

A Chapter in Nebraska Politics

Through the courtesy of the Omaha Bee The Commoner is permitted to reproduce the fac simile of a letter together with an editorial which appeared in the Bee of August 14, 1907.

The Bee is a republican newspaper, but it protests against the misrepresentation of Mr. Bryan by those who seek to make it appear that he bolted the democratic ticket in 1892.

Mr. Bryan does not deem it necessary that his democracy be protected from the attacks of the New York World, but the Bee's editorial and fac simile are reproduced on this page in recognition of the graceful act of a Nebraska newspaper that is not in sympathy with Mr. Bryan politically, as well as for the purpose of challenging the good faith of the New York World when it made this charge against Mr. Bryan and inviting the World to reproduce the Boyd letter as printed in the Bee together with the Bee's editorial.

It may be explained that Governor Boyd wrote two letters to Nebraska democrats, one under date of October 17, 1892, and one under date of November 4, 1892. The first letter was sent to a limited number of leaders; the second letter, which the Bee reproduces, was more widely circulated and was issued at a late hour in the hope that it would not become public property.

It may also be explained that Governor Boyd was what was once known as "a gold democrat." And in 1900 the republican newspapers printed an interview with Governor Boyd in which he declared in favor of Mr. McKinley's election. So it will be seen that the so-called "Nebraska bolt of 1892" was operated through a gentleman to whom the New York World would point as a model democrat rather than through the one whom the World has so often sought to brand "a wild-eyed populist." That "bolt" originated with the democratic national committee when it was composed of men whose democracy was vouched for by the New York World.

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The Bee is not politically aligned with William Jennings Bryan, but for the truth of history it volunteers the evidence to exculpate him from an old charge which is being revamped anew. In a pungent editorial, entitled, "The Source of Bryanism," the New York World undertakes to support its assertion that Bryanism is traceable to populism by charging Mr. Bryan with having helped in 1892 to arrange a form of fusion between Nebraska democrats and populists by which the bulk of the democratic vote was cast for Weaver, Cleveland polling fewer than 25,000 in a total of 200,000. For Mr. Bryan The Commoner enters denial, particularly to that part of the World's charge that would lead people to believe that Mr. Bryan bolted the democratic ticket in 1892. The Commoner goes on to say:

"It is true that a large number of democratic votes were cast for General Weaver, but this was done in the hope of keeping Nebraska out of the republican column in that year. The plan was not arranged by Mr. Bryan. It was arranged by the democratic national committee and for the benefit of Mr. Cleveland. The plan was communicated to the democrats in a 'confidential letter' written by the late Governor James E. Boyd, under date of October 17, 1892. In that letter Governor Boyd asked democrats to vote for the Weaver electors, saying that he

made the request at the instance of the democratic national committee, and he assured Nebraska democrats that this would be 'a definite step toward victory and the ultimate triumph of Cleveland and Stevenson and the principles they represented.'"

The Bee presents herewith a fac simile of the "confidential letter" referred to, which is practically self-explanatory. That the democratic scheme to sidetrack the electoral vote of Nebraska to Weaver was frustrated was due largely to this paper and its then editor, who was at the same time the republican national

committeeman for Nebraska. Governor Boyd's confidential letter was in the hands of the republican national committeeman before it reached the democrats for whom it was intended, and by prompt and judicious work to counteract its effect Nebraska was carried for the republican ticket and its electoral vote cast for Benjamin Harrison.

In following out the directions given in the Boyd letter in 1892 Mr. Bryan simply proved his devotion and loyalty to the Grover Cleveland democracy, from which he had not then been weaned.—Omaha Bee.

BOYD'S HISTORIC LETTER.

LINCOLN, NEB., NOV. 4th, 1892.

DEAR SIR:

It affords me pleasure to inform you that I have been personally authorized by the National Committee of the Democratic party to urge the democrats of Nebraska to support the electors nominated by the Independent party in this state--the object being to so increase the vote for the Weaver electors that those nominated in behalf of Harrison shall be defeated, and this state taken out of its accustomed place in the republican column.

To do this is no sacrifice of democratic principles, inasmuch as the object is the triumph of democracy and the downfall of republicanism and the vicious policies which it advocates.

In Nebraska, a vote for Weaver and Field is more than half a vote for Cleveland and Stevenson.

Hoping for your co-operation, I remain,

Yours in the good cause,

