The Santiam News

POLITICALLY INDEPENDENT

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A WALL STREET JOKER

The postal savings bank bill, which the president has made one of the leading administration measures, has passed the senate and is now in the hands of the house. Should the house give its assent to the measure as it now stands, the president is sure to give his approval and the measure will become a law.

A very large majority of the American people have desired a system of postal savings banks, for many years. They desired that the government should provide a place where savings might be deposited and, at the same time, be absolutely safe. In response to this demand, we have the prospect that this presidential measure shall be enacted into law. But it is doubtful if the people desire a postal savings system in the form which the senate bill will give.

The measure provides that the receiving postmaster shall deposit the savings in the local banks, the banks to pay not less than 2¼ per cent. interest thereon. The money cannot be removed from the local bank except in case of war or other emergency, when the president can replace the cash in the local banks with government bonds. The "other emergency" clause is where the danger exists—where the joker is to be found. Wall Street may have inspired the introduction of this joker; but owing to the fact that the "other emergency" clause can be made to play into the hands of Wall strett so nicely, that one is inspired with the suspicion that the New York bankers are not entirely innocent.

During the period of the late gamblers panic, Wall street had a large amount of country bank funds, attracted thereto by the flattering interest rates paid. When the country banks endeavored to withdraw their deposits, Wall street said "no" and the country banks just had to wait on Wall streets motion. Country bankers are wiser now. Wall street had to invent a different scheme. The postal savings offered the opportunity and "other emergency" clause is the joker.

Heretofore, whenever the Wall street bankers have made a demand upon the federal treasury, the government has always come through. It is to be expected that with the present bill a law, whenever Wall street bankers desire, they can create an emergency. The president will, doubtless, replace the postal savings deposits, with the various local banks of the country, with governmental bonds, as the law will provide for, then deposit the funds arising therefrom, in the Wall street banks. The emergency can be repeated as often as desired, thus forcing the government to convert the savings deposits into bonds, and place the funds at the disposal of Wall street stock gamblers. Could a more beautiful scheme have been invented, to make Wall street the receiving vault of the people's savings?

The country wants a postal savings bank system, if one can be had which will be beyond the reach of Wall street stock gamblers. But the present measure as it now stands, would be a curse to the people. It will give Wall street a hip lock upon the nations finances.

TWO WAYS TO REPEAL LAW

Law can be repealed in, at least, two ways. By repeal direct and by the enactment of another law which counteracts the effect of the older law.

Our assembly friends seem a little leary of attempting to repeal our direct primary law, so they are resorting to the second method of repeal, by the voluntary act of doing something which will counteract the effect of the law.

The direct primary states explicitly how candidates shall be nominated, and that they shall be selected or nominated in no other way.

The assembly proposes to substitute a plan which will, in effect, kill the primary law. Under this plan, there will be no necessity for a nominating primary, for the selection will have been made at the assembly.

If this fact is true, and our assembly friends will not deny it, for such is their intention, are they not attempting to repeal by a voluntary act, a constitutional law? Under some conditions, these same assemblyites would pronounce such act on anarchistic.

Now friends, why not be lawabiding citizens in this matter? If our primary law, including Statement No. 1, is not satisfactory, why not repeal it in a regular and orderly manner? The NEWS supposes that you are, as a rule, lawabiding citizens and are not anarchists. An anarchist, you know, is one who ignores or overrides established law. And this is the purpose of the proposed assembly—to override or set aside the direct primary law. You know this is the purpose of your scheme; for what other purpose is the assembly intended? No body of men are good citizens who openly and deliberately proposes a plan by which a law can be overcome and its intent set aside. The assembly proposes to do this with the direct primary and its advocates do not deny that this is their purpose. The same action in regard to other laws would make the actors outlaws.

Banker Ross has been convicted and ought to be doing time in the penitentiary now. Why? Because he disregarded or sought to override the law of common banking honesty Is he any more guilty than men who deliberately plan to break another law? True, Ross is a criminal and his punishment ought to be severe. Yet his crime against society is less injurious than that proposed by the assembly; for the reason that the assembly proposes to destroy an established law and replace it with a system which the people had discarded becacse of its corruption.

