

CAST HIS FIRST VOTE FOR FRANKLIN PIERCE

F. E. Wilson, of Springdale, Ark., cast his first vote for president for Franklin Pierce. Although he is now 76 years of age he circulated the primary pledge among his neighbors, Mr. Wilson writes:

"I herewith hand you a list of fifty-one names of democrats who endorse the primary plan. I have been very busy or would have secured more. All democrats endorse it. I am in my seventy-sixth year. My first vote for president was cast for Franklin Pierce. Have voted twice for W. J. Bryan. I have known him since his first election to congress. I was then living in David City, Neb. I have four boys who will support a good democrat in 1908. We intend to organize a club here as soon as the busy season is over."

This fine old democrat has set a good example to younger men. A very little effort on the part of Commoner readers will result in adding many hundreds to the primary pledge roll.

Every reader is urged to lend a hand in this work of organization. The work is progressing at a gratifying rate, but the field is such a large one that it will be necessary for every democrat who can do so to actively interest himself in the movement. Don't withhold your pledge because you always attend primaries. You can help the work by setting a good example for your careless colleague. Send in your own pledge. Then ask your neighbor to sign. It will require time to cover the entire field, but if democrats co-operate, the desired result will be accomplished. 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 straight-forward 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 to 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 9.

Extracts from letters to The Commoner follow:

B. K. Green, Westover, Md.—Enclosed find primary pledge.

E. F. Cunningham, Atty., St. Louis, Mo.—Please find enclosed primary pledge duly signed. I note carefully what the hosts of loyal democrats throughout the country say of the primary pledge plan and desire to record my hearty approval of the plan and my unwavering loyalty to its author, Wm. J. Bryan. The people must bring about any great reform, through action at the primaries. If we remain at home on primary day and let the agents of corruption and special privileges select delegates to our conventions, to draft platforms and promulgate our party principles and nominate our candidates, we can but expect that they will select men who will not be in full sympathy with the plain people. Men who believe in democratic principles and desire to have the government run along those lines are guilty of gross neglect when they fail to attend and vote at all primaries, and it is not enough to merely vote, but we should exercise the utmost of our power and influence in seeing that democratic principles are adopted in our local conventions and sent to our state and national conventions in the hands of men whom we can rely upon to defend them against those who are willing to adopt a cowardly and compromising policy. To compromise is to confess that we are wrong, and such a confession, in the light of recent past experiences, means ignominious defeat. There can be no safe compromise with the forces of wrong. If democratic principles, as declared by Thomas Jefferson, and so ably defended by Mr. Bryan, are right (and they are) these principles must be fostered and defended by the plain people and if we do not control the primaries we must fail. The Commoner's plan is right.

A. L. Herold, Driscoll, W. Va.—I am a subscriber for The Commoner, and although I shall not cast my first vote until 1906, it gives me genuine pleasure to sign the primary pledge and to send it to The Commoner. By doing this I feel that I am, in a small way, aiding a powerful movement, which is being led by one of America's greatest Christian statesmen.

William B. Robinson, Vincennes, Ind.—Enclosed find my primary pledge which I heartily approve, and hope

much good for democracy and the country may be accomplished by this plan of organization. I have been a constant reader and admirer of The Commoner from its first publication and sincerely believe that along the lines of its advocacy will be found the greatest good to the greatest number, and that the adoption of the principle it maintains, while doing no real injustice to any one, would secure the general welfare of the American people. May The Commoner, its editor and friends live long and well, and stand firmly for the right, until right prevails.

C. W. Hunt, Lincoln, Neb.—Enclosed find signed primary pledge. Being a traveling salesman I am not always able to attend the primaries, but make it a point to always cast my vote at the general election. To vote and take an interest in the administration of one's own government is the duty of every American citizen. Not only should they vote, but they should devote as much time as possible to studying the problems of government, the stands taken by the leaders of the different parties, the leaders themselves, and then seek to nominate men for office who have proven by their acts that they are friends of the people and will look after the interests of the people if elected. The great trouble of today is that the mass of voters do not seek to learn what effect their votes will have if cast for this man or for that man or for this principle or for that principle. President Roosevelt in his efforts to establish much needed reform has probably done all that he could under existing conditions, but when we learn of his action in the Bowen-Loomis scandal, his inaction in the beef trust case, the whitewash applied in the Santa Fe-Morton affair, we are led to believe that a large part of his reform talk was to increase his own personal popularity and pacify public sentiment. The people are beginning to see that if these reforms are to be had that they must come through the democratic party and the democrats must see to it that platforms are adopted and that men are nominated on these platforms who will do their duty when elected.

F. M. Sturgis, Franktown, Va.—Enclosed you will find primary pledge properly signed and I promise to attend all democratic primary elections when in my power to do so. I am a firm believer in 1896 and 1900 plat-

forms and hope the time will soon come when your democracy will prevail. Send me some primary pledges and I will do my best to get them signed.

D. E. Weidner, La Fayette, Ind.—I commend your effort with regard to the primary pledge. I wish to offer a suggestion regarding the trust question. Most all have a remedy; therefore I believe I am entitled to an opinion as well. I think the most effective remedy would be to make it impossible for a trust or monopoly to collect an account or realize on their paper, after a court had declared it a trust.

