

A BASIS OF UNION.

All Forces Working in the Same Direction Should Unite Upon a Common Basis.

The following is the platform adopted by the National Reform conference at Prohibition park, Staten island, July 3, as a proposed basis of union for the reform forces. Representative prohibitionists, populists, socialists and other reformers in large numbers attended the conference, which adopted the platform almost unanimously. It was voted to call another conference in some representative city between October 1 and March 1 next. Following is proposed as a basis of a union of reform forces:

1. Resolved, That we demand direct legislation, the initiative and referendum in national, state and local matters, the imperative mandate and proportional representation.
2. That we demand that when any branch of legitimate business becomes a monopoly in the hands of a few against the interests of the many, that such industry shall be taken possession of, on just terms, by the municipality, the state or the nation, and administered by the people.
3. That we demand the election of president and vice president and of United States senators by direct vote of the people, and also of all civil officers as far as practicable.
4. That we demand equal suffrage without distinction of sex.
5. That as the land is the rightful heritage of the people, we demand that no tenure shall hold without use and occupancy.
6. That we demand the prohibition of the liquor traffic for beverage purposes, and governmental control of the sale for medicinal, scientific and mechanical uses.
7. That all money—paper, gold and silver—shall be issued by the national government only, and made legal tender for all payments, public or private, on future contracts, and in amount adequate to the demands of business.
8. That we demand the free and unlimited coinage of silver and gold at the ratio of 16 to 1.

Commenting upon the foregoing platform, the Topeka, Kan., Advocate says: "The platform adopted by the representatives of the various reform elements of the country at the recent conference at Prohibition park is a good one. It is proposed as a basis of union of reform forces. With some amendments true reformers ought to be able to unite on it.

"We are well aware that this statement will not be popular with those who are 'rubbing up against the practical side of politics'—those who regard the capture of the offices, no matter at what sacrifice of principle—as the chief thing; but, to the man who places principle above office, and who has little faith in the prospective achievements of officers who may be elected by a compromise with wrong, this platform will appeal with no small degree of force. It might be improved in some respects, we grant, and doubtless it will be at subsequent conferences; but as a whole it now embodies the principles of the Omaha platform with some very important additions. The second plank covers our demand for government ownership of railroads and telegraphs. These have already become monopolies in the hands of a few against the interests of the many." This plank also goes further and declares that "when any branch of legitimate industry becomes a monopoly" it should be taken possession of by the people and operated in their interest. This is right and it offers the only solution of the problem of the release of the American people from the extortions of the greedy corporations and trusts that even now monopolize nearly every necessity of life.

"The land plank is more specific than that of the Omaha platform, and offers the only solution of the question of land monopoly—the greatest monopoly of them all. The more this plank is studied in its relation to present conditions, the more forcibly it will appeal to the judgment of thinking men.

"We have a criticism, and a serious one, to make upon the money plank. It is good as far as it goes, but it stops short of the mark. All money should, of course, be issued by the government, but the duty of the government does not end here. The power to corner money after it is issued should be wrested from the hands of private individuals and banking corporations. Government should do the banking as well as issue the money. In fact, this is the most important feature of the money question. It is due to the depositors that they be insured against loss, and it is due to the great masses of the people that they be insured against future conspiracies to corner the money of the country and precipitate panics for private gain. This is a very serious omission, but it can be remedied hereafter.

"The 'practical politician' who places office above principle, and who always dickers for votes from all the elements that make up the voting population, will, of course, object to the liquor plank. We are satisfied, however, that we can never secure emancipation from the domination of the money power until we first emancipate ourselves from the domination of the liquor power. Any person who will honestly and conscientiously study the subject must inevitably arrive at the conclusion that the money power and the liquor power are so intimately related as to be absolutely inseparable; and it is utterly futile to hope that the vote of the one can ever be directed against the other. Every monopoly, in fact, is wedded to every other, and none of them can be successfully shorn of their power until the hosts of the common people cut loose from them, one and all, and unite in a solid phalanx against them. It may as well be recognized now as later on, that the corrupt influence of the liquor power in politics is a force that must be met before any substantial victory can be achieved in any line of reform. It is the great enemy of all reform. It has no politics but interest and it is in command of means for controlling elections that no other interest possesses. This is the secret of its power over political parties and candidates for office. We have presented this subject to our readers many times before, and in doing so we have endeavored to eliminate from it everything that is calculated to excite individual prejudice. The question involves far more than the individual liberty which is so much talked about. The right of the individual to procure and use liquor is not the great ques-

tion involved. Even those who use liquor, if they honestly study the corrupt power of the saloon in politics, must see that every interest of society demands that that power shall be suppressed. It cannot be suppressed while the business remains in private hand and yields the private gain that it does to-day. The element of private profit must be eliminated from the traffic. This alone will eliminate the greatest evils connected with it, and its subsequent regulation can then be more readily effected.

