

THE OBSERVER

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Entered at the postoffice at La Grande, Oregon, as second class matter

SUBSCRIPTION RATES. Daily, single copy 5c; Daily, per week 35c; Daily, per month 1.00

WHAT ARE "IMPORTANT" LAWS?

The recent congress has often been criticized for its failure to pass "important" legislation. It has passed a lot of minor pieces of legislation, they say, but the really big ones—the excise bill, the currency bill, and the like—it has failed to act upon.

What is an "important" law? Is it one that affects everybody slightly, or one that affects half the people considerably, or one that affects a few people vitally? We cannot furnish a tape-line that can be applied to any law so as to give an exact measure of its importance, but we would remind readers that some of the laws passed by congress which the politicians are not talking about are not only important, but highly so.

For example, a law was passed taxing the ordinary white phosphorus match out of existence. Hereafter the "parlor" match and the "eight day" match will disappear, and the only kind obtainable will be the kind with the brown head that comes in little boxes and which strikes only on its own box. This is a small matter on the stump, but a large matter for the American people. For one thing, it saves hundreds of human beings, and in the long-run thousands, from suffering the agonizing, loathsome and fatal effects of phosphorus poisoning. A second benefit is in the prevention of fires. From this alone the country will probably reap more millions of real money than it would have done from any of the tariff bills that congress did, or did not pass.

Congress also restored the clause in the pure food and drug law which the medicine makers had managed to rub out. They got the law interpreted so they could claim anything as to the curative properties of medicine, as long as they told no lies about its chemical composition. Thus a rascal could—and hundreds did—bottle up salt and water and sell it as a "cure" for consumption, cancer or insanity.

Now the law very properly forbids the label from telling any kind of lies. The seller not only must state the composition correctly but must stay within the bounds of reason in claiming its curative virtues. If he claims absurd curative powers for some inert dope that every doctor, druggist and chemist knows is worthless, he is properly condemned as a swindler. This law, like the match law, offers little campaign material, but it will save thousands of lives and millions of pocketbooks.

The creation of a children's bureau in the department of commerce and labor, the regulation of wireless telegraphy, the requirement of two wireless operators on every ocean

vessel, the creation of an industrial commission, and other acts might be cited which directly and vitally affect the morals or well being of the nation. Are these not "important"?

Right at this time Stanley W. Finch, an experienced official of the department of justice, who has done so much to enforce the "white slave" law, and who already has sent 300 culprits to prison, says that if he had a million dollars, he could stamp out the evil in one year's time, and that if he had a quarter of a million more each year, he could keep it stamped out. Is not that an "important" proposition? How does it compare with a wool tariff bill, or even with a currency reform act? Some 50,000 persons live on the tariff in vice; which is more important, to put these out of business, or to bring down the price of certain commodities a little?

We are all apt to overestimate the importance of laws and issues. An issue that concerned every person in the United States to the extent of five cents would instantly size a front place on the stage of public discussion. Yet it would make absolutely no difference to anybody's welfare which way it was decided. Another issue, that affected a thousand people out of a hundred million, might be unable to get a hearing, even though it meant life or death to those one thousand people, and the saving of their souls as well as their bodies.

It is these so-called minor laws which really are the most important of all—that reflect the actual intelligence and morality of a nation. The wisest and most civilized nation is not the one that has the lowest tax rate, nor the one that keeps out foreign competition most effectively, nor the one that enables its citizens to get the biggest share of foreign trade. It is the nation that makes life the most secure and wholesome—the nation that goes farthest to promote health, safety and public morals, and to keep down the army of human wolves and leeches that openly attack or secretly drain the blood, the soul and the money of the people.

When congress tinkers the tariff or passes a pension bill, it has only made a scratch on the surface of the ground; when it passes a law like the match law, the patent medicine law or the white slave law it has left a monument that will stand long after its political and pocket-book legislation is forgotten.

IT'S TIME TO BE CHEERFUL.

Regardless who you were for in the election today now is the time to smile. For the votes are in the ballot box, at least most of them are and before the dawn of the morrow the counting will likely develop to a reasonable accuracy who is elected to different offices.

Just remember this, the old flag still waves regardless of the personnel of the officials, for behind the flag stands the people as a whole. Poor officers might impede progress for a limited time, but ere long the good, substantial citizenship will either influence the officials, if poor ones should win, to change their ways or they will be supplanted with other men.

The nation stands anyway and so

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This bank, for twenty-five years a pillar of strength in this community, keeps its resources absolutely clean and dependable.

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long as she stands she is the greatest in all the world. Upon this election day which is the climax of a most peculiar campaign let Democrat and Prohibitionist, Republican, Bull Moose and Socialist all join in singing "America," for that is the word that tells the story of great achievements no matter how much the people may differ on internal questions.

A Kansas City woman, held up by two highwaymen, was so tickled that she couldn't keep from giggling when the bandits tried to search her for her purse. Naturally the men found the job too ticklish and decamped.

Inasmuch as winter fashions, it is said, will be a la Robespierre, and recall the reign of terror in France, fathers and husbands might as well be armed for the fray with a plentiful supply of the long green.

