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WILL ATTACK ON INITIATIVE DECEIVE OREGON VOTERS?

Now comes some more "friends" of the initiative and referendum and propose to stab both in the back with the provision that only the presence of the county clerk and in his office can a citizen sign an initiative or referendum petition.

This would be worse than requiring 25 per cent of signatures instead of eight. If to this was added the stab the last legislature proposes—to require that a majority of all going to the polls, whether voting on a measure or not, to affirmatively vote for a measure—then the initiative would be a great hulking corpse. The first would require that a citizen go many miles to sign a measure unless he went to register or had some other business with the county clerk. The requirement that men go 60 and 75 miles to register works a great hardship on the people now. The second would give every ignorant or careless voter a vote against any and every measure he did not vote on at all.

The real friend of the initiative will let it alone. All its false friends want to creep upon it with some sort of deadly thrust in the dark.

What is wrong with the initiative and referendum? The people have voted down every measure that was an attack upon it so far. The people have voted intelligently and discriminatingly, using far better judgment than the average legislature or city council. The idea that the initiative is being overworked is a cry gotten up by the special privileges, whose beneficiaries realize that it is going to stop some of their long legalized piracies.

True, some county division measures lumbered up the ballot at the last state election. That was the fault of the legislatures previously that refused to make provision for county divisions. It was also the fault of some sharp boosters, who expected to get their money back, and who had their fingers rapped so hard by the people that they will not drop any more money that way for a long time.

True, a large number of measures the people wanted have been passed that didn't suit the big interests. The interests blocked progressive legislation in Oregon for a quarter of a century, and, of course, a number of measures came before the people that the legislature should have passed. Among them was the direct primary, gross income tax on corporations, Statement No. 1, forbidding legislature to call constitutional convention, giving the people power in various forms, etc. The big interests fear that the people will now use that power to re-enact in a permanent form the gross income tax, to tax special privileges, to reach out after land monopoly in one way or another. Therefore some men of influence and standing are being encouraged to attack the initiative with this proposed reform or that, every one of which would cripple it, paralyze it, poison it, bury it.

The people need to keep their weather eye open for the prominent and eminent citizen who endorses a measure to take away from them the power of the initiative to the slightest degree. It is working all right, just as it is. It is not injuring the people in any way. Some idols of the people may hit the dust trying to tinker it to suit the big business beast of Oregon. The referendum is in the same class, and an attack on one is an attack on the other. The workmen of Oregon, whether in field or in shop, should not allow dust to be flung into their eyes by any men or papers, no matter how great their reputation. Influential men have been fooled where they could not be bought. Honest men are sometimes led astray by catchy phrases. Oregon should stay with the initiative and referendum.

WOMEN SHOULD VOTE.

Because it is fair and right that those who obey the laws should have a voice in making them.

Because moral, humane and educational legislation desired by women could be secured more easily if women voted.

Because laws unjust to women, and there are many of them, could be amended more quickly.

Because disfranchisement tends to keep wages down. Commissioner of Labor Wright considers disfranchisement of women a "powerful reason why women's wages have been kept at a minimum."

Because it increases the moral and law-abiding vote very greatly wherever equal suffrage prevails.

Because legislation for the protection of children is more easily secured where the mother can vote.

Because the use of the ballot broadens the mind of woman, as well as increases her power for better things.

Because men of loose or immoral character are retired more often by the votes of women.

Because it would help those women who need it most—the working woman.

Because experience proves it to be good and reason tells us it is right. Women vote by millions now in nations and commonwealths like England, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Canada, Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas, Utah and Idaho.

DISCONTENT.

From City Trades Journal.

Discontent, through the steps of its progress, made free men of the vassals of the feudal age, took from them the stigma

of chattels and vested in them at least some of the rights of human beings; it impelled the religiously downtrodden inhabitants of the old world to begin the journey that saw its end at Plymouth Rock; it moved them later, when the hand of the oppressor became too firm, to defiantly toss the historic cargo of tea into Boston harbor; and it was this same noble quality of the human mind that furnished the vigor to prosecute the Revolutionary War and gave to the world the Stars and Stripes.

Industrially, discontent has ruled the mind of the worker since the plan of profiting by the labor of others was first devised. Those who through force of circumstances and for other reasons have heeded the biblical admonition to eat their bread in the sweat of their brow have seen their labor turned to the enrichment of others to their own detriment, and from the knowledge of this condition has sprung a healthy and vigorous discontent that will exist and work for good so long as any form of injustice finds a place in our industrial life.

The trade union, that most beneficent institution of the toiler, owes its birth to this industrial discontent. Discontent, through this medium, has brought the eight-hour day to many trades and is working ceaselessly for it in all the rest; it has secured for the worker many advantages of life he did not enjoy, and holds out to him the promise of still greater measure. Discontent is responsible for a greater degree of education for our children than ever; it is providing them with opportunities for knowledge instead of profit-making for others, and it is bringing the feet of the toiler solidly to the ground and his face to the light and making of him truly a man.

Wild land in British Columbia is assessed 40 mills on the dollar of valuation, while used and cultivated lands are assessed less than half as much. Improvements on farms is assessed at nothing, except for district school purposes.

A recent law of the State of Maine provides for the taxation of water power and shore privileges and rights. Land values must hereafter be assessed separately from improvements.

ACT IN TIME.

There are two great weaknesses in the direct legislation provisions of the Oregon constitution. One is the power of the legislature to repeal a law passed by the people. This was done with the gross tax law on public corporations. It was done with the fish bills. It was sought to be done with the employers' liability law and

the Rogue River fish law. There lies warning enough. If not remedied, the people will make up some morning and find a law passed by a three-fourths majority set aside by an irresponsible legislature.

The remedy is simply. Provide that the legislature can repeal any law passed by the people; but in case of emergency it can suspend all or part of a law until the people vote upon it again, either at the next special or the next general election. Such suspension should only be upon recommendation of the governor and by a four-fifths vote.

The other weakness that will prove our undoing, if we are not alert enough to remedy it, is the power of the legislature to elap the emergency clause upon any bill which it wants to put through and

knows the people are opposed to. So far, with two governors in succession standing with the people, the legislature has not done much damage with the emergency clause. In case of a governor standing the other way, some very serious violations of the will of the people will be sure to be made. It would be the part of wisdom to provide for this before it takes place. This is easily done with the initiative by providing for the emergency clause on a measure being voted on in the legislature separately, and requiring that to be placed on a bill it shall require a four-fifths vote.

The Grange and the State Federation of Labor should take this matter up through their legislative committees, and not wait until pressed for time next year.

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