

The Oregonian

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WHO BEARS THE BURDEN?

The Oregonian opposes the U'Ren proposition to have the estates of dead men pay for Oregon roads. Now the rank and file will favor it all the more—Oregon City Courier.

Is it so? So much the worse, then, for the rank and file. But it is not so. Witness the fate of the U'Ren...

Mr. U'Ren would have the state give everybody a job. The proposal needs to be stated to show its utter impracticability, its sheer insanity. He would pay them through funds raised from the estates of dead persons. Confiscation is a mild term for it; silliness is another. The County of Multnomah has tried through the inheritance tax last year about \$50,000. That sum would not go far toward living all applicants a job. If the rate were to be raised sharply, it would result in nothing but wholesale perjury or outright legislation. There would be nothing left by any accident.

But the gravest and most menacing feature of the U'Ren proposal is the heavy load it places upon thrift and industry and the premium on vagrancy, idleness and ingratitude. The man who can get a job when he wants it will frequently hold no job long, and the state would inherit as its workers the cast-offs of every employment.

If the state pays the wages of everybody who wants to draw pay from the state, the burden falls back inevitably upon the citizens who support the state. How do the men who are working steadily in the mills for, say, \$2.50 per day of ten hours, like the idea of supporting a great army of tax eaters at \$3 or more per day of eight hours?

That is U'Renism for you.

DEMOCRACY IN A HOLE.

Democrats are in a most perplexing position in regard to canal tolls. The U'Ren and President Wilson has put them in it. When they plead that they are not bound by their platform declaration in favor of that principle, they are reminded of Mr. Wilson's profession of strict fidelity to the platform in his reply to the women suffragists. When they say that the canal tolls plank was slipped in unknown to the committee which drew the platform, Senator O'Gorman is there to contradict them, for he was one of the members of the committee and he is a champion of exemption. When they say that exemption is a special privilege, the retort is that its repeal would grant a special privilege to transcontinental railroads, both American and Canadian. If they say that the concession is necessary to preserve amicable foreign relations, they are asked why we should yield pusillanimously on a question of domestic policy in order to retain other nations' friendship. By yielding should we not earn contempt for our weakness? While by resisting until an arbitration court decides against us should we at least retain respect, though emity accompanied it.

Senator Bristow put the issue squarely before the Senate. Having been employed by the Government to investigate the effects on traffic of the Panama Canal, he is well equipped to speak on the subject. He stated the effect of tolls in these words:

The amount of the toll, whatever it is, is added to every ton of freight that passes through the canal as an additional charge. Free tolls for American ships engaged in the coastwise trade would mean that there would be no toll for the American ships upon those ships for carrying commerce between the Eastern coast of the United States and the Western coast of the United States. If a toll is charged, the rate will be increased by that amount; and the water rate, if it is a free competitive rate, will determine the transcontinental rates charged by the railroads, for every dollar of toll that is levied upon the cargo that passes through that canal between the ports of the United States will, as a practical proposition, not only be added to the water rate, but also to the transcontinental freight rate.

But the effect of repealing exemption would not stop there. England also protests against exclusion from the canal of railroad-owned ships, and Senator Borah pointed out that the two propositions are linked together. Mr. Bristow rejoined:

I agree absolutely with the Senator from Idaho. I think the proposed repeal of the free-tolls clause is more than an entering wedge. I am not sure that it will result in a nullification, as to its practical effect, of the inhibition of railroad-owned ships passing through the canal.

