

THE FRONTIER

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THE NEBRASKA SCENE

by James R. Lowell

Candidates running for election to the unicameral legislature are facing a stiffer political catechism than was ever put up to candidates for the two-party, two-house body. The three main questionnaires have been put out by the P. T. A., Nebraska Federation of Labor, and the Nebraska Progressive League.

The Nebraska Congress of Parents and Teachers wants to know whether legislative candidates will support legislation forcing a study and investigation of the entire field of state taxation with the object of revising our system of taxation so as to more equitably distribute the cost of all state service, including education.

This group also wants to know legislators' views on old age security for teachers; raising the education qualifications necessary to secure a teaching certificate; raising educational standards for the youth of Nebraska, and views on ratification of the child labor amendment to the constitution of the United States.

The labor group is concerned with the views of prospective legislators on use of prison labor; repeal of the anti-picketing and criminal syndicalism laws; the child labor amendment; minimum wages and hours of labor; garnishment of wages; awarding of state contracts to the most advantageous rather than to the lowest bidder; unemployment insurance; company labor unions; arbitration in labor disputes; and the question of whether both man and wife should be on the public payroll.

The Nebraska Manufacturers' association is interesting itself in the labor questionnaire, and is advising candidates to arm themselves with all the facts before pledging their votes.

Nebraska labor apparently favors repeal of the anti-picketing law, which was enacted in 1921, later to referendum, and has resisted several attempts to repeal. The law simply provides that in case of strike, picketing will not be permitted, and it does not deny the right to strike. It does, however, protect the right to work. The manufacturers declare that since the passage of the anti-picketing law Nebraska has enjoyed a high measure of industrial peace.

President R. A. Freeman of the Manufacturers' association says: "Strikes can, and often do, become an extremely burdensome war to be borne by a community. The honest, sincere working man of a state deserves protection if he

wants to work. The anti-picketing law protects him in this right . . .

"To repeal the anti-picketing law would be a distinct step backward. It has been on our statute books for more than 15 years, and as I have already said, was approved by an overwhelming majority at the polls. It is confidently believed today that most of our citizens are still convinced of the soundness and fairness of this law."

The state progressive league aims to put the legislative candidates on record as to whether they will "protect the natural resources of the state from the encroachments of private interests."

Candidates are asked to commit themselves as to whether they favor a state central power authority, raising fees for power site leases, municipal ownership, and lobbying in which members of the legislature receive entertainment and emoluments.

Meanwhile it appears that attempts to hold the unicameral legislature unconstitutional will be disregarded. A suit to void the districting act because of alleged inequities in population was beaten in the Lancaster county district court.

It was argued that the Nebraska legislature inadvertently omitted Sarpy county in the congressional districting act, but Assistant Attorney General Murphy pointed out that the courts held the act valid and added the county to the proper district. Murphy admitted the error in the statute, but argued that the evidence showed it was a mere misinterpretation of a map and legally corrected by the court.

The district judges upheld Murphy's view, and reprimanded the instigators of the suit for their action in attempting to create a chaos in state legislative affairs. It was indicated that the case will be taken to the supreme court, but political prognosticators say the unicameral setup will be upheld and Nebraska will duly embark upon its one-house experiment next January.

In the Nebraska political scene, the Lowell Service summarization of political trends shifts this week to the third district where the severity of the drouth has caused a swing toward the national administration during the past few weeks, and, incidentally, to Governor Cochran.

There still appears to be a slight Landon-for-president majority in the 3rd, but the promptness with which the administration stepped in to relieve victims of the drouth in this hardest hit section of the state in 1936, has raised the Roosevelt stock somewhat. Governor Cochran also has been working hard to insure speedy drouth relief, and while Dwight Griswold (R) had a majority over Cochran two months ago, the consensus now is that Roosevelt-Cochran on the democratic side, and Landon-Griswold on the republican, are about even in the 3rd.

Simmons (R) is rated to edge out over Norris for U. S. senator, with Carpenter (D) trailing, and Stefan is picked to retain his job as congressman from the 3rd district.

