

DEMOCRATIC EDITORS KEEP "PEGGING AWAY"

A fine sample of what may be accomplished by organization of the rank and file comes from Lancaster County, Pa. W. R. Knox of Intercourse, Pa., sends a newspaper clipping showing the manner in which the democrats in Lancaster county went to the support of Edward Reilly, a faithful public official who was denounced by the representatives of powerful interests because he stood for an honest accounting to the people on the part of public officials. Mr. Reilly was renominated in a democratic convention conspicuous because of the large number of democrats present. Mr. Knox says "heretofore about 20 per cent of the voters 'ran things,' but at the late primary more than 90 per cent of the voters were present and they were particular as to the kind of delegates sent to the county convention."

Democratic newspapers are working very earnestly in behalf of the primary pledge plan. It is true some editors are at times discouraged. One writes as follows: "We made extended notice of primary pledge in our issue of three weeks ago. From it we have received but one lone reply, which we enclose with this. We will run the pledge at intervals in the future, although we have received so little encouragement as yet. Party leaders seem to think well of it, but go no farther." No one need be discouraged because responses are not prompt and numerous in the beginning. This particular editor and other editors should keep "pegging away." There are many signs of a general awakening among democrats. For a time the work may be slow in some localities, but sooner or later men who strive for the organization of the rank and file will be rewarded by success.

The Magnet, published at New Waterford, O., and edited by W. T. Cutshall, says: "William J. Bryan's primary pledge plan for the purpose of more permanently cementing the democratic party is meeting with universal favor throughout the country and many leading democratic organs are falling in line by not only keeping the pledge standing in their respective journals, but calling especial attention of their readers to the same. The plan is a good one and is already giving evidence of its adoption and growth by democrats in every section of the country."

The Farmington (Mo.) Times and Herald, edited by Theo. D. Fisher, reproduces the primary pledge, and concerning the plan says: "This is getting right back to the people. They are asked to speak out in primary meetings, giving their views and positions on all vital questions, and logically to elect delegates to the various party conventions who will there honestly represent and carry out their expressions. This accomplished, our congressional, state and national conventions would in their declaration of principles represent the views of the people and not the policies and notions of expediency of the politicians. The people would have confidence in a platform thus builded, for it would represent their ideas as no platform shaped along lines of alleged expediency could or would, and would draw all elements of the party to it or send them where they belong—to the opposition. The plan is based not only on the theory that it is the duty of every citizen to take an active part in public affairs in the interest of good government economically and justly administered, but that the people are to be trusted and that they are the platform makers or breakers. Every democrat should be ready and willing to sign the pledge. Already hundreds from all parts of the country have done so, and each week The Commoner gives terse extracts from many who approve of and are helping on this novel primary pledge plan. Reader, if you are a democrat, sign that pledge and send it to The Commoner."

The Monroe Watchman, published at Union, W. Va., and edited by A. S. Johnston copies the Denver News editorial entitled "The Democratic Road" and gives its endorsement to the primary pledge plan. Editor Johnston says he will do all in his power to carry on this good work.

The Thurman (Iowa) Mirror, edited by H. J. Bedford, says: "Democracy's hope for ultimate success rests first of all upon stability of

purpose—strict adhesion to fixed policies calculated to deal impartially with all mankind. Second to constantly battle for preservation of government of, by and for the people. Third, the establishment of a more thorough organization founded upon the democratic policy of keeping the government as close as possible to the people from whence it should come, that the weak shall enjoy the same privileges as the strong in shaping the policies by which they shall be governed. Briefly summed up this is democracy's mission and only by faithful obedience thereto can it hope to achieve a victory that will be grand and lasting. With the single desire that the democratic party shall be quickly elevated to that exalted plane of dominance for that which is good and most needed in government The Commoner has, for some time pursued a vigorous campaign of organization that bids fair to place the democratic party in absolute control by the masses from whence it can only derive power as was demonstrated by the election last fall. Mr. Bryan's primary pledge plan is a short cut to that goal much coveted by all loyal democrats and it is meeting with merited success. Pledges by the thousands are pouring into The Commoner office from every nook and corner of the United States who promise over their signature to attend all the primaries of their party to be held between now and the next democratic convention unless unavoidably prevented, and to use their influence 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. Democrats of Fremont county should send to The Commoner with the least possible delay their pledges to attend primaries and help accomplish this work of organization so well begun."

In a letter to The Commoner, Editor Bedford says: "I am convinced your plan is a winner, if the party voters will accept it as their interests demand. Democracy's success depends on more thorough organization and the adherence to vital issues until they are correctly settled. I wish you success in your campaign for right and justice to all classes."

