

The Oregonian

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Portland, Monday, January 27, 1908.

A TIME TO VOTE "NO": On the ballot in June there will be about twenty initiative measures or referendum bills to be scrutinized and voted on by the electorate; perhaps greater number. It is a nuisance of the first magnitude. No one voter in ten will study the several propositions, and a majority will not look at them at all. It affords a system under which every person is invited to become a legislator, and not a few are flattered by a prospect of getting attention for schemes which the great majority of the people have thought worth any consideration at all.

On most of the propositions those who may vote will mark their ballots in a haphazard way, without knowledge of the subject presented—merely making a guess at it. By such methods the voters are sure to get statutes that can serve no useful purpose; and by referendum some statutes may be rejected which ought never to have been attacked.

Use of the system leads to abuses never anticipated by most of those who voted for adoption of it. It invites any such person to become a lobbyist, a lobbyist leader or whimsical promoter, to propose the enactment into laws of any fads and fancies of their own shallow dreaming; and such are not slow in coming forward. They hope to be able, through the inattention or mistake of the people to obtain in this way a permanent law never could obtain consideration before any deliberative body; and since the constitution may be changed as easily as any other law may be enacted, they expect to upset soon the whole line of constitutional limitations under which the state has been conducted during the past century. Some eight or ten of these attacks on the constitution have been set in array already for the June election. Do you want to compel your neighbor to Sunday observance? Or do you want a new regulation for grand juries? Or a change in the office before the expiration of his term a man you don't like? Or to abolish the old system of representation in lawmaking bodies, and make a new one? Or to destroy the present perfectly equitable system of assessment and taxation and substitute for it partial and unequal taxation in its entirety, fanciful theory? If you want to do these things or others (for this is only a partial list of those now pending), why just fall in with these proposals to amend the constitution, and have it offered on the ballot, hoping that through the inattention, carelessness or ignorance of the voters it may be sneaked through.

If as initiative statute you want a county divided, or a new county formed, or a county seat changed, bother all the voters of the state with it. Does Astoria want a particular fish wharf? Both all the voters with that, too. The voters probably will adopt both measures, and add confusion to confusion. Does a small body of our misguided people, for one notion or another, wish to stop an appropriation for the State University? Call the referendum. A political row in Multnomah through the County Court and the Sheriff, over the custody and feeding of prisoners in the County Jail, occurs. Call the referendum for the entire state.

Observe it being never forgotten that, that every initiative bill or statute, or proposal for change of the constitution, is the product of some special interest, or cranky notion, and that there is no chance, as in a legislative body, to examine, debate, or amend it. It is the easiest way to get rid of the bores, who, seldom having any business of their own, want to take direction of the business of the state. The referendum petition is signed the same way. Every ticket

that goes into the ballot-box will be as long as a circus poster. Perhaps the people of Oregon will conclude this ought to stop somewhere, and that the present year is a good time to put the mark upon every proposition on the ballot opposite the word "No." Then you will know what your vote means. If you put the mark opposite "Yes," you will not know—except that you are voting against all the past experience of the human race, and deciding thereby that all its experience and all the wisdom of our ancestors, and all we have inherited, may be and indeed is to be suspended by the meditations of a gifted gentleman at Oregon City, who, in his hours of leisure, consents to deliver to us the true principles of statesmanship and government.

But we live and learn. Perhaps this gentleman is our final prophet. But Oregon, misled, through strange circumstances, will correct her politicians. So abused had she been, by her politicians of the Mitchell school, for forty years, that she deemed herself fortunate to adapt to her own, crude and half-baked expedients she now is troubled with. But she will rid herself of them, in time; and this whether under one party or another. The Democratic party, now favoring the referendum, through its politicians, does it in order that it may disrupt and overcome the Republican party. But just so soon as the Democratic party may be landed in power—should that occur, and it is not improbable—it will gradually lose its interest in the referendum, and will not be in a position to do so at first principles. Because, as to first principles, there is mighty little in the science of government that is new. Initiative and referendum deal only with the fads and caprices of the present, and the Legislature will tire of all this, and call a constitutional convention.

