

Life of a Legislator

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Post Mortem on Legislature

Canyon City, Oregon.—After we play a hand at pinochle or bridge, we hold a post mortem, and then play the hand over again. We argue the rules of the game and still no one is convinced, and so, we play another hand, and then, go into a bigger and better argument than ever. It is from the post mortems that we hold over the hands, from which we learn the technique and the rules of the game.

For the past 60 days we have been playing the game of law-making; the cards have all been dealt, the hands have been played, and now it is time for the post mortem. We have the corpse of the legislature before us. What did it die of? What was the malady? Why are legislatures what they are and will they ever be better or worse and why does the man down on the street say that the legislature is all the bunk? We are told that the legislature does not do anything, and in the same breath, condemn it for doing too much.

We sat in a swivel chair, in the front row of the house of representatives at Salem for the past 60 days and watched the parade of 1000 bills and laws go by, and that will make a big book for nobody to read and on an infinite variety of subjects of no particular consequence—just laws, blundering confusion, correcting, amending, repealing, struggling with the imperfections of government and trying to correct the inherent faults, evils, errors and general cussedness of man, who is the integral part of the composite whole, which we call government. Government is an evil, reflecting all of the errors of us all. Perfect men would need no government and no laws. They would need no legislature; no regulation, no courts, no police and no administrative direction.

But ah, there is the rub. Men are not perfect; they must be restrained and therefore we have legislative bodies to blunder and stumble along with the rest of blundering humanity, and so we would say that the chief value of a legislature lies in its faults. A perfect legislature to regulate imperfect man would be a failure, for after all, it is only imperfect men who are capable of regulating imperfect men, and so let us repeat that the prime value of a legislature lies in its faults. It is men, humanity, democracy, America.

If you believe in democracy you will believe in the legislative branch of democracy, which functions just as well as the judicial branch of a democracy and better than the administrative or executive departments.

The house of representatives at Salem, composed of 60 members, was a cross section of the men and women who are in the last analysis—America. They came direct from the busy marts of men. They bring into legislative halls your ideas, your notions, your likes and dislikes, your prejudices, your interests and they mix them all up with selfish interests, false reasoning, good intentions, parliamentary trickery, cunning lobbies with the commercial clubs and all of the organizations and varied interests back home, wiring, writing, phoning and sending delegations down, pleading, demanding, threatening, promising, scheming, jobbing, planning and that is America, Democracy, legislatures. The legislature of Oregon is no better and no worse than you are—for it is you.

Out of the 60 members in the house some 45 were never in a legislature before. They did not know whether Roberts' Rules of Order was a song or something to eat. They were fresh from the people; right from the soil—Democracy. They stumbled and blundered along just like a good legislator should

do, guided by the notions of the people back home, reflecting the farm, the field, the office and the shop. The house of representatives should be kept close to the people, and elected every two years, and it is our opinion that more than half of the membership should be new or raw hands each session. Don't let them stay too long or long enough to become sophisticated and so smart that they become adept at parliamentary trickery and legislative legerdemain, and with too long a service, the tendency is to lose the common touch. Keep them fresh from the soil and they will reflect Democracy, with all of its errors, evils and blundering and vain efforts to restrain the strong and protect the weak. If legislatures are a failure it is because men are a failure and if men are a failure, then Democracy is futile, and what you need is a Dictator—a Hitler, a Mussolini, a Mader or an overlord.

But we love humanity; we believe in men and in him is our faith, and upon this faith we base democracy with its blundering, struggling, striving legislative bodies, whose life impulse is to restrain the strong and protect the weak. Don't take your legislative bodies too lightly for when you accept them as an evil or a joke, you are indicting yourselves, and you are confessing that you are incapable of self-government and that you are by nature, a slave, seeking some master, whom you would adorn with a jeweled crown the symbol of sovereignty. You are king and the legislature is your fingers and toes.

