

There is "Something Doing" in Virginia

Henry T. Wickham, member of the Virginia state senate from the district composed of Caroline, Hanover and King William counties, succeeded his father in the legislature in 1888, and was continuously re-elected by his democratic constituents until the democratic primary of August 28, 1907, when he was defeated for the nomination by Dr. C. U. Gravatt, a retired United States navy surgeon.

The Wickham family is one of the most distinguished in the state of Virginia. A monument to General William T. Wickham, father of the senator, stands in Monroe park, Richmond.

During his long term in the state senate, Henry T. Wickham was employed in the law department of the Chesapeake and Ohio railway, which has its general offices in Richmond. First he was general solicitor, but several years ago was advanced to the position of general counsel, at a salary which is said to approximate \$20,000 a year. For three years he has been one of the receivers for the Gould traction properties in Richmond and Petersburg at a reported fee of \$5,000 a year.

The fight on Mr. Wickham in the primary this year was confined to the single issue: "Could he, at one and the same time, fairly represent both his railroad employers and the voters of his district?" His personal character was never attacked, nor were the honesty of his motives impugned.

For nineteen years the people of his senatorial district were so solidly behind him that Mr. Wickham had not even nominal opposition in his own party. But when the "railroad issue" was raised, he went down in defeat in one brief campaign before a comparatively unknown opponent.

Because of the principle involved Commoner readers may be interested in some clippings from Virginia newspapers relating to Senator Wickham's defeat:

The Harrisonburg Times, a republican paper, says: We believe the people of the Thirty-second district will come to the conclusion before very long that they made a mistake in turning Senator Wickham down and especially will they see their mistake in doing so for the reason that he was a railroad attorney.

The Harrisonburg News (dem.) says: Mr. Wickham will serve the Chesapeake and Ohio next winter with great ability when that corporation is fighting the state of Virginia on the rate question. He will render valuable service when the railroad corporations seek to hold down the state assessment of their property for the purposes of taxation. And he will be able to do it now without being hampered by the official oath of a senator.

The Staunton Leader says: The defeat of Senator Henry T. Wickham for the democratic nomination to succeed himself is a noteworthy victory for the people against corporate influences. It is an omen of good to come. The people of Virginia are awakening to a true realization of their rights and well-being and the power that is within their franchises, and this bodes no good for the ring rule that has obtained within the commonwealth for many decades past. In the words of Barnum's maxim, you can't fool the people all the time. They have been hoodwinked into voting against their closest interests for many years, but they are beginning to see which way the wind blows. A few more such victories as the defeat of Senator Wickham will have a most salutary effect, and we will find that democratic primaries will be entered by the voters with renewed interest.

The Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (dem.) says: The new senator from the district composed of the counties of Hanover, Caroline and King William, will be Dr. Charles U. Gravatt, a retired officer of the United States navy, and, therefore, presumably, a gentleman of culture and character, but wholly without experience in public life. The change has been made by a decisive majority of the people with whom Mr. Wickham stands deservedly high for his personal qualities and ability. He has been retired solely because a preponderant element of the voters held it to be incompatible with the general welfare of the community that the functions and obligations of a state legislator and of chief attorney of a railroad corporation should be united in one and the same person. Especially is this view prevalent in Virginia just now because of the existing controversy between the state and the railroads and of the possibility that judicial procedure may take such a course

as to throw all the matters in dispute upon the decision of the general assembly. For, in such a case, the feeling is not without warrant that no man could act as counsel for both sides of so radical a contention without prejudice or favor to one side or the other. The regularly employed advocate in a suit, after exhausting argument and eloquence in behalf of the defendant, can not be expected to go on the bench and render a judgment fair to the plaintiff.

The Petersburg Index-Appeal says: The distinction between the man and the official is fine almost to the point of imperceptibility, but it has been made by, perhaps, too partial friends. Mr. Wickham is an able man and a very capable representative, and far be it from us to impeach his honesty or sincerity. But whatever may be his consciousness as to the rectitude of his own motives and acts, the lesson of the popular verdict in the Thirty-second senatorial district should not be lost on him, to-wit, that those voters do not believe any man can serve two masters, and so they have done for him what he should have done for himself long ago, in retiring either from the senate or from the services of the railroad.