Do you say your representative government, your deliberative body of the representatives of the people, cannot be landed on? That your Legislature will not execute your will? Then you are incapable of representative government, or of any government, except that of the man on horseback. This newspaper has better hopes of representative government, and pins its faith to them; for the representative government—government through assemblies of the people at short intervals by the people—is to be abandoned, the man on horseback, representing the whole people, through the plebiscite—like that of Napoleon or Augustus—will come in long before this country is as old as the hills, and the referendum, a simple, a country may have peace and justice. To a democracy such a condition is indispensable. Property must have fair treatment. For property must exist. Property, indeed, tends to monopoly; and this must be checked. But property must not be checked by the foolish, the ignorant and unequal experiments and unequal legislation. There is a middle course, which always is the way of safety. But Oregon, through abuse of the system demanded or expressed by the new jargon, tends to extreme courses. There must be change—not of principles, but of details—and it is a false assumption that to innovate is to reform. Right now is a mighty good time to stop, by voting "No,"—and to wait a while.

A MODEL DEPARTMENT: The prevalence of red tape methods and the necessity of keeping departmental patronage at Washington out of the hands of politicians who use it as an asset results in great annual waste of money. Fortunately for the people who foot the bills, not all branches of the Government service are ensnared in this maze of red tape. Standing out clear and distinct in this respect is the Weather Bureau. This highly important branch of the Agricultural Department has never been the home of theorists and faddists, and year in and year out it is returning to the people a service of value inestimably beyond its cost. The Weather Bureau, for it not only saves property of enormous value, but it is also the means of saving life.

In the annual report of Chief Willis L. Moore, it is noted that during the year ending June 30, 1907, not one severe storm entered the United States without timely warning being given to the people in the localities where the storm appeared. The infallibility of these warnings is so well understood that they are strictly observed wherever they are posted. If the predicted storm is exceptionally severe, ships remain at anchor and all branches of industry and commerce are affected by storms have ample time to prepare for its coming. The work of the Weather Bureau in connection with floods in the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers and others parts of the country resulted in the saving of an immense amount of property. Out here on the Pacific Coast we have had within the past few years numerous demonstrations of the value of the service in reporting shipping in distress off the mouth of the Columbia.

On more than one occasion heavy property loss and possible loss of life have been averted by prompt reports from the North Head station, the warnings reaching Astoria in time to admit of tugs being sent to the rescue. The accuracy of the Weather Bureau reports is much greater than our reports here, and while Chief Moore modestly refrains from any mention of this fact, it can easily be understood how it is made possible by the continued scientific research of the men in the service. The use of the aeroplane at the Mount Weather, Va., observatory last October enabled the bureau to break a world's record for high flights, meteorological instruments attached to the kites being carried to a height of 23,111 feet above sea level.

These observations of upper-air conditions were continued for three months, and added much to the limited knowledge of upper-air conditions which have such a profound effect on the weather. The Weather Bureau has got well past the "guesswork" stage, and its reputation for reliability is steadily increasing. There is need of one or two more stations out here on the Pacific Coast, and the work would be much nearer perfect if a station were laid to take the place of the land lines along the Oregon and Washington coasts. At the present time the land service is much hampered by reason of the lines being down during storms, when the information they should carry is most needed. The service as a whole throughout the country, however, is admirable, and reflects great credit on Chief Moore and his able lieutenants scattered from the Atlantic to the

Pacific and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. The Washington Railroad Commission, at an expense of several thousand dollars, has determined that the average rate per ton-mile for the Northern Pacific from grain hauled within the state was 2.676 cents, while the rate per ton-mile on interstate lumber shipments was .471 cent. These figures would indicate that the grain rate was too high or the lumber rate too low. Lumber being a low-price product in comparison with wheat, is perhaps entitled to a lower rate, but it will be difficult to get many wheatgrowers to believe lumber entitled to a rate less than one-half that charged for grain. The ultimate result of these investigations regarding rates will undoubtedly be a wholesale readjustment on other commodities than grain and lumber, in which there will be advances where the rate is too low and reductions where it is too high. The problem is not easy to solve, and will undoubtedly supply plenty of work for the lawyers for a long time.

Several hundred farmers, who left Eastern Oregon and the Walla Walla and Palouse districts to engage in wheatgrowing in the new provinces of British Columbia will be interested in the following Ottawa dispatch printed in yesterday's Oregonian: The Dominion government has decided to loan a sum of approximately \$4,000,000 to the farmers of the new provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan whose crops were a failure, to purchase seed grain. With everything favorable in the new districts mentioned, good crops of wheat can be grown, but when the season is unfavorable, as it was last year, the resulting failure is so much more than any failure of which the Oregon or Washington farmer has ever heard that it means government aid or starvation. Another year like the one just closed will see the departure for America of a few thousand settlers who have been drifting north in search of cheap land.