In this post mortem we shall not attempt to analyze any of the 1000 bills that passed into legislative review. But we will show you how royalty still aspires and how the fundamentals of a democracy are in constant danger from sinister, cunning and designing influences that lie dormant, slumbering in the legend of pettit princess and bejeweled grand dames ever eager to ascend the dais of a royal throne. In this session there was an attempt to place qualifications upon the voter. Make property rights a qualification. That strikes at democracy. The jury system was attacked, free press, free speech, elections, circulating petitions, the right to organize, the use of the police, which in a degree is part of the military branch of the government, so closely and so carefully guarded in our constitution. Don't be alarmed. These attacks were of minor consequence, but enough to emphasize the fact that you and your legislators, must guard by day, and in the vigil of the night be ever super-sensitive at the slightest infringement of any of these God-given rights, that are vouchsafed to men in our bill of rights, our constitution, the framework of democracy, which is you, represented at Salem, in your legislature.

In the last few years there has been a new problem that legislators have had to face. That is group interests. And this was most manifest at Salem. It predominated the session. Group legislation. Men group themselves for their demands and seek to do collectively what they can not do individually. A few years back the legislature would enact a law. They now enact a code, and that is wholesaling legislation—mass production of laws. In the administration of a code, there may be 500 regulations, and each of these regulations have the force and effect of a law. With the adoption of about 50 state codes and the NRA, by the house, there were approximately 600 codes approved, and if they only averaged 200 regulations each, that would amount to 120,000 laws, or regulations—wholesaled, which leads us to the statement that this country is overorganized and no one is more appreciative of this fact than legislators who were besieged with groups throughout the session. There was the fish men, the milk men, booze men, the egg men, the plumbers, doctors, cosmeticians, barbers, lawyers, electricians, hop men, bankers, railroaders, the old, the young, and say, we shall never forget the night that 400 or 500 cosmeticians, beauty doctors, stormed the capitol. How would you like to go against 500 beauty doctors, the sweet lassies, who demanded their code in a public hearing before a committee? Would

you have the heart to resist them? And nearly every night there were public hearings in nearly every room of the capitol, and by the hundreds, they would come, urging their demands through lawyers and organizers and men and women, humanity, stumbling, blundering, seeking, striving, urging their group thought upon legislative committees; the members, tired, worn, staggering through a day that would start at 8 o'clock a. m. and maybe end at midnight. All milling around and about, arguing, talking, and that is democracy; with its faults, which are its virtues, and which make America, where the sovereignty, or the right to rule, was taken from the self-appointed few, and with the ballot placed in the hands of 126 million people who elect legislators to stumble and blunder along with them, and as the symbol of the sovereignty, we chose the red, white and blue, the stars and stripes, which mean that men shall rule and rule through themselves, in legislative sessions, and in the Congress of the United States assembled.

But groups are selfish. They make a strong lobby. They hit you hard. They are hard to resist and they never quit. And the folks back home lobby their legislator, they write him, they write him, they phone him to put over this, or stop that—one group against the other group, the people, democracy, America. When the legislature meets all of Oregon is a lobby. Letters pour in by the thousands, and when some large group-measure is up for passage, the telegrams will come in from the four corners of the state, and maybe just as many telegrams on one side as there are on the other. And the committee has to grind it out, and amend to suit this group, to alter in order to satisfy another group, and then after the bill runs

the parliamentary gauntlet, it finally reaches the floor of the house, where it is a target for every other group and there it is amended some more, and then is sent to the senate where it goes through the same course of public hearings, committees, and then out into the senate and amended again, and sent back to the house, and maybe amended again, and in the last act, just before the curtain goes down, it reaches the governor and if he feels a little grouchy, he vetoes it, and back it comes into the house and then another battle, and they pass it over his head or it goes to the graveyard and sleeps for two years, and then gets up out of its grave and comes walking into the next legislative session, backed by a bigger and better group. That is democracy, that is you; that is your legislature.

When we think of the lobby, we think of the boys who infest the legislative halls—lots of them and yet not so many, compared with the folks back home; for remember, when the Oregon legislature meets, all of Oregon is a lobby. If a member lacks the courage, lacks the intelligence, lacks the tact, lacks the ability to withstand this statewide lobby, he has no place in legislative halls. One must do his own thinking and be able to value and interpret the demands, the interests, the ways, the means and the methods of the lobby which meets one in the halls of the state capitol and extends out into the countryside and to the commercial clubs at home, and to the farmers, the soldiers, the rich, the poor man, beggar and Indian chief, for each and all, are a group and that group wants to whisper in the legislator's ear. And we say that the legislature does not do anything, or that it does too much, and it ought to go home, and mind its own business,

but bless your heart, it has no business of its own, and the 1000 bills that pass in parade come from the people with the hundreds of groups demanding that they do pass.

