

ILLINOIS DEMOCRATS AND THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

In 1904 there were cast in Illinois 327,606 votes for the democratic nominee for president. In 1884 the democratic nominee for president received 312,351 votes. So, in twenty years, from 1884 to 1904, the democratic vote increased only 15,255. In 1888 the democratic nominee received 348,371, which was 20,765 more than the democratic nominee received in 1904. In 1892 the democratic nominee received 426,281 votes, which was 98,675 more than was received by the democratic nominee in 1904. In 1896 the democratic nominee received 464,632, which was 137,026 more than was received by the democratic nominee in 1904. In 1900 the democratic nominee received 503,061, which was 175,455 more than was received by the democratic nominee in 1904.

This does not necessarily mean that democratic principles have become unpopular in Illinois. Men are now quite familiar with conditions that controlled during the presidential campaign of 1904 and the demonstrations in Illinois, as in other states, since the latest presidential election show that the people are ready to return to the democratic party whenever the democratic party returns to democratic principles and frames its platform and nominates its candidates accordingly.

There is, than Illinois, no better field for work by earnest democrats. It is a good sign, so far as Illinois is concerned, that that state stands third in the number of primary pledges returned to The Commoner office. The democrats of Illinois have done great work along the lines of the primary pledge plan of organization. There are, however, many Illinois democrats who have not, so far, co-operated, and the interest of these may be aroused if those democrats who have already assisted will renew their activities and bend their energies toward the enrollment in the primary pledge list of every Illinois democrat who believes that his party will win success by deserving it.

The same appeal which The Commoner has made to the democrats of Missouri, of Ohio and of West Virginia it now makes to the democrats of Illinois. Every Illinois reader of The Commoner is requested to ask every Illinois democrat of his acquaintance to sign the primary pledge and call upon his own neighbor to do likewise. If a number of democrats of every Illinois county would organize for the purpose of circulating the primary pledge form in every precinct, obtaining the signature of every democrat who is willing to discharge his duty to his party, the field would be covered in a short time, and the results would count. Illinois democrats are reminded that this work of organization is not to terminate with the signing of the pledge. The interest of democrats once aroused is to be maintained, clubs are to be organized in every county of the state and in every precinct of the county, these clubs having for their purpose the promulgation of democratic principles and the protection of the democratic creed from those who would destroy it.

Many thousands of Illinois democrats have co-operated with The Commoner along the lines of the primary pledge plan. If these democrats will but renew their activities they will place The Commoner under great obligations to them and what is, of course, more important, they will have rendered distinguished service to their country because of their earnest efforts to make their party a valuable agent in the perpetuation of popular government.

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that, according to the terms of this plan 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 this page.

Extracts from letters received at The Commoner office follow:

M. B. Barker, Lane, Kans.—Enclosed find six signatures to the primary pledge.
H. N. Morris, Washington, Iowa—Find enclosed four signatures to the primary pledge.
Gilbert Barbee, Joplin, Mo.—I herewith send 110 signatures to the primary pledge.
B. M. Nye, Santa Rosa, Calif.—Please find

enclosed fifteen signatures to the primary pledge.

G. W. Weese, Upper Glade, W. Va.—Enclosed find primary pledge with thirty-nine names signed by Jeffersonian democrats. Success to The Commoner and the pledge plan.

W. G. Maggard, Hiseville, Ky.—I send you a list of 90 signatures to the primary pledge. Success to The Commoner and the cause it represents.

C. S. Essex, Pueblo, Colo.—I enclose herewith eight signatures to the pledge.

Caleb Smith, Pleasant Ridge, Ky.—Find enclosed \$1.00 for renewal of subscription to The Commoner, and my primary pledge signed. Mr. Bryan is doing a good work for a noble cause in promoting the primary pledge organization. Long live The Commoner.

Wilbur Y. Smith, Lineville, Ala.—I herewith enclose 35 names of voters who signed Mr. Bryan's primary pledge. When I can be of service to you, I am at your command.

F. A. Phelps, Nicklow, W. Va.—Enclosed please find my primary pledge accompanied with 55 democrats. I live in a rural district and find compensation in trying to build up the grand old party upon Jeffersonian principles.

Israel Wolfe, Arbuckle, W. Va.—Enclosed find primary pledge signed by ten.