The City Council, apparently having in view the vast amount of money that will soon be rolling in for the heavy taxation of \$200,000,000 worth of property, or, more accurately, property taxed at that valuation, last Saturday voted an advance of \$10 per month to several engineers and a \$25 per month advance to the City Physician. This move is particularly appropriate at this time, when so many small taxpayers have been thrown out of employment or have been obliged to accept wage reductions of from 10 per cent to 25 per cent. On the whole, however, perhaps the taxpayers will be gratified to the economical cost. The liberal advance might have been made effective throughout the city payroll.

The male Vanderbilts who is to give away his sister at her forthcoming marriage to a foreign Count must appear at the ceremony in knee breeches. If an examination of the coffin of the late "Cornell" Vanderbilt or his sire, who ran the ferry, should be made at some time in the future and a disarrangement of the bones be noticed, it will not be due to struggles from ante-mortem interment. They will have simply turned over in their graves some years after the funeral.

Governor Chamberlain, Dick Montague and M. L. Miller tell a waiting world that the Democrats are completely vindicated by events for the principles for which he contended in 1896 and in 1900. For free coinage of silver? That was the only issue or question in those days. But one can't tell. Perhaps Jefferson Davis was completely vindicated at Appomattox.

"Goida," the English novelist who delighted in picturing this world and its queer people as being infinitely worse than we are, died in poverty at Florence, Italy, last Saturday. Her books had a wide sale on both sides of the ocean, but if they ever contributed in the slightest degree to making the world a better place for the readers, it is somewhat mysterious how the miracle was accomplished.

Our country is peaceful, not aggressive. It doesn't want war. It must arm, therefore, and maintain its armaments and increase its armaments, especially its armaments at sea. We shall avert attack by preparation to meet it. Coming simultaneously with the Attorney-General's order to begin suit against the Harriman railroad trust, Vice-President Mohler's interview would have served better his employer's purpose if it hadn't been published.

Jack London turning up safe and sound just when everybody thought him and his freak craft lost did not forget to mention his new novel. Certain celebrities need no salaried press agent.

A Cleveland poultryman has a hen that refuses to lay unless she gets a chew of tobacco. The anti-cigarette league should be thankful that she does not smoke cigarettes.

Criticism of alleged weakness of our battleships by Mr. Dickie, designer of the Oregon, would have more force if he had withheld the fact that he had been snubbed.

Detroit has a minister who recently raved: "There is a hell; there must be a hell!" How does he know? Was he ever convicted for land fraud?

A Western paper is afraid that Taft will fall down and that Hughes will be elected. Not if Taft happens to fall on Hughes.

Mr. Cortelyou's candidacy is limited to himself and the philanthropic, unselfish satellites who revolve around J. Pierpont Morgan.

Umatilla farmers demand a reasonable freight rate on wheat. An open river will secure it for all time.

If in the case of George C. Brownell it was beer talking and not the man, no wonder they say talk's cheap.

Is Japan calling home all its Consuls and Vice-Consuls to tell what they know?

BRYAN AND HIS PARTY.

And a Look at the General Political Situation. New York World (Ind. Dem.). Some of Mr. Bryan's friends cherish the delusion that the Republican National Convention may nominate a reactionary candidate and that this would make the election of even Mr. Bryan possible. The Chicago Convention would do nothing of the kind. If the reactionaries nominate a Republican party, success in preventing Secretary Taft's nomination, they will get Theodore Roosevelt. Let there be no misunderstanding about that.

No matter how many official statements Mr. Roosevelt may issue declaring a third term, he will seize the Republican nomination himself rather than let it go to any man who does not represent the Roosevelt policies and who is not in sympathy with the Roosevelt Administration.

Hardly a dozen Democrats in Congress are unequally in favor of Mr. Bryan's nomination. The party leaders know it and have refused to support him. It is not to be expected that they will support him to press this most important fact firmly upon Mr. Bryan's mind when he goes to Washington. We say the Southern States are not in sympathy with Mr. Bryan's nomination, and principle that now remain in the party as it is officially constituted.

