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THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 1910.

A CURIOUS PRIMARY BILL.

At a casual glance the extremely bbreviated draft of a primary law offered by the official subcommittee of he Democratic party may appear as ear nothing as it could be in obedience to the instructions of the party onvention. While the primary laws f other States occupy many pages in he statute books, this syncopated roposition fits nicely into little more han half a column of newspaper. We ppear to have here, not so much a rimary law as the ghost of a law, the erfunctory, colorless, skeletonized emnant and reminiscence of a law. ut when we come to scrutinize the aragraphs more closely, we discover ropping through the dry shell two rovisions of uncommon liveliness and gnificance.

One of them is found in section 2. he Byrd bill provides, among other xcellent safeguards, that all primaies shall be "conducted by the judges f election appointed according to w." It is important to note this refully. Under the law the circuit nd corporation courts appoint the ectoral boards and the boards apoint the judges of election. Moreer, the law requires that the minoriparty must be given representation mong the judges, thus absolutely uaranteeing non-partisanship and ir play. These are the election offirs which would conduct all primaries nder the Byrd bill. Under the singur provision of the State Committee's ill, the officers who conduct all priaries are appointed, not by the courts rough the electoral boards, but by he local committees of the party iding such primary election." This eans simply that whoever controlled nd dominated the local committees ould control and dominate the apointment of the primary election hicers.

It is needless to expatiate on such a rovision. The Democratic voters have ked for a direct primary on the round that it would minimize the ssibility of machine control, and ey have demanded a law which ould give the primary all the safeuards now thrown about elections. they consider that this is an anwer to their demands, they can take and be thankful.

The other provision in this bill hich early arrests the eye is found section 3. Of the mystifying lanuage and curious contradictions coined in this section—the command at parties desiring a nominating onvention must choose the delegates a primary being immediately folwed with the assurance that parties ed not do anything of the sort unss they like—we shall not speak w. At the moment we are peculiarly ruck with the provision that the ate Executive Committee of any rty may decide whether State nomitions "in any given case shall be ade by direct primary or by a nomiting convention." The Democratic rt in convention has formally decid- that State nominations shall be in ery case by direct primary. For hat reason does the committee, the eature and agent of the convention, ropose to give itself the legal power ignore and reverse this decision? will, of course, be said that no State ommittee would dare to disobey the andate of its party. What then is e purpose of deliberately authorizing to do so on the statute books? early this provision must look extantly forward to a time when the emocratic party's specific declaration favor of the primary no longer olds. It must anticipate a day when her forms of State nominations will permitted and authorized. We now nothing, and pretend to know thing, of the motives of the subcomittee of the State Committee in framg this peculiar section. But no one n examine it without perceiving that perfectly paves the way for a reogression from the direct primary to e delegated primary, and from the legated primary to the old-fashioned nvention. Is this what the Demoratic voters desire, or is it the reerse of their desire?

Chairman Ellyson was quoted the her day as saying that the reason s committee had deferred action on e primary so long was that it dered to have the benefit of all the test thought on the subject. After amining the committee's offering, s find this remark hard to underand. We discover nothing in this ill, so brief yet so full of unexpected terest, that the committee could not ve framed as well last summer or e summer before—at any time, in ct, when it was ready to meet and ve a few hours to the subject. At ast, the committee's confidence in its ility to frame a primary law so casily at the last moment now seems ear. But if this curious document tisfies the demand of the rank and file of the party for a legalized primary, or comes anywhere near it, we shall regard its satisfaction as a nine days' wonder.

A MAURY MONUMENT.

A standing reproach to Virginia has again been brought forward for discussion. Following the announcement that the alumnae of the State Normal School had offered prizes for essays on the life of Commodore Matthew Fontaine Maury, the Bristol Herald-Courier desires to know why the people of Virginia have never erected a monument to this great Southern genius.

