

Levi Pennington

People

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## Pennington to Rev. H. S. Lower, February 25, 1948

Levi T. Pennington

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February 25, 1948.

Rev. H. S. Lower,  
5412 N. E. Flanders St.,  
Portland 15, Oregon.

Dear Mr. Lower:--

Your telephone call suggesting that I interest myself in the state campaign of the Christian Independent party came as a surprise to me, and I am sure that you have been and will be disappointed in my attitude toward it. I do not expect to participate in the campaign, either as a campaigner for others or as a candidate. I know that some of my friends will consider this a serious defection -- some may want to have a prayer meeting to see if they cannot convert me from my backsliding.

I have not abated in my hatred of the liquor business. I think I realize its seriousness in Oregon, when during the life of the State Liquor Control Commission (which might better be called the State Liquor Promotion Commission) the sale of liquor in the state stores has increased from \$4.00 per capita to more than nine times that amount -- and this for hard liquor only, with no account of beer, light wines, etc. I am ready at any time to do what I can for the overthrow of this business and the salvation of its victims from the alcohol habit. But all this and much more that I could say does not mean that I shall be in the political campaign for the Christian Independent Party this year.

There are a good many reasons for this, reasons that I do not need to recount, though I could name some of them. One is the fact that this is to be the Christian Independent Party. I do not know how many parties will be in the field, but I suppose at least four. Will not the party which Wallace is promoting stand for a good many things for which the Christian Independent party will stand? Is not the one big reason if there is any for your campaign the prohibition issue? Then why dodge the name? If I could support the campaign, I'd be more likely to do it if the old name, and the one under which Watson is running nationally were retained.

But there are no circumstances that I could think of right now under which I could feel that I could devote time and energy to this campaign. I have less of both time and energy than I used to have, and more interests that I am trying to serve than I have ever had in my life, it seems to me. If I should try to list them, I'm sure I'd leave out a number of them, but organizations with which I am connected and for which I am trying to do service include:

The Friends Church. I am clerk of our monthly meeting, have responsibilities from time to time in the quarterly meeting, am chairman of the National Service Section of the yearly meeting, and frequently have special tasks to perform that I could not well escape if I would, and would not if I could.  
Oregon Council of Churches. I was on the program com-

mittee for their recent state convention at Salem, and have the sole responsibility for the raising of Newberg's quota of their annual budget.

American Friends Service Committee. I am on the executive committee of the Oregon Branch, and also on the peace section. And I have some responsibilities for the national organization in this section, though Emmett W. Galley is executive secretary of the Oregon Branch, and now the chief representative of the national organization.

Friends Committee on National Legislation. I am on the executive committee of that body, and their only representative in Oregon and Washington. I have just conducted a campaign for funds for that organization.

National Council for Prevention of War. I am one of the vice presidents of that organization, and I suppose I'd be considered their chief representative in the Pacific Northwest.

Heifers for Relief. I am first vice president of the state organization. I spent weeks in the organization of this county, which sent the first carload of heifers from this part of the United States to Europe, and has sent two shipment of milk goats across the Pacific. I suppose the work for that organization will increase as spring comes and we are able to make additional shipments.

Northwest Institute of International Relations. I have been a member of the executive committee of that organization ever since it started, and should be in a meeting of that committee this afternoon were it not for the fact that I am laid up with a cold.

Pacific College. Though I retired from the presidency in 1941 and was made president emeritus, there are still many things that I have had the privilege of doing for the college since my retirement, raising money, teaching during the absence of various members of the faculty, etc. I hold myself always ready for any service that I can render to the college which I served as president for thirty years.

Earlham College. This is my alma mater, and I have assisted in a Good-will campaign among graduates of that institution in the Pacific Northwest, and have done some things for the college since I attended its centennial celebration last fall.

Church World Service. I have worked to some extent with this organization, though most of my efforts along that line have been with the American Friends Service Committee and Heifers for Relief. But I did have something to do, both locally and in the state set-up, for the Christmas Ship. My wife is chairman of the local Friends Service Committee, and I have packed and shipped tons of clothing for overseas relief, part of which went on that Christmas Ship. (This gathering and shipping of clothing is a continuous job, and there are some hundreds of pounds of it ready to pack now, as soon as I am well enough to go at it again.)

Well, enough about organizations. I have headed two community campaigns for overseas relief in the past two years; had a section of the city for the Community Chest; have headed money-raising campaigns for the Children's Farm Home, the Louise Home, the Salvation Army, etc. And I could go on with a story that would give point to my brother's wish that I were not so "actively retired."

But the one biggest thing that has my interest these

days is the effort to force universal compulsory training on the American people. To me that is the worst threat that has ever faced the United States.

Slavery? Yes, that was a terrible thing, but it directly affected only a small part of our population. UMT would enslave the entire nation.

Liquor? Yes, that is a terrible thing, with more men and women and children enslaved by it than all the negroes in the United State at the time of the Civil War. But UMT not only threatens our liberty, but it is, to my mind, a sure step toward another world war more terrible by far than the last one. Liquor is killing people off terribly fast, but another world war would wipe us off the earth millions at a time.

Well, I am committed to the task of giving all the time and energy I can spare to the work of attempting to defeat UMT. I have spoken against it repeatedly, over the radio, to ministerial associations, to churches, service club, etc. I am to be in Portland for another debate on the subject next Wednesday., a bit later in Vancouver, etc.

Under all the circumstances, I do not expect to be in the state campaign for any candidate or any issue. If I could see that this new party and new ticket would advance the cause of reform, and would help to eliminate the liquor traffic, gambling, prostitution and other evils, I might feel that I could take some of my time and energy, what little I have, from some other cause and put them into this campaign. Thus far I do not see it.

With regret that I must disappoint you in this matter, and with the hope that we shall never abate our zeal in opposition to evil and promotion of good, I am

Sincerely yours,

Levi T. Pennington.