

THE OBSERVER

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THE EXPENSIVE REFERENDUM.

The state has just held another expensive referendum election. In one of the precincts of La Grande the cost of each vote to the people of the state amounted to something like sixty cents. In other precincts of the county and in other counties of the state the cost has been even greater. Four measures enacted by the legislature have probably been approved. It merely served to prove to some dissatisfied electors that the members of the legislature were competent to act wisely. Add to the cost of the election just held that of the legislature of last winter and the bills begin to assume importance from a financial viewpoint.

If the sterilization bill had not been referred to the people, we would have a statute on the books distasteful to the majority of voters. In this case the people would not have ruled, and the machinery of the courts would be constantly clogged with review cases dealing with that unpopular measure. In this case an expenditure by the state will do away with attempts to get into court. It will save individuals many thousands of dollars. It will have the effect of keeping much unsavory reading matter out of the dailies, and allow men and women who are serious about reform concerning criminals, to formulate some measure that won't meet with such state-wide disapproval.

But the referendum question will not down on these considerations alone. Where each party sets up the gospel of economy before election and is compelled to put into motion some legislation enacted by some former party to test its own enactments, it is arguing a difficult case. The referendum is on trial. Neither side can in view of the benefits derived, or expenses incurred, say that the referendum is the climax of good legislation, or that it is a piece of uselessly expensive machinery. It will doubtless boil down to the stern fact that the use of the referendum is too free, that it should be employed only as an extreme corrective, and used cautiously. The sooner this comes about the better.

because as the law now stands it is too expensive.

As long as men of any conceivable qualification can run for office and assist in the making of laws, the necessity for some remedial legislation seems to be the only outcome. Water will not rise higher than its own source and men of no training cannot be expected to legislate wisely. This is just as true as that white is not black. Where men seek the office for the emoluments that are to be derived from it, either as salaries or as side money for laws that favor cliques and private concerns that hope to profit by some special act, so long will some weapon wielded by the people at large be necessary to hold them in check. If the practice of frequently referring measures to the people continues voters will in time come to the idea that the legislature is an unnecessary institution and either restrict it to a smaller number and insist on higher qualifications or it will abolish the legislature altogether.

It is not saying too much that the people will in time exact from the applicant for office the same testimonials and references regarding his abilities as does successful operation or business firm today. In the general hubbub of elections, in the indiscriminate use of invectives and the habit of spreading broadcast statements that have no foundation, the average voter is completely at sea regarding the qualifications for office of the man who seeks it. Passion and money play their part and the result is a portfolio entitling some person wholly unfit, to decide the weal or woe of an entire state. The practice of publishing a man's past history is in its infancy but can be said to be one step in the right direction.

"SAFETY FIRST."

When the delegates of the American Association of Railway Surgeons recently gathered at their tenth annual meeting in Chicago, the "safety first" movement was endorsed. The meeting showed the practical steps which these surgeons have taken for the conservation of life on American railways. The spirit of the association was shown in the remarks of Dr. S. C. Plummer of Chicago, chief surgeon of the Rock Island lines, who said:

There must be "safety first" in every walk of life if the country shall progress and the community become larger and more healthy, and to do this everyone engaged in any duty wherein the public is directly concerned is charged with this observance—"safety first."

That is the meaning of the "safety first" movement well expressed. But it might be extended to include the employment public as well as the general public. It has been so extended and in the well organized and well regulated factory of today, regardless of the laws making such steps compulsory to a degree, the employers have adopted the "safety first" movement and are looking to the welfare of the worker to an extent that was undreamed of a decade ago.

Dr. Plummer showed the steps taken by the railroads at the instance of the surgeons for the conservation of human life. He pointed out the estab-

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La Grande National Bank

La Grande, Oregon

ishment of hospital cars for emergency use, the greater care by their employers insisted upon by the railroads and the fact that 68 roads in the United States and Canada have adopted the "safety first" movement and have placed officers in charge to see that it is fostered.

Had Dr. Plummer's energies been directed along commercial lines he would have discovered that the larger manufacturing institutions are running apace with the railroads and in not a few instances setting the pace for them in the conservation of human

life which is coming to be realized as essential to the future welfare of this country.

CLASSIFIED ADS.

YOUNG LADY wishes a position. Phone Black 3391. 11-6 tf.

STRAYED—One bay horse, four years old, weight 1150 lbs. Take up and drop card to John L. Reed, La Grande. 11-18t p.

FOR RENT—Three furnished rooms. Call Red 3961.

WANTED—Three teams and teamsters at once on Spring street grading. See John Mars. 10-20 tf.

WANTED—To buy cheap Underwood typewriter. Notify Observer.

FOR RENT—2 more furnished rooms over Hill's Drug store. Call Hill Drug store. 11-3 tf

TO RENT—Two large airy, sunny bedrooms, for gentlemen only. 1710 Fourth st. 10-21 tf.

MODERN HOUSE FOR RENT—\$17.50 per month, includes water and telephone. Call Black 3121 or at 301 Main. 11-8 3t.

FOR SALE—Brand new No. 5 Royal typewriter, never been unboxed. Will sell for fifty dollars on contract, as desired. Address Royal, Observer. 11-5 2t.

FOR SALE—Household furniture. Call at 702 N avenue. 11-3 6t. p.

1512 ADAMS AVENUE—For rent, housekeeping rooms, and one single bed room, with bath. Phone Black 1731. 11-4 tf.

LOST—October 30th, between Golden Rule and Newlin Drug Store, Gent's black leather purse, containing \$70. Return to Observer. Reward. 11-6 5t.

TWO FURNISHED Rooms with board 905 Spring. Call Red 1721. 11-4 tf

FOR RENT—4 room furnished house close in. Call 1620 6th st. 10-22 tf

FOR SALE OR RENT—New Model Remington typewriter, F. D. Haisten Furniture Store. 10-17.

FOR SALE—New 4-room modern cottage, 4 blocks from business center. small lot, a good bargain, some terms. Edw. W. Kammerer, 2004 Adams ave. 6-20 tf

FOR RENT—Modern furnished house, nice housekeeping rooms or bedrooms. Phone Red 1311. 10-4 1m.

FURNISHED House for rent, close in. Call Red 3282, Mrs. Clare Scriber. 10-25 tf.

WANTED—Girl or woman for general housework, 902 Pennsylvania av. Phone Main 715. 11-4 tf.

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Four good cars available day and all night for city and country driving, and to surrounding towns, charges reasonable.

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Call Sommer House or Foley Hotel.

J. D. LYNCH