



The Indianapolis Times

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

Keep the Primary

Once again the politicians are endeavoring to take away the primary from the people and to throw control of political parties into the hands of the few.

For the most part, the sponsors of these movements in the legislature come from those whose records have so little to commend them that they are afraid to again submit their fate to the people.

Instead of repealing the primary law, the legislature would do better if it restored the right of nominating the Governor and senators by direct vote.

It is true that there are faults in the primary method of nomination, but they do not compare to the evils of a convention system.

The convention permits the easy manipulation of government by the bosses who are usually paid, in some form, by the utilities and other privileged interests.

The convention system is designed to take away from the people any voice in their own government.

If there were any real desire to have real representative government, the legislators would turn their thoughts toward shortening the ballot and strengthening of the primary. Reform might come in this manner. Only autocracy, graft and corruption can come from limitations upon the people's power.

About the only argument against the primary is that it could produce legislators who recognize in their own unfitness evidence of lack of ability on the part of the people to make wise choices.

Veterans and Veterans

We oppose the reported plan of the politicians to block the cash bonus bills until the end of the congressional session, and then to pass a compromise which in turn can be pocket-vetoed by the President.

That is a grand plan for political face saving all round, but it is grossly unfair to the veterans. They have a right to a clean-cut decision, one way or the other.

We see no reason why the administration or any member of congress or any newspaper should need to save face in opposing to the end a bond issue which in turn can be pocket-vetoed by the President.

As we, together with many business leaders and government experts, have pointed out, such bond issue would shake the federal financial system and prolong business depression. The veterans would suffer in the end, because they are dependent on a return of national prosperity.

But, of course, we agree that the veteran in need should be helped. And we believe that a way can be found.

In the first place, most of the veterans are not in need; most of them have jobs and thus have no incentive to sacrifice the maturing insurance value of their bonus certificates, as proposed by the blanket \$3,000,000 plan.

That brings us down to the unemployed veterans. On the basis of general unemployment figures, that means from 10 to 15 per cent of the veterans.

We have seen no good reason advanced against the proposal to increase for this group—to double or perhaps to lower the interest rate on such loans.

In addition we have urged the necessity of a direct federal appropriation for unemployment relief in cases where local and private relief funds are proved inadequate. In other words, the unemployed veteran today is in dire need not because he is a veteran, but because he is unemployed.

Because it is essentially an unemployment problem it can not be met fairly or effectively by handling it as a special veterans' problem, covering the majority of veterans who are employed.

Immediately after the war, when hundreds of thousands of men returned from the army to civilian life, there was specific soldiers' unemployment.

The bulk of them got \$30 a month in wages, with part deducted for war risk insurance. All were given a "bonus" of \$60 when discharged, which at that time wouldn't buy a good suit of civilian clothes. Most of them came out of the army broke.

Unemployment in the days immediately following the war was due to this surplus of man-power dumped on a market which rapidly was needing less man-power anyhow, because of machinery and women workers.

Unemployment directly after the war affected, almost entirely, the former soldier.

Unemployment today has nothing to do with the war. It affects men who were too young for war service as well as men who were too old for war service. The former soldier has lost his identity in this unemployment crisis. It is not an unemployment of war veterans, but a universal unemployment, affecting all ages and types of men and women.

The blanket cash bonus proposal is bad from the veterans' own point of view because most of the money would go to men with jobs who do not need it. Certainly no person can object to any reasonable relief for unemployed veterans.

Power Trust Neckties

The Clarion River Power Company's attempt to strip up the federal water power act on a couple of dozen \$3 neckties has failed.

Even though the neckties were from one of Fifth Avenue's best stores, even though they were souvenirs of the famous Pinney project's completion, the federal power commission has a right to say they do not look well in the power company's net investment accounts upon which the public is going to pay and pay for the next fifty years, so the District of Columbia supreme court decided this week.

This, after all, is not a frivolous matter, but an extremely important one.

The \$144 item for neckties was only one of many the power commission's accounting department challenged as improper when it examined the Clarion River Power Company's net investments accounts.

The company claims the Pinney project cost \$11,032,000. The accountants of the government say its legitimate cost was only \$4,645,000, and that the rest—more than six million dollars—was padding and should not be included in the sum on which the public must pay rates.

And if the public wants to buy back the plant in

fifty years it should not pay eleven millions, but four and a half millions, the accountants contend.

When the power commission set a date for hearing what the company had to say about this matter, the company's answer was an injunction suit to prevent any hearing and a challenge of the validity of the power act.

