

THE NEW CONSTITUTION

A Series of Articles Dealing With the Proposed Amendments

(By A. J. Weaver, President of the Constitutional Convention.)

No. 1.

The Herald presents herewith the first of a series of articles dealing with the proposed amendments to the state constitution as adopted by the constitutional convention which met in Lincoln last winter. The series is taken from a talk given to the editors of the state by A. J. Weaver, president of the convention, and perhaps the best qualified man in the state to explain them. The amendments are somewhat lengthy, and we believe that voters will appreciate a short, unbiased summary. Following is the first installment of the series:

The average life of our state constitution has been twenty years. This has been due to unwise limitations to the growth of the states and a change of social and economic conditions. Nebraska's constitution has lasted for forty-five years. When the constitution of 1875 was adopted Nebraska was but an infant state. Today it is a great modern commonwealth. It has asserted its supremacy in education, in agriculture and in industry, and finally it has a superb citizenship which recognized the necessity of modernizing the constitution so as to meet the new needs of the people. This convention therefore in answering the mandate of the people "To revise, amend or change the constitution," had much to guide it, particularly the great growth and prosperity of the state, and the convention wisely recognizing that the constitution of 1875 was a great document and fundamentally sound, decided that it would only amend the fundamental law.

There were presented to the convention 336 proposals. After seventy-four days of deliberation in which each proposal was given a full and fair hearing, the convention adopted forty-one amendments, which will be submitted to the electors of the state at a special election to be held Tuesday, Sept. 21, 1920. The convention was unanimous in the opinion that the people of the state having at considerable expense called a constitutional convention, the delegates to which were selected at a special election, the result of its deliberation should likewise be submitted at such an election, thus enabling the electors to vote upon the merits of the proposed amendments without the confusion which would necessarily result as in years past from the submission at a general election in a presidential year. This convention has submitted its work in the fairest possible manner by permitting a separate vote on each amendment. These amendments have received the earnest and careful consideration of the convention and we recommend all of them to the people of Nebraska. We believe that their adoption will result in more efficient and economical government of the state and its subdivisions, facilitate the administration of justice and promote the public welfare.

As to Jury Trials

No. 1 authorizes five-sixths jury verdict in civil cases. This will simplify the judicial processes and prevent many useless re-trials, resulting in a saving to both the taxpayers and litigants. When important property rights are now determined in arbitration and condemnation proceedings by a majority of arbitrators or appraisers, it is not necessary to require a unanimous verdict in civil cases.

No. 2 permits the legislature to regulate the property rights of the aliens. California and other states have for years been confronted with perplexing alien problems. Settlements of Japanese are taking place in our own state and the convention concluded that if immigrants to this country persisted in remaining aliens, receiving the benefits of our government without assuming the responsibility of citizens, their property rights should be subject to regulation.

No. 3 provides that the common school branches shall be taught in the English language in all schools of the state. This provision will insure to the youth of the state a knowledge of the language in which the spirit of our institutions is expressed, and will promote true Americanism.

Initiative and Referendum

No. 4 reduces the percentages required on initiative and referendum petitions. These reductions were deemed advisable on account of the increased number of voters by suffrage being extended to women.

No. 5 requires that counties entitled to two or more representatives or senators shall be divided into dis-

tricts, each district to elect its own member. The purpose is to distribute the senators and representatives more equitably in large cities, to provide representation to rural districts, to shorten the ballot and to bring the candidate nearer the personal acquaintance of the voter. As an example of the unfairness of the present system, almost half of the population of Lancaster county resides outside of the city of Lincoln and yet this part has not had a just apportionment of the county representation in the legislature. It might be well to add that under this provision all districts are placed on the same basis and for that reason there is no discrimination. Furthermore, the large cities of the United States, including New York and Chicago, are so distributed.

The Legislature

No. 6 provides that the number of state senators, if desired by the people, may be increased to fifty, thus providing a way for a more representative senatorial body in case the growth or needs of the state demand this increase. There is no provision, however, in the old or new provisions, preventing the reduction of the size of the membership of either house.

No. 7 increases the salaries of members of the legislature from \$600 to \$800 clarifies the meaning of the salary provision as to special sessions and eliminates the provision requiring the legislature to remain in session sixty days even if it can complete its work in less time. The reasons for these changes will be obvious to every citizen.

No. 8 requires a majority approval by an aye and nay vote of conference reports and amendments from either house, many of which under the present legislative procedure are passed by a viva voce vote during the closing hours of the legislature and which in many cases carry large appropriations and pertain to important measures. This will render less likely vicious and ill considered legislation and will promote economy.

