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Let there be an equal pole of hope and fear. Does arbitrate the event, my nature is that I incline to hope rather than fear.

WHAT'S THE ANSWER?

A BILL at Salem would increase the number of circuit judges for Multnomah county from five to eight.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

VARIOUS financial publications have endeavored to present summaries of the amounts of issues and investments made in 1912 in corporations generally known as public utility companies.

The greatest development has been in the hydro-electric, and electric light and power fields, and here the Pacific coast has the premier place.

Particulars of issues made by 55 public utilities companies in 1912 aggregate \$259,656,000.

For electric light and power companies on the Pacific coast issues total \$99,000,000.

The most prominent feature in this finance is the spread of the holding company idea.

The need of safeguarding investors finds continual expression. The "Blue Sky Law" either to its full scope or with limitations, in jurisdiction to special forms of utility investments—is looked to as an efficient agency along this line.

A WASTE

THE messenger who carried the electoral vote of one of the states was late in arriving because he did not know that there was a specified time at which he was due at Washington.

The episode is a reminder of the absurdity of the electoral system. The pay of the messengers for delivering the vote at the national capital totals about \$40,000.

The fee was fixed in the times of the stage coach, when distances were not yet made easy by modern facilities and when the cost of travel was great.

Indeed, under modern conditions, the electoral college itself is an unnecessary formality, unworthy of perpetuation. We hold to it because until yesterday nobody had seriously proposed a change.

Even if we continued elections through electors rather than by direct vote, the vote of a state could be as safely transported by mail as by special messenger.

Of course, the \$40,000 is of little consequence to a great nation. But it is public money, and from the White House down to the lowest

village office, expenditure of public money should be with scrupulous care and conscientious concern.

THE LOBBYISTS

HOW far should a legislature go in proscribing lobbyists? When is one a lobbyist?

A bill at Salem requires everyone who appears at the state house in the interest of a bill to register with the secretary of state and in the public record make known his errand.

There are lobbyists and lobbyists. There is the paid kind whose pursuit of legislators is not always for good purposes.

But there is the citizen who is in no sense a lobbyist. Many a citizen goes to the capital only with thought and desire for the public welfare.

Among them are men from whom any legislator could get valuable advice. All the wisdom of the state is not in the legislative body.

Then there is the constituent at home who journeys to the capital to see the member from his district.

Should it be made an offense for the constituent not to register his name and his business with the secretary of state, when he calls on his representative? Should he be denied the right to speak to the member concerning legislation except publicly before a committee?

Would such a plan be representative government, or government by autocracy?

THEIR HUNGER FOR BOOKS

CURIOS and interesting accounts of the hunger of newly arriving immigrants for information appears from investigations among New York libraries.

Immigrants arriving in New York crowd together in tenements on Manhattan Island. It takes the average foreigner three years to learn to read and speak English.

Meanwhile, they find work in their various trades and save every penny possible, enabling them at the end of their apprenticeship to American ways to move out to the suburbs.

The appetite for knowledge among these new comers is insatiable. Eight of the forty branches of the public library are within their district.

In one of these—the Bowery—in last October there were circulated 12,281 books. Of these 5860 were of the best standard fiction.

The rest were books on science, philosophy, history, economics, the trusts and the tariff.

Each nationality has its main business street, and there are still many streets where only Italian, Yiddish, Roumanian, or modern Greek are spoken.

The readers at the branch libraries are mainly Russians, Roumanians, Greeks, Italians, and Hungarians. The nationals of these races are encouraged to meet in the audience rooms of the library, which thus serve as their social centers.

The librarians say that the United States gives to these people an outlet for their aspirations. In the books they choose for study this is illustrated.

The persecuted Russian states government and, as a rule, becomes a radical Socialist. The Italian, who works with his hands reads more practical books.

The melting pot of the United States are fused the radicalism of the Russian, the practicality of the Italian, the love of pleasure of the Hungarian, the industry of the Greek, the frugality of the German.