The court has sustained the power act. The court even has pointed out the importance of making immediate determination of the actual costs of projects, a matter which already has been delayed ten years by power commissioners none too zealous in enforcing provisions of the law.

Now the law may be enforced at last if we can secure a power commission willing to enforce it. Unfortunately, three of the five men in the power commission at the present time discharged Charles A. Russell, power commission solicitor who argued and won this case.

All five of the commissioners refused to reinstate this man, whose only offense had been zealous enforcement of the power act.

The Human Approach

The proposed consolidation of all eastern railroads into four big systems may be sound economically and still be laden with grave social dangers in throwing upon the streets thousands more jobless men.

One of the heads of the four systems, Daniel Willard, president of the Baltimore & Ohio, sees this threat.

"It is my thought," wrote Willard in the executives' service bulletin, "that in the consummation of any plan of consolidation involving the B. & O. which the interstate commerce commission may approve, the B. & O. should undertake to safeguard the interests of all its employees."

More specifically this means that every man employed by the B. & O. should be retained in the service of the company in the same work and at the same compensation so far as possible and justifiable, and that the same treatment should be extended to the employees of other companies which may be unified with this company.

Willard said that in cases where actual services are terminated, the company should provide similar or equivalent jobs at other places for the men affected. England, he pointed out, has written this obligation into an act of parliament.

"To do less than this," he added, "would be unjust to a large group of deserving men and women, now looked upon as semi-public servants. The public interest does not require benefits derived from unjust treatment of those who now man the railroads."

Finland's Wickersham

Finland now has its Wickersham committee, just as it has its prohibition, and its bootleggers and con- gested prisons. The government has appointed a board to investigate social conditions created by prohibition and to make recommendations.

Apparently there is a rather good prospect that this board's report will be more helpful than that wet report with a dry summary recently transmitted by President Hoover to the congress of the United States.

The Finnish committee, unlike the Wickersham committee, has been directed to make recommendations looking to the furtherance of temperance.

Temperance is something we are inclined to overlook in our discussions of prohibition in this country. It should be the objective of those who support the eighteenth amendment, but, if it is, this fact is not always clear.

The Wickersham report on prohibition, says a dispatch from Washington, promises to be one of the best sellers of the winter book season. Which is not bad for dry literature.

"I thought I'd have a fit," as the customer said to his tailor.

"A man may be down but not out" is a saying which seems to apply most everywhere but in the ring.

The Harvard student who threw a grapefruit at Rudy Vallee and missed, has been dismissed. The college seems justified in dealing thus severely with a man with no better aim in life.

Chambers of Commerce seeking publicity for their cities might take a lesson from Bostonians. They used their bean.

REASON BY FREDERICK LANDIS

If in an unguarded moment you should feel as if everything is going to pot and that things could not possibly be worse, just turn to the Fifty Years Ago column and read that it was away down below zero.

There are a lot of people in this world who never have been introduced, but if you will just glance at the proceedings of the different legislatures now in session, you will see that all of the bills have been introduced.

While we are thinking of this Butler-Mussolini episode, it is some comfort to read that the London Times just has been forced to apologize to Lloyd George.

The latest picture of Mahatma Gandhi represents him as being almost homely enough to win the first prize in an American beauty contest.

It must be very aggravating to Nicholas Murray Butler to have this other Butler, General Smedley, rush in and grab off such an enormous portion of the limelight.

Germany's oil lands are said to be passing rapidly into the hands of American operators.

Possibly Germany has a second cousin of ex-Security Fall in charge of her interior department.

SPEAKING of Fall, the papers say he has had a sudden relapse and is too sick to go to Washington and face the guns in that old criminal prosecution that's been hanging fire these many years.

If this government hasn't enough gumption to call Fall's ancient bluff and haul him into court and give him what's coming to him, it ought to go into the hands of a receiver.

It seems able to hand it to General Butler, who twice has been honored by congress for gallantry in action, but it seems unable to hand it to Fall, who has been branded for infamy, branded by the supreme court of the United States.

COMMANDER GHATTI, Italian explorer, states that recently he was charged by five gorillas.

This is nothing; we used to know a man who was pursued by pink elephants twice a week.

We are not a bit disappointed that Wilkins, the explorer, didn't invite us to go with him on his submarine expedition to the north pole.

And if the public wants to buy back the plant in

M. E. Tracy SAYS:

If You Don't Give the Imagination a Chance to Do Bigger, Better Things It Will Eat Its Heart Out by Doing Smaller, Meaner Things.