After twelve years of Mr. Bryan's leadership the Democrats of the North have all but ceased to elect members of Congress. There are only two anti-Republican United States Senators north of the line of the Missouri compromise. There are eighteen Northern states from which there is not a single Democratic Representative in Congress. Outside of the South and New York City there are only thirty-six Democrats in the two houses of Congress.

Even in the South, where Democracy is the strongest, Populism holds the balance of power in many states. The party is divided into hostile factions. Loosely drawn primary laws have made it impossible to elect members of Congress. Populists vote at Democratic primaries and elect Democratic candidates and frame Democratic platforms. It is Southern Populism, not Democracy, which is clamoring for Mr. Bryan's nomination, while the Democrats shrink into silence lest they imperil their political future.

The World's capitalist agrees with those timid Southern fatalists who have come to think that Democratic harmony can be defeated only by another overwhelming disaster under Mr. Bryan's leadership. This is a counsel of despair. The Democratic party cannot afford another such disaster. Least of all can the South afford the Democratic party the South to pay a heavy penalty for its subservience to Populism and its recreancy to Democratic principles.

For twelve years now the National Government has been under the domination of a Republican majority, drunk with the arrogance of ruling roughshod over the minority. If Mr. Bryan's nomination is permitted there will be greater Republican majorities in the future—majorities more drunk and still more arrogant. Under the leadership of a Republican President less complacent than Mr. Roosevelt one of these majorities will be called upon to enforce the situation of the United States by reducing the representation of every Southern state in which the negro has been disfranchised.

There will be no militant Democratic party left in the North to help the South fight her battles, and the South will be left to fight which her own leaders have invited.

It is folly to say that this cannot happen. This very thing was provided for in the original platform of 1896. It will be provided for in other public platforms, and the day will come when the Republicans in Congress will make the reduction of Southern representation a strict party question unless there is a Democratic opposition there which they respect or fear. A question is of far greater importance to the South than the ambition of any individual body's ambition, and just so far as Southern leaders discourage the rehabilitation of the Democratic party in the South, just so far are they inviting the deluge.

There is no state that Bryan lost in 1896 which he could carry in 1908. There is no electoral vote that he lost in 1900 which he could win back next November. The Democratic party cannot afford to let Bryan's nomination go. We do not understand why he should desire the nomination. Certainly another defeat will add no laurels to the wreath he already wears.

Mr. Bryan in his conference with the party leaders at Washington will be faced with one of the greatest opportunities of his whole political career. He can help undo the Democratic party. He can help send to the campaign harmonious, enthusiastic and hopeful. He can make himself a true leader, a great leader, by standing by the principles of the party and by showing an ambition to Democratic welfare he can win for himself a loftier place in public confidence than he has yet held.

Mr. Bryan has a broad enough, unselfish enough to do it. Here is his opportunity. Here is the opportunity of the Democratic party. Here, perhaps, is the issue of Democratic life or death.

In the Field to Stay. Brooklyn Eagle, Ind. Dem. There is in the opinion of one Democrat who carries the banner of New York, a candidate for the Presidency next November. Indeed, it is more than a mere opinion. It is confidence. And, like a definition of a political marriage, it is a triumph of hope over experience. It will be misleading to add that it is shared by Mr. Bryan himself. He is the Democrat who thinks so.

There is no Democrat, nor is there any Republican who thinks that, without the electoral votes of the Empire state, the Democratic nominee will have a chance of winning. Even Mr. Bryan himself entertains no such delusion. He knows that with the loss of this commonwealth will come the loss of the Presidency once and for all. Probably this explains the optimism, sincere or otherwise, with reference to New York.

He has no alternative. He must include it in his calculations. He must either give expression to his confidence of winning it or admit that his nomination would be equivalent to defeat. If he admits that the Empire state will go to him, the wish is father to the thought. They are living in a fool's paradise. And what is worse, they are likely to remain there. The Empire state will go to the Republican nominee, and the indications point to the triumph of their old idol at Denver.

There is, it appears, no truth in the statement that Mr. Bryan had written a letter declaring his intention to follow the track for other candidates in case a canvass disclosed the fact that a third of the delegates opposed him. Such a letter purporting to have been sent to Willis J. Abbott, was never written. The rumor, and the disclaimers following it, serve no more than the purpose of advertising Mr. Bryan's attitude as unalterable. He is in the field to stay.