An Eastern professor says long ears are a sign of low order of intelligence. One might expect, however, that these people hear enough to make them wiser than the rest of us.

Massachusetts man cured himself of typhoid fever by riding on a milk wagon. There are, also, certain diseases that can be cured by riding on the water wagon.

Perhaps the Single Taxers are happy now, but wait until tomorrow morning. The result will show Mr. Fols spent his money with U'Ren for little good to his cause.

Rockefeller attended an Old Settler's association in Cleveland, and admitted he was old. That's one of the privileges a man may avail himself of.

The revolution in Nicaragua is growing so serious it may be necessary to lock up some of the rebels on a drunk and disorderly charge.

At any rate the defeated candidates will have one grand satisfaction. There will always be room for them in vaudeville.

Buffalo, N. Y., Nov. 5.—Henry Moest, 57, a Republican election clerk, dropped dead at the polling place when it opened this morning.

"THIS DATE IN HISTORY."

November 5.

- 1605—The Gunpowder Plot discovered. 1715—Treaty signed by which the Low Countries were ceded to Emperor Charles VI. 1779—Washington Allston, eminent painter, born at Waccamaw, S. C. Died at Cambridge, Mass., July, 9, 1843. 1814—Americans abandoned and destroyed Fort Erie. 1854—Russians defeated in their attack on the British at Inkerman. 1861—Election to select the state capital of Kansas resulted in favor of Topeka. 1862—General Burnside succeeded General McClellan in command of the army of the Potomac.

"THIS IS MY 79TH BIRTHDAY."

Bishop Foley.

Rt. Rev. John S. Foley, the venerable bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Detroit, was born in Baltimore, Nov. 5, 1833. He graduated from St. Mary's college in his native city and completed his theological studies in Rome. He was only 16 years old when he graduated from St. Mary's. In three years more he was prepared for the minor orders, which were administered by Archbishop Kenrick. Two years later, in the church of St. John Lateran in Rome, he was ordained. He then returned to Baltimore, with which diocese he was connected until his appointment and consecration as bishop of Detroit in 1888.

Congratulations to: Ida M. Tarbell, writer, 55 years old today. Eugene V. Debs, Socialist candidate for President, 57 years old today.

Truman H. Newberry, former secretary of the Navy, 48 years old today.

Augustus P. Gardner, representative in congress for the Sixth Massachusetts district, 47 years old today.

Nicholas Longworth, representative in congress of the First Ohio district and son-in-law of Colonel Roosevelt, 43 years old today.

Frederick J. V. Skiff, director of the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, 61 years old today.

THE CANDIDATES' HISTORY

WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT September 15, 1857—Born at Cincinnati, Ohio. 1878—Graduated from Yale college. 1880—Newspaper reporter in Cincinnati. 1882—Collector internal revenue first district of Ohio. 1886—Married Helen Herron of Cincinnati. 1887—Assistant county solicitor of Hamilton county. Became judge of the superior court of Cincinnati. 1890—Became solicitor general of the United States. 1892—Became United States circuit judge, sixth judicial district. 1900—Became president of the United States Philippines commission. 1901—Became first civil governor of the Philippine islands. 1907—Provisional governor of Cuba. 1904—Became secretary of war. 1908—Elected president of the United States. 1912—Re-nominated for president of the United States.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

Oct. 27, 1858—Born in New York city. 1880—Graduated from Harvard university. 1880—Married Alice H. Lee of Boston (who died four years later). 1882—Became member of New York legislature. 1884—Took up ranch life in North Dakota. 1886—Married Edith K. Carow of New York. 1889—Became United States civil service commissioner. 1895—Became president of New York police board. 1897—Became assistant secretary of the navy. 1898—Organized Rough Riders and fought in Cuban campaign. 1899—Became governor of New York. 1900—Elected vice president of the United States on the Republican ticket. 1901—Succeeded to the presidency of the United States on the death of William McKinley. 1904—Elected president of the United States on the Republican ticket. 1909—Sailed from New York on a

hunting expedition to Africa. 1910—Associate editor of the Outlook. 1912—Nominated for president of the United States by the Progressive party.

WOODROW WILSON.

Dec. 28, 1856—Born at Staunton, Va. 1879—Graduated from Princeton college. 1882—Graduated from the law department of the University of Virginia. 1883—Practised law at Atlanta. 1885—Married Helen Louise Axson of Savannah. 1885—Became professor of political economy at Bryn Mawr college. 1888—Became professor of political economy at Wesleyan university. 1890—Became professor of jurisprudence and politics at Princeton. 1902—Became president of Princeton university. 1902—Elected governor of New Jersey on the Democratic ticket. 1912—Received Democratic nomination for president of the United States. Author of numerous works on political economy and American history.

Groom Meets Obstacle.

Newport, R. I., Nov. 5.—That he will have to import a minister to unite him and Elizabeth R. Finley, a New York artist, is the predicament of E. R. Thomas, one-time multi-millionaire. By the conditions of the divorce decree from his first wife Thomas was unable to marry in New York. Now the Newport clergymen are standing by precedent in not desiring to marry a divorced person.

Who is who? Has 'Em All Guessing