The River Press

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DIRECT ELECTION OF SENATORS

There seems little prospect that the resolution for the amendment of the federal constitution to provide for the election of senators by direct vote of the people, which passed congress, will ever become part of the organic law of the land, says the Helena Independent.

Upon the question of the direct election of senators the country at large, and this applies to all sections of it, is virtually of one mind. Practically every one agrees that under a direct vote, the senate would not be the refuge of the vested interests it has been in the past.

But had a deliberate attempt been made to defeat direct election the plans could not have been carried out any more successfully than they have been by the tacking on of the provision in the proposed amendment which gives the federal government the right to supervise elections in the various states.

As long as this provision is a part of the amendment, it is inconceivable that the southern states will ratify the amendment, and when it is considered that only the refusal of one branch of the legislatures of one-fourth of the states means the ultimate defeat of the amendment the power of the south in this regard can be appreciated.

The southern states have had a bitter lesson in federal supervision of elections, and the lesson is one which will be remembered for many years to come. The dark days of the reconstruction, the actual experience of negro domination, will not be forgotten until the ratio of white and black in the southland is materially changed, and it is reasonably certain that the southern states will guard jealously any encroachment of the federal government which will be likely to again disturb the supremacy of the whites which has been maintained in all of the southern states since the troops were withdrawn.

Between imperiling the supremacy of his race and bettering the method of electing United States senators, the ordinary southern man will not hesitate as to his choice.

In addition to this, many of the states have solved the question of direct election of senators without waiting for action by congress. This is true in most of the southern states, where there is a popular vote in the primaries. It is also true in many of the western states, and in Montana this year, we will have actual direct election of a federal senator if the pressure of public sentiment is sufficient to compel legislative candidates to sign statement No. 1.

THE THIRD TERM GHOST.

The allegation that a third term for a president of the United States would be a menace to the welfare and safety of the republic is challenged by a writer in the Saturday Evening Post, who regards the proposition as a scarecrow constructed by professional politicians. In an extended discussion of the subject, the critic of the anti-third-term theory says:

The third-term ghost has lived a good many years upon the supposition that the president of a republic has the power to keep himself in office indefinitely unless there is some absolute check upon him. Whatever the danger in the past that a president would use the federal patronage to obtain delegates, everybody can see that national conventions of delegates chosen by state conventions made up of delegates chosen by district conventions made up of delegates chosen by primaries made up of the official and organizing end of the party have about come to an end.

Before the presidential election of 1916 nearly every state in the union will have its machinery for obtaining the preference of the voters of the country for their own standard-bearer. If that constituency cannot be trusted, then popular government is a failure from top to bottom, and the only thing to do is to make the leaders of the party dictators for life. As a matter of fact, people scoff at the idea of a man on horseback or any other man in the United States keeping himself in power as the Mexican president kept himself in power—by a series of moving-picture elections.

On the other side there is only one solution of democracy on a great scale, and that is leadership on a great scale. Governments by large boards frequently changing are unable to lay out and push forward a program of constructive legislation, even though those boards be a senate and a house of representatives. Those boards have tried to concentrate their power by steering committees and the speakership, but the executive heads of cities, states and the nation are in a better position to represent the nation and to push forward what public sentiment demands. Therefore they ought to be re-elected a fair number of terms. A good governor ought to serve terms enough to give him a chance to work out a good policy; and there is no reason why the people should be deprived of a good president because he has shown himself to be good in eight years of experience. There is no good logical reason for a custom forbidding the re-election of executive officials for a reasonable number of successive terms than there is for a custom permitting the re-election of legislative officials. If one is wrong both are wrong. If either is right both are right. The sun has risen on the American people, and the poor old third term ghost may flit back to its shades.

CENTENARY OF LAND OFFICE.

The land office of the national government is one of the great institutions of the world. Nothing even remotely resembling it existed in ancient times, and those of Australia, Canada and perhaps Russia are the only ones in modern nations that can be compared with ours.

The centenary of such an institution is an event of peculiar interest to the United States, and especially to the west, says the Spokesman-Review. It occured on May 7 at Washington city. It deserves commemoration because the history of the land office in effect is the history of the settlement of the west, which is the characteristic feature of the economic development of the United States.

Secretary Fisher of the department of the interior and Commissioner Dennett of the land office delivered noteworthy addresses.

