

GOOD EXAMPLE SET TO YOUNG MEN

Israel Fowler, of Madison, Ind., writes: "Enclosed find 128 signatures to the primary pledge. All democrats are pleased with it. Will use my best efforts for the cause."

Mr. Fowler is 84 years of age. He has set an excellent example for younger democrats. With a little effort on the part of every one who is anxious that the democratic party be organized by the rank and file, every democrat could be enrolled on the primary pledge list.

Recently the Brooklyn Eagle referring to Mr. Bryan's "Back to the People" suggestion, asked how to overcome the political inertness of the people. William Hemstreet, of Brooklyn, says that its inquiry "is the most timely and pregnant of all questions that can come from a publicist, whether national or international, foreign or domestic," and that "our confirmed electoral indifference in our business towns responds to Professor Goldwin Smith's prophecy that our doom is sealed." Mr. Hemstreet adds:

The American people have deliberately concluded that it is cheaper for them to leave their politics to the selfseekers than to bother with it, with their occasionally voting against their party ticket to give the party managers a touch of discipline.

But the folly of that is that the other party managers are quite as bad. So the politicians have concluded that the caucus is their meat. As the people outnumber them ten to one, why don't they also adopt the caucus?

It has already become a question whether the American people will return to this simple duty of the initiative voluntarily or be compelled to by law. Our electoral duties underlie all others; that was the meaning of the revolution. We have got to come right down to the caucus or give up our republic. No devices of the academicians will take the place of our laziness and cowardice.

Mr. Bryan, with true old fashioned American genius, sees the point, but does not go quite far enough back.

Nature and practice have shown that the caucus precedes the primary and, in popular absence, rules it, so why shall not the state adopt the caucus as it has adopted the primary? The caucus is where the politicians get their power to make and administer our laws.

But the bulky people have one obstacle that the few politicians have not, namely, the absence of a place of meeting in the small election district. Then the people must do as the politicians do, take a private house or office, or even the street corner as a caucus to make up a ticket for the primary that elects the conventions.

The countrymen have their town hall. The Board of Elections in the city ought to provide a place for party caucus deliberation as it does for the party primary. Then let the state compel the attendance and balloting there of every eligible voter on pain of disfranchisement or fine. This will solve every civic and political problem. There is not a village in this land that cannot give this city points in civil government, because their best men are in at the political initiatives.

We vainly boast that we are American sovereigns. Then let us be content to do a sovereign's duty. It takes only two evenings a year of our stingy time. Until the state adopts this coercion let interested patriots get up, in their respective electoral districts, right about their own homes, a caucus society. They are numerous enough to take possession of the primaries and not half try. This will be a happy revolution, for the people are always disinterested, brave, public-spirited and wise. The step is so simple and natural that it has been overlooked.

Charles Stephens, Columbus, Kas., writes: "Believing that your plan for placing the voters on

record, by securing a pledge from each to attend all primaries and conventions, will be one of the main factors in bringing about a glorious victory of the reform forces of this country in 1908, I cheerfully send you my pledge. I do not do this upon the theory that I will fail to perform my duty in the absence of such a pledge, but because it will place me in touch with him whose life-purpose is to devote his entire time and energy in an effort to release the people from the grasp of predatory corporations, which, for the want of better laws, are plundering the people of this country. There is one thing that should be included in the pledge, and that is, that each voter should also agree to keep apace with the times, so that he will know what to vote for when he attends the primaries and conventions. To this end, he should take and carefully read The Commoner, the greatest of all the great publications of its kind.

"After the death of my father, which occurred when I was but a child, it was announced that nothing had been left to me but my strength. After attaining my majority I found that I had fallen heir to some valuable stock in the greatest corporation in the world; not in the Standard Oil company, but in the corporation known as the Government of the United States. At once realizing that this corporation controls every dollar that goes into and out of my pocket, and human liberty as well, I thereafter attended all stockholders' meetings (primaries, conventions and elections), in order that I might use my influence and cast my vote, in the interest of the great concern. Ever since I became a voter I have been unable to understand why some voters pay absolutely no attention to these great "stockholders' meetings," but always attend such meetings of another corporation, where they have \$5 or \$10 invested, and argue until they are red in the face, over a matter which involves but a few cents. This is, indeed, one of the problems of the age. I have a \$25 share in a rural telephone company, every share of the stock of which is always represented at the annual stockholders' meetings. When a motion is made by a stockholder in favor of a certain plan we follow his reasoning instead of our prejudice, and we vote accordingly as we see it, although we are members of different political parties and of different religious and fraternal organizations. We stand by the institution instead of dividing up into different factions and standing by our respective factions or parties, right or wrong. Why is it that the business of this great country cannot be conducted in the same way? Why is it that the cunning political manipulator can, with a wave of the flag and a shout for "the good old party," secure the endorsement of a policy which puts millions of the people's money into his pockets? Why is it that so many business men spend their days and nights trying to prevent the loss of a cent in their private affairs and never give an unprejudiced thought to their interest in the public business, where they are losing large sums through the acts of their dishonest, self-serving public servants? It is because they look upon political contests as they do on a baseball game and want their side to win, whether they have the best man or not. It is prejudice.

