

THE HOUSTON DAILY POST

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THE FADING LANDMARKS.

Once again our democratic president abandons his oldtime political principles and embraces the national brand of woman's suffrage.

But a few months ago, his advocacy of woman's suffrage was qualified. He favored it through State action. Now he favors it as a matter of national action, or, plainly, through compulsory processes if events shall demonstrate that three-fourths of the States favor an amendment.

So far as The Post is able to discern, only a few people are considering the national suffrage and national prohibition questions except upon grounds of expediency, prejudice or partisanship.

The possible inflicting of either policy upon States that do not favor it is very meagerly considered. All of which goes to show that there is very little disposition shown to consider the logical consequences of trifling with the constitution to put into effect the policies one may desire.

It is observed, however, that in some quarters quite a distinction is drawn between the prohibition and the suffrage amendments. Mississippi's legislature promptly ratified the prohibition amendment by an almost unanimous vote, but there is much opposition to the suffrage amendment in Mississippi.

Mississippi's negro population forms 60 per cent of the whole and Mississippi fears national suffrage control, and is therefore opposed to it. But Mississippi is sure that New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey ought to be dry whether their citizens desire prohibition or not. So dry Mississippi votes to put it over on wet New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

And later on suffrage legislatures in New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey are going to vote to expand the franchise in Mississippi.

You will have to admit that turn about is fair play.

If dry Mississippi is not willing to let the liquor question alone in New York, she can not expect suffrage New York to let the suffrage question alone in Mississippi.

Considered upon principle alone, national suffrage and national prohibition are of the same stripe. That is to say, they take from the States, willy nilly, the right to regulate suffrage and the liquor traffic.

But there is far more justification of national suffrage control than national liquor control. The regulation or prohibition of the liquor traffic is purely a matter of police regulation and there is not logically a Federal question in it, after the matter of Federal taxation is eliminated.

Not so with suffrage. The consequences of the extension or suppression of suffrage are national in their scope. The congressman voted for and elected in the States votes upon question affecting the welfare of people in all the States. For this reason the people of one State may with much plausibility claim the right to demand that suffrage in other States, in so far as it relates to the election of president, senators and representatives, be based upon a law of general application.

There is far more justification, therefore, as The Post sees it, for Northern and Western States to force national control of suffrage upon the South than there is for the South to co-operate with the dry Western commonwealths to force prohibition upon wet Northern commonwealths.

License in the North can not effect domestic conditions in the dry South, but suffrage conditions in the South may materially affect domestic conditions in the North.

Indications are that little opportunity is going to be given the people to discuss either amendment. Mississippi ratifies the prohibition amendment without further discussion among the people, and there will be suffrage legislatures, in all probability, to return the compliment.

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What the radicals are doing to our form of government in the excitement of war, when basic principles are lost sight of and only opportunism, expediency, prejudice and experimentalism are active, remains to be seen. But if a sober second thought fails to halt present movements in time, we shall emerge from the war with a new form of government.

So far as we can see, the democratic party now in power has absolutely discarded the principles which called it into being, and is fully embarked upon an uncharted sea of socialism, federalism, opportunism and a form of democracy in which the individualism that was the faith of the fathers is to be honored no longer.