

# THE WAGEWORKER.

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## HITTING THE POLITICAL PIPE

A FEW STRAY BITS OF GOSSIP CONCERNING MATTERS THAT HAVE TO DO WITH RUNNING THE CITY, COUNTY AND STATE

There are those who are very bitter at Mr. Bryan because he has, as they declare, injected the county option fight into this campaign. It might be well to hark back a little and see about this. We have given voice to our own convictions that the injection of the county option question into partisan politics is ill-advised, and Mr. Bryan, with all of his persuasive eloquence has as yet failed to convince us of our error. And yet, if county option became the burning issue in this campaign, as now seems likely, we hold that Mr. Bryan is not primarily to blame. According to our view point the men responsible for the present lamentable situation insofar as it relates to democratic organization, are the democratic senators who refused to vote for the initiative and referendum bill in the last legislature. These men surely were not actuated by democratic motives to vote against that bill, for 90 per cent of the people, republicans and democrats alike, favor that policy. There are two interests violently opposed to the initiative and referendum—the liquor interests and the railroad interests. There you have the explanation in a nutshell. The democratic senators who voted against the initiative and referendum bill were representing other interests than those of the people. Had the initiative and referendum amendment been submitted the present trouble would have been obviated.

On the other hand Mr. Bryan's supporters insist that he was forced to his present position by Governor Shallenberger's refusal to convene the legislature in extraordinary session for the purpose of passing an initiative and referendum bill. It might be well to consider that phase of the question for a moment.

Mr. Bryan sprung the extra session idea while Governor Shallenberger was absent from the state. Upon his return Governor Shallenberger held a conference with some of Mr. Bryan's supporters and declared that it would be idle folly to convene the legislature unless there was an assurance that enough votes could be mustered to pass the bill. The advocates of the extra session said they would get enough pledges if given time, and the governor told them to go to it. They began their work, but to this date they have not succeeded in getting enough pledges. A dozen or more attempts to amend the constitution failed in this state, although the need was great, because of the negligence of the voters. Not until the adoption of the primary law was it possible to carry an amendment, and this was made possible by so arranging it that when state conventions of either party formally endorsed an amendment it then became a party question and could be voted for by merely marking a cross in the circle for a straight ballot. In order to get an amendment upon the straight ballot in this way it would be necessary to have it submitted in time to get into the primary call and upon the primary ballots. Governor Shallenberger waited until it was evident to all fair-minded men that it was no longer possible to do this, and then announced his decision not to call an extra session. The date that this decision was announced Mr. Bryan still lacked three of having enough senatorial votes pledged to pass the bill in the upper house.

No one who desires to be fair will deny that it would have been extravagant folly to call a special session for the purpose of considering the initiative and referendum unless there was positive assurance that it would pass both branches. That assurance is still lacking. Who would advise the expenditure of \$15,000 or \$20,000 on a special session that was foredoomed to be useless? Neither Mr. Bryan with all of his influence, aided and abetted by the Direct Legislation League and its powerful machinery, could secure

pledges of enough votes in time to get the amendment endorsed properly—and without that endorsement it is well known to observant citizens that an amendment to the constitution can not hope to carry.

Senator Patrick, in his speech before the Lancaster county democratic convention, made many assertions that were unworthy of him. He asserted that the liquor trust controlled the party machinery, and further declared that the "pie biters" brigade stood in the way of reform along the lines sought by him. There is not an appointee of Governor Shallenberger's who has drawn as much money from the public treasury as this same Mr. Patrick. Nor has Nebraska ever had a governor who showed himself so free from liquor trust domination as Governor Shallenberger. The only progressive liquor legislation enacted in twenty years in Nebraska was enacted by the last legislature. The brewers and distillers sought to secure the repeal of the law prohibiting saloons within a certain distance of Fort Crook. Governor Shallenberger prevented it, and the prohibition still stands. The brewers and distillers fought the passage of the bill prohibiting drinking on trains, but the democratic legislature passed the bill and Governor Shallenberger signed it. If ever the liquor interests put up a fight against a measure designed to cripple them, they put it up when the daylight saloon bill was shot through the legislature and sent to Governor Shallenberger without warning. If Governor Shallenberger was in any wise dominated by the liquor trust does even Senator Patrick imagine that he would have signed that bill? The statesman from Sarpy county merely discounts his own intelligence and indicts the intelligence of the people when he declares by inference that Governor Shallenberger is dominated by the liquor interests. If that were true, why is Mayor Dahman the self-confessed candidate of the brewers and distillers? And Patrick's assertion that the liquor interests spent \$40,000 to defeat him for state senator from Sarpy county—well, that sounds so much like a joke that one is inclined to smile and let it pass.

