

"A Simple Method of Giving Voters the Initiative"

Public interest in the primary pledge plan is increasing as is evidenced by the returns received at The Commoner office.

All of the letters are interesting, but it may not be out of place to direct attention to two letters recently received. One is from S. F. Swayne, attorney at Ft. Wayne, Ind., who cast his first vote for Abraham Lincoln. The other is from Algernon Colburn, law student, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, who will cast his first vote at the next election and his first vote for president in 1908. Mr. Colburn writes: "I celebrated my twenty-first birthday the 4th day of this month. I consider it an honor to be able to put my name on record at your office, at the opening of my voting manhood, as being connected with this movement. I hope that in the distant future I will be able to point with pride to this pledge as the humble beginning of a vigorous and useful career of service to democratic government and to mankind." Mr. Swayne writes: "With my first vote for Lincoln, I feel that I am reaffirming the political faith thereby expressed in recording adherence to the democratic policy outlined in your primary pledge plan. This plan presents a plain and simple method for giving the voters the initiative in expressing their views on political questions. From these universally expressed views the great wish and purpose of the masses will be available in forming the political issues and find suitable candidates through whom they can be carried into effect. Record my name in most hearty approval of the primary pledge."

Extracts from other letters follow:

I. D. Rogulen, chief deputy district court, Kalispell, Mont.—I enclose herewith my pledge as outlined in recent issues of The Commoner. This work is absolutely necessary. The politician and his master, whose willing tool he nearly always is, is ever on the alert. But the common people, except in some cases, need to be reminded time and time again to be on their guard, lest those who fatten on other people's toil, get the control of the party organization. Witness the result in the last democratic convention. But if the people are pledged, they will retain in their hands the only means by which they can hold their rights. If you have any blank pledges, I could use about thirty of them."

James Pace, Nowata, I. T.—I send you a list of forty-nine names that I had the pleasure of getting today. I could have sent many more names, but did not think it was necessary, as we are in Indian Territory and can't vote, but we will vote some day.

W. A. Smith, Wood Lake, Neb.—I herewith send you list of names to primary pledge. I strongly endorse it. I live on a small ranch, but take an active part in politics—never miss a democratic meeting or county convention, I go there to fight for democratic principles from 1896 down. I think to purify politics is something that needs to be done from township delegates to our state and national delegates. It is not because democrats are unwilling to abide by the will of the majority that caused so many stay-at-home votes here in Cherry county, but because they saw dishonesty from delegates in the action of New York.

D. W. Peel, Bentonville, Ark.—Enclosed find primary pledge. I hope every democrat in the United States will sign the pledge and faithfully work to the end.

M. Luther Baldwin, League, W. Va.—I am twenty-one today and hasten to send you my pledge. I believe in the eternal principles of democracy as enunciated by Jefferson, Jackson and our uncorrupted leaders of today who dare to stand by the truth while others cringe under the money lash.

T. J. Emmet, Ness City, Kan.—Enclosed I hand you primary pledge, which I am much pleased to sign, and will keep my pledge as far as I am able to do so.

W. H. Steelsmith, Conrad, Ia.—I wish to be enrolled as one of those who will attend all caucuses, primaries and preliminary meetings of the democratic party, and demand of those having powers delegated to them as representatives in county and state organizations, a pledge to advocate and support in every honorable way such democracy as the Chicago and Kansas City platforms promulgated.

Sam Bertram, Littlecrab, Tenn.—I think I can return the primary pledge in two weeks, with the names of quite a number of our good democrats appended to it. I think Mr. Bryan's plan of organization is a good one, and I certainly shall do everything I can to forward the movement. Let us become thoroughly organized. Why shouldn't

we? Our principles are undying. Organization doesn't mean a dropping out of old principles and the taking up of new ones, but a getting together on the old Jeffersonian principles of democracy. I am certainly glad to see the responses of so many democrats all over the country. Let the good work go on.

John McCarthy, Clarkson, N. Y.—I received your primary pledge blank yesterday, but as I am not very well at present I can not do any canvassing for a few days, but then I expect to get the signature of every democrat in this district. I think the primary pledge idea an excellent one, and the only way that will organize and harmonize the democratic party.

A. J. Lee, Linton, Ind.—I enclose primary pledge. I am in hearty accord with the plan. I am cutting out all the pledges and asking my Jeffersonian friends to sign them. I will collect soon and send them in.

J. L. Brock, Ludlow, Mo.—You will please excuse me for being so slow in signing and forwarding the primary pledge, which I will now do with great pleasure. Hope every democrat in the nation will do likewise, also every republican who believes in good government.

P. O'Brien, Keokuk, Ia.—As an old-time democrat I heartily approve your primary pledge and will endeavor to induce my friends to take it.

D. L. Reynolds, White Pine, Tenn.—Enclosed you will please find the primary pledge, signed by some of the best democrats in the county. I say "best" because it takes the best to stick in this part of our state.

Ernest Tripp, Callender, Ia.—I heartily endorse the primary pledge plan and believe it to be the only way to get in line for 1908. Every true democrat should sign it.

J. H. Bennett, Reidsville, N. C.—Enclosed please find primary pledge signed cheerfully. I am fully in accord with the democracy of The Commoner. It is all the democracy that stands for anything of value to the people.

O. T. Maxwell, Cisco, Tex.—With pleasure I co-operate with you in securing a clear, honest and straightforward declaration of the party's position on the great questions which we are to contend for in the future.

Gilbert Wright, Hornellsville, N. Y.—Please find enclosed primary pledge signed. I heartily believe that a government 'of the people, for the people and by the people' can in no way be brought as near to the people as it can through the primaries, where bossism and machine rule may be rebuked.

