

# The Oregon Statesman

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## WHY NOT TRY PERSONAL OBEDIENCE?

If every man were to have one pet law-breaking mania that he might enjoy with the secret or open sanction of society, every man would need to go armed and barricaded all his life lest the right maniac should find him.

There are staunch friends who in spirit are nevertheless highwaymen; there are religious zealots on whom financial obligations sit with painful instability. There are honest business men who wish to be, and perhaps are, social perverts; there are sober men who wouldn't touch a cigarette, even, who still covetously wish their neighbor wouldn't watch his money and jewels so closely. There are a million slants to perverse humanity, covering almost every possibility of thought or action; some one wants to do every one of these perverse things.

If every man were free to declare his nullification of the laws restricting his own pet indiscretion or crime, instantly there would be no law but that of brute force. Society is not ready to declare such a condition.

No man of reasonably sound mind, and almost no moral pervert, would try to argue that one crime, which is the legal definition of any offense against society as a whole, ought to be tolerated in one person without giving every other person an equal exemption; if for no higher reason than that such exemption instantly destroys all law, all justice, and is itself chaos.

Why should the law maintain a police force to save the booze offender from arson, or murder, or his wife or daughter from rape—when these other criminals claim only the same kind of exemption that he claims when he peddles or illegally uses or shields booze? The only reason is, that society must protect itself as a whole. No one would be quicker to demand legal protection against the kidnapper, the firebug, the vitriol thrower, the bomb assassin—all these "other" men with hobbies that they glorify in than many a man who says in word or deed that "I am above this booze law." The man who does not believe in enforcing even the booze laws, which are the sovereign will of the majority, has small moral right to expect the poisoner and the rapist and the slugger who assaults his home, to be punished for ignoring those particular laws and making a glory of their violation. He has his own pet vices that he says are above the law—why not they?

Only by making all laws respected because they are the laws of the people, can there be a society that protects any single thing that humanity holds dear.

There is one selfish but infallible test that every man can make as to his duty on any law: "Do I want the protection of society? Shall I give to other men the right to work their own warped wills on me or my family, simply because they dislike the law restraining their chosen criminality? If I sanction the breaking of the booze laws, may not others rightfully assault or kill or rob me on the same theory of exemption? If I want booze, and a lustful brute wants my wife or daughter, shall both of us receive absolution for our unlawful desires? Wherein are we different?"

With a fair application of this test, there would be small trouble among good citizens, even among many cowardly or selfish citizens, in enforcing the liquor laws. There would be no need for importing agents to sleuth out the liquor violations—and the spirit of obedience to law would make every sort of crime infinitely less prevalent.

Would it not be worth while to try personal obedience as a social experiment?

Introducing General Leonard Wood, governor general of the Philippines. He is the right man in the right place.

And John Bull has sent his acceptance, R. S. V. P., to the international disarmament conference. John will want a front seat where he can spit on the stove if he desires to do so.—Exchange.

Please help the stegan editor prove that our district ought to raise ten times as much live stock as it does now. Today or tomorrow.

When General Leonard Wood went to the Philippines to make a survey of the conditions on the islands the first people he talked to were the school teachers. The views they expressed were no doubt illuminating, for there is no class so capable of imparting genuine information.

Musicians have decided the fate of jazz. They say it expresses hysteria and promotes idleness. The judgment may be correct as to hysteria, but not as to idleness. Violence is not idleness, and jazz

**FUTURE DATES**  
August 31, Wednesday—Joint picnic of Salem and McMinnville Rotarians at McMinnville.  
September 25 to October 1—Oregon State Fair.  
September 28, Wednesday—State school convention to open bids on \$2,000,000 bonds.  
November 21, 22 and 23—Marion county school teachers' institute.

denn the League and for what it stands.

You are evidently mistaken about the N. P. L. being "against the United States government and the political doctrines upon which it is founded." The United States supreme court has decided, without a dissenting vote, that the laws of North Dakota, passed by the Nonpartisan League state government, are constitutional. This the court would not have done if your opinion were correct.

I am sorry that you allowed yourself to be led into making an appeal to the religious and patriotic passions of your readers. I do not think it worthy of you or entitled to a place in the columns of The Statesman. With reference to the Kansas episode, your position is in marked contrast with the editorial expression of the Pacific Legion which is as follows: "The ex-service men who participated in the recent far party, at which the guests were two Nonpartisan organizers deserve nothing but condemnation from loyal Americans, regardless of individual convictions as to the menace of that radical body. Mob rule never is American, and a cowardly performance in the name of patriotism is made none the cleaner. Such conduct under the name of the American Legion never has been and never will be tolerated."