Dick Johnson is favored over his democratic opponent from Omaha; Harry R. Swanson (D) is a big favorite for secretary of state; Dr. T. W. Bass likewise is ahead for state treasurer and is one of two or three republicans given an advantage.

most certain victory for state office; Jurgensen is ahead for lieutenant governor; Marsh (R) looks best for auditor; the Swedish names of Olson (D) and Swanson (R) for land commissioner make this a wide open race; and Good (D), because of his greater experience, is expected to come out ahead in the 3rd for railway commissioner.

Near Arlington, Nebr., capable of daily output of 700 gallons. The bulk of the product was being trucked to Chicago.

The federal tax on alcohol is \$3.50 a gallon. Rough estimates indicate a loss of \$20,000 to \$30,000 a day. What to do about it is a tough problem, and the next legislature no doubt will consider it at length.

Political forecasters attach considerable significance to the state labor convention at Grand Island last week when five candidates were endorsed. The Roosevelt for president, Cochran for Governor, and Norris for senator endorsements are not unexpected but the prognosticators were a bit surprised at the convention's putting the stamp of approval on the two republican candidates, Johnson for attorney general, and Bass for state treasurer.

Johnson, who worked his way thru law school at Lincoln as a laborer and who has been active during his career as a lawyer as a champion of laborers' rights, naturally comes in for labor endorsement. However, the only reason for Bass' endorsement, as the political soothsayers see it, is his commendable past record as a state officer and the fact that he ranks head and shoulders over his democratic opponent in qualification for the treasurership.

Reappraisal of state school lands, ordered by the 1935 legislature, has made little change in the net value of the lands in the counties that have been surveyed to date. However, in Red Willow county, the valuations were increased from \$78,585 to \$105,905, while in Kimball county the appraisal was lowered from \$220,506 to \$189,776.

Since last August mineral leases have been granted by the state board of educational lands and funds on 28,952 acres of state school lands. Hopes of striking oil in the state have accounted for putting \$2,895 in the state school fund, the leases being granted at 10 cents per acre. The state would collect 12 per cent royalty if oil were found on its lands.

The state has 1,638,000 acres of land of which \$118,876 is under sale contract. Lands not under sale contract are subject to lease. Lessors pay 6 per cent of the appraised value as rental money. Lands leased usually are of the poorer class, the better having been long ago sold by the state, before such lands were withdrawn from sale by act of the legislature.

Revenue from state lands for all purposes during the calendar year 1935 totaled \$529,717. About two-thirds of this was from rental and leased land.

With income from bond interest, about a million dollars a year is derived from state funds and lands, all going to county and school districts to pay expenses of public schools. When school lands are available for lease, an auction is held, but the bidding is on a premium in addition to the rent. The premium is paid only once and in advance.

The 1935 legislature ordered a new system of appraisal. Under the new act, all the school land in a county is classified in about a half dozen classes, based on adaptability for cultivation or grazing and upon topography and type of soil. The state then is required to apply the same per acre valuation to the same type of lands in the same county. The county boards act with state officers in determining valuations.

If repeal has done anything to the bootleggers, still operators and hangers-on of the "moonshine" era industry, it has given them a shield of apparent respectability and a "bulk" customer list, a survey of state and federal enforcement activities reveals.

Fred Parker of the Nebraska Beverage Dispensers association estimates that several thousand gallons of raw alcohol are being sold daily in Omaha. In addition, stills are pouring great quantities of "corn" whiskey into the city. The situation is not as bad outside, but the bootlegger industry still hangs on.

The raw alcohol goes largely to "bathtub" gin fans, who still prefer their private recipes, the heavier "kick" and the lower prices to the labeled and stamped brands sold by licensed dealers. Failure of most out-state towns to permit sale by the drink is blamed by Parker for the flourishing moonshine and bootlegging business that continues.

Since last July the federal and state investigators have seized nearly 100 unlicensed stills in Nebraska, several of them with capacities for turning out from 500 to 700 gallons a day.

Not all the moonshine turned out in Nebraska is sold here. Last fall, federal officers uncovered a still

near Arlington, Nebr., capable of daily output of 700 gallons. The bulk of the product was being trucked to Chicago.

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A third party was formed in Nebraska last week for the first time since the bull moose organization in 1912. It is the new Union party, with William Lemke, of North Dakota as presidential candidate.

