

# THE SCIO TRIBUNE

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SCIO, OREGON, AUGUST 19, 1920

## TOO MANY LAWMAKERS.

In another column we reproduce a short article from the Oregon Journal upon the wisdom of reducing the membership of our national house of representatives. The article is timely for a new apportionment of house members will be due in a few months.

Our national senate is composed of two members from each state, giving a total of 96 members. Nor can this number be increased except by a change in the federal constitution, regulating the number from each state, which is very unlikely.

The house of representatives is supposed to be made up of one member from each state and the balance to be apportioned as population increases, and the total of the membership is now about 435. In the minds of the public and many of the members this large body has become cumbersome, unwieldy, and is not productive of the best results. New members will increase the number unless the law regulating the apportionment of membership is changed.

At the present time nearly all the bills passed by this large body is upon the recommendation of a committee of no more than 15 members. Upon the second reading of a bill it is referred to this or that committee for consideration.

In due time, unless the committee wants to squelch the measure, the bill is reported to the house with a recommendation favorable or otherwise, and nine times in ten the body of the house ratifies; that is to say, passes or rejects the bill, in accordance with the committee's recommendation.

Thus a half dozen of the leading members controls the legislation of our lower house of congress. What are the other 400 members but automatons who simply confirm or ratify the committee's report?

Another most important matter to consider is the quality of men elected as members of the lower house. Four-fifths of the members are but very ordinary men, not qualified nor equipped as lawmakers should be. Our national house of representatives is degenerating rapidly. We need not go from our own state to establish this fact. Our present membership establishes the truth of the statement. They are pleasant, likable gentlemen, but they are not big enough to fill the places they occupy.

Several years ago our only representative was Binger Hermann of Roseburg. So far as dipping into the pork barrel is concerned, he was of more value than all three of our present members. And he was receiving a salary of but \$5000. The combined salary of our present members is \$21,500. Now if we could

have another Binger instead of our present three, our state and the country would be the better for it.

Congressman McArthur has declared himself in favor of a house with a total membership of 300. Why not cut this number in the middle and give us more of a good thing?

Our federal constitution requires a member for each state. If to these 48 we should add a member for each 1,000,000 of population, we would have a body of 150 to 160 members, and our country at large would be much better represented than it is today, that is to say if we could cut out the automatons members. We would save on salaries nearly a half million dollars.

Our national senate, our American house of lords, is made up of two members from each state and is really a more representative body for the country at large than is the lower house. In the senate New York is no more powerful than is Oregon. In the house it is nearly ten times as powerful.

Our federal constitution, admirable as it is, made to serve the requirements of five or six millions, does not meet the requirements of a nation of 110,000,000 of people.

Up to the present time we have added 18 amendments to the venerable instrument and the 19th is pending. Possibly when we become a nation of 200,000,000 people, we may need a new organic law altogether.

This nation has made tremendous progress in the 144 years of its existence. Our laws fundamental must keep pace with modern conditions. Many of the laws thought necessary by our constitutional fathers has become obsolete as time advanced and have gone into the discard.

We must meet the conditions as time develops them, and the reduction of the membership of our national house of representatives seems near at hand. We need fewer members and an improvement in quality of the personnel.

## A REPUBLICAN LEAGUE.

If the United States could formulate a league of nations and the other thirty odd nations would adopt it without reservations or amendments and especially if it was formulated by the republican party, perhaps Lodge, Borah, Johnson and Candidate Harding would be willing to ratify it. Borah might be doubtful. He is reported to have said he would not endorse a league of nations even if evolved by Jesus Christ. Unfortunate to the vanity or partisan bullheadedness of these gentlemen, an international agreement whether with one or thirty nations cannot be formed on that basis. It necessarily must be on a basis of compromise and the United States must be willing to concede something.

Granted that the United States has made the greatest advances in the science of government, these other nations, if they enter into a league, have ideas and rights to which the other signatory nations must concede in part, at least.

All nations agree that war is the worst possible manner in which to settle an international dispute, and that the greed and avariciousness of strong nations should not be allowed to trample upon and despoil a weak nation.

For several years The Hague tribunal has been in existence, and friendly arbitration has settled disputes and which might have caused war, have been peaceably settled. Yet, if some involved nation refused to arbitrate or to submit the dispute to The Hague tribunal, as was the case with Austria in bringing on the recent great war, if war is to be prevented some stronger power of control must be evolved.

President Wilson saw the opportunity was ripe at the Versailles treaty to bring about the formation of a league which would be almost a sure preventive of war. He saw that all Europe was sick of war and looked upon the formation of a league which would have such a kick that no nation would go up against it willingly, and he broached the proposition. The league was formed. Every nation conceded some of its wishes. The United States made concessions. The league is now in operation, and without the United States, the leading peace loving nation of the world, being a member. Why? Simply because Woodrow Wilson, a democrat, proposed and was mainly instrumental in bringing the league into existence. If Mr. Wilson had been a republican the league would have been ratified by the U. S. senate probably on the first ballot.

But the partisan political senators thought they saw an opening by which the league could be defeated. They had no idea but what the league would fail without the U. S. as a member, and for purely partisan political reasons they procured a refusal on the part of the senate to ratify. Yet that party has the gall to ask the people to place the nation in the hands of men who prefer to settle international disputes by war rather than by arbitration.

So the voter at the polls will be confronted with this proposition: A vote for Harding means you favor war rather than to force nations to first try to settle disputes before a court of arbitration; while a vote for Cox means nations must try to settle by peaceful means of arbitration before going to war. In other words, a vote for Harding means you are not in favor of a league at all unless it is made by the republican party and signed by a republican president.

A vote for Cox means you favor ratifying the present league with, perhaps, explanatory reservations. The republican party is thus forced into the position of being opposed to international arbitration, while the democrats say try to settle by arbitration and let us, if possible, not send our young men and boys out to become fodder for cannon, poison gas, or to become victims of the submarines.

Indications are now that the country market for wheat will range from \$2 to \$2.10 per bushel; oats 60 to 75 cents per bushel; hay, baled, \$18 to \$22 per ton. The wool and sheep markets are still demoralized, with the outlook for fair prices ahead.



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