

wooden ships than we ever built, but wooden ships are obsolete on all the seas of the world except in our coastwise trade, and these benevolent navigation laws, supplementing the high protective system of this country, exclude from competition with our own vessels the iron vessels owned by citizens of other nations. So, as a result of the fact that we were not prepared to roll iron in 1860 and that our navigation laws keep the iron ships of England from competing in our coastwise trade, we have in our coastwise trade a fleet of worthless vessels, wooden vessels nearly all of them, adding nothing to the commercial importance of this country and doing us no good in time of war."

No wonder that, according to the record, Mr. Grosvenor in charge of the subsidy bill took occasion right here to say, "Mr. Chairman, there being no further desire for debate at this time, I move that the committee now rise."



**INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM**

George H. Shibley, president of the "National Federation for People's Rule," has made an interesting statement showing the present status of the initiative and referendum movement. Mr. Shibley calls it an effort at "restoration," saying previous to the rise of the convention system the voters instructed at will at town meetings in rural New England and elsewhere at mass meetings. Furthermore, members of the legislature and of the national house were pledged by districts instead of by machine rule state and national conventions, as is now the case.

Mr. Shibley's showing follows:

Up to the last year a direct vote system for public questions had been restored in Oregon, South Dakota, Illinois, and Texas, with a constitutional amendment adopted by the voters in Utah in 1900, and with a pledged two-thirds' vote for a constitutional amendment in the Ohio house and senate.

Nevada has the referendum. The republicans have defeated the constitutional amendment for the initiative, proposed by a democratic legislature. For the past two years the Nevada democrats have been advocating the initiative, also direct nominations, and are making them live issues.

In Utah, three republican legislatures have refused to install the direct vote system for public questions, thereby openly repudiating representative government.

Last November the people of Montana by a vote of nearly six to one adopted a constitutional amendment for the initiative and referendum.

On the same day the people of Delaware cast an advisory vote on the question, Shall the legislature establish a system whereby the voters can instruct by direct ballot—the advisory initiative and advisory referendum? The vote throughout the state was 8 to 1 for the proposal. In the city of Wilmington it was 10,501 for and 781 against—11 to 1. The house by unanimous vote (25 republicans and 10 democrats) has just passed a bill for the advisory initiative and advisory referendum for Wilmington. The state bill will come up later.

In Maine during the last campaign both political parties promised that its candidates, if elected, would vote to submit a constitutional amendment for the initiative and referendum, and the details of the system are now being debated.

In Massachusetts the house has repeatedly voted to establish the advisory initiative, but the senate by a close vote has defeated the measure. Last year the attitude of the senators was published to the voters by the Massachusetts Referendum League and all candidates for the senate were questioned and their replies published. Twenty-five of the forty state senators elected have pledged for the advisory initiative. Of those who declared against the measure only six were elected.

In Ohio in 1905 the democratic party declared for the initiative and referendum, while the republican organization refused to declare for the system. The non-partisan organizations questioned candidates and published the replies, and then the republican voters when they went into the polling booths largely used their pencils to cross off the republican candidates for the legislature and insert the names of pledged democrats, the result being that the democratic representation in the senate jumped from four to nineteen—a majority, and a 475 per cent increase in a single election. In the house the gain was nearly as great.

The following year, 1906, in Oklahoma where little was known of the referendum system the democratic state chairman caused to be mailed to the county chairmen reprints of the initiative and referendum chapter from the 1902 democratic campaign book, and then throughout the territory the democratic leaders declared that if the party's candidates for the constitutional convention should be elected they would work and vote for the people's rule (a direct vote system for public ques-

tions). The republicans opposed the measure as far as they dared, the net result being that of the 112 delegates to the constitutional convention 98 were democrats and 4 others were pledged to the initiative and referendum. State Chairman Jesse J. Dunn has written me as follows: "One of the foremost propositions which we urged in the campaign for the election of delegates to our constitutional convention was the initiative and referendum."

The Leader of Guthrie, February 7, 1907, says: "The initiative and referendum was the paramount issue in the last campaign. The democratic party, through its executive committee, and in every platform adopted in each district, promised the people that this law should be incorporated in the constitution. That the people might not be misled or deceived, it was distinctly stated that the law should be modeled after the one in force in Oregon. The republican press bureau here, and the republican party, have constantly and earnestly opposed this law. They predicted that it would never be placed in the constitution, and that if it was, the per cent required would be placed so high that the law would become inoperative. We want to call the attention of the rank and file of the state, of the farmers, the Farmers' Union and Federated Labor, to this grand promise that has been redeemed. The democratic party in the state of Oklahoma has given the government of that state to the people."