The answer is not altogether creditable. In a wholly proper admiration for the achievements of our political and military leaders, we Southern people have almost overlooked the Wizard of the Seas and men of like mould. We have suffered Maury's renown to fade with the years, and have never given him the meed of his work.

There is nothing but approval of the honors we have paid our heroes of war and nationality, but there should be a speedy end to the incomplete patriotism which has overlooked other immortal leaders of the South. The time is fully come when Maury should have his monument, standing among those of our greatest men.

Had Commodore Maury lived in Germany or in France, and his deep-sea discoveries, his submarine torpedo-boat and his torpedo emanated from one of those countries, his name and his works would be familiar to every school-child. Without the least exaggeration, his appreciative countrymen would rank him with von Moltke and Bismarck, or with Pasteur and Hugo.

Many efforts have been made to arouse the Southern people to a true estimate of Maury's services. In lieu of other means of honoring his name, it has been proposed that Chimborazo Park here in this city be rechristened Maury Park. This would be an acceptable tribute from the capital city, but the due work of memorialization should not stop there. The great commodore should have his monument from the State which gave him birth.

THE WHEREFORE OF HIGH PRICES.

High prices hit hard. The wage-earner suffers more than the merchant, and the consumer fares worse than the producer. But where the merchants' profits are derived from the wage-earners' savings, and the producer is necessarily a consumer as well, all classes alike are affected. This is why economists the country over are now puzzling over the startling figures of the cost of living; this is why Secretary Wilson has instituted a special investigation; this is why Congress is being petitioned to appoint a committee which shall probe into the whole question. Every man's cash account cries out to know the wherefore of high prices.

If there is any answer to this riddle, it seems that it must be found in underlying general conditions. The break-up in the cattle-ranges in 1906 produced a natural slump in beef. In the same way, a short crop of cotton in 1909 drove the market to 16 cents. But these fluctuations affect particular industries only. Causes that affect the prices of all products must be more general than the supply and demand of special staples.

Economists and practical men of finance seem pretty well agreed that the increased production of gold is primarily responsible for the upward trend of prices. This can best be seen by comparison. The year 1900 was a season of reasonable prosperity and comparative plenty. Money was not tight. Trade was not depressed. And yet since that time the annual production of gold has increased from $237,000,000 to $442,000,000. This country's currency, bank notes included, has increased $1,051,000,000 during the same period. Of course, our trade and our industries have expanded since 1900, and our average per capita wealth has increased $146, but neither our industries nor our accumulated wealth, nor our trade, have required all this vast multiplication of our circulating medium. The inevitable has happened. Gold has become cheapened. To be sure there is little of consolation in telling the wage-earner that provisions are not higher, but that money is simply cheaper. Such philosophy does not pay grocers' bills or thicken pay envelopes. Nevertheless, it remains the truest and deepest explanation for existing prices.

Along with this cause two others have operated, not as powerfully but still most significantly. The protection afforded by the tariff and the growth of monopolies have reduced at once the benefits of foreign and domestic competition. The tariff keeps off cheap producers from other lands; monopolies keep down competition at home. Between the upper and nether millstones there is little left for the consumer. The increased cost of production has also operated to raise prices. Rich lands have become scarcer, while farming has not been widely improved. The margin of cultivation has been invaded. We have increased our production—for example, our wheat by 142,000,000 bushels in nine years—but we have consumed more of what we produced than ever before in the history of the nation. In addition, the number of agricultural workers, comparatively at least, has steadily decreased, thereby reducing our relative powers of production. Naturally, therefore, our demands on our own resources have been larger.

If these are really the controlling forces, they cannot be easily or speedily changed. There is no rainbow of promise. The gold-mines are producing as never before, the tariff and the monopolies are unrelenting; our people are not returning to the soil. High prices, it appears, have come for a long stay.

THE PEOPLE OF MANCHESTER SHOULD SPEAK.

