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REFORMERS' MONSTROUS PROPOSAL.

Perhaps because H. W. Scott's name was used by the direct primary "league," the Oregonian must needs undertake defense of the legislative abortion recently brought into existence by the misguided voters of the unfortunate state of Oregon. But even the astute Oregonian, professing superior knowledge of matters political, admits that the new law is full of defects, and implores that it be given "fair trial" before being pronounced to be what it is—the greatest legislative farce ever concocted by would-be reformers.

The attitude of the direct primary reformers toward the independent voter is quite plainly brought out in the Oregonian's belated reply to The Astorian's criticism of the new bill. THE INDEPENDENT VOTER, the Oregonian assures us, HAS NO PRE-ELECTION RIGHTS. HE SHALL BE EITHER REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT, OR ELSE HE SHALL NOT VOTE FOR CANDIDATES FOR NOMINATION. He is read out of a constitutional voice in the selection of candidates by our present-day reformers, despite the acknowledged fact that THE INDEPENDENT VOTER IS THE SAFETY-VALVE OF OUR WHOLE POLITICAL SYSTEM.

By what act of God or man, by what precept of Americanism, was the right delegated to such men as the editor of the Oregonian to say that any man shall be denied the right to cast a secret ballot? By what authority has it been decreed that the independent voter shall have no voice in the selection of candidates for some of whom he must vote—or stay away from the polls? Did the men who fought, bled and died for our country contemplate legislation that would require a voter to subscribe himself to either the democratic or republican party in order that he might exercise his right of suffrage? Is fidelity to party organization essential to enjoyment of the privileges guaranteed by the constitution?

Long before the state election was held The Astorian pronounced and denounced the direct primary bill as un-American. Let the honest voter consider the questions propounded above, and he will agree with us that the direct primary bill has no place upon the statute books of an American state.

The Oregonian sets up the anarchistic contention that "an independent voter has no more right to vote in a republican primary than a stockholder of the Northern Pacific railway has to vote in an election of directors in the Southern Pacific." What sickening rot! The independent voter has the God-given right to go to republican or democratic primaries and express his choice of candidate. It would be just as reasonable to deny him this right as to deny him the right to vote for republican or democratic candidates after they were nominated. The Oregonian and the fanciful reformers with which it has identified itself would name candidates for the independent voter to choose between and would take from him his American prerogative of expressing his choice for nominees at primary elections. We have failed utterly to find one reasonable innovation in Oregon's direct primary law, and are not surprised therefore that the Oregonian has refrained from resorting to reason in its discussion of the outrageous measure.

Very flippantly our Portland contemporary asks whether or not The Astorian ever heard of a primary election under the old system in which a man did not have to make known his party affiliation before he could vote. The Astorian never heard of a primary election under the old system at which a man was required to publicly or privately convey any intimation of his political faith. If he happened to vote the republican primary ticket, it was taken for granted that he was desirous of voting for republican delegates to the convention. He might have been a republican, or he might have been a democrat. His political faith was his own business, and the constitution of the United States and every principle of common decency intended that it should always remain so. Voters, just ponder for a moment upon this "argument" for that feature of the direct primary law which requires a voter to publicly announce his political faith:

"Every man who goes to a republican primary to vote for delegates to a republican convention thereby announces himself as a republican. Otherwise he

would have no business participating in that primary. The only change made by the new law is to require the voter to make his public announcement of his party affiliation some time in advance, so that his fellow-men may have a chance to know in what primary election he intends to vote. No man who went to a primary election under the old law could conceal his party affiliation, and the only difference under the new system is that, if he undertakes deception, his trickery will be known in advance."