H. W. McNeal, Chillicothe, Ohio.—I am 68 years of age, was born a democrat and am still of the same convictions, and my war cry has been: "Down with the beef trust, Rockefeller trust and all of the other trusts."

Isaac N. Pratt, Warren, R. I.—The primary pledge I enclose herewith, with the hope that its object may be abundantly realized throughout the country.

James E. Hall, Falmouth, Ind.—Enclosed find primary pledge. It is a good plan and every democrat should sign it.

M. M. Warner, Lyons, Neb.—It gives us great pleasure to pledge ourselves to be a worker in the gigantic battle for human rights and human liberty as outlined in the eternal principles of democracy.

A. B. Newton, Winter Garden, Fla.—I have waited to see if some one else would not claim the honor of being the first from Florida to send in his primary pledge, but now I hope to claim it for myself.

J. D. Coonce, Claysville, Mo.—Enclosed please find my primary pledge. I am heart and soul in this movement. I wish my name enrolled on your pledge list. I am ready to do all that I can for the cause of the people at large and Bryan democracy. I will also enclose two or three others.

William Scherffus, Lynnville, Ky.—Enclosed please find pledge signed by me to be present at all of the democratic primaries, not only until the next national election, but as long as I am able to go, and do what little I can to aid in placing the principles of democracy before the people in this district as set forth by Jefferson, Jackson and W. J. Bryan.

Harrington Bros., Coppell, Tex.—We, the Harrington Bros., pledge ourselves to attend all primaries between now and the next national convention.

H. W. Ford, Sodi, Calif.—I take pleasure in joining the forces of faithful democrats that are sending in their pledges to support true democratic principles. All democrats from the least to the greatest should fall into line.

Dan V. Stephens, Fremont, Neb.—I believe this a most excellent idea. It brings our forces together. Dodge county will stand with you and the common people.

A. R. Yeiser, Yeiser, Colo.—I heartily endorse your plan of the primaries, as that is all the chance the people have in selecting those whom they wish to vote for in the general elections. I would to God there could be a law enacted to make bribery a capital offence, also lobbying a penal offense, then the people would stand some show to get their rights.

D. T. Waters, Springlake, Mich.—I enclose the primary pledge which I have most earnestly signed. I regret that it does not go a little farther and not only pledge the signer to attend the primaries, but also election. This matter of absence from the polls is no less to be regretted than absence from the primaries or caucus.

Chas. E. Williams, Bellaire, Mich.—I send you my primary pledge and sincerely hope that every honest democrat in the country will do the same and then be sure to keep their pledge.

David Lorbach, Waverly, Ohio.—As an alternate delegate to the Chicago convention in 1896, I was well pleased with the platform and nominee of said convention, and now I wish to be enrolled in the good work as a steadfast and unswerving democrat who believes in equal rights to all and special privileges to none. So here is my pledge and may success crown your efforts.

T. F. Holden, Rushville, Ind.—Find enclosed primary pledge signed. May the plan result in abundant success.

John W. Leber, Ephrata, Pa.—I heartily approve of The Commoner's plan for the organization of the democratic campaign of 1908. It is a noble idea, and tends to purer and more elevating politics. When this is realized and which I sincerely believe will be ere long, all the rascality, corruption, greed and graft which is practiced nowadays in American politics will be a thing of the past.

G. W. Barr, Dayton, Ohio.—I herewith enclose you the primary pledge, which I most heartily endorse. I think it a wise plan to bring true democrats together and leave out the wolves that wear sheeps' clothing.

W. J. Minehan, Binghamton, N. Y.—Enclosed find my primary pledge. I think it is a good plan. I have been with you ever since 1896 and am with you now, and will be with you until the last.

H. J. Grogen, Endington, Mich.—I trust your efforts will awaken the people to action in and for the good of the nation. Inclosed please find my pledge. Yours for good government.

W. H. Wilson, Woodland, Iowa—Am heartily in accord with your primary plan. Democracy must arouse itself to the great work of protecting the masses against the classes. Find enclosed my pledge duly signed. Yours for democracy and equal rights.

C. W. Halstead, Ashley, Ill.—I will do all that I can to secure signatures to the primary pledge petition.

James B. Miller, North Andover, Mass.—Enclosed you will find my primary pledge. I am willing to do what I can to bring the democratic party back to the people.

Mr. J. S. Buttner, Rockwell City, Iowa.—Being in sympathy with your call to organize the democratic party into a more potent and effective working force in the hands of the masses, by the infusion of a greater amount of democracy into its organism, I enclose herewith the primary pledge duly signed, and will do what little I can to bring about the desired results by a faithful attendance at all primaries in my voting precinct. I believe your plan, as outlined, is the true road to reform and re-organization of the party, and if taken hold of by the people and carried out will bring the democratic party "back to the people." When this is accomplished I believe the reform element from all other parties will readily come to us, and then the people will be able to strike effective blows against the insolent and arrogant power of plutocracy now so strongly entrenched in the body politic.

Will R. Knox, Intercourse, Pa.—I heartily approve of the "primary pledge" and herewith mail it with my name attached. We, in Lancaster county, Pa., are just beginning to know what we have long suspected, that the so-called democratic party is often controlled by the republican machine.

John H. Martin, New Matamoras, Ohio.—Enclosed herewith find primary pledge duly signed. I think the time has come for the people to write the platforms of their parties.

C. M. Schackleford, Clarence, Mo.—Find enclosed (Continued on page 7.)