"By increasing the circulation of The Commoner we will secure a better attendance at conventions, by those who have never signed the pledge. I am offering to pay one-half of the subscription price on 100 subscriptions to your paper, from this county, believing that it is the best \$30 investment that I can make in the interest of the reform movement."

Extracts from letters received at The Commoner office follow:

J. B. Hill, Gilmer, Tex.—In your issue of the 11th instant appeared a report from me concerning a list of 103 signatures to the primary pledge. Said communication was credited to J. Ben Hice, when it should have been J. Ben Hill. Please let this serve as a correction of the mistake.

A. A. Hobson, Bristol, Va.—I am an old man, nearly 74 years of age, and have a large family—four boys and five girls and fourteen grandchildren. I have been a justice of the peace in this city for about fifteen years. Am a Virginian by birth, and a democrat dyed in the wool. I wish you success in your efforts.

Wm. Horchler, Newburg, W. Va.—I herewith

send list of primary pledges, containing thirty-six names. They are all true and enthusiastic democrats. I will get a list of subscribers for The Commoner as soon as I can. Democrats in this county are in a hopeless minority, which makes it hard to do missionary work, where it is so badly needed. I will do my best. I am German, came to this country January 3, 1855. The first vote I cast was for Stephen A. Douglas. I have voted for the democratic nominee ever since—even for Parker—but only on the advice of The Commoner.

Grove C. Squire, Melrose, Ia.—Enclosed find pledge signed by myself and a few others. Had every democrat taken such a pledge in 1903 the story throughout the country would have been vastly different. I am with the reform element of the democratic party from now until 1908 in case we can get the masses to act. Your plan is the simplest and best I know of, and it seems to be reaching the body from ocean to ocean. That is the main thing—all must be reached and all interested.

J. A. Russell, Piggott, Ark.—Enclosed find my pledge. I have always voted the democratic ticket. I long to see the day when right, truth and justice will rule this nation of ours. I am 59 years old. I am a reader of The Commoner and wish it success in the doctrines it teaches.

G. C. Spain, Weston, W. Va.—I am glad to know that I can send you thirty-six of my neighbors' names signed to the primary pledge. I approve the plan laid down in The Commoner so that the truth and the right may prevail. I have always voted the democratic ticket and always will.

George Dinsmore, Little Hocking, R. I.—Enclosed find list of those signing the primary pledge. This list might be extended, as every voter who is in favor of democratic principles is in favor and anxious to sign. We all realize the importance of attending the primaries. Sometimes we hardly have as many as are necessary to do the business—decidedly a lack of interest.

C. T. Reynolds, West Hamlin, W. Va.—It gives me great pleasure to assist you what little I can in the great and good cause you are advocating. It needs no arguments to get the democrats in this community to sign the pledge. I enclose twenty-five pledges.

B. J. Wilson, Selica, N. C.—Enclosed find a list of signatures to the primary pledge. You might send a sample copy of The Commoner to each of them. I wish every democrat in the county would take it. I am now 66 years old, and can't get around like young people.

N. J. Pierce, Springfield, Mo.—Enclosed find primary pledge filled out. These men are all warm friends of The Commoner and will carry out this pledge.

A. T. Ferguson, Pinnacle, N. C.—After considering the primary pledge since March I think it is a great plan to bring the democrats throughout the United States together. Too many men think they should not take interest in primary work, and wait for a few bosses to meet at the places appointed for conventions and put up such men as suit them. The common man's vote counts at an election as much as John D. Rockefeller's or Morgan's, and the latter work unceasingly from year to year for their interest, while the poor man should be more interested than they, for such men as Rockefeller can live under any administration, while the masses are ground down to poverty. I sign the pledge in good faith and will work for the betterment of the people.

J. S. McClintock, Deadwood, S. D.—I am pleased to send in the names of twenty more democrats from different sections of the Black Hills, who have signed the primary pledge and will be at the front doing all they can for the righteous cause of democracy.

La Vergne Orton, attorney, Humboldt, Kas.—You will please find enclosed the primary pledge, signed and endorsed. It is a great idea, and one which all loyal democrats should heartily endorse. The time to commence the battle is today, and not wait until tomorrow. Our enemies are well organized; that is one of the essentials to success, and let every true democrat prepare for the great battle that is sure to be fought in 1908. The principles advocated by William J. Bryan are the only