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of the public eyes are defective and

70 PER CENT

of the defective eyes should be wearing

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STODDARD DISCUSSES MUCH MOOTED SUBJECT, SOCIALISM

To the Editor of Observer:—I wish to call your attention to two articles on the front page of your paper that do not seem to be consistent with each other. In the one you discuss the question on the proposition that Union county is ready to secede from the union of counties known in their associate capacity as the state of Oregon. In the other article you criticize the woman lecturer, Miss May Wood-Simon because she said she did not honor the constitution of the United States. You may claim that your proposition to secede from the tyranny of the tax collector was stated merely in an exaggerated form to intensify the force of your argument against excessive taxation. Be that as it may, it is evident to a casual observer that you and Miss Simon are afflicted with the same malady, and as the discussion will not down it is useless for you to call on the La Grande school board to suppress public discussion of questions that are recognized by everybody to be uppermost in the thought of the world today. I am not a socialist, and perhaps not a "near" socialist, as they say about beer, but I do believe in free speech as guaranteed by this same constitution that you desire to defend by suppression.

It is agreed by everybody, the "higher ups," the "blanket stiff" and the "common people," that something is wrong. Perhaps everybody knows what the malady is and each one has a remedy according as he is affected by the grinding processes by which he is afflicted. Some call it by the name of "High cost of living," Jim Hill called it "The cost of high living." Some want to "Bust the trusts," some want to regulate while others want to own them. So far as I can understand this last is the chief offending of the socialists.

Now, about this not honoring the constitution, that you attempt to make such a glaring offense against the lady lecturer. We all know that our government was the result of a successful revolution, that the Declaration of Independence enunciates the doctrine that all just laws should come from the consent of the governed, and that the right of revolution is "boldly proclaimed. And these facts have never been successfully controverted, because, in the very nature of things, they are true. Proven to be true, in the experiences of men, during the long struggle of ages for the freedom that we are supposed to enjoy. It is useless for the old decaying limb on a tree to say to the young shoot or "sucker," you have no right to be." We should be guided by the lessons of history wherein men persecuted each other for differences of opinion on religious doctrine or political policy.

Along with the rest I wish to venture a guess as to what is the matter with our governmental and industrial system. As stated before everybody knows something is wrong, even the "idle rich," who are the parasites of our institutions, are beginning to sit up and take notice of the growing unrest and agitation. Every generation or epoch in history has its problems, and we living now have problems greater than any in the past. We must not forget that institutions are made for and by the people, and not the peo-

ple made for the institutions as was formerly practiced under absolute monarchy. The right to amend, change or abolish any of our institutions is the very foundation of our democracy, as the "divine right of kings" was the buttress of absolute government. The free speech and free press guaranteed by the constitution is indeed the safety valve of our republic instead of a menace as you have stated in the Observer. Why preserve these things in the fundamental law if men are to be trusted with the liberties of each other. Why worship as a fetish any document if it is possible to improve it, and it is admitted by a great many that the constitution is not up to date. It has no reference to the initiative, referendum or recall, and in a thousand places it has been stretched to the breaking point to adjust itself to the changed and ever changing conditions of an advancing civilization. It is in fact the bulwark of the reactionary and the main defense of those who are entrenched in power and favored by privilege, instead of being the buttress of the common people. To say that it should not be attacked is to deny the right of free speech, to deny that the people should elect their own senators, and to deny that growth and development are not essential.

So much for our governmental, now a few words about our industrial system. We proceed on the assumption that capital never dies and that repudiation is an awful crime against society and civilization. During the life of men now living the problem of production has been solved, but the problem of distribution of the products has yet to be solved, and no man can say for certain how it is going to be done. That is really the problem of the age, and a funny thing about it is, that everybody agrees that is the crux of the whole matter. The difficulty lies in arriving at an equitable understanding. Perhaps it is an irrepressible conflict and may never be settled, but the socialists think they have discovered the light and are anxious to shed a few rays of light upon our clouded intellects. Why deny them this privilege. You know the light of the world has always come from the meek and lowly, and the oppressed have always been the apostles of liberty. The slick and fat and well fed, and those who enjoy fortune and power and glory hardly ever come to the rescue of the forlorn and oppressed. So, let the socialists proceed with their propaganda, provided they do so in an orderly and lawful manner, and with due regard for the rights of others.