Willie White, Canterbury, W. Va.—Enclosed please find thirty-five signatures to the primary pledge.

Thomas Malony, Spokane, Wash.—I enclose herewith twenty-five signatures to the pledge.

A. W. Bass, Lakeview, Mich.—Find herewith the primary pledge signed by nine good democrats.

O. McDonough, Rockwell, Ia.—Enclosed you will find circular bearing twenty names of standing democrats, most of whom are Irish and ever loyal to their belief. It is with great pleasure that I assist you in obtaining pledges.

M. A. Neff, Cincinnati, Ohio—Please place my name on your list of Bryan democrats. I cast my first democratic vote for you in 1896. Never attended a democratic convention as a delegate until this year. Have missed no primaries and don't intend to. I have attended all the national conventions since 1896, but not as a delegate. If I live will work to secure a delegate that will not be led by those who controlled the St. Louis convention.

A. P. Gibson, Harvey, W. V.—Enclosed find list of signatures to the primary pledge.

James M. McComas, Ranger, W. Va.—I enclose primary pledge petition. I have been a little slow getting it filled out owing to not being able to circulate about much, as I am seventy-two years old and not able to get about very much. But I send you the names of thirty-six genuine democrats. As old as I am when I think of doing something to the advancement of democracy I feel like a boy. I enlisted in the cause of democracy and voted the democratic ticket from the time I was twenty-one years old. I am a radical free silver democrat, being of the opinion that had it not been for the recent gold discovery our treasury would have been drained of every cent it contained.

G. S. Bird, Wellford, W. Va.—I sent my own

primary pledge in early last spring. I send the names of 20 more true and tried democrats whom party lashes can not drive anywhere. They have become disgusted with grafting and party bosses.

W. O. Black, Casswell, Mo.—Enclosed find primary pledge with 35 names. Wish I had time to get a hundred. Best wishes to The Commoner and William J. Bryan.

Alva E. Gray, Edgerton, Wis.—I secured these two names in a hurry. Hope they will do some good. I hope to secure more later.

T. L. Stamper, Denton, Ky.—I think this plan of organization is good. We need something to keep our people in line. So far as I have gone with this pledge every man has signed.

P. H. Brumfield, Dunleith, W. Va.—Enclosed you will find my primary pledge. This has been my life long work, and meets with my sincere approval. I would suggest that all of the democrats of our county, both young and old, be awakened to a sense of their duty, and be induced to attend primary meetings and conventions, so that the principles of democracy will be fully understood and impressed upon their minds. My father used to take me to conventions when I was but a boy, and the impression thus formed has enabled me to resist all the influences to waver or do anything else but be a straight democrat all my life. Yours for the good of our country.

Joshua S. Moore, Roundpeak, N. C.—Please find my name at the head of seventy-five names signed to the enclosed primary pledge. I am seventy-four years old; have always voted the democratic ticket. These signers are staunch democrats, and may be depended upon. I will try to get some more signers later on.

P. C. Callaway, El Dorado Spring, Mo.—I send you herewith the primary pledge. I believe The Commoner has fallen upon the right plan. Every democrat, whether he signs and forwards his pledge or not, should resolve to attend his own primary, and use his influence for the triumph of democratic principles of government. The Commoner is indeed doing a great and much needed work. In the teaching of right principles of government, in the placing before the minds of its readers high and lofty ideals of manhood, and in its unmerciful attacks against graft and corruption in high office, it is doing a reformative work that at this present time is much needed. I have read almost every issue of The Commoner since it began its career, and I have come to regard it as a household necessity. If the masses of the people could be induced to read and meditate upon the truths found in its every issue, and with honesty to themselves, would lay aside their political prejudices, this country would give a sweeping victory to democracy in 1908. But the most difficult thing for a reformer is, not always to convince, but to convict. Nevertheless, the only thing to do is to keep hammering away. May The Commoner live to see its doctrines and reforms take hold of the people. May the masses learn to see their best interests and in spite of their political affiliations, may they develop courage to vote their interests at the polls.

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

I promise to attend all the primaries of my party to be held between now and the next Democratic National Convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to use my influence 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.

Signed _____

Street _____ Postoffice _____ State _____

County _____ Voting precinct or ward _____

Fill out Blanks and mail to Commoner Office, Lincoln, Nebraska.