Prohibits Salary Raises

No. 9 extends the present constitutional provision prohibiting the appointment of members of the legislature to state offices. In the interest of the public service these members should not be permitted to create new offices or legislate as to existing departments and then become the beneficiaries of the laws enacted.

No. 10 prohibits raise in salaries during a term of office. This provision will prevent or discourage lobbying in favor of such increase.

No. 11 reserves the mineral rights in state lands. Nebraska still owns 1,600,000 acres of school lands and, in view of the known fact that there is oil and other mineral resources in surrounding states, and valuable deposits of potash in our own state, the convention wisely concluded that these remaining natural resources should be preserved to the people. Such resources have furnished an immense revenue in states like Wyoming and Minnesota, thereby lessening the burdens of government which otherwise would have to be paid by direct taxation.

No. 12 eliminates the obsolete legislative apportionment provisions.

PALMYRA ONCE MIGHTY CITY

But Today Only Ruins Mark Site of Great Commercial Center of the Third Century.

Palmyra, in Asiatic Turkey, is perhaps the most remarkable "dead city" in the world—a place of mighty ruins, dreary desolation, ghosts and skeletons. There is a living Palmyra, too. It is a little Arab village of some 1,500 people, living in low-mud huts, and is so lost in the midst of the ruins that from a little distance it is invisible.

The ruins of Palmyra are really majestic, with long rows of columns, great arches and massive stone walls still standing. These are the remains of a city that in the third century after Christ was sought as an ally by both Rome and Persia. It was a city of culture and beauty and a great commercial center where caravan routes met and crossed.

The utter decay of Palmyra has been considered something of a mystery, especially since Damascus, her sister city and very similarly situated, remains today just what she was 2,000 years ago—a busy commercial town.

Ellsworth Huntington, an expert on climate, who visited Palmyra, expressed the opinion that the decline of the city was caused by the failure of its water supply, due to a change in climate. He found that there were eight large conduits running from the mountains to the city, but that only two of these contained water at the time.

Palmyra has numerous namesakes. There are no less than 19 Palmyras in the United States, and one in Brazil.

F. W. MELICK COMPANY FILES INFORMAL PROTEST

The F. W. Melick company of Heeningford has filed an informal protest with the railway commission against the cancellation of the Updike grain warehouse licenses. The protest asserts that elevators, especially terminal elevators are required by law to accept grain for store, that shippers should have privilege of storing grain especially when grain is shipped on the long haul. If the market becomes completely demoralized while grain is in transit it is argued that it would work a great hardship if shippers do not have the privilege of storing.

"Effective at once," says a letter from the Updike Grain company of Omaha to the railway commission, "we wish to cancel our public grain warehouse licenses at Aurora, Hastings, Clay Center, More Bluff, Bruno, Seward, Goehner, North Omaha, Eldorado and Harvard."

The grain company made this request after having received an opinion from the attorney general's department holding that public grain warehouses are required by law to receive grain for storage up to capacity of their storage room. The request for cancellation of licenses covers every public grain warehouse of the Updike company in Nebraska.

One protest from shipper has been received asking the commission not to permit cancellation of warehouse licenses on the ground that shippers ought to have somewhere to store grain, especially at terminal shipping points. The railway commission has taken no action on the subject of cancellation. Thus far it has been deemed the right of a licensee to have his license cancelled whenever he desires it, providing he has paid all obligations incurred under warehouse law. Licenses are issued upon the payment of \$2 to the state treasury and the giving of a bond signed by a guaranty on indemnity company. Licenses are issued for a calendar year.

Talk about the daylight-saving plan all you please, no real economic problem is to be solved that way. You can't beat the inexorable law of production by shifting the hands of the clock.

A lot of counterfeit American money is being circulated in Russia.

Another nice thing about overalls is that you can scratch a match on them.

According to New York's spring fashion edict, men's coats will be worn "just a fraction longer," the fraction in many instances being about one-half year.

The divinity that doth hedge a king is no longer believed in or respected by the common people. Burglars have looted the villa of King Christian of Denmark.

WE'LL SAY IT'S HOT

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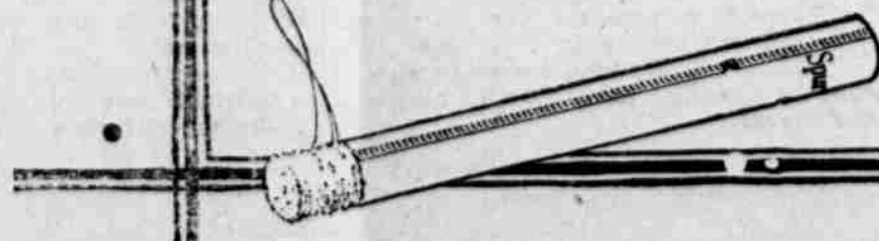
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