

SOME REMARKS ON THE "REFERENDUM"

(Conclusion)

X.

In closing No. 4X in your last issue I stated that even should the English grammar be changed by judicial utterance in Oregon and "the" be declared an indefinite article the referendum question would not be finally settled.

There are some ghosts that will not down. A remnant of power still remains with the people.

An old grandfather's clock is usually a treasured piece of furniture. When its works are worn out or disturbed or move improperly, it is either useless as a timepiece and must cease to be regarded as a regulator, or it must be overhauled.

So, if the constitution of the State of Oregon requires winding up, or a new wheel or two, the people must give that sacred institution the medicine its future usefulness demands.

And they will do it.

Even the big rooster that jumped upon the fence and flapped its wings and crowed "loot, labor and lunacy" when the referendum was turned down in a street assessment case—even his crow has a little bit of croak in it—its claxon tone is gone.

The Bible has been revised, church creeds that have been the faith, hope and comfort of pious generations have been modified. The constitution of Oregon, hallowed and venerable as it is, may be approached without more material sacrifice.

And if we must be iconoclasts—so was Cromwell, so was George Washington.

In plain words, if the attempt of 60,000 of the voters of Oregon has failed to make the initiative and referendum a part of its organic law, then a constitutional convention must be called and it must be inserted in that way. And while at the job there will be several other points of general interest to attend to.

It has been suggested that the Supreme Court may simply ignore the referendum portion of the appeal before them, and deciding that the Legislature has the arbitrary power, the incontestable power, to declare an emergency at its own sweet will, in connection with any law, so decide the charter to have been legally in effect and settle the real question of street assessment into which the referendum was injected.

This, as far as the court is concerned, would leave the referendum in the aerial position of Mahomet's coffin.

But I cannot believe this course will be taken. What would be the use of a referendum at all if a Legislature by declaring an emergency to any and every law could thus knock out the 90-days provision and side-track Mr. Referendum.

Bre'r Fox is a sly animal—but Bre'r Rabbit he got some little sense yet ahind his ears.

XI.

Through what means is a constitutional convention to be called if necessary? Through the action of the salt of the earth. The unions and the granges—the farmer and the workman.

Earnest believers in the rights of the farmer and workman as against the self-interest of professional politicians, can do it. A few in every voting precinct of the state and it is done.

There will be no issue more important to the people of Oregon before them at the next election.

Vote only for those men as representatives to the next Legislature who are solemnly pledged to a constitutional convention as well as to the character of the men who shall compose that convention.

And be sure that you nominate men upon whose pledges you may safely rely.

This is a duty superior to party or faction.

If the referendum amendment had been defeated by the people at the polls, the proposition would have been an entirely different one. We should all have acquiesced and waited patiently for further education and experience to have naturally done its work. But, after all the active endeavor, the earnest propagation of the principle, its passage through two Legislatures, its safe conduct through the platform committees of all political parties, its advocacy by party papers, its motto upon the cards of political aspirants, its exposition among all the issues of a hot campaign, its ratification by the people, 12 out of every 13 voters in the state—after all this—with due respect to legal construction and the candor and ability of our Circuit bench—after all this to find that the different shades of meaning and purpose attaching to the words "the" and "that" can overturn it all, it does seem—something like the lengthened sentence I have just written—a little bit too much.

Now the Circuit Judges may be right and we may be all wrong. If the Supreme Court says so we will cheerfully acknowledge our stupidity, and we will go to work again, undauntedly. How?

XII.

Gentlemen of the labor unions, it is up to you.

No chain is stronger than its weakest link. Your chain has links which are weak, links which are weaker and links which are weakest.

Unless you search out your weakest link and strengthen that your chain is but a rope of straw.

Jealousy, ambition and personal advancement are the enemies of all great popular causes until through defeat and repeated reverses the cause is purified and redeemed.

Sick unions, like sick men, must take medicine until they cast out from their system the poison which breeds and nourishes disease.

I am enough of a Christian Scientist to believe that state of mind has a great bearing upon ultimate result.

One year's absolute devotion of mind to the true purposes of your existence, to the exclusion of all extraneous waste of energy would give you a strength not to be otherwise acquired.

If your true purpose is not the general good then you have no reason for being at all. You must perish. Money's only advantage over brawn is its steady, patient, unchanging purpose.

The value of your labor, your all, will be, is largely regulated by definite purpose upon your part, of course within natural limitations. To these you must accommodate yourselves, but with a reserved power. This is a land of law. Submission to the law is the groundwork of all consolidation. Your desideratum is some control over the making of the law. This can be yours through harmonious union, never through discordant faction.

