



## The Indianapolis Times

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"Give Light and the People Will Find Their Own Way."

### The Fee System

Two years ago the Democratic party made a futile effort to abolish the fee system in Indiana, placing all county officials on regular salaries.

They traced the election evils of Lake county to the fact that county officials received sums larger than the salaries paid to the President of the United States.

This year the political situation, as far as Lake county is concerned, is changed. Democrats hold these securities.

One of the tests of the Democratic party, perhaps the acid test, is its attitude in victory. Will it have the same ideas upon the fee system now that it held two years ago, or will it yield to the political demands of Lake county and forget its high purpose?

There can be no question of the evils of the fee system. It should be changed. Lake county is not the only spot which it affects. It is absurd to make the prosecutorial of Madison county, now passing for the first time in years to Democratic hands, twice as profitable as that of a supreme court judge. Certainly it does not require twice the legal knowledge, twice the integrity, twice the work.

In hitting the fee system, the legislature will do well at the same time to strike at the provision of law which has made it so evil a thing.

Originally the fee system was based upon the piece system of work to relieve smaller counties from undue burdens. It did not begin to breed its evil children of corruption until the passage of the Wright law, which turned into the prosecutors and sheriffs more money than ever before.

The particular provision of that law which has made the fee system in Lake and Madison counties, in particular, as well as all other counties operating on that basis, so objectionable is the \$25 fee given to prosecutors for all cases in connection with the law, and a \$200 fee for all nuisance cases.

That provision was the scheme of the Anti-Saloon League to raise funds. It expected to employ its own lawyers and in many counties has demanded the privilege of prosecuting all nuisance charges.

It intended this not so much as an added penalty for the man who got drunk or the operator of bootleg joints as it did for its own aim to raise funds for its organization.

If it be considered wise to make getting drunk so burdensome by this added fine, the law should be changed so that this fee goes into some state or county fund.

It is that \$25 fee for convicting a drunk, who generally pleads guilty, that has made the prosecutorial so profitable.

There is no more reason for giving a prosecutor \$25 in such cases, perhaps not as much, than there would be in putting up a bonus of \$1,000 for convicting a bank bandit or a bank embezzler.

The Anti-Saloon League is not so powerful as it was when the vicious provision was put into the law. It has not been so successful in getting its own attorneys a monopoly of nuisance cases.

The first amendment to the Wright law should be taking of the \$25 fee in liquor cases from prosecutors and making it the duty of the prosecutor to prosecute all nuisance cases.

Such amendment would remove some of the viciousness of the fee system, which is all wrong in principle and should be changed.

### Adjourn Politics

Let it be hoped that the tender of Chairman Earl Peters of the state Democratic party to adjourn politics from the necessary reapportionment of congressional districts will find a response from Chairman Rogers of the Republican organization.

Indiana, under the last census, will lose two members of the house of representatives. That will require new political divisions.

It is but human to expect that a legislature of which one body is Republican and the other Democratic will find such a subject of debate. Each party might be expected to try for advantage by grouping counties in such way as to make election certain of a majority for its party.

To have this question settled in advance by conference of leaders of the party would remove the probability of the legislature becoming so embroiled in a political struggle on this question as to forget important legislation for which the people have voted.

All that the people want is such division of the state that every citizen will have a fair chance of being represented in the national congress. The people, as the parties are learning, care very little about political parties and organizations and a great deal about justice, decency and fair play.

### California Again

California is about to hang one of its own wards, whose age is 10 years and 4 months!

Ernest Dias is down on San Quentin's books as 24, but alienists have examined him and pronounced his mental age as just over 10. When he committed the double murder for which he must hang, he was a ward of the state that is to hang him, a former inmate of the home for feeble-minded, paroled in spite of the fact that he was known as a mental case and a dangerous character.

California, of course, is to blame for the murder this adult child committed. The state, not the mental incompetent that it turned loose upon the public, is guilty. But bound by its antiquated law that permits the supreme court to review on procedure and not evidence, the courts can not intervene.

"To me it appears monstrous," said Supreme Justice William Langdon, "that the state should hang one of its own wards, who never should have been set at liberty and who at the time of this tragic event still was under surveillance as a mental defective."

Monstrous it is. As monstrous as for California to keep in its prisons Tom Mooney and Warren Billings on the testimony of perjurers. Yet it is committing both wrongs because of the same weakness. This is the weakness of a state that is too small to admit it has made a mistake.

### The President's Address

President Hoover's appeal in his Armistice day address for a warless world was heartening. It consciously voiced the hope of the American people, for whom the President spoke.

But the address was singularly lacking in definite suggestions or pledges which might translate that high hope into reality. Therefore, the net effect was profoundly disappointing.

The President spoke as one tired by party and political reverses, weary with domestic problems of economic depression; as one who had not sensed the seriousness of the international situation and the need for American peace action.

How else explain his casual statement that "the outlook for peace is happier than for half a century"? Is it possible he does not know that virtually all statesmen and publicists of Europe agree that there is a drift toward war, that conditions are more explosive

## M. E. Tracy SAYS:

**Human Nature Lacks Confidence in Agencies Unless They Can Exert Some Authority.**

WISERACKS, platitudes, slogans—how easily they come to our lips, and with what sublime faith do we mouth them.

"It looks like I'm in for a shocking evening," says Bert Walker as he is being strapped into the electric chair at Columbus, O.

"I'd rather be fighting," says one of many ex-doughboys in a New York breadline, "you eat sometimes, then."

"I fear the Democrats when bearing gifts," says Senator Moses, using a famous Latin line, which he is obliged to pervert and then translate to make himself understood.

And the President of the United States, though speaking in a vastly more serious tone, takes an almost equally complacent attitude toward the realities of life when he proposes to establish organized peace through "persuasion."

### Empty Words

THOUGH it may be brave to joke at death, it is ridiculously futile, and though it may be consoling to dream of a world made over by the simple process of academic moralizing and good example, it hardly squares with human experience.

Peace for humanity is obviously a bigger problem than peace for the United States, if, indeed, the United States insists on his policy of keeping "free from any advance commitment."

The least expected of the President in his Armistice day address was a pledge of prompt American adherence to the world court—a pledge repeatedly made and unfulfilled by him and by his party during three administrations.

Hoover praised the world court as usual, but forgot to mention that we are not yet a member. Is it possible that the President has forgotten that he personally has kept the world court protocol locked in his desk for nearly a year, instead of sending it on the pay roll, not to mention all the sheriffs, constables and dry agents.

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