The people of Manchester have held a public mass-meeting to heckle, examine, interrogate, or hear from former City Attorney Page. Why should they not hold another one to record their opinion of the obstructive attitude of the committee which is ostensibly promoting consolidation for them? If they are satisfied with the attitude of this committee, the Richmond committee might well withdraw from further deliberations upon the flat statement that City Attorney Pollard's draft was Richmond's last word on consolidation, which Manchester may take or leave at her pleasure.

Perhaps the Richmond committee might as well do this in any case. It all depends upon what date consolidation must be effective to give this city census credit for the access of population. This has all along been a prime object with Richmond, and there seems to be some doubt about the census matter. We were first told that the critical date was February 1 next. There is no longer a shadow of a chance that consolidation will be completed by that time, and if this date is accurate, further haggling is as superfluous as it is wearying and unseemly. Now it is officially suggested that April will probably be time enough. If this statement may be relied upon, it is worth while to pursue the conferences, provided that Manchester offers some evidence of being serious in her intentions.

This Manchester should by all means do. If the endless "amplifications" of the plain agreement reached between the cities long ago are not deliberately devised to strangle consolidation, they are at least having exactly that effect. As the weeks go by, the cities are not coming together, but drifting apart. If the people of Manchester mean business, the time is ripe and overripe for them to show it. If, on the other hand, they do not mean business, if, in short, they are satisfied with the frivolous or grabbing policy of their spokesmen, further going through the form of negotiations is worse than useless. And if the hope of union is thus blocked, it seems to us, as we have suggested heretofore, that a grave issue confronts the Manchester people. This is as to how they are to secure the new free bridge, which they now so urgently need, and the other civic assets which Richmond, under the consolidation agreement, was to provide for them.

According to the Atlanta Constitution, a Georgia man who was caught with $2,000 worth of liquor in his establishment was acquitted of any infringement of the liquor law. This in itself might not be startling, but it seems that the jury gravely accepted his plea in self-defense that "the liquor had been purchased for the purpose of filling a physician's prescription for his wife." No one can blame the dry forces for becoming cynical over an experience such as this. We have never pretended to any great faith in the efficacy of legislation to prevent people's drinking. But that it should work so badly as to justify the medicinal need on the part of a lady of, say, 2,000 quarts of liquor at one time is entirely beyond us to believe. It is much easier to think that the jury lacked faith in prohibition and was determined to drive a nail into it, regardless.

Our records show that all the societies of which he was a member have now expelled Dr. Cook, except the Ananias Society.

By the way, who has got the moving-picture privileges for the forthcoming Cummins-Aldrich go?

Try not to get Mr. Madriz mixed up with the name of a nickel cigar.

Shall we ever see it convicted and turned into a Tobacco Trusty?

The National Geographic Society has lost Willis L. Moore as president, not to mention several other things.

A policeman at Leeds, Eng., has just died from injuries received in a suffragette riot. And this is what we call the gentle sex.

It might be said that Mayor Gaynor's New Year's gift to Tammany took the form of a five-for-five picture postcard.

Also it is an extremely cold day when J. Pierpont Morgan does not indulge in a few well-chosen mergers.

Considering the season, it is a mercy that it was a peekaboo shirtwaist strike, and not a muff-and-neckpiece proposition.

Fishermen ought to find those unsinkable targets mighty convenient for sinkers.

When the intra-party scrapping really begins in Congress, it is somewhat probable that we shall cease thinking of Nicaragua, the Balkans and all those parts.

Few things can cause more trouble in a home than a thermometer with emotional insanity.

Careful examination of the Washington news convinces us that it will not be safe for insurgents to figure on any White House meal-tickets this winter.

Now or never is the time for our Hannyracker friends to cut some ice.

At this time we desire to extend hearty congratulations to the members of the Paragraphers' Union on their exceeding abstemiousness in the use of the old-line R. E. Morse quip.

Borrowed Jingles

GIRL WHO LOOKED BEHIND.