The Lynchburg News says: The failure of Hon. Henry T. Wickham to secure a renomination as democratic candidate for the state senate reflects a more than usually important event in Virginia politics. The people of the state have reason, in our judgment, to be gratified at Mr. Wickham's defeat—as doubtless in largely prepondering numbers they are—and to rejoice that the democracy of Hanover, King William and Caroline have had the courage to establish a precedent in this relation which is altogether of wholesome import. In saying this we would be understood as in no way seeking to prejudice the worth of Mr. Wickham as an individual. The Hanover senator is a most amiable and agreeable gentleman. His ability as a lawyer requires no encomium when it is considered that he represents a great railway trunk line as chief counsel in Virginia. That he is an accomplished, skilled and influential legislator is also a subject of general concession. But while all these things are true, there are some other things that are equally true, which should long since have constrained Mr. Wickham's constituency to retire him to private life. It ought not to be so that any member of the general assembly shall be brought face to face with the alternative of voting for a measure at the risk of inviting frowns of a powerful corporation client. Mr. Wickham was compelled to face the issue thus arising in the campaign just closing, and upon that issue the democratic electorate of his senatorial district rendered a verdict of "nay" to his plea for re-election. It was in all respects a proper verdict, and absolutely consistent with sound public policy.

The Richmond Journal says: For months the Journal has been urging the voters of this state to defeat every candidate for a seat in the next general assembly who occupies the position of counsel of any railroad. We have given unanswerable reasons why this should be done. The least of these is the equivocal position of the attorney himself; the greatest is the utter impossibility of serving two masters. This implied-no reflection upon the integrity of the attorney. It imputed to him no conscious wrongdoing. It simply denied him miraculous powers; the capacity to be in two places at one and the same time. He could not be in the place, which ought to be occupied by a faithful counsel, of whole-hearted devotion to the interests of his clients, and at the same time work with an eye single to the welfare of his constituents. When the time came, as come it must, that the interests of client and constituent met in head-on collision, the corporation counsel must be in a position of great embarrassment and torn by conflicting views. It is sheer nonsense, if not arrant hypocrisy, to pretend to unbiased fair-mindedness when vital questions balance between the good of the railroads and the public good, when in one pocket is a huge salary and in the other merely a mandate from the voter. The man was never created with so judicial a temperament and so oblivious of the side of the slice the butter was on, to whom with restful, implicit confidence the people could look under such circumstances. It is not in human nature. The fight of the future is for supremacy between the railroads and their cognate influences and the rule of the people. So titanic are the powers of the former that while the ultimate issue is sure, the struggle

will be severe and long contested. Strange as it may appear, it will take the whole force of government, exerted through years, to show those who now dominate the country, that it was not for their belief and glory and fattening the fathers established this republic. They shall have the lesson driven into their heads that the taxing power of traffic rates, which can levy a toll upon everything a man and his family use, and hence regulate that man's life, is no longer a sovereign prerogative of a handful of Wall Street tyrants. This is the way the people of Virginia are now thinking. This is the way the people of the Thirty-second senatorial district thought last week when they defeated for renomination Hon. Henry T. Wickham. Seldom in the history of politics has there been set before a people a question of principle more clearly defined and divested of diverting and entangling accessories. With nothing against the ability or integrity of either Wickham or Gravatt, with everything in favor of the former, so far as experience in public affairs goes, he went down to defeat because the people were determined to speak with no uncertain sound upon the question, the burning question of railroad domination. It is needless to add the congratulations of the Journal to the sturdy voters of the Thirty-second senatorial district of Virginia. They deserve, and will receive, the applause of the entire state.

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 14.

Special Offer

Everyone who approves the work The Commoner is doing is invited to co-operate along the lines of the special subscription offer. According to the terms of this offer cards each good for one year's subscription to The Commoner will be furnished in lots of five at the rate of \$3 per lot. This places the yearly subscription rate at 60 cents.

Any one ordering these cards may sell them for \$1 each, thus earning a commission of \$2 on each lot sold, or he may sell them at the cost price and find compensation in the fact that he has contributed to the educational campaign.

These cards may be paid for when ordered, or they may be ordered and remittance made after they have been sold. A coupon is printed below for the convenience of those who desire to participate in this effort to increase The Commoner's circulation:

The Commoner's Special Offer

Application for Subscription Cards

5	Publisher COMMONER: I am interested in increasing THE COMMONER'S circulation, and desire you to send me a supply of subscription cards. I agree to use my utmost endeavor to sell the cards, and will remit for them at the rate of 60 cents each, when out.	
10		
15		
20		
25		
50		
75		
100		
BOX OR STREET NO.		
P. O. STATE		
Indicate the number of cards wanted by marking X opposite one of the numbers printed on end of this blank.		

If you believe the paper is doing a work that merits encouragement, fill out the above coupon and mail it to The Commoner Lincoln, Neb.