

Direct Legislation in Use in Oregon

Editor Independent: The great things of this world often make no noise. Many people heard of the politics of the congressmen who were elected in Oregon last June; comparatively few heard of the laws which were enacted by the people of Oregon directly without any legislative middlemen. It was the first time the complete direct legislation was actually put into operation on American soil in state affairs. Two states, South Dakota and Utah, had direct legislation in their constitution before Oregon, but Oregon is the first to actually use it. The politics and personality of the congressmen elected in Oregon last June will sink into the natural unimportance; they are the little things at that election. Two laws actually enacted through direct legislation are the great thing. They are historic as being the first completely and organically democratic act of a state.

The Outlook's account of this is so clear and condensed that I quote: "In accordance with the constitution of the state of Oregon, which provides for legislation by popular vote, known as initiative petition, two bills were submitted to the voters of the state on the 6th of June, and both were carried. They now have the force of law exactly as bills have which pass the legislature.

"One law provides for a system of local option with regard to the sale of liquor. In any county or district composed of contiguous precincts, or in any precinct, by petition of ten per cent of the voters (in no case more than 500 signatures being required) an election to decide for or against prohibition within the territory included in that petition shall be ordered. If the election results for prohibition, no change can be made within two years thereafter. If a county as a whole gives a majority against license, no subdivision of the county, no town within the county, for instance, has the liberty of deciding in favor of license. On the other hand, if a county as a whole votes against prohibition, every subdivision voting for prohibition is entitled to have its vote enforced by the county court within the limits of that subdivision.

Although this law is called a local option law, it is really a combination of local option and prohibition. In certain respects this law violates both the principle and policy of local option. Nevertheless, the law is, in general, a local option law and promises to work in the interests of real temperance.

"The other law newly established in Oregon provides for direct nomination without intervention of a nominating convention. Popular primaries are hereafter to precede every election except for a vacancy, for presidential candidates, for municipal offices in communities of less than 2,000 population and for school officers. In adopting the direct primary, Oregon has simply proceeded on the course which it took in establishing initiative legislation—that is, it has gone one step further in the attempt to transfer power from the representatives of the people to the hands of the people themselves."

The local option law received a vote of 43,316 for and 40,198 against, giving it a majority of over 3,000 in a total of 83,000. The direct primary law had a vote of 55,205 for and 16,354 against or a majority of 40,000 in a vote of over 72,000. At the same election, a constitutional amendment putting the state printer on a salary and submitted by the legislature was carried by a vote of 45,334 for and 14,193 against, or a majority of 30,000 in a vote of 59,000. These figures illustrate the fact that a closely contested matter draws out a large vote, while one largely favored by the people draws out a much smaller vote though a far larger majority.

The prohibition party secured 5,514 votes for their candidate for supreme court judge. The temperance sentiment secured over 42,000 votes for a local option law with strong prohibition bias, and, through direct legislation, was able to enact a law such as they never have gotten nor could get through any legislature. The difference between 5,000 and 43,000 is, to my mind, the difference between

REQUEST OF EDITOR.

We would like every reader of this paper to write and say if he or she could make use of any of the following named articles: a Burey, Sewing Machine, Organ, Piano, Stove, Carpet, Cream Separator, Furniture, Set of Dishes, Gun or Watch. On a postal card or in a letter say which one of the above named articles you could make use of and you will receive by return mail the most astonishingly liberal offer ever heard of. You will get a special new catalogue describing the goods you mention. You will get a Free Trial Offer and a most surprisingly new and fair proposition will all go to you by return mail, free, postpaid. Say which one of these articles you might possibly use for, mention this request, and address your postal card or letter to: KEARS, ROEBUCK & CO., Chicago, Ill.



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Made in pretty Fall styles of the leading novelty and Mannish Cloth and other wool Suitings at special price, \$2.95, 4.05, 4.50 up to..... \$7.20

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The dressy and stylish garments for Fall wear—quality and finish of them is first class—special price \$4.95 \$8.10, \$6.75, \$5.85 and.....

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Large square style in gray and brown color with wide border at \$1.75, \$2.25, \$3.00 up to \$8.50

Underwear

We offer you some very exceptional bargains in Underwear this week. The garments are very desirable—the price is unusually low.

Ladies' fleeced, ribbed Vests and Pants—ecru or navy all sizes; regular 25c quality; this week per garment..... 10c

Ladies' Ribbed Union Suits, gray or ecru; medium weight, sizes 4 to 6, good value at 50c; sale price..... 30c

Childrens Elastic Ribbed Vests and Pants. At the following special prices

Size 16, 9c; 18, 11c; 20, 13c; 22, 16c; 24, 18c; 26, 20c; 28, 22c; 30, 25c; 32, 27c; 34, 30c.

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those who are willing to leave their old parties for a prohibition party and those who will support a democratic temperance measure, and demonstrates the futility of the partisan prohibition activity.

Mr. W. S. U'Ren of Oregon City, writes: "The campaign against the local option law was very bitter and the liquor interests are said to have spent a great deal of money. Some statements place it as high as \$75,000, and I do not think they are excessive. The temperance people's campaign cost, I am told, from \$2,500 to \$3,000. Our campaign for the direct primary nomination law from start to finish cost \$1,710.52." It was impossible to get such a law through the legislature. A few earnest men enlisted the best legal talent in the state (far better than goes to the legislature), raised the small amount of money necessary, spent it economically, and the people adopted the law by an overwhelming

majority. I may add that a third petition for a law was started by the socialists. It was a rather rabid socialistic law and the petition for it did not get the requisite number of signers—less than 5,000—and so, of course, it was not submitted.

The whole orderly procedure demonstrates the sanity, virility and common sense of the common people when

they can be directly appealed to on a clear issue and the complete success of the initiative and referendum when put into actual practical use.

ELTWEED POMEROY.

The Daily Star is running an interesting "Dot Contest" and offer liberal cash prizes for the winners. Those interested in puzzles, games, contests, etc., will do well to study the Star ad on page 20 in this paper.