The girl who looked behind her
With shy and timid glance,
Such wondrous grace entwined her
She set my heart a-dance;
Then, like a nymph affrighted,
She vanished in the throng
And left mine eyes delighted,
My fancy fraught with song.

The girl who looked behind her,
And fled on frighted feet,
Though memory hath shrined her,
I never more may meet.
Another man may fetter
The heart that fled from me—
But who could love her better,
Whose love more faithful be?

The girl who looked behind her
Oh, may the future bring
Far fairer things and kinder
Than any bard can sing;
Though I may never greet her,
I pray my song may find
The lass who made life sweeter
For him she left behind!

—Boston Transcript.

MERELY JOKING.

Just His Pose.

"Suits me," responded the subject. "Photograph me with my nose against a grindstone. Got one handy?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Will Get It There.

Recruiting Officer: "If you are a married man, why are you trying to join the army?"

Henpeck: "'Cause I'm such a lover of peace."—Judge.

Has Tried Hard.

The Lady Fare: "You cannot cheat me, my man. I haven't ridden in cabs for thirty-five years for nothing."

The Cabby: "Haven't you, mum?" Well, you've done your best."—New Zealand Free Lance.

She Couldn't.

"Yes, she threatened to go home to her mother."

"And how did you keep her from doing it?"

"I refused to button her gown for her."—Kansas City Journal.

THE OBSERVANT PARAGRAPHERS.

DR. FLETCHER says chew every particle of food taken thirty-two times. At that rate would it be possible to finish dinner by supper time?—New Haven Palladium.

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There is, after all, one good thing about a severely cold winter. It lessens the opportunities for skating on thin ice.—Chicago Record-Herald.

* * *

Mayor Gaynor is charged with having forgotten where Tammany is, and Tammany hasn't seemed to know for some time.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Doubtless the going-away statement of Mr. Morse relieved his mind, and it didn't seem to hurt anything else.—Philadelphia Ledger.

* * *

Congress is disposed to investigate anything and everything under the sun except itself.—Philadelphia Record.

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Oddly enough, none of the muck-raking magazines enlightened the public as to the great burden they are to the postal service.—Milwaukee Free Press.

OPINIONS AND RAILROADS.

Magnates Have Lost by Previous Disregard of Popular Voice.

The circumstance that the railroad presidents who conferred on Monday with President Taft opposed the changes in the interstate commerce act which he has in mind to recommend to Congress has not caused surprise. The railroads have generally opposed all the regulative legislation that has been adopted, and that fact weakens the force of any criticism which they may make at this time. If the public service corporation had cooperated in the past in the formation of regulative laws it would be a damaging fact that half a dozen of the leading railroad presidents of the country had condemned a proposed enactment. But the railroads have lost in influence over public opinion, partly by their habitual opposition to all progressive legislation affecting them and partly by the exaggerated language employed in expressing this opposition. The cry of "Wolf!" has grown so familiar that few take it seriously.

This is a matter of regret, for there can be no really intelligent general consideration of the questions involved in regulation unless the railroad side of the case is put squarely before the public. The changes in the interstate commerce law which Mr. Taft is about to recommend, to judge from his own speeches and those of Attorney-General Wickersham, will aim largely at perfecting the details of that law, and they will be, many of them at least, rather technical. Public impressions regarding them are now hazy. Will the result of the ensuing discussion be that the advocates of the changes will have a respectful hearing, while all that is said by the representatives of the railroads will be dismissed as merely another illustration of their customary obstructiveness? Will the campaign against changes in the law consist largely of the old predictions that railroads are to be ruined, their credit destroyed and their capacity for development taken away from them? If so, experience has taught the managers of public service properties nothing. It should be an incident of the deepest significance to them that half a dozen of the leading railroad presidents of the country appear in opposition to proposed legislation, and that the public takes that opposition as a matter of course, regarding it as a negligible factor in the formation of a fair and intelligent opinion about the merits of the proposals.—New York Tribune.

