"

This man was one who had lost all in the panic. The interest on the note was over \$20,000 and he went out of the door a rich man, whereas he came in, to all intents and purposes, a pauper.

Once in Seattle Hunt demonstrated that he was in earnest about his newspaper scheme. He at once ordered 12 typesetting machines and a quad press, and contracted for a building to be erected on First avenue and Madison street. The structure will be ready in five or six months, about the time the new plant will arrive and then the paper will start. It will be called the Washingtonian.

Mr. Hunt has returned to Korea, but he has placed his newspaper proposition in the hands of a man who is said to enjoy a national reputation in the journalistic field. This man will supervise the installation of a plant, or organize a staff and look after general details. It is said that Mr. Hunt will not reside permanently in Seattle but will nevertheless dictate the policy of the paper.

It is said Mr. Hunt made a proposition to ex-Senator John L. Wilson who owns the Post-Intelligencer, to purchase that paper. Mr. Wilson's price was too high and Mr. Hunt will enter the field as his rival. The Post-Intelligencer has the morning Associated Press franchise for Seattle. This will make it necessary for Mr. Hunt to get his dispatches from the best source he can find. He announces that he will have a special leased wire service from the east, and, although this will cost an immense amount of money he is reported to have said that he could afford to lose \$100,000 a year for the first three or four years that his paper runs. He will certainly lose considerable money at the start.

Mr. Hunt is reported to have made a remarkable proposition to several heavy advertisers in Seattle. It is said he called them together and said he would carry their advertising for one year and if at the end of that time the circulation of his paper does not exceed, or at least equal that of the Post-Intelligencer, he would not charge them a cent for it. If it does they are to pay him the full rates charged by the Post-Intelligencer. This deal has not yet been consummated, but it is said to be one of the astounding things which Mr. Hunt proposes to do in Seattle.

Hunt's establishing a newspaper in Seattle means a bitter fight for both business and political supremacy between him and ex-Senator Wilson of the Post-Intelligencer. Conservative men express grave doubts of Seattle's ability to support two morning newspapers, and the general belief is that in the long run one of them will be forced to the wall. Which? The Post-Intelligencer has the advantage of being established, of having the Associated Press service, and of being closely identified with several gigantic business enterprises. It covers its field well, is the leading paper of the state, and has the 'prestige.' But Mr. Wilson bought it on borrowed money and were it once to commence losing money, he would not have the private means to keep up its excellence as a newspaper, unless, of course, he could secure it from outside sources altogether antagonistic to Mr. Hunt. Mr. Hunt has loads of money and goes into the fight with a full knowledge beforehand that for some years he is bound to lose money. He jauntily says he doesn't care whether his paper is a dividend payer or not, that he wants a paper, and is willing to pay the bill.

There are many in Seattle who greet the coming of Mr. Hunt with no attempt to conceal their joy. These are the political enemies of ex-Senator Wilson, and their name is legion several times over. They see in Mr. Hunt's scheme a chance to break the prestige which Mr. Wilson necessarily has by reason of controlling the party organ, and they hail the Korean mining king as their deliverer from bondage. These men are making all kinds of extravagant assertions. Some of the most jubilant predict that the Seattle Post-Intelligencer will suspend publication within 60 days after the first number of the Washingtonian is issued. But it won't be so, for the Post-Intelligencer will give Mr. Hunt a hard struggle and it is by no means certain that it will come out second best. In the struggle, however, every political condition in the state will probably be revolutionized.

What Mr. Hunt proposes to do politically, of course, is not known except in a general way. That he will attempt to restore the waning influence of King county is certain. When he dictated politics before Seattle had a governor, and a member of the United States senate, while Tacoma, its hated rival, had nothing. Today, Seattle has nothing and Tacoma has a governor, a United States senator and a member of congress. Seattle can't even get a decent hearing at Washington City, and what few favors are bestowed upon it come from Congressman Jones who lives at North Yakima, and Senator Turner, who is a Democrat and whose home is Spokane.

It is said that Mr. Hunt's first move will be to make a Seattle man Senator Turner's successor in 1903. A local paper has published a story that he will support Samuel H. Piles, general con-

sel for the Pacific Coast Company, and a leading Seattle politician, but some doubt is expressed as to the authenticity of this tale. It is doubtful if Mr. Hunt knows himself who he will support. Moreover, he and Mr. Piles once had a bitter fight which extended over some years and was not fully healed up until 1892, when Mr. Piles tumbled into the band wagon, and at Mr. Hunt's solicitation, nominated John H. McGraw for governor in the Republican state convention in 1892.

There was a time when Mr. Hunt owned the Post-Intelligencer that if Sam Piles had addressed 5000 people in the armory, and at the conclusion of his speech he had been driven in a carriage through the streets by a shouting and approving populace, not a word would have appeared about it in the columns of the Post-Intelligencer. It is doubtful had Mr. Piles been openly assassinated in the streets of Seattle if the Post-Intelligencer would have printed the news. Mr. Hunt did not approve of Mr. Piles in those days, and absolutely forbade the printing of his name, under any circumstances, in his paper.

But this is digression. There is no doubt that Mr. Hunt will not support either Levi Ankenny or John L. Wilson for the United States senate. There is little doubt that he will bring out a Seattle man and make a strong endeavor to arouse the old Seattle spirit once more in his behalf. Also that he will endeavor to galvanize into life, under a new name, the old "P. I. ring." For despite its numerous sins and shortcomings it always assured to Seattle that prestige to which it was justly entitled, and which came out winner after many a hard fought battle, in which the political giants of other sections of the state were arrayed in solid phalanx against it. Alaskan.

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Hulide claims adjoining the upper and lower half of creek claim No. 31 below discovery, right limit, Bonanza creek, in the Bonanza Mining Division of the Dawson Mining District, plans of which are deposited in the field Commissioner's office at Dawson, Y. T., under receipt No. 4 by R. I. Jephson.
First published February 25, 1901.

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