

Ohio's Opinion of Governor Harmon

Columbus, Ohio, March 18.—To the Editor of the Lincoln (Neb.) Journal: I have just read a statement in your paper over the signature of C. M. Gruenther, manager and spokesman of Harmon's campaign in Nebraska, which appears to be a defense of Governor Harmon's record and criticism on a circular issued by the progressive democratic league of Ohio. Mr. Gruenther takes it upon himself to inform the democrats of Nebraska that this pamphlet is an anonymous circular and its parentage is unknown. If he had wanted to state the facts and had looked on the outside cover he would see that this pamphlet was issued by the progressive democratic league of Ohio, rooms 510-511 Harrison building, Columbus, Ohio.

The progressive democratic league in Ohio was organized on January 2, 1912, when some 200 representative democrats from all parts of Ohio gathered in Columbus and perfected an organization. The president of this league, John J. Lentz, was a member of congress from this state for two terms, elected in the memorable campaign of 1896 and re-elected in 1898. His voice has been heard in almost every state of the union in behalf of progressive democratic principles and he is one of the leading democrats of Ohio. The secretary, William W. Durbin, Kenton, O., was the chairman of the democratic state committee in 1896 and 1897, was delegate to the national convention in 1900, was democratic candidate for auditor of state in 1908, running almost 50,000 ahead of his ticket and coming within a few thousand votes of election. The treasurer, John H. Blacker of Chillicothe, O., is one of the leading bankers of that place and he was chairman of the democratic state committee in 1898 and a delegate to the national convention in 1896. Among other officers of the league are J. W. Johnson of Waverly, O., editor of the Waverly Watchman; H. H. McFadden of Steubenville, O., editor of the Steubenville Gazette; Henry Kampf of Piqua, O., editor of the Piqua Leader-Dispatch; Earl D. Bloom of Bowling Green, O., editor of the democratic paper at that place; Charles Shively, editor of the Norwalk, O., democratic paper; Adam Bridge, editor of the Franklin News. I have given these newspaper men to show that the democratic press of Ohio is not unanimous for Mr. Harmon by any means. Besides those mentioned above there are at least twenty-five or thirty more democratic papers in Ohio openly opposing Mr. Harmon's candidacy. Other members of the league include Charles E. Mason of Hamilton, O., John T. Flynn of Bellaire, Congressman John P. Whitacre of Canton, O., Hon. L. C. Koplin of Akron, O., R. L. Gehman of Medina, O., and many other prominent, active democrats who have represented their party in state and national conventions and in various capacities, all of whom are opposed to the nomination of Mr. Harmon because Mr. Harmon is not a progressive democrat.

One of the planks upon which Mr. Harmon was elected in 1908 and 1910 declared in favor of the initiative and referendum. Mr. Harmon openly repudiated this plank of the platform on February 8 in an address to our constitutional convention and thousands of democrats in Ohio have repudiated him who before that time were wavering in their support.

From a reading of the article of Mr. Gruenther it would appear that the biggest part of this article was prepared in Ohio and sent to Nebraska to be put out over the name of Mr. Gruenther. I want to take up a few things spoken of in the letter to show how tricky this answer is. Mr. Gruenther claims that the circular said that Harmon failed to sign the Ohio tax reform law. On page 11 of the circular said "He has tried to take the credit for everything and shoulders the responsibility for nothing in his administration. Great credit is claimed for what the tax commission in Ohio has done and yet it will be remembered that he did not sign the tax commission law." This is absolutely true and when he speaks of Governor Harmon signing a law on June 2, 1911, that is not the law creating the tax commission because this law was passed long before June 2, 1911. I only mention this to show how he has tried to mix up matters to deceive the voters of Nebraska. We in Ohio know that in 1910 both the parties indorsed the one per cent tax proposition and it was in both the democratic and republican platforms and the legislature enacted it without partisan division and the credit belongs to no one man nor to either party. Let it not be forgotten that Tom L. Johnson began to fight for tax reform in Ohio and was the pioneer for the two cent fare on steam railways and an honest valuation for the taxation of railways and made his campaign for the governorship in 1903 on this platform and it is openly charged by Mr. William Gordon of Cleveland, democratic candidate for congress in the Twentieth district in 1910, that Judson Harmon did not support Mr. Johnson in that campaign.

One thing he fails to tell about and that is, why did Governor Harmon fail to sign the public utilities bill. His literary bureau is giving him credit for this bill and saying that it is a better utility bill than those of Wisconsin, New York and New Jersey. If it is such a good bill why didn't he sign it? People all over the country are asking this. So far as Tom Johnson is concerned we only need quote what he said about Mr. Harmon in 1908 when he stated certain facts which were then true and are still true, in the following words.

"I am opposed to Harmon's nomination because I do not believe he stands for the principles for which progressive democracy stands. The democracy of Ohio can't go before the people with a candidate who is known as the legal representative and railroad receiver in Ohio of the Morgan interests in New York. The democracy in Ohio can't go before the people under the leadership of a man who is backed and supported by the interests that defeated Bryan in 1896 and 1900 and sacrificed the party on the altar of Mammon in 1904. The nomination of Harmon would be hailed with delight by all the big interests in Wall street."

