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JOHN HODGINS DISCUSSES ALL REFERENDUM MEASURES

La Grande, Oct. 31.—To the editor of the Observer. In Monday's Observer you made a report of the discussion at the open meeting of the Farmers' Union held at the Knight of Pythias Hall on the referendum measures to be voted on at next election, and as your reporter has somewhat misunderstood a part of the discussion and its import, and as I have been intending to review briefly the four measures for which this election has been called, I will with your kind permission say:

That the last legislature, (Senate Bill 254) passed an act calling for a special election to be held on November 1st, to vote upon such measures as the people might want to submit to the referendum; though heretofore these measures have always been voted on, as was intended, at the regular elections, without, or with very little, cost to the taxpayers. This election will probably cost the taxpayers of this state \$100,000, the state appropriating \$12,000 for the publication and postage on the measures and the state expense alone. This is a fair example of the wasteful extravagance of the last legislature, which even went that of 1911 some better. There are five measures to be passed on by the people—two for the University, county attorney bill, the sterilization bill, and the compensation act.

The first for the repair and extension of the plant already at the University, carrying \$75,000. It is claimed that these repairs are badly needed, and if so, it would be poor economy to refuse this sum for such purpose and the necessary extensions to the buildings now owned by the state.

The second bill is also for the state university, and carries the sum of \$100,000 for the erection of another building for school purposes. Whether or not this bill should be voted at this time is questionable, and perhaps should be left to be determined later. If the present policy of filling the state's higher institutions with numbers regardless of scholarship or purpose in life, is kept up, no doubt the building is needed; but if the policy of making these higher schools real institutions of higher learning, open to those who come of their own free will through an earnest desire to reap the benefit of the state's bounty, and prepare themselves properly to receive real collegiate instruction, then it may be needed.

The state has voted a millage tax to support its institutions of higher learning, which is a move in the right direction, for nothing can be more detrimental to their usefulness than an uncertainty of support. The state of Oregon and its people have always shown a commendable liberality in education matters. This is attested by the fine high school buildings all over the state, and the ease with which the state has been grafted many years through logrolling schemes fathered by political pedagogues dickering and bickering with ignorant legislators sent to Salem to make laws in the past. These grafts have become a disgrace to the state, and it was only a few years ago when the people in desperation took matters in their own hands and put an end to three of the four so called Normal Schools, and at the last election by referendum vote again knocked out the unreasonable and extortionate appropriation of nearly a million dollars voted by the extravagant legislature of 1911. I have been informed by an ex-member of the legislature that one of the state schools—not the university—even carried citizens of another town who had attended lectures given by one of its teachers on its rolls as students, so as to form a basis for further demands for more appropriations. While this question is not directly involved in this election, yet it should be considered in preparing for the future.

The chief trouble is the rivalry that has grown up between the State University and the State Agricultural College, with the Normal School also attempting to cover ground that it should not, and this is directly due to the three institutions being under separate and independent management. There should not be the least rivalry between an agriculture, hor-

ticulture, stockraising and kindred subjects, and a college of liberal arts and sciences. There is absolutely no sense why these three schools should not be branches of the state university, under one president and board of regents, with curricula prepared to suit the needs of each without unnecessary duplication of work, or duplicating what ought to be taught in the high schools at home. The fact that they are located in different towns makes no difference. The medicine and the law department of the state university are at Portland; and it would be entirely proper to have the agricultural and the normal department, away from Eugene, also. The nonsense sent out over the state that consolidation means that all the different schools must be grouped in one town and those in the other towns abandoned is ridiculous. Each school could have its own dean or head master all working in harmony under one board of regents, who could come before the legislature and ask what is proper. The rivalry for numbers eliminated, the standard of each could be easily raised by imposing an examination and preventing those who should be in the high schools at home from becoming a burden upon the taxpayers of the state at large, and a drag to the real student who goes there to educate his brains, and not for society functions.

This plan has been adopted in other states with entire satisfaction, with the possible exception of the "presidents" who are left out of a job; and the traveling solicitor who finds that public sentiment and intelligence has decreed that higher education is a thing to be diligently sought by those who earnestly strive therefor, and not commercialized like seeking customers for goods. Such methods are infra dig., and should not be countenanced by any reputable school, much less the state schools of higher learning. This, no doubt, will be the plan in Oregon, when the people will elect a legislature independent and intelligent enough to resist the logrolling schemes and importunities and do a little conservative work along these lines, or when they take the bit in their teeth and do it without the legislature. It is the logical solution of this vexed and constantly recurring squabble. Greater economy and a higher standard should be the end in view, and there is much room for both.

What is usually known as the workman's compensation act is intended to allow such manufacturers, mill men, railroad companies as do not come under the interstate commerce laws, and other employers of labor, and their employes to make an election as to whether or not they wish to come under an arrangement whereby the state guarantees the laborer compensation if he is injured in such employment, and if killed, his widow or family are granted a regular stipend thereafter from the fund accumulated. This is intended to protect the workman and his family, without having to incur expensive litigation, and, as in some cases, and the payment of a large part to soliciting, ambulance chasing attorneys, who disgrace their profession. It is a good measure, practically making the state an insurer against accident.

The sterilization bill is largely a medical question, and is along the lines of the best sociological thought, and is designed to protect society in the future, against degeneracy.

The bill passed by the legislature making each county a prosecuting attorney's district, is one of unquestioned merit. If this official is not controlled from some central authority like the United States District Attorneys are, and responsible to the authority whom he directly represents, he should be to the people of the county where he lives, so that each county can make its own choice without interference from other counties; and for the further reason that the affairs and conditions of each county must be better known to one who resides in it than to an outsider. The men who compose the jury lists, the witnesses, and the officials being all better known to the prosecuting of-

(Continued on Page Three.)

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