Another illustration is North Dakota. There the democrats made an active campaign for more power in the people, and striking gains were made. The democratic candidate for governor received 45 per cent of the vote, whereas two years before the democratic candidate received 27 per cent. This has caused the republicans to become progressive. In the legislature composed of 121 republicans and 19 democrats the house has submitted a constitutional amendment for the initiative and referendum to apply to state affairs, except that the initiative is not to apply to constitutional amendments—a reservation brought about by the presence of state prohibition. The vote stood 74 for to 17 against.

Over in Wisconsin such of the republicans as are really Jeffersonians are pushing the initiative and referendum bills, and a measure will doubtless pass. Senator LaFollette favors it and so does the republican state chairman, W. D. Connor, the present lieutenant governor.

In Missouri Governor Folk has not only recommended the initiative and referendum in his message, but a good bill for a constitutional amendment, approved by him, was introduced in the legislature and it has passed the house, is reported from the senate and doubtless will pass. Governor Folk's message also recommends the initiative and referendum for national affairs.

In New Jersey a bill for the advisory initiative and advisory referendum for state affairs has been introduced by the People's Lobby. The house stands 29 republicans to 31 democrats and it is expected that the democrats will make the bill a caucus measure. If they do the state will go democratic next year provided the democratic national convention stands for the restoration of people's rule.

Over in New York state Mr. Hearst and his co-workers are to introduce in the legislature a bill for the initiative and referendum principles.

In Pennsylvania, Former State Senator Flinn of Pittsburg, who some years ago defeated the re-election of Senator Quay, has taken the lead in proposing a bill for the initiative and referendum in cities and boroughs. The bill was quickly reported in the house and will doubtless pass, with the issue clearly drawn in the senate. Mr. Flinn's next move will probably be the proposing of a bill for a direct vote system for state issues and another bill for direct election of United States senators by the Oregon plan.

**Letters From the People**

Henry Barclay King, Augusta, Ga.—I want to make one more guess at Mr. Theodore Harris' problem in your issue of the 11th, though it is not entirely satisfying to me. Is the article "matches?"

Mr. O'Donovan, St. Ann's Home, Terre Haute, Ind.—In The Commoner of January 18, 1907, you use many and piercing words about the employers of child labor. I am not an employer of child labor. I have naught to say for those employers. Would you be good enough to make some remarks in The Commoner on the furnishers of the said child labor? I imagine them to be the parents of the children sold to do the said labor.

C. G. Barbour, Vicksburg, Miss., propounds a query. Mr. Barbour writes: In 1896 the bankers defeated you for president on the cry of a 50-defeated a democrat for president on the cry of a

50-cent dollar. With a vast increase in gold coinage since the same crowd now meet and resolute for "I. O. U." money on the plea that there is not enough money for actual business need. Query: Will they support a democrat for president in 1908?

J. B. Gray, Schellburg, Pa.—Enclosed please find a clipping from the New Era Journal printed in Huntingdon, Pa., on public ownership. It is a republican paper. Wishing The Commoner and its editor success in their battle in the interest of the whole people in a government of the people, by the people and for the people.

I have been a reader of The Commoner almost from its first issue.

D. D. Kremen, Massapequa, L. I.—I clipped this from The Commoner January 18, 1907: "The eminent financiers who loaned Japan the money for the late war are the gentlemen to say whether Japan will be allowed to grow too chesty."

Absolutely true, these "eminent financiers who control the irritamenta malorum" of the world can and do promote or prevent war, between nations, as best suits their interests.

This being the case, would not an international agreement, making war loans illegal and uncollectable, similar to gambling debts, under the law of this state? It seems absurd to designate certain commercial articles contraband of war and legalize the debt contracted to purchase them. This suggestion seems worthy of consideration by The Hague convention—if offered by Mr. Bryan would doubtless receive respectful attention.

A. K. Grow, Hamilton, Mont.—I desire to call attention to the freight rates of the orange crop and to compare them with the actual knowledge of President Hill, who would be an intelligent and reliable witness before the Interstate railway commission; where there appears to be some trouble about arriving at a just, general freight rate, etc. J. J. Hill, president of the Great Northern Railway, desiring to give the exhibition a little taffy on trade and commerce, by telling how he managed the carrying trade for his road and great ships, said as to rates: "Practically, a loaded car can be taken two thousand miles for one hundred and twenty-five dollars." The above quotation was taken from memory, from the magazine called "World's Work," and, I think, dated September, 1905. A San Francisco newspaper recently said: "The revenue of the railroads on oranges to eastern points is \$25 a ton and thirteen tons to a car," making \$325 per car, say, for 2,000 miles. Mr. Hill's statement calls for same distance and \$125, which would be saving to the consumer on a carload of oranges the nice little sum of \$200. There are other calculations which can be made on this orange deal, enough so to make it interesting to consumers.

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