H. H. Bailey, Lula, Tenn.—I send herewith 20 more pledges. It is a pleasure to work for the principles of democracy. I have worked for the cause since I was 15 years old. I think we should meet our enemy on the frontier; if we go down in defeat let's go down with our colors flying and our faces towards the enemy. Then we can say we have fought a good fight and kept the faith. I love The Commoner. I would like to see the circulation increase. Send me some sample copies and I will try to get another club. I would like to know how many pledges you have received. I send in list a letter from John B. Newsom. I wish you success.

John B. Newsom, Enville, Tenn.—I send herewith my pledge. I am an ex-confederate soldier. I gave some of the best years of my life for my country. I believe in a government that is near the people, and for the people. We need a platform that speaks for itself. I hope that every democrat will work for victory. Count me in the front of the fight always.

Clark Cleaver, Nellie, Calif.—I herewith forward my pledge to do my level best for the democratic principles in the political field, to attend primaries, etc., and to do my best to elect its honestly nominated candidates. I voted for Lincoln, and for all the candidates nominated for the presidency by the republican party, down to McKinley. It seems now to me that the republican party has a string in its nose and the trusts hold it.

Nathan Smith, Fulford, Colo.—Please enroll my primary pledge. I am pleased to see the good work going on. Colorado needs lots of education. I am a prospector and miner; have voted the republican ticket more than all other. Since the Peabody misrule it is time for all laboring people to call a halt.

C. B. Coe, Wyandotte, I. T.—Find enclosed two sheets of names who have signed the pledge. I placed all the blanks you sent me out among men that I thought would take an interest in getting the list up. I hope to have remainder in soon.

W. T. Wilson, Bellevue, Texas.—I send you primary pledge with 20 signatures. I heartily approve of Mr. Bryan's plan of the primary pledge. I voted for Mr. Bryan in 1896 and in 1900. I also voted for Mr. Parker in 1904, but it was a bitter pill for me to vote for Mr. Parker. I hope the primary pledge will aid the democrat party in avoiding such blunders as that made last year.

Dr. Robert Blackwell, Danville, Va.—Please find herewith enclosed, list of 35 names to your primary pledge. We Virginia democrats feel that this pledge idea is a very "happy thought." May God grant that our grand old party may soon return to true principles as expressed by Jefferson and Bryan, giving us no more

emetics such as Clevelandism, Parkerism, etc. Many of us have swallowed the last dose of the last named so-called democracy, that we intend to take. Please send me another list. I could get an unlimited number of names if my time would allow me to see the people. You might send all on this list a sample copy of The Commoner as very few, if any, take it. All true Americans should read regularly The Commoner. Best wishes and many earnest prayers for long and prosperous lives for both your paper and its noble owner.

Kean St. Charles, Kingman, Ariz.—Your kind of democracy is the only kind worth fighting for. It is useless to mix the Wall street variety with the true version. Arizonians will have only the one kind Jefferson-Bryan blown in the bottle. The primary pledge is awakening real democrats to their duty. The battle must go on to a finish. No Grovers or Parkers will suit the people in this mineral belt.

C. A. Smith, Bryant, Ind.—You may enroll me as one fully in favor of the primary pledge plan, the Chicago and Kansas City platforms and the man who has stood the test.

J. W. Boeing, Berthold, N. D.—I return herewith primary pledge blank with the names of democrats at Berthold, Ward county, N. D. If you will send me another blank I will endeavor to get the names of democrats at Minto, N. D. I believe the following named persons would take an interest in this work. Wm. M. Woods, Bottineau, N. D.; D. H. McArthur, Bottineau, N. D.; E. A. Burr, Bottineau, N. D.; Frank Slaberg, Grand Forks, N. D.; J. W. H. Farver, Berthold, N. D.; Ross Feigley, Berthold, North Dakota.

E. O. McConce, editor of the Mutual, Okla., Enterprise.—I enclose today under separate cover a copy of the Enterprise containing a short editorial relative to the primary pledge system you have so appropriately put into action. Treat the article according to its merits, as I assure you it was not written with the object of "breaking into print," as the former trend of my editorials proves it to be a mere analogy of what is the common output of the Enterprise. If, however, you can use it to an advantage it is your property. I am heartily in accord with the doctrine of The Commoner, and the system with which it attempts to achieve. Every well-meaning citizen of any party, like Pilot "can find no fault" with a system which does not restrict constitutional liberties, defeat justice or disturb the conscience. Much less ought a democrat fail to respond to such a system. I am very largely impressed with the idea that an awakening of the conscience is the all important issue of the day. It needs no argument to convince the fair minded that the nation is in need of good citizenry rather than good soldiery. I wish The Commoner success in its efforts to restore conscience to an appreciation of the "higher ideal" and trust that statehood for Oklahoma will find a little space now and then in its columns as heretofore.

Stoner J. Wheeler, Covington, Ky.—Enclosed find primary pledge duly signed. I am a constant reader of The Commoner and a great admirer of Mr. Bryan. His noble stand at the St. Louis convention shows the material he is made of.

E. L. Turner, Neosho, Mo.—Am enclosing primary pledge more to let you know where I am than to show my party fealty. The last time I saw you was in Denver, when I was