The progressive democratic league of Ohio knows that Tom L. Johnson spoke the truth then and it is true today. In the same statement Tom Johnson charged Harmon with being opposed to the initiative and referendum. Harmon kept still until he thought the time had come to show his Wall street friends that he was all right upon this question and then he declared himself before the Ohio constitutional convention. If you want to know what democrats and progressives in general think of Governor Harmon you only need to read the expressions of the members of that convention after he delivered his speech. They tell you better than

we can that Harmon is a reactionary of the worst kind. How does it come that every bolter of '96 and every gold democrat who has been against the democratic party since '96 is now for Harmon. Please explain why a poll of Wall street taken by the New York Globe showed Harmon to be the favorite of Wall street after Taft. In the polls taken by the newspapers over the country where the people have voted Harmon has not been able to secure more than 5 per cent of the democratic votes outside of Ohio and in Ohio he has received less than 40 per cent and that before he declared himself against the initiative and referendum. Now he would not receive 25 per cent. Mr. Gruenther does not deny that Harmon bolted Bryan in 1896 but claims that he supported him in 1900 and 1908. In 1905 in the democratic city convention in Cincinnati when Judge Dempsey was nominated for mayor, Judson Harmon made a speech to the convention saying among other things that what they wanted to get was the support of the republicans and then he added: "In 1896 there were many of us democrats who knew where the republican headquarters were and we let no grass grow upon that path." He said that as a member of Cleveland's cabinet Governor Harmon took no part in the campaign of '96 in speeches or otherwise and refused to participate in the Palmer and Buckner movement and yet it is known to democrats in Cincinnati that he marched in the McKinley parade in 1896. Let it not be forgotten that in 1908 Hamilton county, which is Harmon's own county, gave in the neighborhood of eighteen thousand majority for him and turned around and gave an equal majority for the republican candidate, William H. Taft. There are hundreds of democrats over Ohio who believe that Mr. Harmon and Taft had a working agreement in that campaign. One of his appointees, John C. Sullivan, state railway commissioner, and who traveled with Mr. Harmon all over the state, was active in organizing Taft and Harmon clubs in 1908. This is how he gave his loyal support to Mr. Bryan.

So far as the funds are concerned for sending out the circular of the progressive democratic league, we court an investigation as to their source. Our contributions have come from the rank and file of the democracy, who have given from 50 cents to \$25 to help finance our movement.

Every mail brings us contributions from the loyal progressive democrats who do not want to see our party delivered over to Wall street again. We in Ohio know what it meant in 1904 when through such men as Judson Harmon the democracy of Ohio was betrayed into giving its support to Alton B. Parker. We remember that in that campaign Ohio went republican by more than 250,000; out of twenty-one congressmen we lost twenty; out of 450 county officers we lost nearly 400, and out of eighty-eight counties we lost seventy-one. We might content ourselves to confine our opposition to the state of Ohio, but we have some love for the progressive democracy of other states in the union, and if the democracy of Nebraska wants to have a show for the election of their state officers, for their congressmen, county and other officers, for the election of a United States senator, they will not be hitched to the chariot of Wall street that betrayed the democracy in 1904 by supporting Roosevelt and throwing Parker overboard. Our league appreciates the fact that in opposing Mr. Harmon we have incurred the enmity of every real enemy to progressive democracy in this country, so that we do not wonder that we are misrepresented and lied about shamefully. We think that being upon the ground in Ohio and having a chance to measure Mr. Harmon that we know him better than Mr. Gruenther or any Nebraska democrat. On May 21 the people of Ohio will speak through their primaries as to who they want for president. In every district in Ohio there will be an anti-Harmon ticket presented for which progressive democrats can vote. Doesn't it look to an outsider as though there was genuine opposition to Mr. Harmon's candidacy? If he was the kind of a progressive democrat Mr. Gruenther would have the democrats of Nebraska believe would not he commend himself to the progressive democrats of Ohio? Our league has over 10,000 voluntary members in every county of Ohio, all of whom are actively and systematically opposing Governor Harmon for the good of those principles we have fought for since 1896, and we shall continue to fight him until the last ballot is cast at Baltimore in the national convention.—Progressive Democratic League of Ohio, by John J. Lentz, president, W. W. Durbin, secretary.

HOW President Taft's judicial mind has worked in politics is shown by a review of some of his acts by Amos Pinchot in Pearson's Magazine for May. If you are for President Taft for re-election this story of some of his acts will make you do a lot of thinking. If you are against him it will give you plenty to talk about that cannot be dodged. Every candidate should be judged by his public acts when that is possible. His acts are more important than his words. The right man as President means a great deal to you. Just fix that in your mind. Then see by this review of his acts if you think President Taft is the right man. Another article in the same magazine gives the written opinions of prominent Democrats from all over the country as to the availability of W. R. Hearst and other men for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

The whole series of articles on "The Usurped Power of the Courts" by Allan L. Benson has been printed in pamphlet form and will be sent to any American address upon receipt of five cents for each copy. Prices for quantities upon application.

Pearson's
Magazine
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