"There is one other omission in this platform. In these times issues arise and grow in importance very rapidly. The recent decision of the supreme court upon the income tax law, and the imprisonment of Mr. Debs and his associates without a trial by jury, by which the constitutional guarantees of human liberty are brushed away like a cobweb, call for emphatic demands for the curtailment of the powers of the courts. Instead of a constitutional democracy, we have to-day a judicial oligarchy which is supreme. It is the only absolute power in the nation. The people have no voice in their government. We have no laws but court-made laws. We have no constitution but a court-made constitution. The constitution is without meaning until the court says what it means. All ordinary rules of construction are valueless. There are new rules of interpretation which alone apply, and the secret of which the courts alone possess. This is the humiliating state of our government to-day, and no reform platform is now complete that does not declare very emphatically against these court usurpations and propose ample reform in this respect. At the next conference these subjects should be considered."

I very heartily endorse the criticisms made by the Advocate. The solution of the so-called "money question" is to be found in governmental banking only. Any proposed solution that falls short of that will be found to be no solution at all. Usury, or interest, is the basis of the foundation and the keystone of the arch of money monopoly and the secret of its "power to oppress." Source and volume of issue do not compare, as issues of importance, with control of distribution. The continued, duplicated use of the people's several and collective credit is absolutely necessary in commerce and trade and is impossible in this era of complex civilization, without banking. Under a system of government banks the people may use their credit at cost and thus abolish interest in banking transactions. As the interest rate upon all interest-bearing securities constantly tends to the current, prevalent rate of bank interest, governmental banking would virtually abolish and destroy interest. The most important words in the Omaha platform are: "At a tax not to exceed 2 per cent."

In his second inaugural address, Thomas Jefferson said: "The liberties of the people are more in danger from the aggressions of the courts than from mobs and riots." Recent history has justified his assertion. The people should speak in no uncertain tones in condemnation of judicial usurpation, and demand such reform as is practical and efficient, even if it is a revision of the constitution. The aggression of the courts must be curbed or the liberties of the people are lost.

There is one other burning issue which demands consideration at the hands of the combined forces of reform. The Advocate, of this same date, tersely sums up this issue in these words:

"There can be no adjustment of present inequalities until some plan is devised that will permit labor to share in the benefits of the increased powers of production afforded by labor saving machinery. So long as capital is permitted a monopoly of these benefits human labor will continue to be displaced and enforced idleness will increase. Who will solve the problem?"

The conservative solution of this problem is voiced in the demand for a reduction in the hours of the day's labor until all who desire to work may be able to find an opportunity. The radical solution is found in the celebrated plank 10 of the demands of the A. F. of L. "We demand the collective ownership of all means of production and distribution." The problem of the age is involved in the query: "How can we prevent the triumphs of inventive genius and the march of civilization from destroying and trampling under foot the masses of the human race?" The true solution is Christian socialism and all would-be solutions, under a competitive system of industry, can but be mere palliatives to soften and mitigate the rigors of existing evils, until the transition is safely made from a competitive to a socialistic state.

I am not altogether satisfied of the wisdom of the demand for the prohibition of the traffic in liquor for beverage purposes. It appears to me that the principles underlying the South Carolina dispensary act are the correct ones. Let the several states monopolize the liquor traffic for all purposes, beverage included. A multitude of reform voters are ready to vote for profitless state control of the sale of liquor for all purposes, who are not yet prepared to vote for national prohibition of the sale of liquor for beverage purposes. The South Carolina law is working to perfection and producing admirable results. It has reduced drunkenness and crime to a minimum. It has eliminated the factors profit and politics from the liquor question by placing in control non-partisan supervisors on a stated salary. It has extinguished the pernicious custom of treating, by prohibiting drinking on the premises, abolished the trade with minors and drunkards and destroyed the privacy of the saloon by removing screens and curtains. It is a good law; has been pronounced constitutional, and should be endorsed and demanded.

It is to be hoped that by the time the next general conference meets public sentiment may be so molded as to cause a revision of the union platform upon the lines indicated.

GEORGE C. WARD.

POINTS FOR THE PEOPLE.

—Strange, is it not, that the credit of a powerful financial trust should be greater than the credit of the mightiest nation on earth?—Paola Times.

—Stand by the Omaha platform. Land, transportation and finance are the three great issues, and the greatest of these is finance.—Washington (Kan.) Republic.

—While governments retain the power to coin money they should not at least coin it alone from the metal on which their creditors have a corner.—Paola Times.