RIVAL VIEWS OF MARS.

Scientists Do Not Agree Unanimously with Lowell's Claim.

Professor Lowell tells us the Martians are building more canals. Other astronomers say that something seems to be going on on the red planet. The one opinion implies rational life, a considerable population and a condition of practical science far beyond anything known on the earth. This opinion is really a claim of knowledge. The other is hardly a guess. "It seems." Lines are visible across the face of the planet, but whether they are ditches the astronomers know not. "It seems."

It is hard to push a man of science across the path of certainty and persuade him to say "thus it is" until he knows that "thus it is." Guesses, hopes, hypotheses are good to suggest lines of investigation, but few real scientific workers will try to make a mere hypothesis which may apparently explain some of the facts stand as a proven scientific theory which correctly describes the facts and processes of nature.

Professor Lowell insists that there is rational life on the planet Mars and that the inhabitants are digging canals. Other astronomers content themselves by saying that changes of appearance are observed. Professor Lowell's theory, which, he says, reflects and states the fact, is the more interesting. But the other view is the safer, intellectually speaking, and morally, too, for that matter, for what right has any man to aver a fact unless he knows it is a fact?—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Daily Queries and Answers

Address all communications for this column to Query Editor, Times-Dispatch. No mathematical problems will be solved, no coins or stamps valued and no dealers' names will be given.

Road Teams on Private Roads.

Can county teams or those of a contractor doing public road work haul material for road-building or repairing over a private farm road, cut the road into holes and ruts and break down or damage bridges without repairing or paying for the damage done? "A READER."

There is no State law permitting road teams to use and destroy private roads. Of course, no one interested in the road question can object to the proper use of his roads by road teams. On the other hand, every such team and every road contractor should take pains to repair any damage done to the roads of an individual.

Trade Directory.

Is there such a book published, listing all work in the United States, with their superintendents or managers, and where can same be purchased? T. J. C.

If you have in mind a general trade directory, there is none. A number of periodicals publish lists of current works on special lines and a number of other directories give the name of managers in special branches.

Destroyed Currency.

Does the Treasury Department ever make good greenback lost in a fire where it can be clearly established that it was lost? If so, what steps should be taken? A young man of good standing in this county a few weeks ago had his storehouse and goods burned about midday. He had in the store a sum of money ($90) in greenbacks, which he had taken from his safe in his dwelling that morning to the store and fixed up with some other papers to send to the bank by a neighbor who was going to town that day. He was called from the store in the meantime, and on his return the store was on fire, and the flames had progressed too far for him to go in. It was not insured. J. W. G.

Where remnants of the bills remain sufficient to identify them as to amount the government will replace them with new bills. Where the bills were entirely consumed the owner has no recovery from the government. In this case if no particles of the bills are found it will be a particular hardship. The law, however, which bears severely in this case, is made necessary by the fact that in many cases persons have attempted to defraud the government by pretending that their money had been burned up.

K. of P. Lodges.

Will you kindly give address of lodge and meeting nights of any K. of P. lodge in Richmond. STRANGER.

Damon Lodge, No. 7, meets every Thursday night at Marshall Hall, Dr. R. O. Garcin, C. C.; Germania Lodge, No. 15, meets every first and third Wednesday night in Pickett Camp Hall, Wm. A. Loehr, C. C.; Myrtle Lodge, No. 35, meets every Thursday night at Smithdeal Hall, J. L. Patterson, K. of R. & S.; Old Dominion Lodge, No. 4, meets in Lee Camp Hall, first and third Mondays in each month, S. B. Henderson, C. C.; Syracuse Lodge, No. 5, meets every Monday night at Smithdeal Hall, George W. Bowden, K. of R. & S.

Are Unitarians Christians?

