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THE OHIO PLATFORM

The Ohio democratic convention was the political event of last week. The platform adopted, and reproduced on page five of this issue, made a strong presentation of some of the issues but failed to reaffirm the Kansas City platform.

It began with municipal and state issues and the handiwork of Mayor Tom L. Johnson was evident in the terse and emphatic declaration of democratic principles so far as they apply to local questions. The necessity for municipal reform is an urgent one and there is sound democracy in the plank demanding that the people be given an opportunity to vote on questions involving the granting or extending of a franchise.

The plank which declares that "steam and electric railroads and other corporations possessing public franchises shall be assessed in the same proportion to their salable value as are farms and city real estate" is both logical and just, but it is likely to offend the very people who were to be conciliated by an evasion of the silver question.

The plank against passes is all right but will not make votes among the so-called conservatives. The platform urges tariff reform.

The anti-trust plank would have been stronger if it had reiterated the Kansas City platform on the subject. The free list and the prevention of railroad discriminations are good so far as they go but they do not go far enough. Whenever a trust can export its goods to other countries it can live here without any tariff. Something more than free trade is necessary to such a case. Absolute fairness in railroad rates is desirable, but even this will not make private monopolies impossible. The Kansas City platform suggested a complete remedy—the only one yet proposed—and it is to be regretted that the Ohio convention was so prejudiced against the last national platform of the party that it ignored a remedy endorsed by more than six million voters.

The plank condemning imperialism criticizes the republican policy without pointing out a remedy. Here again the failure to reaffirm the Kansas City platform has weakened the Ohio democracy.

The convention endorsed the proposition to elect senators by the people. The labor plank is excellent but those who wrote the platform failed, either intentionally or unintentionally, to mention government by injunction, the black list and arbitration. A reaffirmation of the Kansas City platform would have covered these points also but having failed to reaffirm, the convention should have

been careful to touch on all the important questions.

The convention not only failed, but refused to endorse or reaffirm the Kansas City platform, and, from the manner in which the gold element has rejoiced over this feature of the convention, one would suppose that the main object of the convention was not to write a new platform, but to repudiate the one upon which the last national campaign was fought.

Gen. Finley was right in insisting upon a vote on his resolution endorsing the Kansas City platform, but he made a mistake in including in his resolution a complimentary reference to Mr. Bryan. Mr. Bryan is not a candidate for any office, and a mention of him might have been construed by some as an endorsement of him for office. The vote should have been upon the naked proposition to endorse the platform of last year, and then no one could have excused his abandonment of democratic principles by pleading his dislike for Mr. Bryan. The cause ought not to be made to bear the sins of an individual. Mr. Bryan will endure without complaint any punishment which the democracy of Ohio may see fit to administer to him, but he does not want his name used to the injury of a good platform.

The gold papers assume that the convention refused to adopt the Kansas City platform because it contained a silver plank. If so, it would have been more courageous to have declared openly for the gold standard. If the gold standard is good, it ought to have been endorsed—if bad, it ought to have been denounced. To ignore the subject entirely was inexcusable.

The money question is not yet out of politics. Every session of congress will have to deal with it. Republicans declare that it is dead but they keep working at it. At the last session of congress they tried to make the silver dollar redeemable in gold and when that is accomplished they will try to limit the legal tender qualities of the dollar. The gold standard will not be complete until gold is the only legal tender money and bank notes the only paper money. Then our supply of primary money will be controlled by foreign financiers, and our supply of credit money by domestic financiers.

This plan has been developed gradually and every step has been taken secretly and stealthily. The republican leaders have been in this movement for years; as soon as the democratic party found that some of its leaders had joined the conspiracy those leaders were deposed.

It looks now as if the reactionary influences were once more trying to secure control. If they succeed in Ohio or elsewhere it simply means another gigantic struggle such as was witnessed in 1896. The democratic party cannot be made a plutocratic party even if there was room in this country for two such parties. There was a time, under the Cleveland regime, when the party leaders used general and ambiguous phrases to deceive the voters, but that scheme can not be worked again. We can not expect the voters to have confidence in the party unless the party has confidence in the voters and if the party has confidence in the voters it will state its position on all the important questions before the country and invite judgment.

The present campaign involves a senator, as well as a state ticket, and as the convention dealt with other national questions, it should have dealt candidly and honestly with the money question. Mr. McLean is supposed to be a candidate for the United States Senate, and is also supposed to have dictated that portion of the platform which has to do with national issues. The senator elected by the next Ohio legislature will have to vote on the money question. The democratic party of the nation is opposed to making the silver dollar a promise to pay gold, and is also opposed to substituting national bank notes for government paper, but the democratic party in Ohio was silent upon these important subjects. Why? Did the leaders ignore the money question in order to please those who bolted? Or does Mr. McLean want to be left free to affiliate with the republicans on financial questions in case of his election?

Mr. Kilbourne, the nominee for governor, is an excellent man, a life-long democrat and an active supporter of the national ticket in both 1896 and 1900. He is better than his platform. He deserves and should receive the vote of every democrat in Ohio.

If any of the Ohio democrats feel aggrieved because the reorganizing element of the party triumphed at the convention let them not visit their disappointment upon the state ticket but rather see to the nomination of senators and representatives who will select a trust-worthy senator. Let them see to it also that the state platform is made at the primaries next time rather than at the convention. If the voters at the primaries had instructed their delegates to insist upon the reaffirmation of the Kansas City platform the result would have been different.