If we are not only to exact tolls from coastwise ships but are to permit railroad-owned ships to use the canal, what shall we have gained by our investment of \$400,000,000? One of our chief purposes in making that investment was to drive out water competition by facilitating water competition with railroads. If we charge tolls away just that much benefit of competition. If we permit railroad-owned ships to use the canal, a very short time may elapse before they will have driven out all independent competitors, will have raised water rates to a parity with the railroad rates prevailing before the canal was built and will have used their steamships, as the Southern Pacific for years used the Pacific Mail line, to drive out water competition. The route through the canal between our coasts may then become as bare of American ships as our rivers have become bare of steamers under the pressure of railroad competition. The railroads will rule the ocean as they rule the rivers. The President cannot deny that toll exemption is a Democratic policy, for as Senator Chamberlain said, not a

single Democratic Senator voted against it. It was adopted and half the Democrats in the House voted for it. The policy had thus been adopted by the Democracy, and its endorsement at Baltimore was an endorsement of that which the party had already done, not a trick of a schemer. The only Senators who voted against it were Republicans in whose company Democrats would find themselves ill at ease, for they include many of the old standpat brigade. Here are their names: Brandegee, Burton, Crane, Fall, Gronna, Lodge, Nelson, Oliver, Penrose, Root and Wetmore.

When we recall that Senator Lodge voted against exemption, his protestation of patriotic confidence in the President's wisdom in foreign affairs is heavily discounted. He is not showing a lofty disregard of party through devotion to his country; he is welcoming an ally in a cause for which he has always fought.

Mr. Wilson is putting his party into a position which will be most difficult to defend. The party which formerly delighted to twist the British lion tail is to obey the lion's command. The party which would make the railroad servants of the people now becomes their ally.

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competition. She says as much in plain terms in a letter to a British newspaper. They have invaded her legitimate market, underbid her goods and hogged the trade. If these specifications are true we have a clear case for the application of a literary anti-trust law. Unfortunately there is no such law at present included in international treaties, but there ought to be. When we behold a genius like Marie Corell sinking into oblivion because more artful writers have captured the market, it is time something were done. The obvious course seems to be to establish a regulation that any person who has bought one of Miss Corell's books shall buy all the rest of them and read nothing else as long as he lives. In our opinion such an enactment would be eminently just.

RETICENCE AND REFORM.

Agnes Repplier, who is a spinster of a certain age and ripeness, has been writing on the "Repeal of Reticence." Her complaint is that the world has begun to talk plainly about some evil matters which in the good old days of the Victorian taboo were left discreetly unmentioned. Miss Repplier accepts implicitly the faith that these evils are past all remedy. Discussion of them does no good because it can lead to nothing in the way of improvement. Her theory is that such things as are already listed and always will, inasmuch as they are a part of the providential scheme of the world.

Our best course in regard to them is to speak and act as if they did not exist as long as we possibly can. When they actually break into respectable society by their consequences we should give them some decent name and put on the best face we can until the flurry is over. Miss Repplier's essay, which appeared in the Atlantic Monthly, takes the point of view of the village gossip toward delicate topics. They may be discussed with hushed voices behind closed doors, but it is disgraceful to acknowledge in public that you ever heard a whisper about them.

This attitude is no doubt extremely polite and highly satisfactory to the spinsterish mind, but it gets nowhere. The world declines longer to accept Miss Repplier's faith that the social evil and its allied ills are incurable. It rejects the doctrine that they have been imposed upon us by Providence and has resolved at all costs to get rid of them. There has been war in Mexico for three years without much regard to Red Cross rules, but there are no immediate signs that the end is near. Were the wounded allowed to perish on the field, the effect would be to brutalize the survivors and reduce us to the conditions of primitive barbarism.

There is much to be said in favor of Germany's salting British maritime supremacy that it is surprising to learn that the tonnage of new vessels launched in Great Britain last year exceeded that of all other nations combined. British tonnage was 2,203,000, that of all other nations 1,806,000. Germany was a poor second with 818,976 and the United States third with only 288,000. Nor is this disparity due to building of warships, for Great Britain's total was only 271,000 tons, while other nations built 406,900 tons. There is sound sense in John Bull's statement that we built the Panama Canal for his use.

Miss Edith Durham, a Balkan war correspondent, in a lecture in London protested against the work of the Red Cross on the ground that by restoring the sick and wounded to health it kept up the supply of soldiers and thus prolonged war. There has been war in Mexico for three years without much regard to Red Cross rules, but there are no immediate signs that the end is near. Were the wounded allowed to perish on the field, the effect would be to brutalize the survivors and reduce us to the conditions of primitive barbarism.

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