

"If the People Rule Why Don't They Get What They Want?"

J. N. K., Carthage, Mo.—There are a good many reasons "why the people don't rule." Abraham Lincoln, than whom no greater statesman since his election as president, placed capital secondary to labor. Now the dollar is considered before the man. He believed in the honesty and sincerity of what present day republicans designate as the common herd and incapable of self government. Mr. Lincoln was always guided by public opinion and of a higher morality. He was the leader in formulating that opinion, and as he was honest, he believed in the honesty of the people and in their capacity. He viewed and deprecated the rise of the capitalistic class as more dangerous to the perpetuity of the union than was the rebellion. Republicanism since his time, has dwindled until it has degenerated into a political cesspool, and men seek office for the graft it affords them. Insurgency in the republican party will never cleanse that political cesspool, and if the insurgents want genuine progressive reform they will have to become democrats. United action by them and their constituency with democrats will produce beneficial results, otherwise their endeavors will be failures. We have had presidents far more deserving of impeachment than was Andrew Johnson, men who violated their oath to support the constitution and the congressional laws enacted thereunder. The people do not as they should hold the big stick and do not rule. They never will so long as capital and corporation influences dominate the government, and in my opinion (which may be sneered at) such domination will be continued if the present administration retains its usurped power until overthrown by revolution. Then they who brought on the storm will meet the cyclone. When a political party can only be held in power by misleading their partisans by false and malicious statements, promises made which fail to materialize, that employment of labor depends on high protection (the tax of which enriches the beneficiaries and impoverishes the many), it only requires that they who labor be educated to have knowledge of present conditions. Labor will find employment whether we have a tariff or do not have it. The cotton crop of the south protects the labor in all the industrial mercantile corpora-

tions of the country, and not the tariff. United action by the cotton planters, by drastic measures in their power to adopt, would show the fallacy that protective duties give such employment. Should they conspire to hold their product, the courts might decide against their conspiracy as in restraint of trade; and the conspiracy entered into by Aldrich, Payne & Co., and their beneficiaries in the late law of tariff enactment comes under alike in restraint of trade and in discrimination between citizens. Multiplicity of commissions, of new offices, giving greater patronage to the administration, increases its hold of power and prevents rule of the people.

W. F. Hood, Animas Forks, Colo.—If the people rule! It is to laugh, or swear, as one is inclined. I have not been able to express my opinion concerning the last presidential election (to say nothing of the three previous ones) in writing that would pass the United States mail inspectors. Ignorance and prejudice on the one hand, and deceit and cunning on the other, is the reason why the people do not rule. So it is self-evident that the remedy is education—a painfully slow and heart-breaking process. Some wag has said that "Life is just one d—d thing after another." How appropriate that is applied to our political life! How do we learn? During or after the silver campaign of 1896 the Hon. C. S. Thomas of Denver said: "The people will have to think it out through their stomachs." Now one would think that that method would knock the persimmon, but it didn't. I think the next campaign was won by the slogan of the "Full Dinner Pail," coupled with the threat, that if Bryan was elected they need not come back to work. Now it seems that that was a fallacy. One of the surest ways to learn anything is first to learn how not to do it. There is only one drawback to it, and that is, that before we learn all the ways how not to do it we are dead. As long as labor has no more self-respect and manhood than to "lick the hand that smites," as they did the last election, they do not deserve "a full dinner pail." But I firmly believe, that in another generation, this will be a pretty good country to live in. And all brought

about by the initiative, referendum and recall, which being interpreted, means the people rule. Even then the millennium will not be at hand, simply because humanity is not perfect and probably never will be, but then all mistakes will be of the head and not of the heart. In other words, the mistakes will not be as now—malicious deceit—as exemplified in the Payne-Aldrich tariff law, and such would-be laws as asset currency, ship subsidy, and the lack of such laws as the income tax, inheritance tax and any other honestly enforced tax law. If our laws reflect public sentiment, what a fine aggregation of rascals we are. We are as bad as the fellow who was slightly under the influence of John Barleycorn and robbed his own trunk. But we are not all drunk. After the nation has had the initiative, referendum and recall for a few years we will abolish the American house of lords, not only as undemocratic, but infernally expensive, especially when you consider how they are elected. Forty dollars per vote in a general election would spell quite a sum. The reason the people don't rule is there are too many who believe that "Jones pays the freight," and that the tariff is not a tax. In regard to the latest fallacy, which I suppose will last about a generation (and the democrats are about as deep in the mud as the republicans are in the mire) is this, that the tariff must only cover the difference in cost of production at home and abroad. Again, it is to laugh. Is the wage paid per day the only factor to be considered? Perish the thought. It is a fact conceded by all that the efficiency and daily output of the American steel worker and the factory worker is several times that of the daily output per man than of any country on the earth. Furthermore, if this is not true, how can we undersell the foreigner at his own door? The difference in cost of labor production! Rats! And again rats! "Come, children, it is time to go to bed." But the fact remains, that the government has to have a revenue. How is it to be raised? That is the question of the hour, yes, all hours. That is good for a chapter or two of its own. In the meantime, you can bet your last simoleon that it will not be raised directly and on the square for some time. The children are not ready for that yet. They like to be humbugged too well.

R. W. Safford, Moscow, Idaho.—In answer to the question put by Senator Owen, I wish to say that to assume that the people rule is a delusion, for a majority of the people will assert that we do rule. Now for some of the reasons why we do not rule: Apathy and indifference; a subsidized press; party prejudice, caused by listening to one side; intimidation and coercion of employers, and the influence of the many thousands of federal employes who desire to hold their jobs. All these together with the subtle influence of money used to corrupt the people and the law-making bodies are reasons why the people do not rule, and for the same reasons do not get what they want, or in other words what they ought to have. Apathy and indifference we might point out as a prime cause why the people do not rule. With a great many voters he who serves them is only a passing incident, while with the privileged class who profit by legislation it is a constant thought with them and quite important who is elected to the legislature and to congress. Here is where the subsidized press that is independent between times comes to the scratch in the campaign and does the work of the "system." "A

chain is no stronger than its weakest link," and the government is no stronger than the people make it. I am a firm believer in the initiative and referendum and believe when it becomes the universal law of the land and firmly adhered to we will come nearer having a government of, by and for the people.

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