It is only justice to Senator Patrick to say that his record as a member of the senate is as straight as a string. His vote was always recorded on the side of the people, and he has a right to resent the fact that he was turned down. Perhaps the liquor trust did effect that result. But Senator Patrick should realize that his personal victory or defeat is not sufficient to force itself upon a great party as a matter that must be taken cognizance of to the detriment of the party as a whole. Only once in a generation arises a man who is bigger than his party, and Senator Patrick was debarred from getting that distinction by reason of the fact that another stood forth while the Patrick political prominence was still an eventuality of future time.

The speech made by J. H. Harley at the Lancaster county democratic convention was a revelation to even his most intimate friends. It was not eloquent in the respect that it appealed by reason of dramatic effect or elocutionary perfection. It was eloquent of deep conviction couched in forceful phrase and homely illustration. Not even Mr. Harley had hopes that his appeal would fall on other than unheeding ears. He realized, as did every other delegate, that the result was a foregone conclusion. It did not need the personal appeal of Mr. Bryan at the close of the debate to carry the county option endorsement through. Long before the convention met the result was known. Democrats who have testified to their democracy by unswerving and unselfish devotion to it in times of stress and storm, were informed at their caucuses that they

couldn't be considered as delegates because they did not "stand with Mr. Bryan" on the county option question. Heretofore it has been customary to select delegates because of their democracy and then adopt a platform instructing them how to vote to meet the wishes of those whom they represented; this time men were called to one side and asked how they "stood with Mr. Bryan on county option," and if they were not in hearty accord with his views they were kept off the delegation to the county convention. That policy made it easy to secure a county convention in accord with Mr. Bryan's views, and neither Mr. Harley nor any other delegate opposed to inserting county option in the state platform was foolish enough to believe that their views would have any weight.

There were present upon the floor of that convention men who have been fighting for the initiative and referendum for more years than Mr. Bryan has been prominent in politics. There were present men who personally favor county option and were outspoken in their beliefs before Mr. Bryan began the study of it, but who did not, and do not now, believe that it is a matter to be taken into the domain of party politics. Certainly such men are entitled to fair play, and to dub them tools of the whiskey trust, as Senator Patrick did by inference in his speech and by direct language in private conversation, is unjust, yea wicked. Men who worked with the legislature of 1909 to secure the passage of a county option measure were denied the right to sit as delegates because, forsooth, they were opposed to making county option a tenet of the democratic faith. And this, too, when these men were outspoken in favor of county option before Mr. Bryan had, according to his own statement, taken his attention from national issues long enough to consider such a purely local question.

It is certainly a peculiar situation. What the result will be at Grand Island no human being knows. That a big majority of the delegates to that gathering will be personally opposed to putting county option in the platform is admitted. But what will happen when Mr. Bryan takes the floor? We have lively recollections of a convention in Grand Island a few years ago that was not friendly to Bryan. For fifteen hours it balked on his program, and all that time Bryan sat silent. Finally, at 4 o'clock in the morning the storm broke. Bryan took the platform, and in twenty minutes a change could be noticed. At the end of forty minutes the leaders of the opposition to him began sneaking from the hall. At the end of an hour of impassioned oratory the convention was on its feet yelling for Bryan. At 5:05 o'clock everything was lovely and peace reigned, at least on the surface, and Bryan had triumphed again. But history records the fact that in the following election the democratic ticket went down to overwhelming defeat.

But if the democrats are rowing among themselves in the democratic front yard, you ought to see the republican fracas in the republican back yard! The g. o. p. in Nebraska has been so successful in dodging the liquor question for thirty years that it is interesting to watch it now when it must either fish or cut bait. The fact of the matter is that while the democratic party has had to bear the odium of being the "whisky party," the republican party has been getting the support of the liquor interests. If the liquor interests have such a powerful hold on Nebraska politics, and the democratic party is the "whisky party," in heaven's name why was it left to a democratic legislature to enact the only progressive liquor laws in a quarter of a century? And why was it left to a democratic governor to sign those progressive liquor laws? The republican legislature of 1907, of which our republican friends so often boast, took no progressive step along liquor legislation lines, and Governor Mickey is not recorded in history as having

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## BILLY MAJOR'S DOPE CARD

THE SAME CONTAINING A FEW UNBIASED OPINIONS ABOUT MATTERS OF MORE OR LESS INTEREST TO THE PUBLIC

Here goes the Journal again, weeping over the sidewalk issue with all the sobbing and sighing necessary to make people believe that the whole industrial future of Lincoln rests upon whether sidewalks were built just so. I want a beautiful city just as much as anybody, but I am forced to confess that I am so fully occupied getting the grub and the clothing for a family of eight that I haven't much time to spend in considering the question of a "city beautiful." And to me the question of keeping the larder filled is of vastly more importance than the question of keeping our sidewalks on straight. If the Journal will join with a lot of us unartistic, unappreciative and sordid workmen in solving a few questions of the immediate present, we'll cheerfully agree to come across when they are solved and join in the crusade for a city beautiful. Just now we are engrossed in the question of eats.