The newly arrived immigrant is often studied. This sketch throws light on the immigrant settled down in his new home.

RAILROAD AND SCHOOL

IT HAS been left for the little town of McComb in Mississippi, with a population of but \$237, to put into successful operation a plan of vocational education which will probably be widely followed.

The Illinois Central railroad has shops in that town. There is also in the little city a high school, where the same problems of vocational education are rife as in the great cities of the nation.

By virtue of an understanding between the railroad company and the high school, the selected boys attend school one day and work in the railroad shops the next.

They receive pay, varying from 13 to 18 cents an hour. They are called "student apprentices." After four years of combined work in high school and in the shops the boys are ready, either

to enter college or to draw down a man's pay in his trade.

The railroad superintendent says that it is not only feasible, but quite satisfactory.

It is a good measure. But what about the swindling promoter who organizes a bogus corporation and floods the country with glittering prospectuses and lying literature?

Why attack the mere agent and leave the principal undisturbed in his operations with soap bubble securities?

LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE

(Communications sent to The Journal for publication in this department should be on only one side of the paper, should not exceed 500 words in length and must be accompanied by the name and address of the sender. If the writer does not desire to have the name published, he should so state.)

Electrocution. Portland, Or., Jan. 27.—To the Editor of The Journal—I have noticed, in the news items in the daily papers, that a bill has been or is to be introduced at the present session of the Oregon legislature to substitute the electric chair for the gallows, and that no one under the age of 21 be allowed to witness the execution.

It is proper for the legislative body to give a patient hearing to both sides. It should also consider the interests of the great body of labor that does not belong to union organizations.

It should also have a due regard for the employers. It should also have full solicitude for the great public which has a direct interest in seeing a settlement as far as possible of the inharmonies between employer and employee.

In passing a compensation bill, the legislature cannot please all. It cannot hope to have all agree. No bill could be framed that would receive the assent of all groups of employers and all varieties of employees.

All the body can do is to give a conscientious consideration to the contentions of all interested, and then—act. Action is essential for the welfare of the state and for the good of workers and employers.

The present system of lawsuits and litigation is ruinous waste. The injured workmen gets but a comparative pittance from the awards of the courts in personal injury suits.

The system monopolizes the time of the courts, sends huge amounts of Oregon as fees to casualty companies, and is an all round extortion on industry.

The present system is war instead of peace. It is a bludgeon method instead of compromise. It is waste instead of economy.

Oregon is bettered accordingly as every condition is bettered. It is the business of the legislature to construct something that will end this war, that will banish the bludgeon process, that will check waste.

The issue is squarely before the body. If there is failure to meet it conscientiously and courageously, one more sin of omission will be properly chargeable to the legislature, and one more measure will have to go on the ballot.

IN MINNESOTA

A BILL in the Minnesota legislature proposes municipal slaughter houses for all the cities and towns of that state.

It gives each municipality authority to issue bonds for constructing and equipping the plants. The plan is the result of an inspection by the secretary of the Minnesota health board of the public abattoirs of Paris, Edinburgh, Sheffield, Brighton and Birmingham.

The purpose is to provide effectively against the sale of diseased meat. Reports accompanying the measure are that in some of the European cities, the public abattoirs are required to be self sustaining and in others they are not.

The Brighton plant is operated at a loss, incident to the low rates charged for killing. There, the charge for killing is: Killing, 24 cents; sale of offal, 16; actual cost of slaughter, 8 cents. The fee for sheep is: Killing, 6 cents; sale of offal, 2; actual cost, 4 cents. The actual cost for slaughter of calves is 12 cents, and for hogs, 2.

A GOOD INVESTMENT

ANY sum that the state may appropriate for a geological survey is an investment. There will be enormous returns on the expenditure in new industries established, in more labor employed, and in money kept at home.

We imported \$12,000,000 worth of geological products in 1911. We could have produced 75 per cent of this importation at home. But because we have never located our geological deposits and opened them to industry, we only produced 33 per cent. The remainder we purchased, mainly of California and Washington, whose geological resources are no better than our own.