The Arizona Bulletin, published at Solomonville, Arizona, and edited by F. H. Fowler, endorses the plan and says: "This plan recognizes the right of the democratic voters, the rank and file, to shape and control the policy of the democratic party, and should appeal to all who believe in the rule of the people and that the majority should govern in party and national affairs. It means that the democratic platform shall honestly voice the prevailing sentiment of the people of the party and that the confidence of the people will not be betrayed at the national convention. The citadel of democracy is at the precinct primary; there the people speak for themselves, but from that point to the great national convention the people speak only through delegates. That the primaries be well attended and delegates elected who represent the prevailing sentiment of the voters is of first and paramount importance. Only at the primaries can the will of the people be ascertained, and unless the voters attend such primaries faithfully their wishes will be thwarted in county, state and national conventions. The Bulletin is in favor of beginning the work of organization for the next campaign now, and agrees thoroughly with Mr. Bryan's plan. Never before was it so clearly demonstrated that the rank and file of the democratic voters should control the party than in the late presidential campaign. The men who furnish the votes on election day must be heard all along the line, from precinct primary to national convention."

In a letter addressed to The Commoner, Editor Fowler says: "Allow me to say that personally I am heartily in favor of Mr. Bryan's plan, and shall do all in my power to further same. The course Mr. Bryan is pursuing is pleasing to the rank and file of democracy everywhere, and also commands the respect of those of different political faith."

The People's Advocate, published at Malad, Oneida County, Idaho, and edited by W. H. Peck,

endorses the plan, and says: "Those who do not have the pleasure of perusing the columns of Mr. Bryan's paper, The Commoner, cannot understand the great work he is doing, and what he may accomplish in the future is beyond the power of any man to accurately foretell."

The Advocate then outlines the primary pledge plan, and says: "This seems a very simple plan of organization, but it is surprising to see the number who are entering into the movement, and the letters sent to Mr. Bryan each week, from prominent people in nearly every state, approving his course and offering assistance. The list continues large each week and it is shown that Mr. Bryan made no mistake when he selected the newspaper as the medium through which to keep in touch with the people. By the time the next national convention is held, Bryan will have an army of workers in the field, all striving to the same end, they will be active and aggressive and their influence will be felt in every delegation at the convention."

The Oklahoma Enterprise, published at Mutual, Okla., presents the primary pledge plan to its readers and urges them to get in line.

The Fulton, Mo., Telegraph reproduces the primary pledge and says: "The Telegraph will do its part in aiding every movement that has for its object the ascertainment of the will of the people and the scrupulous enforcement of that will. This paper will also furnish all the information that it can upon the questions which are before the public to the end that its readers may be prepared to render the maximum of assistance to every worthy cause. At the top of this column is a pledge prepared by Mr. Bryan, in simple and straight-forward wording. Neither democrat nor republican need hesitate to take that kind of pledge. It means much in politics. If it was generally observed by the members of both parties there will be less to complain of. In Mr. Bryan's scheme, it merely recognizes the right of the democratic voters to control the policy of their party, and to determine its position upon public questions. In its broader sense it aims at honesty and sincerity in politics; and certainly the democratic party must stand for such honest sincerity if it hopes to appeal successfully to the country. It is a proposition that should appeal to all who believe in the rule of the people—to all who are willing that the majority shall govern in party management and in the nation—and certainly no real democrat or real republican can oppose the principle of rule of the majority. The Telegraph will be pleased to publish letters from the voters of Callaway county and elsewhere upon this question."

The Columbia, Mo., Herald, edited by Walter Williams, says: "A century and a quarter after the American people fought for and obtained the right to govern themselves it seems somewhat odd to hear this right questioned. Yet this is the state of affairs at the present time. The right of self-government is laughed at in certain quarters. It is denied in others. The principles of the Declaration of Independence have just been declared by a distinguished citizen of Massachusetts to be obsolete."

"The democratic party should assert the right of popular self-government. In a republic this is the right preservative of all rights. If the people lose to monopoly or corruption or trust or oligarchy this right then the real republic dies whatever forms remain. Here is the strength of the democratic party. In a failure to realize and act upon it is weakness."

"The platform of the democratic party is in the making. It will be written by the people or by certain well-defined, smooth-spoken gentlemen holding briefs for special interests. We confess to a belief in the right of the people to govern themselves and as corollary to this belief in the right of the members of a political party, the rank and file, to write their own platform."

"When this or that danger to the perpetuity of republican institutions is pointed out it is well to remember that a denial of the right of the people to govern themselves or an attempt to defeat the exercise of this right is the worst of dangers."