"True, the provocation often is great, but to succumb to such temptation is more harmful than beneficial to the participants and alienates the sympathies of fair-minded people."

I trust that your seeming advocacy of violence, perhaps unintentional but none the less effective, will not prove fruitful in stirring up trouble. I dare express the hope that the wind which you seem to be sowing will not result in a harvest of whirlwind.

Referring to the articles of G. X.: It seems strange that he does not know that there exists no Oregon Nonpartisan League. None has been organized, but I suppose that is of little moment. It exists in the imagination of G. X. and that is all that is necessary for the purpose of setting up a man of straw to be destroyed. Is it possible that the membership of G. X. in the N. P. L. likewise exists only in his own imagination? I admit it may be just a little uncharitable, but I wonder if his knowledge of the Nonpartisan League is of the same character? Perhaps, the latter may explain the change of pen name by G. X. One thing I like about the average member of the N. P. L. is the willingness to sign his own name to his articles.

In conclusion, I wish to renew my plea for a real discussion of issues involved. Let us have the truth, without bias, irrespective of where it may lead or reveal. "The truth shall make you free." Very sincerely,

—A. SLAUGHTER.  
Salem, Or., Aug. 18, 1921.

There is nothing to discuss about the principles of the Nonpartisan League apart from the principles of Socialism. Townley is a Socialist. All the principal men connected with the organization are Socialists. Its principles are Socialistic. The fact that its program, so far as they were able to work it out in North Dakota, has passed muster in the United States supreme court, does not prove anything in this respect—

Any more than the abandonment of polygamy by the heads of the Mormon church, after having suffered "martyrdom" by serving terms in the penitentiaries, made it plain to the world that they no longer believed in polygamy.

If they had been sufficiently powerful, they would have imposed the principles of polygamy on the whole of the United States, and, indeed, on the whole world. If Townley and the other leaders of Socialism had been sufficiently powerful, they would have imposed the full principles of Socialism on North Dakota, and on Minnesota, Idaho, Montana and other states where they had more or less power—and on the whole United States—

And this government is not founded on the principles of Socialism—it is founded on principles diametrically opposed to the fundamental principles of Socialism—

And therefore the Socialists (and the Nonpartisan League) are against the United States government. No one in North Dakota doubts this.

Mr. Slaughter says: "That principle (the fundamental system of Socialism) is the abolition of the profit system based upon the surplus value produced by the wage earner. Then why befog the issues involved by representing the Nonpartisan League to be something that it is not? It seems to me that the truth about what the League stands for should be sufficient to either justify or con-

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## OPENING DATES OF SCHOOLS SET

Hubbard, Detroit And Cedar Camp Lead County, Start September 6

Although many children may feel it is a trifle early to think about the first day of school, the fact is that a number of school houses are being put in repair and scrubbed up for that eventful first day.

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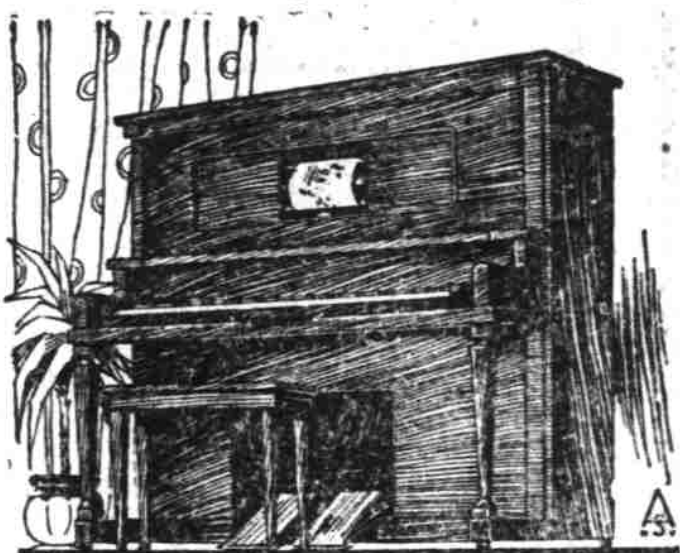
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