Hurt With Another Woman's Hat. Hartford (Conn.) Dispatch. Miss Jennie Neely, in stepping on a train near Stamford, Conn., to pick up a handkerchief in the aisle, was seriously injured by a pin in the hat of another woman, on the opposite side, who stooped at the same moment to recover the handkerchief.

TYPICAL RESOLUTIONS, ADOPTED BY WISCONSIN AND MANY OTHER STATES.

Following are the preamble and resolutions of the Legislature of Wisconsin, on amendment of the Constitution of the United States so as to provide for election of Senators by a direct vote of the people. Whereas, it is the sense of this Legislature of the State of Wisconsin that the public welfare demands that the United States Senators should be elected by direct vote of the people; and

Whereas, the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States has on four separate occasions passed by a two-thirds vote a resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States by direct vote of the people; and

Whereas, the United States Senate has refused to consider or vote upon said resolution; and whereas, the people of the several states a change in the method of electing the United States Senators is a matter of national importance; and

Whereas, such opportunity to amend the Constitution of the United States may be obtained by the adoption of this or an equivalent resolution; and he is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, calling for a convention to propose such amendment; now, therefore,

Resolved, That the Legislature of all other states of the United States now in session, or when next convened, be and they are hereby directed to pass this application by the adoption of this or an equivalent resolution; and he is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this resolution to the President of the United States, to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States, calling for a convention to propose such amendment; now, therefore,

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ONE THING AND ANOTHER

HOW one does hate the "informer" of record that got his pay in full. He stood out for the coin. Since then many have followed in his steps for greater or less reward. Every time I hear of a case I am reminded of the story of Mr. Moody and the cowboy.

The great evangelist was preaching on Judas and the betrayal of Christ. A cowboy, pretty well boozed up, ambled into the arena, and, with a zeal in the front row of the gallery, the words of the speaker interested him and as Mr. Moody paused toward the climax the man arose, one hand on the top of his hat and a finger pointed toward the revivalist and said: "Mis-ter Moody, is all that fact-fact?"

"Yes, my friend, they are plain facts." "Mis-ter Moody, is all that in-hi-try?" "Yes, my friend, both sacred and profane history tell that Judas Iscariot betrayed his Master for a miserable 30 pieces of silver."

"Well—th—"

Let the "halloo-lah" rise! There is one less worry for the hen-pecked man on wash day. A Pringleville man has invented and patented a device that does away with the clothesline.

The wages of sin seldom suffer a reduction. A wedding ceremony without a hitch in it is unique.

The rooster's comb is mighty red. The days are growing long; The pigs squeal early to be fed, The lark pipes up his song. The boys are croaking in the slough— They're always up a daisy. And nothing will be overdue This Spring of nineteen-eight.

The youth who thinks he can beat a bank would do well to read the little tablet by the teller's window saying the "banker's association" and to remember the Pinkertons' "never sleep."

"Butter getting ready to drop," writes the commercial man. The strength of some of it should hold it up. W. J. C.

HONORABLE JAPS AS INVADERS They Costly Semi-Savage Campaign of Blood in Corea. Chicago Post. The Japanese as invaders are no laughing matter. Their present brutal methods in Corea; as sketched by F. A. McKenzie, an English reporter of sufficient standing to find place in the London Contemporary Review, cannot but make us have greater sympathy with the Californian wish to shut our doors in their faces. Mr. McKenzie tells us that the Japanese immigration into the Hermit Kingdom has been drawn almost entirely from the coolie class.

Neither the Democracy nor Mr. Bryan has ever demanded the absolute destruction of aggregations of capital. They have sought and secured the modification of laws which will prevent the accumulation of the people by these private interests, and they propose to see to it that these laws are obeyed.

Mr. Davis' latest ebullition before a New York audience, in which he talks of industry striking revolution in the matter of commerce and calls aloud for the absolute destruction of aggregations of capital, is scarcely calculated to appeal to the people's sense of justice, upon which high sense of equal justice, upon which Democracy must base its hopes.

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WHERE IS ANYBODY "ATT"?

Some of the Troubles of a Great National Party. Without a doubt the Democratic party is unfortunate in some of the burdens it has to carry. Redolent with radicalism, Senator Joseph Cannon, of Illinois, looms in the spotlight as one of these Old Atlas was never so pestered.

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