The NEWS writes upon this subject frequently, for it believes it to be a question of vital importance to the people of Oregon and desires that everyone shall have the widest possible knowledge upon the matter. It is the efforts of the old political gang to regain control of Oregon politics which makes the defense of reform laws necessary.

WHERE DEMOCRACY FLOURISHES

New Zealand in the southern seas and Switzerland in the heart of Europe are the two most democratic governments of our time, just as, remarks the Twentieth Century magazine, "Oregon among our commonweaths and Los Angeles among our cities are the most important examples of democracy in action in this republic." Switzerland and New Zealand are small states, and it is often said that because of their comparative insignificance they furnish no example for the United States to follow or even to consider, but no sufficient argument is presented to show what is good for a small republic would not be good for a great one.

Switzerland has preserved itself from suffering the feudalism of privileged wealth, and has established a truly people's government by the same means which have since been adopted in Oregon, the initiative, referendum and recall; it also has proportional representation, and an equitable tax system. It adopted practically the New England town meeting system, under which neither plutocracy nor mob rule, an oligarchy nor a revolution, is possible. This system cannot be strictly followed here in state and national affairs, but the Oregon method comes as near to doing so as is possible, it gives the people a chance to speak finally on any law.

Under the New Zealand system also, officials are true representatives of the people, whose rights and welfare are not subordinated to the selfish aims and schemes of privilege-seeking classes or combinations of interests. The basic principle of government is the fraternalism of the Golden Rule New Zealand's system may not be perfect; one can find plausible objections to it; but it is solving the problem of the greatest good to the greatest number as our statesmen have never yet even attempted to do. From 1885 to 1890 inclusive New Zealand was in the grip of land monopolization and high protection, and during that period its population decreased by 20,000, and most of the people became poorer. In 1890, under a new premier, a radical change was effected, and now the government, the people, own most of the unoccupied, untused lands, and all public utilities. The government tolerates no monopoly but itself, and it is the people.

Adverse critics have said much about the heavy debt of New Zeland, but behind this debt is not merely so much money in the treasury and the power of taxation, but all the assets of the country that in other countries are mostly in the hands of private corporations. The government owns and has for sale or lease vast areas of land, and all the railways, telegraphs, telephones, etc., so that its debt is a people's investment. There are no big dividends on watered stock to pay to corporations and no individuals, companies or corporations are able to acquire and hold vast areas of the public domain. Any one can get land on easy terms, but he cannot hold land that he does not use. Idle land and all its appurtenant resources belong to all the people. Speaking of the period already mentioned, before New Zeland effected a social revolution, Professor Parsons says: "There was plenty of idle land, abundance of idle capital, and quantities of idle labor, but these three factors of production could not be brought together because of monopoly—monopoly of land, of capital, and of government by the land and moneyed interests." But under the new system monopoly was abolished, the people came into their own, and "for a period of 18 years the people enjoyed a degree of continuous prosperity rarely known by the people of any land." There has recently been some depression, but less than in other countries, and the secretary of labor reports favorable reaction and bright prospects.

The liberal government of New Zealand is one of advanced civilization, for its main features are wisdom, justice and humanism. Its high ideals are to secure and maintain for all the use of God's greatest gift to men, the land, and equality of opportunity. It seeks to foster selfrespecting manhood and womanhood, while at the same time helping the helpless to help themselves. It taxed the idle land out of the possession of speculators; it took over the caryinig business, passengers, freight and express as well as mail, and established a parcels post and postal savings banks; it helps men to make a start on a new piece of land and to build a home; it even transports a laborer to a place where he can get employment and trusts him for the fare. All this may be too paternalistic for a great country like this, but there are features of the government of, by and for the people in New Zealand that are worth our statesmen's attention. It is an exhibition not of socialism, but of real democracy.—Portland Journal

CONSTRUCTIVE LEGISLATION

One newspaper writer complains that democrats do not advocate any "constructive legislation;" that their energies are devoted to criticism of republican administration. It may be that that depends upon what one calls "constructive legislation." Just now it would seem that the most important service that a political party may render to the people is to aid in the prevention of destructive legislation as contemplated in the republican program. And it may be said that the very prevention of this form of legislation, involving as it does the life of the republic, is the highest form of constructive legislatiou.