An epoch of monopoly threatens our city and state. In the recent argument over the sailor boarding house monopoly bill, Mr. Wilcox, on the stand, stated that he believed it proper there should be that monopoly, so did Mr. Flanders, so did some others. Judge Sears declared officially that he believed the Legislature intended just that thing and no other.

Well, this is a little thing. But suppose that Mr. Wilcox should come to believe it best that there should be but one flour mill in the state, or one banking house in Portland—or that Mr. Flanders should ascertain that the shipping business of Portland could beneficially be confined to one dock, or the law business to one firm—or that others should discover that one newspaper was enough, or one line of boats on the river—giving to a board appointed in perpetuity the power to say which one—what then? One master plasterer, plumber, painter, carpenter—it seems absurd, doesn't it? Yet it's logic!

In conclusion: The referendum is a big question forced into a very small pot. It cannot remain there. Either the cover will be removed or the pot will burst.

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Elect Delegates.

Although the session of the Dominion Trades and Labor Congress does not meet until September 22, yet the various affiliated bodies are electing their delegates to said congress, which meets at Brockville this year. The most important feature at this session will likely be the establishment of a national law bureau and defense fund to combat the "Russian-Siberian law" which the Dominion senators are endeavoring to introduce to curtail the influence and success of organized labor in the country.

The platform of principles of the congress are:

1. Free compulsory education.
2. Legal working day of eight hours, and six days to a week.
3. Government inspection of all industries.
4. The abolition of the contract system on all public works.
5. A minimum living wage, based on local conditions.
6. Public ownership of all franchises, such as railways, telegraphs, water works, lighting, etc.
7. Tax reform, by lessening taxation on industry and increasing it on land values.
8. Abolition of the Dominion senate.
9. Exclusion of Chinese.
10. The union label to be placed on all manufactured goods where practicable, and on all government and municipal supplies.
11. Abolition of child labor by children under 14 years of age; and of female labor in all branches of industrial life, such as mines, workshops, factories, etc.
12. Abolition of property qualification for all public office.
13. Voluntary arbitration of labor disputes.
14. Proportional representation with grouped constituencies and abolition of municipal wards.
15. Direct legislation through the initiative and referendum.
16. Prohibition of prison labor in competition with free labor.—Vancouver (B. C.) Independent.

Not a "Hero."

Morgan Bulkley Brainard, scion of one of the leading families of Connecticut and a graduate of the law school at the recent Yale commencement, made a strong reply to the remarks of President Elliot of Harvard, who characterized the strike breaker a hero, in his oration delivered in competition for the Townsend prize. "To make the title of hero of any value," said Mr. Brainard, "it must be bestowed by some large part of the American public, and for the purposes of my discussion I will divide the public into two large classes and endeavor to show that in the eyes of neither is the scab considered a hero. "From the standpoint of the laboring man," the speaker continued, "he pleases, for whom he pleases and on what terms he pleases. But what is this right? It is a legal right, but certainly it is not a moral right. Will public opinion uphold a man who, while acting strictly within his legal rights, does an act which is sure to result in everlasting harm to his fellow men? Are such men to be ranked with Washington and Nathan Hale? If so, the standard of heroism has sadly fallen."—New Era.

A special agent of the Department of Labor is investigating labor conditions in the Indiana gas belt, to ascertain which is the more satisfactory, union or nonunion labor.

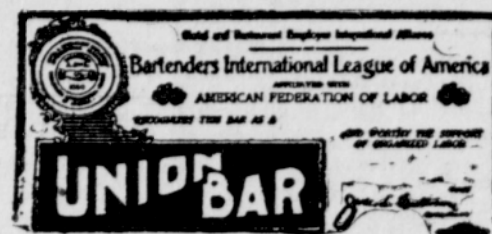
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Display the above card in the shops. If you do not see the card, please ask for it. The following is a list of the unfair barber shops in the city: M. Barber—On Taylor, between First and Second. Lehen Bros.—209 Third street. Charles Nelson—269 Burnside street. C. W. Babcock, Russell St., Albina. W. S. Norton, 22d and Savier Street. All 5-cent barber shops, all Japanese barber shops, and all Chinese barber shops.

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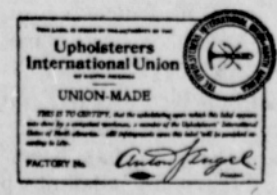
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