Still Burn Oats Despite Cattle Feed Shortage

CHICAGO, ILL.—Despite the fact that cattle raisers are forced to buy expensive foreign oats and other fodder or watch their herds starve, stocks of grain are still being destroyed in the midwest and elsewhere under government direction, according to authenticated reports filed here.

These conditions will play an important part in boosting the cost of living another 12 to 15 per cent by spring, latest available estimates show.

Meantime farmers are complaining that their crops are being destroyed on a settlement basis far below the prices commanded by foreign shipments, which are being shipped in to meet the demands.

A typical instance is reported by the Erie (Kans.) Record in a despatch reaching here. The Record says:

"Earl Smith, who resides six miles west of Chanute and who signed up with the government in the soil conservation program, recently was forced to burn two and one-half acres to comply with his agreement, this in spite of the fact the corn crop in his section is a total loss and other feed is very scarce.

"The oats were cut and raked into windrows and Mr. Smith figured on giving the surplus oats to some of the neighbors who were badly in need of feed, but he was informed that this was not permissible and that the oats must be burned.

"The oats burned represented 15 per cent of Smith's total acreage and he said he was told that he would receive between five and seven dollars an acre for the reduction, payment of which would probably be made in September.

"The oats would have averaged around 20 bushels to the acre. "Mr. Smith has been buying feed for his livestock since burning the surplus oats."

PAYING THE PIPER

The New Deal party has very little to say about government finances. Evidently, the administration high command has decided that the least said about taxes and debts and deficits, the better.

Perhaps the figures are so vast as to be beyond easy comprehension. Moreover, we haven't begun paying for the spree yet. The piper hasn't asked for a settlement. And until he does, government extravagance and deficits will remain more or less academic subjects with most of us.

There lies the hope of the New Deal and the danger of the country. For the public debt and the public rate of spending have reached truly dangerous proportions.

It would be mad enough were we to face no more than repayment of what we now owe. But nobody knows how much more debt we will have incurred before a halt is called. Re-election of Mr. Roosevelt means a continuation of this mad spending spree; a staving off of the inevitable; frantic clinging to a fool's paradise, bought and maintained with borrowed funds. In the end, it means disaster for millions of American taxpayers.—Kearney Hub.

CANT LAUGH THIS OFF

It has been effectively demonstrated that Governor Cochran thinks all he has to do is "laugh off" everything seriously involving his administration.

The governor is wrong.

Just recently he attempted to "laugh off" a charge by Dwight Griswold, Republican candidate for governor.

Griswold, in a speech at Kearney charged that Governor Cochran had deliberately concealed an exhaustive report dealing with conditions at the state penitentiary. The penal report, Griswold said, was made by a nationally-known prison authority praised by J. Edgar Hoover, head of the nation's G-men, for his ability. Griswold charged that the typewritten report was filed with the board of control in the spring but that it was immediately pigeon-holed by Governor Cochran.

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PROMISES and PERFORMANCE

PROMISE

Consumer Taxes

"Not only must the government income meet prospective expenditures, but this income must be secured on the principle of ability to pay. This is a declaration in favor of graduated income, inheritance and profits taxes, and against taxes on food and clothing, whose burden is actually shifted to the consumers of these necessities of life on a per capita basis rather than on the basis of the relative size of personal income."—Franklin D. Roosevelt, Looking Forward, 1934, pages 104-05.

"We favor maintenance of the national credit by a federal budget, annually balanced on the basis of accurate executive estimates within revenues contributed by Taxes based on consumption to 61.3 (per cent)."—Robert Jackson, Treasury Department, before Committee on Finance.

"What is known as consumers' taxes, namely the invisible taxes paid by people in every walk of life, fall relatively much more heavily upon the poor man than on the rich man. In 1929, Consumers' Taxes represented only 30 per cent of the National Revenue. Today they are 60 per cent . . ."—Franklin D. Roosevelt, letter to Roy W. Howard, September 2, 1935.

Meantime farmers are complaining that their crops are being destroyed on a settlement basis far below the prices commanded by foreign shipments, which are being shipped in to meet the demands.

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