But we would not change it. Let us blunder along, just like human beings, correcting today the errors of yesterday. That is what a democracy does and it does it through its legislature.

I am that coyote fellow. I am that fellow who wanted to go back to Grant county the first day of the session. Back where I could hear the coyote howl. And now, after 60 days listening to the arguments and demands of groups of over-organized America, I am returning to my home in Canyon City, Grant county, to hear my constituency howl.

I enjoyed serving the legislature. I enjoyed it, because I love humanity; men, democracy, America, and long may it blunder along, striving, struggling, seeking to restrain the strong and protect the weak, and over the imperfections of all may the stars and stripes be the emblem of hope for that more perfect day when men will need no law and legislatures will be no more, and until then, let us, your legislators, with their constituency, all howl like the coyote whose home is on the broad fields of freedom that stretch out into the vast empire of Eastern Oregon.

Enterprise—Probably the largest herd of cattle so far found free of Bang's disease by government testers in Oregon is that owned by W. E. Chapman of Wallowa county. Although Mr. Chapman's 430 head of registered Herefords had never been tested for this disease before, the laboratory reports returned to the office of County Agent Garnet Best showed not a single reactor for this herd.

Home Extension Program Help to Oregon Women

Oregon women, always interested in making their homes more comfortable and attractive, and in having their families better fed, clothed and cared for, are coming more and more to rely on the home economics staff of the Oregon Extension service for information and assistance in making these things possible.

A total of 30,367 homemakers were given assistance during the past year through individual letters, office calls, telephone calls or personal home visits, while thousands more have been reached through circular letters, news articles, bulletins, radio programs, meetings and other contacts, the annual report filed by Miss Claribel Nye, state leader of home economics extension, shows.

An increasing desire on the part of women throughout the state to help extend the home economics extension program by acting as local leaders for definite projects in their communities is also reported by Miss Nye. In addition to increasing the effectiveness of the work in those counties having home demonstration agents, it has been possible this year for the first time to provide one or more projects for every county in the state, largely through the voluntary cooperation of these local leaders, Miss Nye says.

Among the projects available during the year have been child care and parent education, home food preservation, meal planning and table service, vegetable cookery, low cost meals, use of eggs, milk and cheese products, bread making, recreational leadership training, renovating and remodeling, economy buying, economy dressmaking, gar-

ment finishing, care and use of sewing machines, coat making and home crafts. An unusually large number of requests for help with housing problems were also handled.

In addition, the report shows that homemakers' vacation camps were conducted in eight counties with 291 women attending; county-wide homemakers' conferences were held in 14 counties without home demonstration agents; 1900 women from 116 communities participated in the annual program planning days in the six counties having agents; and 329 homemakers attended the annual Home Interests conference at the state college.

State and county extension workers also directed the county relief canning projects in which 636,565 cans were filled, conducted the rural housing survey of 5473 farm homes in six counties, and assisted in other emergency relief projects.

CLUB WORK RATED HIGHLY.

Lane county, second highest scoring county in the United States and first in the 11 western states in the recent National 4-H County Progress contest, ranked but a fraction of a point lower than St. Louis county, Minn., winner of the national award, H. C. Seymour, state club leader, reports.

As winner in the western division, Lane county 4-H clubs will receive \$1000 in cash. The national award was a \$10,000 4-H club building.

Mr. Seymour was one of four state club leaders who, with a representative of the national 4-H club department, made up the national committee of judges for scoring the contest entries. He expressed a great deal of pride in the development of 4-H club work in Lane county, as shown by the report prepared by R. C. Kuehner, county club agent.

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U. O. Again Selected As Carnegie Art Center



For the sixth consecutive year the University of Oregon school of art has been designated as the Western center for teaching of art appreciation, by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. Art Teachers, selected from the western states, are given a summer of instruction with all expenses paid by the corporation. Harvard serves as the Eastern center. Above—view of the University art building. Right—Ellis F. Lawrence, dean of the school of art and architecture.