—If the reported business revival continues, it will create a demand for money; and when it does, then we shall hear of a money stringency.—Brookton (Mass.), Diamond.

—Our republican papers in one breath tell us that business is reviving and the outlook is brighter and in the next that democracy has ruined the country. Politics make strange bedfellows.—Farmers' Tribune.

—Men who are in the work of reforming others must not forget that reform to be effective must emanate from within, and they are in constant need of it themselves. No one can truly help another unless he can help himself.—People's Record.

—An honest dollar, such as the tools of the high priests of the money gang want, is one that will buy as much labor and products of labor as used to be worth two dollars, but will at the same time pay no more notes, mortgages, taxes and salaries than it ever would. Do you call that honest?—Farmer's Tribune.

—The price of gold itself depends on fiat, or legal decree, the English parliament having by law, in 1844, fixed the price of an ounce of gold, troy weight, at £3 17s 9d, or \$18.93. Why, then, cannot the United States establish the price of an ounce of silver at \$1.29, which is the ratio of 16 to 1, by law as well?

—The Kentucky democrats have solved the silver question by writing a platform that points to a gold basis and then nominating an avowed silver man as the candidate for governor. They expect to catch the voters coming and going. Whether they will or not remains to be seen.—Brookton (Mass.) Diamond.

"If any fact is established beyond controversy it is that where prices of farm products are very low the great consumers of manufactured goods and wares cannot purchase, cannot consume, therefore the manufacturer cannot sell, and of necessity must employ the wage-earner on short time and starvation wages, or close his works entirely."

—During the war, and for years after its close, there was no gold or silver coin in circulation, yet the country has never enjoyed more prosperous times. This is conclusive evidence that metallic money is not essential to a prosperous condition of the people. To hear the gold-bugs talk now one would think the country would go straight to the demeriton bow-wows if gold was to go out of circulation.—Southern Mercury.

—The Boston Safe Deposit & Trust Co. recently sold \$255,155 worth of Kansas mortgages at 60 cents on the dollar, and the Topeka Capital and other redeemers don't understand how it could have happened. Next to "wiping the stains from the fair brow of Kansas" the most important thing was to "restore the credit of the state abroad," and we are surprised that this little matter has been so completely overlooked.—Clay Center (Kan.) Dispatch.

—Do not allow anything to lead off from the main question. The contest is between the bankers and the people. Between organized money loaners, who are interested in high rates of interest, and the great army of producers; between organized greed and unorganized, struggling humanity, who through ignorance and petty prejudices are led to support systems that make slaves of themselves, their neighbors and their children.—Chicago Express.

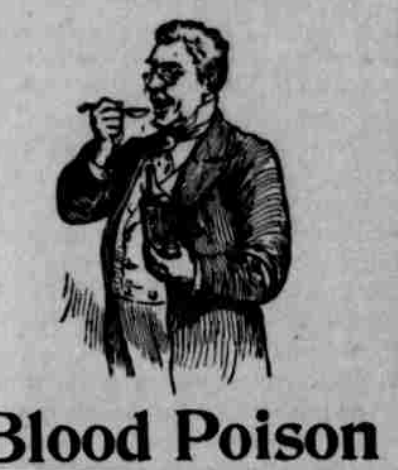
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—Did you ever look at a paper dollar or a silver dollar, and feel that it was one bit better because there was a hundred millions of gold in the United States treasury? Did you not consider the dollars just as good when there was but sixty millions in the treasury? How miserably humbugged people are, and all for the benefit of the other fellow.—Progressive Farmer.

—When we come to the last analysis, the bank question is the storm center of the money question, and this for the reason that the proper distribution of money is the most important factor in the financial problem. Government banks of deposits and loans is the only remedy for our present private bank controlled expansion and contraction currency system.—People's Paper.

—Republicans are now enjoying the merry row going on in the democratic party over silver. But it will soon be time for republicans to play. When the gold-trust contract has expired and a republican congress is assembled, they will be asked to authorize the issue of gold bonds; if they don't, the treasury will be swamped, and if they do, the party will be swamped.—Paola Times.

—Hon. E. O. Leech, in the North American Review, writes on silver and declares it would be dishonest to coin 52 cents' worth of silver into a debt paying dollar. Mr. Leech appears to forget that as soon as free coinage is adopted 27 1/4 grains of silver will be worth \$1 instead of 52 cents. First place silver where gold is and then talk about the bullion value.—Southern Mercury.

—The old parties—both of them—are doing everything in their power to provoke discussion on the silver question that it may magnify itself into the main issue of the next campaign. Yet every last rascal of them knows it is a small issue compared with some that ought to be considered and settled. They have but one object, viz., to divert public attention from the greater issues.—New Charter.

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