SAN FRANCISCO, Feb. 5.—The federal war department at last has approved plans for the Bay bridge, and work will begin on the Golden Gate span about July 1.

This insures San Francisco not only more than \$100,000,000 worth of construction in the near future, but direct north and east connections with the mainland.

The bay bridge will run from the Rincon hill district of the city, six miles east, to Oakland, by way of Goat Island. Its cost has been estimated at \$72,000,000, and the time necessary to build it at six years.

The Golden Gate bridge will have a single span of 4,200 feet and a clearance of 210 feet. Its cost has been estimated at \$35,000,000.

Both bridges will be financed through public bonds, those for the Golden Gate bridge being issued by a district composed of nine counties and those for the bay bridge being issued by the state of California. The bonds will be retired by tolls, after which the bridges will be made free.

Restore Faith

SUCH enterprises restore one's faith in the future. We ought to have more of them, not only in this great country, but throughout the world. If we had, fewer people would be out of work.

As a matter of fact, civilization has not been doing what it could, or ought, during the last twenty-five years. Too much of its ability, equipment, and resources has been wasted in useless fighting or equally useless triviality.

From a purely mechanical standpoint, the San Francisco bridges are quite the biggest projects of their kind ever undertaken, but in proportion to the tools at our command, they are not.

Egyptians built the pyramids without so much as a steam hoist, while the Suez canal was dug by women carrying the dirt out in baskets on their heads.

If you don't give the imagination a chance to do bigger, better things, it will eat its heart out by doing smaller, meaner things.

Marks to Shoot At

WHY not a second canal through Nicaragua? Why not a dam across Baffin straits to change the climate of New England and eastern Canada? Why not a tunnel under the English channel? Why not a great inland sea to kill the scorching effect of Sahara, or a dozen other enterprises that really would challenge the strength of this age and give folks something really worth while to brag about?

Cost, you say? Well, just think over this for a month. Thirteen years ago, the civilized world banded up \$300,000,000, slaughtered 10,000,000 of its best men, and crippled 20,000,000 more, for the

It could dig a ditch from New York to San Francisco, or bridge the Atlantic for less money, not to mention the human misery involved.

Don't you realize that the battle of the Marne, the siege of Verdun, or any other major action on the western front represented a bigger outlay in dollars and cents than the Panama canal?

Vision Lacking

PEOPLE constantly are saying that the machine age is killing work, and it is, if work included no more than meat, drink and pleasure. But if work means the larger scheme of making such experiments and improvements as our ability, training, and resources permit, the machine age is creating so many opportunities that we couldn't be advantage of them if every man, woman and child were to toil sixteen hours a day for the next thousand years.

It is not lack of opportunity, but lack of vision that ails society.

Great Field Open

WHAT we really are trying to do is make work, without taking chances, keep ourselves busy eating the pie and cake left by the last generation. That wasn't the way the last generation did it, or for several generations before.

They took chances, built railroads right across the map, strung wires half around the world, when the 5 per cent boys said it couldn't be done, or wouldn't pay if it could.

As far as New York goes, it is safe to snipe at the Protestant clergy. "Rain" did get by here in spite of grumbling, but once it hit the road there were many towns which would not hold up a mission to be held up to tragic scorn.

The truth of the matter, as I see it, is that the theater never was in a more lively and vigorous state as far as its artistic achievements and potentialities go.

The growth in frank, colorful and gay native drama is almost wholly coincidental with the development of the so-called licentious stage. A clean theater and a dead theater are synonymous.

Here Are Four

NOT three or four of the best plays of the last few years would be, except in the censor's pencil, "Rain," "What Price Glory?" and "The Green Pastures" to name some of the outstanding dramas of our day, would all have been turned back under any form of censorship which a law could create.

And I cite "The Green Pastures" particularly because it is precisely the type of fine play which must be sacrificed to a licensing system.

The law which Senator Mastick is sponsoring in New York is not content to bar obscenity.

It also contains a clause forbidding the sacrilegious.

"Obscenity" is a word difficult of definition, but it is easier by far than "sacrilegious." That is a word which will be used and always has been used to ban anything.

In other words, the dogmatic churches, which have been fast losing ground because modern thought has obliged them to stand up and fight for the validity of their creeds, which is the crux of the baby act.

They will insist that the authenticity of orthodoxy is not a fit subject for public and dramatic debate.

Sex is to be taken out of the theater, and also religion, which leaves the budding playwright very little but the musical glasses.

Playing Horse With It!