The secretary declared that it must be the policy of the national government in administering the people's farm to give the individual so much privilege as is essential to induce him to develop his holding in such a way as to make for the greatest benefit of the community as a whole. Mr. Fisher condemned all systems of disposing of the public domain that would play into the hands of the speculator for profits, put unearned profits into the possession of landholders, or compel the seeker and would-be utilizer of land to pay a higher price to them than he would have to pay the government. Only in case an increased price to the speculator or landholder was due to actual improvements on the land would it be justified.

The progressive secretary called the attention of congress, many of whose members were present, to the fact that the national legislature lags behind several states that have enacted advanced legislation with respect to leasing coal, mineral and ore lands.

Sanders Was Very Sarcastic.

Saturday Evening Post.

The late Colonel Wilbur F. Sanders of Montana, who was once a United States senator from that commonwealth, mixed a good deal in politics and one time when he ran for the governorship was defeated by a prominent democrat.

On election night the democrats of Helena held a jollification meeting and Sanders went over to see what was going on. He stood in the edge of the crowd, but was soon recognized and called upon for a speech.

"Friends and fellow citizens," he began, "when I was nominated for the high office of governor by the republicans my opponents and democratic friends told me they could beat me with a yellow dog!"

There were loud cheers.

"And," shouted Sanders, "they did."

Integrity as a Business Asset.

Kansas City Star.

"A reputation for infallibility is pretty nearly out of the question," Melville E. Stone told the Kansas editors. "But a reputation for integrity is perfectly possible."

In other words, character is essential for newspapers as well as for individuals. There is no short cut to success. Some men are constantly sticking out lightning rods in one direction or another, hoping for conspicuous good fortune to strike them. That will never do. Success is won only by merit.

The insincere and dishonest newspaper, like the insincere and dishonest man, is foredoomed to failure.

Montana Smoke Case Delayed.

WASHINGTON, May 14.—The United States supreme court has denied the motion of Fred J. Bliss for an advancement of the date of the hearing of the so-called smoke cases against the Washoe Copper company and the Anaconda Copper Mining company. In his petition for advancement Bliss contended that it is of vital importance to Deer Lodge farmers that the case be advanced so that they may enjoy relief to which they are entitled and that a further delay of two or three years would be disastrous to the large district affected.

The defendants in respone asserted they were ready to take up the case within a reasonable time but that no real reason exists for its advance. They assert that the record in the case, consisting of 25,000 printed pages of testimony, has not been served upon them and they are not advised whether the record has been completed or printed in the supreme court.

TAFT SCORES ROOSEVELT

President Makes Caustic Criticism Of His Opponent.

CAMBRIDGE, Ohio, May 13.—In one of the most bitter speeches he has made since he began his active campaign for re election, President Taft held Roosevelt up to ridicule, calling him an "intense and dangerous egotist and a flatterer and demagogue."

Mr. Taft suggested that there would be "but little hope for the future of this nation if Mr. Roosevelt were wafted to the skies in a chariot like the prophet of old, and there was no one left to do the job Mr. Roosevelt said the country needs him to do."

The president's speech boiled over with attacks and criticisms of Colonel Roosevelt. One of the attacks on Mr. Roosevelt, which raised a laugh, ran like this:

"I think it would be dangerous to put again in the White house a man with Mr. Roosevelt's present constitutional views, with the elation he would necessarily feel by reason of getting something that all the great presidents have not gotten; it would not be safe. He says the reason the American people are going to elect him is because he is necessary for the job. Well, I hope the American people will not think he is necessary to do the job. I want to call your attention to what the job is which he proposes. It is the millennium that he is going to bring about when he gets into office. All bosses are going to disappear, politicians are going to be fewer and he is going to have a finger in every community in every state, in every county, and everything is going to heaven.

"If that be true, the millennium is coming, and if that is the job he is to do, it is going to take longer than four years. I beg of you to ask him when he comes here whether he would take a fourth term; ask him whether he is going to take a fifth term, and why he should not continue in office throughout his life."

Maryland Delegation Divided.

BALTIMORE, Md., May 14.—The Maryland republican state convention here today faced the task of reconciling the apparently contradictory results of last week's primaries. Although 66, a bare majority of the 129 delegates, were bound by the popular preference to vote for delegates to the national convention who should favor the nomination of Theodore Roosevelt, a still larger majority of these state delegates, estimated by the Taft men at 78, were Taft sympathizers and numerically these were able to control the convention.

