

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

By Judge J. R. Mears

Presiding Judge, District Court of the State of Oregon

The present war forcibly reminds thinking Americans of the privileges they enjoy. Among these privileges is the right of suffrage.

A person convicted of a crime the punishment for which is imprisonment in the penitentiary, from the time of such conviction is classified as civilly dead, and forfeits the privilege of an elector. Our state constitution (article 2, paragraph 3) deprives such person of the right to vote, and such right is permanently lost, under the laws of this state, until affirmative action is taken leading to the final granting of a restoration to the rights and privileges of citizenship by the governor of Oregon. It is therefore a valuable right that should be protected and exercised by all honorable citizens.

Prior to August 26, 1920, women were not granted the privileges of voting. The 19th amendment to the constitution of the United States effectively cured that situation. In the next general election it is expected that more than half of the number of votes cast will be cast by women actively exercising their privilege of expressing their desires in the administration of our government.

The 15th amendment provides that the rights of citizens of the United States shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of race or color. Paragraph 20, article 1, of the constitution of the state of Oregon provides:

"No law shall be passed granting to any citizen or class of citizens, privileges or immunities which upon the same terms, shall not equally belong to all citizens."

Paragraph 1 of article 2 of the state constitution provides:

"All elections shall be free and equal."

By paragraph 2 of the same article it is provided:

"Every citizen of the age of 21 years and upward, who shall have resided in the state during the six months immediately preceding an election and who shall be duly registered prior to such election in the manner provided by law, shall be entitled to vote providing such citizen is able to read and write the English language."

For the information of those in service, it should be called to their attention that paragraph 4 of article 2 of the state constitution provides:

"No person shall lose or gain his residence in the state

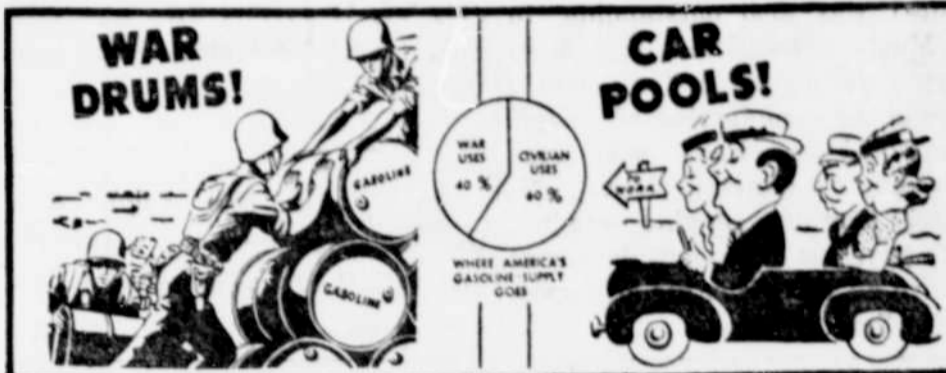
by reason of his absence or presence when employed in the service of the United States."

The three great national labor organizations, namely, the American Federation of Labor, the C. I. O., and the Railroad Brotherhoods, are aggressively carrying on a campaign to impress their membership with the importance of exercising their sovereign rights by registering for voting in the locality in which they reside, and thereafter protecting their interest in our form of government by actually voting at the polls on election day.

A recent canvass of some sections of Multnomah county, and particularly of citizens employed in the shipyards, has exhibited to friends of the writer that as high as 40 per cent. of the eligible citizenry in the points contacted were not registered to vote.

It is therefore to the personal interest of every citizen to express his desires in this democracy of ours by his vote, with the result attained that such laws as are enacted and such officials as are elected for the administration of our government are the direct choice of the true majority of the entire citizenry and not of a small portion thereof.

Briefly: Be sure you are properly registered to vote at your present address. It's a pleasant privilege and an important right, to vote!



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