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The Value of Primaries

Those who think that the highest duty of a public man is to avoid being turned down will find food for reflection in Mr. Roosevelt's first experience after re-entering politics. When he reached New York he found a special session of the legislature wrestling with the primary bill recommended by Governor Hughes. He at once entered the fight and insisted upon the passage of the primary bill, but the measure which he endorsed was turned down by both the senate and the house. In an editorial in *The Outlook* (July 9) he defends his position and calls attention to the fact that the bill was supported by a majority of the republicans in both the senate and the house, but was defeated because a minority of the republicans joined with a majority of the democrats to oppose it. Mr. Roosevelt will be stronger instead of weaker for having endorsed the measure, provided of course the provisions of the measure prove satisfactory to the public. Without a knowledge of the details of the bill *The Commoner* could not express an opinion as to that particular bill, but it is in favor of the primary plan and it believes that the voters, without respect of party, favor the principle embodied in the primary. In defending the measure which he supported Mr. Roosevelt says:

"In its essence this is a movement to make the government more democratic, more responsive to the wishes and needs of the people as a whole. With our political machinery it is essential to have an efficient party, but the machinery ought to be suited to democratic and not oligarchic customs and habits. The questions whether in a self-governing republic we shall have self-governing parties is larger than that particular bill. We hold that the right of popular self-government is incomplete unless it includes the right of the voters not merely to choose between candidates that have been nominated, but also the right to determine who these candidates shall be."

Mr. Roosevelt is right. The primary is a democratic idea and *The Commoner* is gratified to have Mr. Roosevelt defend it upon the ground that it is democratic—that it is intended to make the government more responsive to the wishes of the people. But how will Mr. Roosevelt oppose the initiative and referendum which is, if possible, more democratic than the primary? The primary does enable the people to select the candidate, but the candidate, as Mr. Roosevelt knows, often misrepresents his constituents, and at present the constituent is helpless to protect himself. He may select a man in whom he has perfect confidence and yet find that the man is secretly tied to interests hostile to the public. He may even bind his candidate to the platform, but the representative may violate the platform as representatives constantly do. If the people have a right to select a can-

didate, have they not a right to enforce the carrying out of their wishes?

The initiative and referendum gives this right. Through the initiative the voters can compel the submission of any question which the legislature refuses to submit, and through the referendum they can veto any measure which they regard as objectionable. If the people of New York had the initiative and referendum they could easily secure a primary provided they want it. They could by petition force the submission of the proposition and then at an election they could endorse it, and make it a law. There can be betrayal of trust not only once but continuously even with the primary—although it is less likely—but with the initiative and referendum the people can protect themselves from betrayal and insure legislation in harmony with their wishes and their interests.

Let us hope that Mr. Roosevelt's experience with the primary question will lead him to the support of that much larger and more important reform, the initiative and referendum. He may even come to understand the value of the recall after he has had to deal with a few faithless public servants who secure office by false representations and then continue in office on the theory that they have more right to the salary than the people have to faithful public service.

A GREAT MAN GONE

In the death of Senator John Warwick Daniel of Virginia, the nation has lost one of its greatest orators and statesmen, and the democratic party one of its most brilliant members. For a generation Senator Daniel has been one of the leaders of his party and has been conspicuous in all of its conventions. He was one of the managers in the fight for the endorsement of the doctrine of bimetallism in 1896, and in introducing Mr. Bryan at Richmond, Virginia, a few weeks afterward, delivered one of the most eloquent tributes paid the candidate during the campaign. He took an active part in the conventions of 1900, 1904 and 1908, and in all the councils of the party, as well as in matters of legislation.

He was a lovable character and his disputes within the party did not disturb the friendship that existed between him and those who differed from him. His services to the state will long be remembered, and the party throughout the country will share the sorrow that his death has brought to his family, to the commonwealth of Virginia and to the whole country.