We bought of them because their people spent money in finding and cataloguing their various geological deposits and capital was attracted to development of various profitable industries.

A NEW BLUE SKY

LIMITED form of Blue Sky law is pending in the Minnesota legislature.

Its title is, "For the protection of subscribers for and purchasers of corporate stock, and prescribing penalties for its violation."

The stock solicitor must procure a license from the bank examiner, and give a bond of \$1000 for the benefit of any person defrauded. He must deliver to the person solicited a printed statement giving full information about the corporation whose stock is being offered, including a detailed statement of its assets and liabilities, and such other information as the purchaser of stock would need to know in order to judge of its value.

Any one who advertises stock

must furnish in the advertisement the same information as the personal solicitor must give when soliciting.

A copy of the contract of subscription must be furnished the subscriber in addition to the printed information.

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COMMENT AND NEWS IN BRIEF

SMALL CHANGE

Too many laws much lawing cause. William Rockefeller is on Jekyll Island, playing Hyde.

It takes many Moros' eyes, teeth, etc., to average one American's.

It's going to come, hooray, hooray; that bridge across the Columbia.

Seems like a game warden can have more trouble than violators of the game laws do.

That prospective bridge across the Columbia will not only be of great utility, but a big advertisement.

The "hunger strike" of imprisoned British suffragettes looks like spit work in which they are the principal sufferers.

There can't very well be a statute embodying every good idea, nor prohibiting everything that some good people think wrong.

Now Mr. Roosevelt nor nobody else can do anything to control trusts in New Jersey.

The joke is on Arizona and her messenger; he didn't know when he was due to arrive. He should be given a job herding sheep when he returns.

If the people of the country had a chance to express their sentiments on the subject, probably nine tenths of them would voice disapproval of congressional filibustering, and disgust with filibusters.

Woman wanting divorce says bachelors over 35 are no good for husbands; she has tried two. Some people will judge millions by one or two instances. And then her ex-husbands might give some unfavorable testimony about her.

Party politics have kept the Illinois legislature from organizing for nearly a month, causing great damage to that state. It is a bad climate where people hatch their chickens in January in the regular open front poultry sheds, or in an old box in the yard as the usual custom in the Standfield country.

Estacada Progress: What has become of the Estacada Commercial club? Wouldn't it be a good idea to reorganize and get in the game this spring? There is a strong probability that the P. R. L. is not a bad climate where people hatch their chickens in January in the regular open front poultry sheds, or in an old box in the yard as the usual custom in the Standfield country.

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OREGON SIDELIGHTS

The vestrymen of Emmanuel Episcopal church at Marshfield have decided to proceed with plans for a new church edifice.

Albany Democrat: If the valley ever gets that clear lake water it will have the best in the world, so clear and pure as to be transparent for 100 feet straight down.

Eugene Register: The fact that the Siuslaw dairymen has so far supplanted stock raising as to make a shortage of meat imminent is one of the indications of the rapidly changing industrial conditions in Lane county.

Dufur Dispatch, quoting from issue of January 28, 1912: "The Dalles people are still of the opinion that a vast body of coal underlies their town and its suburbs, and will continue the work of prospecting as soon as spring opens."

Hillsboro Argus: Joseph Switzer, the baker, has bought a place in Switzerland, and intends making his permanent home there. He says the hills and neighboring section progresses while he sits under the vine and fig tree in the federalist.

Baker Democrat: In the last few years lumbering has developed in Baker county to a point that makes it the chief industry. At the outset of the new year orders that will take all the year will have been booked by Baker lumber men, and there is every prospect of good times.

Standfield Standard: On New Year's day Mrs. C. A. Hazen set a broody hen. Thirteen chicks were her reward. It is not a bad climate where people hatch their chickens in January in the regular open front poultry sheds, or in an old box in the yard as the usual custom in the Standfield country.

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