The man, then, who undergoes change of political faith is a trickster! He is practicing a "deception!" According to this doctrine, the democrat must never change his politics; the republican must always remain republican. No more preposterous idea was ever advanced in the annals of our republic, and the argument stamps its author a numskull. Let us suppose Governor Chamberlain is renominated. Some of the 7000 or more republicans who elected him will want to vote again for him. Shall they be required to publicly renounce allegiance to the republican party because they favor George Chamberlain for governor? Has not the voter the constitutional right to vote for the candidate of his choice at the primary election? The people of Clatsop county want C. W. Fulton returned to the United States senate. When the voters of this county are called upon to choose members of the legislature that will elect Mr. Fulton's successor, must democrats renounce allegiance to their party because they favor the selection of republican candidates best fitted to bring about the re-election of Senator Fulton? People of anarchistic tendencies perhaps will answer in the affirmative, but all men of ordinary reason and intelligence will reply, emphatically, "No."

"Party organization" demands this, howls the Oregonian, putting party above constitution. If the Oregonian feels that a man shall not forsake one party and go to another, why did it so industriously support W. J. Furnish, the last republican candidate for governor? Mr. Furnish used to be a good democrat, yet the Oregonian made no protest when he broke into the republican party. What is good logic now ought to have been equally as good then. Only the veriest dreamer would for a moment seek to contend for the terms of the direct primary bill. It is a disgrace to the state, utterly impracticable and without the least semblance of reason.

The provision requiring voters to state their political faith before the primaries merely has the effect of putting the bulk of the voters under the thumbs of the men for whom they work, and of increasing rascality. The manufacturer will be in position to require his men to vote at primary elections. If he happens to be a democrat, his employees must register as democrats, and those of them who may be republicans will thereby lose their right to express their choice at the republican primaries. The registration books stand as a check upon the political conduct of every workman and place him absolutely under the control of his employer.

The Astorian begs to assure the Oregonian that it understands thoroughly every section of the direct primary bill, and that it is and always has been aware of the fact that the provisions of the measure are confined to parties casting 25 per cent of the vote for congressional candidates. In this respect, also, the law is un-American, as it excludes the smaller parties, the members of which are guaranteed by our constitution quite as much political freedom as was originally guaranteed to those who seek to deprive them of it.

In a local article appearing in The Astorian the predicament of Clatsop county democrats was stated backwards. Correction was later made in this column. Hundreds of democrats in this county have voted a citizen ticket for years. Many of those voters are foreign-born. As only about one-tenth of the voters are capable of following the schemes of political tricksters, many who have voted the citizen ticket in the past will register, unknowingly, as citizens. They will find no citizen ticket to vote, and therefore will have no vote. They are in precisely the same fix as the independents—legislated out of their great American right to vote as they see fit, and to vote secretly.

No condemnation is too severe for the men responsible for the Oregon direct primary law.

OCEAN TRAVEL.

So great is the multitude of visitors to Europe who are now returning to this country that the first cabin rooms of some of the first class steamships have been overcrowded. One large vessel found the accommodations so taxed that the management decided to transport no steerage passengers on the western voyage. That appears to have been an almost unprecedented decision.

Trans-Atlantic travel year after year swells to amazing proportions. Within a decade important additions of monsters of the deep have been made to the ocean fleet, but other leviathans will be launched within a comparatively early period, while still others, larger than any now afloat, have been designed. The speed of the future champions of the seas driven by turbines will doubtless surpass also the most striking feats on record.

The czar has made his son a colonel and now hopes Kuropatkin will be encouraged to advance fearlessly upon the breastworks.

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Russia's Answer to United States Concerning Contraband.

London, Sept. 7.—The preliminary representations made by Count Benckendorff, the Russian ambassador to the foreign office, indicates that Russia is on the point of making substantial concessions to the United States and Great Britain regarding the question of contraband of war, as a result of the submission by Foreign Minister Lamsdorf of the report of the general commission to Emperor Nicholas today, together with the information transmitted by Ambassador Benckendorff showing the views of the British government.

The Russian foreign minister is expected to present to the British government, through Sir Charles Haringe, the British ambassador to Russia, tomorrow, the formal reply of the Russian government. It is understood in official circles here that Russia, while not acknowledging herself at fault for the capture made by her ships in the past, will more specifically describe the conditions under which certain goods, such as foodstuffs and cotton, become in her view contraband.

The British foreign office is satisfied from the representations made to it that such substantial concessions will be made by Russia as will lead to an easy settlement of the vexatious question.

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