Last week I made a few remarks about our educational system. I have before me right now a letter written on a typewriter by a graduate of the Lincoln high school who is also a graduate of a Lincoln business college. The letter is one in which the writer makes application for a position as stenographer. There are 154 words in the letter, exclusive of address and signature. There are five misspelled words in the letter, and the punctuation is worth going miles to see. And to cap the climax the writer spelled my name wrong!

I have a personal grievance against Alderman William Schroeder, and there are some twenty-five or thirty others just like me along North Thirty-third street. Economy is all right, but there is a vast difference between economy and penuriousness, a difference that Mr. Schroeder seems unable to understand.

We sympathize with the citizens of Wymore, who are threatened with the loss of the Burlington shops because the sheriff of Gage county did not follow the illustrious example of the sheriff of Lancaster and appoint a lot of Burlington sluggers to protest the "scabs." Funny, isn't it, that railroad corporations never take any remarkable interest in the lives and bodies of their employes until it so happens that those employes are a lot of "scabs" and strikebreakers and porch-climbers. When that comes to pass the railroad managers are awfully concerned about protecting life and limb.

But is it better to have the shops and sacrifice manhood, or to have manhood and lose the shops? It strikes me that the railroads are going a little bit too far when they arrogate to themselves not only the right of life and death but also the right of property and opportunity.

It is to laugh! I mean that it is laughable the way the newspapers all join in agreeing that it is quite satisfactory to have a negro wear the belt as the champion fighting brute. A few short weeks ago and the sporting writers of those same papers were pointing to Jeffries as the man on whom "the hopes of the white race were pinned." All right, all right! Jack Johnson seems to have knocked out vastly more than Jim Jeffries; he seems to have knocked prize fighting over the ropes.

The man who claims to be able to swing the labor vote is a liar. But he isn't as big a liar as the man who willfully charges another man who is trying to advance the cause of organized labor is also claiming to be able to "swing the labor vote." No man owns the vote of organized labor, nor is every man who is trying to advance the cause of organized labor trying to swing the labor vote. The trouble with the voters in the ranks of organized labor is that when either too independ-

ent or too partisan it is too suspicious. The minute some union man steps out and advocates a line of political action he is immediately charged with trying to lead the labor vote into some political camp. And often that is the case, too. But we know of no such effort in this section. As a union man I don't care what political party enacts the laws that organized labor is most interested in securing, just so long as those laws are secured. And that is the policy that this little labor paper has pursued for seven years, and will continue to pursue.

Speaking of signs, in Omaha the other day I saw several stretched across the sidewalks. I saw one permanent sign stretched clear across Farnam street. Does anybody deny that Omaha is a great city? It is just witnessing the completion of a sixteen-story building and as yet I haven't seen a single newspaper that objected on the ground of "sky line." I know Omaha like a book. I worked there for upwards of ten years. It has many features I do not like, but they are features that seem inseparable from every hustling, growing metropolis. But when it comes to enterprise, hustle, faith in the future, and willingness to invest money in large enterprises, Omaha has got 'em all backed off the boards. I wish we could strike an average between Lincoln and Omaha—give Omaha some of the moral features of Lincoln, and get from Omaha some of her public spirit.

A number of the democratic newspapers of the state are publishing a letter under a Lincoln date line. The Wageworker is in receipt of this letter every week, but not being a democratic newspaper it declines to give it space. A couple of weeks ago the letter contained a reference to the only meeting of the anti-saloon league held in recent months and mentioned the fact that about the only business transacted at the meeting was to increase Chairman Poulson's salary from \$1,800 a year to \$2,500 a year. By reason of a typographical error two or three papers made it read "from \$18,000 a year to \$25,000 a year." Of course any one but a parrot would have instantly recognized the typographical error, but Chairman Poulson seizes upon it to make the foundation for a charge of "liar" and to get himself a little publicity. Reference is made to this matter in this place merely to give further evidence as to the mental and moral calibre of Mr. Poulson.

What a pestiferous lot those socialists are, to be sure. Here is the socialist mayor of Milwaukee actually making ability the test of public appointment, exacting honest work from city contractors and compelling the city's servants to render a full equivalent for the salaries they draw. How'n thunder do they expect to keep a political machine greased and in running order? Out upon all this socialistic rot! The first thing we know the public generally will get acquainted with what socialism really means, and forget what they have been led to believe it means, and when that time comes there'll be a political awakening that will jar the country from center to circumference.

And, after all, isn't it about time that union men quit knocking on the men who are trying to happen to differ from them on some minor matters? The man who can not sink his personal differences when the good of the whole movement is concerned isn't worthy of the card he carries.

And President Taft says it has been the greatest congress the country has ever had. The sentiment is endorsed by every trust and tariff monopoly in the country.