The special interests have, under the republican party, become so thoroughly entrenched in power in this government that the most painstaking, patriotic effort will be required before they are dislodged. Mr. Taft's national incorporation plan would destroy our system of government, leaving the states mere helpless provinces and the people subject to the whims of corporation magnates, the railroad bill with its courts of commerce would centralize railroad authority at Washington, making it inconvenient for shippers to make effective protest; the ship subsidy bill would take from the pockets of the many for the benefit of the few; the central bank would vest absolute control over the money of the country in the hands of a coterie of men; the republican party's tariff policy would continue the system of "seeking to tax the people rich" which, in reality, is a tax upon consumption for the benefit of generous contributors to republican campaign funds.

Does the democratic party wage war against federal incorporation, insisting that the rights of state government, as well as the rights surrendered to the federal government, shall be preserved intact? Does it insist that the state's authority over corporations shall be retained for the benefit of the people whom corporations are presumed to serve? Does it object to a system of railroad law that would centralize authority over railroads at a point practically inaccessible to the shipper? Does it object to ship subsidy or any other form of subsidy because "equal rights to all and special privileges to none" provides the rule for the public servant? Does it object to the central bank because to give such an institution life would give its managers a power over the people too great for human beings to have? Does it insist upon a tariff revision made downward for the consumers and by the consumers? Does it fight Aldrichism and Cannonism in the capital building, Taftism in the White House, Ballingerism in the departments? Does it insist that the house of representatives shall be restored to its representative position so that it shall voice, in some degree, the will of the people? Does it insist upon the election of senators by the people rather than by the special interests? Does it demand the enforcement of the criminal clause of the anti-Sherman law against the chief magnates of the trusts, requiring those persistent violaters of law to wear the prison stripes? Does it stand for the restoration of this government as the fathers intended to the position of a government of, by, and for the people, rather than a government of, by, and for the trusts?

If the democratic party does stand for these things, if its platforms are written in unmistakable terms and its candidates are of such character that they may reasonably be trusted to do the people's will, then the democratic party has a great constructive policy.

Some men may sneer when they are told that the republican party has gone so far in its plutocratic policy that it has actually imperiled popular government. But more and more thoughtful men are coming to recognize this as a solemn fact.

"But soberly it is now no child's play to save the principles of Jefferson from total overthrow in this nation." The democratic party has the fundamental principles essential to this great work of salvation. If it shall remain true to those principles, true to the spirit in which Jefferson and Jackson served the public interests, it will be given the task of restoring the American nation, and the opportunity to dedicate it anew to the real service of the people.—Bryan's Commoner.

We are told by the timber barons that if we tax their property the same as the home owners in the city and country are taxed, that they will immediately slash off all the timber in the state. These barons are bluffers. They could not do it in ten years, and if they tried it, we could very easily regulate the cutting of timber and the clearing of ground after by laws that would compel them to replant as fast as they cut.

The big employers never hesitate to subordinate business to political convictions. It is only the working man who has conscientious scruples as to political machines. "Any machine to get there," is the motto of "big business" everywhere. When the workers learn that the ballot is an implement and a weapon they will stop using it for the benefit of special privileges to pry their "machine" out of the mud to have them run over every inherent right of man.

There are said to be thirty-four million feet of good timber in Lane county. As stumpage sells for from one to three dollars a thousand feet at the lowest figure, there should be on the tax rolls of Lane county thirty-four million dollars on the non-tillable lands, the classification timber land comes under. There is a deficit of about thirty-two millions, however.

Efforts are being made to secure from Congress an amendment making the Federal Judiciary elective. If we had a national initiative it could be secured. Energy spent to amend the Constitution should be concentrated on this issue in state and nation.

Notice

Patrons discontinuing the use of electric lights, for part of the season, will be charged $3 to have them switched on again, except those keeping three lights the entire year.

FIRE, LIGHT & WATER COM.