THE LA PAZ COLLEGE

Mr. Bryan has received from Mr. George A. Carden, a well known lawyer living at Dallas, Texas, this letter: "Herewith I send you check for \$10 for the college at La Paz, Bolivia. I wish you success in this enterprise."

FAIR NOTICE TO BREWERS

"No man is so big and powerful," says the *Omaha World-Herald*, "that he can compel other men, who are freemen, to allow him to do their thinking for them." That is pretty straight notice to the American brewer.

WANTED—MEN

(James Russel Lowell on Wendell Phillips.)
He stood upon the world's broad threshold; wide
The din of battle and of slaughter rose;
He saw God stand upon the weaker side,
That sank in seeming loss before its foes.
Many there were who made great haste and sold
Unto the cunning enemy their swords;
He scorned their gifts of fame, and power, and gold,
And underneath their soft and flowery words,
Heard the cold serpent hiss; therefore he went
And humbly joined him to the weaker part,
Fanatic named, and fool, yet well content
So he could be the nearer to God's heart,
And feel its solemn pulses sending blood
Through all the wide-spread veins of endless good.

The Rayner Interview

Wide publicity is being given to an interview by Senator Rayner of Maryland, in which the following paragraphs appear:

"Will Mr. Bryan and his followers permit the democratic party to nominate a president of the United States and to send to the people a platform of its own construction? If he shall insist, as I have no reason to think he will, that he must select a candidate for us and that he must frame the platform, then we must rise in our might and assert the principle that no man has the right to dictate the nomination and formulate the principles of the democratic party.

"Three times have we gone down to defeat under the platforms that we could not defend before the people, and it would be absolutely fatal now for the democratic party to again rush into the arms of disaster in pursuit of policies that can not be maintained."

It is worth while for the democrats of the nation to consider the above paragraphs. The second paragraph explains the first. Senator Rayner thinks that we have been defeated three times because we had platforms which we could not defend. To which defeats does he refer? We have had FOUR defeats in succession, 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1908. Senator Rayner does not say that we have gone down to defeat four times on platforms that we could not defend, but only three times. Which defeat does he mean to except from his statement? Undoubtedly the defeat of 1904. But why does he overlook that defeat when the party polled a million and a quarter less votes than in either of the other three campaigns? Probably because that year the nomination suited Senator Rayner. Senator Rayner in giving advice to the party ought to explain just what his attitude was in each of the three campaigns. It is evident from his statement that he was not satisfied with three of the platforms, and he does not want the party to rush into disaster by pursuing the policies endorsed in those platforms, but what about the campaign of 1904? Is he willing to rush into the arms of defeat by pursuing the policies endorsed in that campaign?

He asks whether Mr. Bryan and his followers will permit the democratic party to nominate a president of the United States and to send to the people a platform of its own construction. Mr. Rayner need not bother himself about Mr. Bryan. He has no desire to dictate. One individual out of six and a half million is not able to do much harm anyhow. The democratic party of which the senator speaks in such a fatherly way contains so many democrats that Mr. Bryan is not likely to have much influence unless a great many democrats agree with him, and it is hardly fair to call those who agree with him his followers; they are his co-workers. He does not assume any authority; he does not ask them to accept his views; but it so happens that he and they, thinking independently, reach the same conclusions on a number of questions, and are they not entitled to a voice in the nominating of a president and in the writing of a platform? One would suppose from Senator Rayner's remarks that Mr. Bryan and his followers were a little group in one corner of the democratic party and that they were trying to control the policy of a much larger group, which Senator Rayner describes as "we." He says, "we must rise in our might," etc. But who are "we?" Are they the ones who believe that our platforms have been indefensible in three campaigns? If so, why did they not rise in their might and write those platforms? We have never had three platforms more clearly written by the people themselves than the platforms of 1896, 1900 and 1908. In the last campaign the "we" element of the party did its best to write a platform, but succeeded in securing about one-tenth of the convention. Must that "we" control the next convention in order to assure us a platform that can be defended?

The democrats of the United States might as

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