With a situation like this confronting them, the leaders of the two camps of delegates conferred until early this morning and reached a provisional agreement that eight of the sixteen national delegates should be named by the Roosevelt men and eight by the supporters of Taft.

Socialists In Convention.

INDIANAPOLIS, Ind., May 14.—"Progressive opportunists" and "immediate revolutionists" opposed each other at the opening of today's sessions of the socialists' national convention. This was the division of 209 delegates on the election of the platform and resolutions committees and was won by the "opportunists" or conservaties, led by Congressman Victor Berger of Wisconsin and Charles Edward Russell of New York, by large majorities.

Mayor L. J. Duncan of Butte, Mont., an avowed "revolutionary" elected to the platform committee, said he would support Haywood and sympathizers with the Industrial Workers of the World among the men and women on the convention floor in advocating the forming of one great national industrial union that could strike immediately and effectively for the overthrow of capitalism and the realization of socialistic ideals.

Direct Election of Senators.

WASHINGTON, May 13.—The house today adopted 237 to 39 a joint resolution providing for an amendment to to the constitution to permit the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people. It has already passed the senate and now goes to the states for ratification.

Direct election of senators first was taken up by congress in 1826. From time to time attempts have been made to make the senate a popular body and have its members elected as are the members of the house. Numbers of these resolutions have died in committee, while others have passed at the last moment of a congress, never to receive the president's signature.

Lawyer Accused of Bribery.

LOS ANGELES, May 15.—Clarence S. Darrow of Chicago, chief counsel for the McNamara brothers in the Los Angeles dynamiting case and one of the best known criminal lawyers in the United States, was placed on trial before Judge George Hutton in the superior court today, under an indictment charging him with having attempted to bribe a juror in the McNamara trial. When he appeared in court Darrow said he was ready for trial; would ask no delay; that he was innocent of wrong doing and had no fear of the outcome of the case.

Ohio Vote Will Decide.

CLEVELAND, May 16.—Replying to claims of Theodore Roosevelt that he had 522 delegates to the republican national convention, President Taft in a public statement pointed out that Mr. Roosevelt had only 309 delegates and for the first time admitted that the result of the primaries in Ohio will settle the question of the nomination.

"Ohio, my home state, much to my gratification, will be the decisive one and will settle the question of nomination," said the president.

Will Spend Millions.

SPOKANE, May 16.—Carl G. Gray, incoming president of the Great Northern Railway company, announced here that millions of dollars will be expended this and next year in extending lines into virgin territory of Montana, Washington and Oregon, and the province of British Columbia. The plan is to drain the rich grain fields of western Canada by means of north and south feeders.

Roosevelt Wins In California.

SAN FRANCISCO, May 15—Delayed returns from remote districts of yesterday's presidential primary will be useful only to determine the exact pluralities rolled up by Theodore Roosevelt and Champ Clark over their respective opponents for the republican and democratic nominations.

Roosevelt's plurality is estimated between 60,000 and 65,000 over Taft and La Follette; Champ Clark leads Woodrow Wilson by probably 20,000.

Throughout the state the vote was comparatively light. This was regarded as surprising in view of the strenuous campaign waged for the republican preference and the keen interest that everywhere was manifested by the huge crowds drawn by the campaign orators.

Roosevelt probably carried every county. Even San Francisco, which was expected to give a "thank-you-for-this-fair" vote to President Taft and where a determined effort was made by the Taft managers to make a good showing for the candidate, favored the colonel by a plurality of 3,347.

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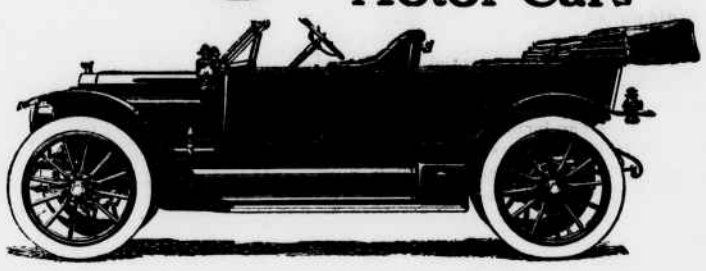

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