Rev. J. L. Robinson, minister of the First Unitarian Church, sends the following: Your answer to "Bible Student" in Sunday's edition contains one slight error, and it implies that Unitarians are not Christians. 1. Dr. Eliot is a Unitarian, and his writings are held in very high esteem by our fellowship. So much so that his recent address before the summer school of theology, entitled "The Future of Religion," has been published as a tract for free distribution by the American Unitarian Association. 2. You state that "the majority of our leaders are Christian men and women," implying that Unitarians are not Christians. I am sure you meant no discourtesy. If to believe that Jesus was a pre-existent angel or the Eternal God is necessary to constitute people Christians, then we are not Christians, and have no desire to be so called. But if to build one's theology around the eternal fatherhood of God, as we believe Jesus built His, and to do the will of the Father, as Jesus endeavored to do it, constitutes a reasonable interpretation of Christianity, then we are Christians. Furthermore, if to believe the Messianic, or Christ, idea that God is working out His purposes through the ages; that justice and mercy and righteousness and good will will one day fill the "earth as the waters cover the sea," and that God will do this work through men—if this constitutes Christianity, then we are Christians. I believe that this is a reasonable definition of Christianity, and in this sense Unitarians are Christians. Courtesy and good will suggest that people be called what they wish to be called.

This column is not intended for theological controversy. Our answer was intended simply to convey the idea that most of the leading men and women of to-day belong to those churches which, affirming the divinity of Christ, are generally classified as "Christian."

STATE PRESS

The Municipal Conference.

It will be observed that there is no purpose to force upon any city any particular form of government, but to secure such amendment to the Constitution or the statutory laws as will permit any city to adopt a simplified scheme of government, if a majority of the voters so elect. Some think that it is possible to secure this option without changing the Constitution. We do not concur in that view. We believe that a radical change in the organic law is essential. However, the whole question will be threshed out in Richmond. Some of the delegates have been considering the matter since the Roanoke conference was held, and will have a definite plan to propose. The city Council of Newport News ad the Chamber of Commerce have appointed delegates, and each body should by all means be represented. It is a question of vital importance to the city.—Newport News Times-Herald.

Exhibiting Our Fruits.

We are greatly gratified to note that the indications are favorable for a successful meeting of the Virginia State Horticultural Society, which convenes at Winchester to-morrow, and will be in session two days. Among the members who are to contribute specimens of fruit the papers mention six of the prominent farmers of Albemarle, who have devoted much time and study to this department of agricultural industry, and we are particularly pleased at the announcement that the apple is to be the principal fruit to be exhibited and to receive consideration as to the best methods of its culture. The soil of Albemarle has for very many years been regarded as specially adapted to the production of the finest specimens of this particular fruit, the name and fame of the Albemarle Pippin being known and recognized, not only in this country, but on the other side of the Atlantic.—Charlottesville Progress.

The Compulsory Primary.

We repeat, it is difficult to understand why friends of the primary system are displeased with the compulsory feature of the Byrd plan. If the primary is a good thing, it should be compulsory. If it is not a good thing, there is no quicker or surer way of ascertaining the fact and sealing its doom than by making it compulsory. As to the objection of the opponents of compulsion, that a majority of the party should be free at all times to adopt the nominating plan that seems best, it is not well taken. A majority of the party can do away with the primary system at any time—not at a moment's notice, of course, but quickly enough. If a primary law, based substantially upon the suggestions of Speaker Byrd should be passed, and should prove more unpopular with and unsatisfactory to a majority of the Democrats than the convention method, it doubtless could be repealed with much less difficulty than has attended the efforts of a majority of the Democrats to secure the enactment of the law.—Bristol Herald-Courier.

Bitter on Byrd's Primary Bill.

If a Democrat from Southwest Virginia had framed the Byrd primary bill he could easily get a passport into the Republican party on the grounds of complicity with the enemy. The passage of that bill will guarantee a Republican government in Virginia quicker than another constitutional convention. The Democratic party in this State needs to be delivered from the house of its friends. We surely cannot believe there is real danger of such monstrosity being passed by the Legislature.—Southwest Times.