

About Knockers

Everyone who has seen anything of the world at all has come to recognize the word "knocker" as an effective and appropriate word in the English language. You can scarcely turn a corner nowadays but what you see a "knockers' club" in session. They have someone "on the slab," a slang expression that originally came from the dissecting room, where people are torn to pieces, although I would not for the world charge the medical students with being the original knocker. Woman holds that claim, for about the first thing Eve did when she turned loose in Eden was to knock an apple off the tree. Straightway she began to knock Adam. So it comes natural for every person to be a knocker. It is in the blood. But man, I think, equalled the fine record at the game made by woman. It looks to me as if the race from the beginning had been neck and neck.

One of the most prominent newspaper men in Pittsburg, who upon one occasion was a managing editor, obtained fine revenge upon one of these chronic knockers. He had occasion to go to Missouri at the time Paddy McGraw was captured, and while there sent out some splendid stuff. The correspondent in the town felt aggrieved that he should lose such a tidy "string," and sent in an urgent query to the paper in question, stating that the Pittsburg reporter in the field did not know his business and that in addition he was not "playing ball." The home office paid no attention to the queries, but the Missouri correspondent kept up a steady fire of queries, each time becoming more urgent and making more serious charges against the Pittsburg man on the scene. He wired and wrote until the managing editor in question returned home with

the prisoner. All of the queries had been addressed to the managing editor, so that the first thing the accused newspaper man did was to write a note to the Missouri correspondent to this effect: "Upon my return home I find these telegrams and letters, which I respectfully return. Yours, So-and-So, managing editor." As far as I can learn that knocker has never had the nerve since to either write or send a query.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Initiative and Referendum

Writing for the St. Louis Post Dispatch upon the subject of Initiative and Referendum, William Preston Hill says:

The people of Missouri will be called upon to vote at the next general election in November on the constitutional amendment incorporating direct legislation by the initiative and referendum into our constitution of Missouri.

I have often been asked by intelligent and even well educated men to explain by illustration the exact meaning of these words.

Direct legislation means law-making directly by the people. It is composed of two parts, the initiative and the referendum.

If the initiative were a part of our constitution, then 10 per cent of the qualified voters of the state, which in Missouri would amount to about 70,000 voters, could sign a petition stating that they wanted a certain law enacted. Then under the provisions of the initiative, if the legislature failed or refused to pass that law, it would have to be submitted to the vote of the whole people of the state, and at the next general election it would be printed on all the ballots, and every voter of the state, irrespective of party, could vote yes or no on that question, and if it was approved by a majority it would become a law directly

by that action of the people and without the consent of the legislature or the governor and the law would then read: Be it enacted by the sovereign people of Missouri; instead of: Be it enacted by the legislative assembly of Missouri.

The referendum is another part of this same system.

With the referendum in force, if the legislature passed a law that was obnoxious to the people or that the people considered unjust or oppressive or if the legislature gave away for little or nothing a valuable franchise that the people did not want given away, then 10 per cent of the voters of the state could within 90 days after the adjournment of the legislature sign a petition demanding that this law be referred to the vote of the whole people of the state, and under the provisions of the referendum this law would have to be printed on all the ballots at the next general election, and if approved by a majority of the people then and then only would it become a law. But if rejected by a majority of the voters then it would become null and void and be marked vetoed by the sovereign people of Missouri.

These two principles, the initiative and referendum, combined in our constitution would constitute the system known as direct legislation.

Everybody can easily judge by the above that it would be a complete and specific cure for the corruption that has invaded our political life.

Nobody will try to bribe those who will no longer be able to deliver the goods. After the adoption of the referendum the whole people alone will be able to make final delivery of franchises, etc.

Prof. J. R. Commons, the well-known professor of sociology and political economy, said: "The greatest issue before the American people today is 'bribery.' No reform move-

ment, no citizens union or the like can fully cope with it. The referendum alone is a complete and specific cure for this condition. It alone goes to the source of corruption. It deprives legislators and executives of their monopoly of government and the power to sell. After the adoption of the referendum they will no longer be able to deliver the goods."

Hon. Joseph W. Folk said that if the referendum had been in force in Missouri there would have been no need of his boodle prosecutions because there could not have been any boodling.

All those who are in sympathy with his efforts to purify our politics should vote yes on this constitutional amendment at the next election.

Suppressed Dispatches

Among the congratulations received at the White house, but not given out, were the following:

Mountains of Morocco.—Raisuli agreed not to release me until after the convention. Is a perfect gentleman. Promises to abduct me again whenever it will do good. Both our congratulations.—Perdicaris.

Caracas.—Glad to learn from Black that wars must go on. Hope it is the end of pacific blockades. Down with arbitrating damages. Felicitations.—Castro.

Santo Domingo.—Best wishes. Have arranged with Hay to stone a foreign minister a month till election. Vive la Monroe doctrine.—Morales.

Paris.—Bon! a bien tot. Am planning an uprising of downtrodden Fuegians. Send light cruiser. Vive la revolution; amusez-vous bien.—Bunau-Varilla.

Manhattan.—The best news since Knox resigned. Don't run amuck.—Wall Street.

Westminster.—All success. Would like such a platform myself. Chamberlain joins in approval of reciprocity plank.—Balfour.—New York Post.

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