As to taxation and the "high cost of living": Repudiation and revolution coupled with reconstruction on a more equitable basis are the words that express the only solution possible of the existing conditions in our social and industrial system. These words suggest a terrible condition of affairs but why not look the facts full in the face? Take the national debts of the world, the state debts, the municipal, county and school debts, to say nothing of the railway, corporate and individual debts, and how is it all going to be paid with the accruing interest. Then add to this the high cost of living and the cost of keeping up our institutions through the medium of taxation and the question arises: What is the inevitable outcome?

Bringing it home to ourselves, have not we in our state, municipal and county affairs, as well as in our private affairs been into the game to the limit? Take the city of La Grande as a sample: The bonded debt is \$285,000, drawing 5 per cent interest, and the floating debt and improvement bonds about \$265,000, at 6 per cent interest, making in all \$550,000. Then add to this the school debt, about \$110,000. To pay the interest alone will take nearly \$40,000 per annum. All other districts and municipalities are in the same fix.

How is it all going to be paid? Nature shows us how, so does history. A famous mathematician has figured out that \$1.00 at 6 per cent interest, commencing at the birth of Christ, the interest compounded annually, would produce a sum of money so vast that, taking the earth as a base, 8,000 miles in diameter and piling silver dollars, side by side and top of each other, a column would be reared so high that it would take a man, falling at the rate a body usually falls toward the earth, thirteen trillion of years to fall from the top to the bottom of this column.

The trouble with our present social and industrial system is, that it is founded on fallacy or a fiction—first, that capital never dies, and second,

that repudiation is a crime. The ancient Jews had their year of jubilee. Nations have liquidated by change of dynasties, and all down the line repudiation has been the only remedy for congested wealth, and the corruption of the appropriators of wealth and the impoverishment of the producers is the main rock upon which all the past civilizations have foundered, yet man, with all his accumulated experience and wisdom consoles himself with the trite saying that "History repeats itself."

J. B. STODDARD.

FACTS ABOUT REGISTRATIONS IN 1912.

- ◆ General election will be held on November 5.
- ◆ Primary election will be held on April 19.
- ◆ At the general election will be elected president, vice president, one United States senator, congressman for new Eastern Oregon district, secretary of state, sheriff, clerk, assessor, treasurer, coroner, surveyor, commissioner, justices of the peace and constables, recorder, superintendent of schools, dairy and food commissioner, railroad commissioner (2nd district), state representative, Union and Wallowa counties senator from Union and Wallowa counties, representative from Union County, joint senator including Union, Malheur and Morrow counties.
- ◆ At the primary election parties will nominate for same offices and in addition will express their choice for president and vice president and will elect delegates to their national conventions.
- ◆ Registration closes on April 3.
- ◆ Last day for candidates to file nominating petitions, April 4.
- ◆ Registration reopens April 29.
- ◆ Closes for last time May 15.

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Whether the Central league will play 132 or 156 games will be decided when the schedule committee meets in Fort Wayne, Feb. 21. Half of the members of the Washington team have signed up and Clark Griffith figures to have the complete outfit in line by Feb. 1.

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Application for Grazing Permits.

Notice is hereby given that all applications for permits to graze cattle, horses and sheep within the Wenaha National forest during the season of 1912, must be filed in my office at Walla Walla, Washington, on or before February 15, 1912. Full information in regard to the fees to be charged and blank forms to be used in making applications will be furnished upon request.

J. M. SCHMITZ, Supervisor.
Jan. 18 20 25 27 Feb. 1 3.



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