

party should have a voice in its councils should not only sign the primary pledge but he should obtain the signatures of his neighbors.

C. W. Sherman, Sr., of Orchard Knob, Ore., a democrat well known to Nebraskans and one who has, perhaps, never missed an opportunity to participate in the primary elections of his party, writes:

From a bed of rheumatic torture, I arise to signify my hearty approval of The Commoner's plan of making the democratic party truly democratic. I accept the pledge as a matter of course, because the plan has been my rule of life. Real democracy is based upon the love of man for his fellow men, and is therefore real Christianity. If all the members of the party could be aroused to act upon this theory, and make the party's principles represent the united opinion of the masses, the corrupting power of greed and of sordid commercialism would vanish before it like the melting snow beneath the rays of the sun.

A. A. Paul of Crockett, Calif., says that he signs his primary pledge most willingly, but he declares that if the position to which he pledges himself means only to attend the primary elections, it is not enough. Mr. Paul adds:

The fountain head of the stream is the club, the ward club or preliminary meetings or meetings at which nominations are made of those to be elected at the primary. If these preliminary meetings are neglected, there is no use, in many cases, of going to any of the succeeding elections. Bad men named to us, voted for at the primary election, are the little streams that form the larger river, through county, then state convention and the moral voter is powerless, if the rivulet started at the club meeting is corrupt.

The Commoner desires to impress Mr. Paul's statement upon the mind of every democrat. It must not be forgotten that the primary pledge is but a simple means to a very important end. It is expected that every democrat who attaches his name to the primary pledge will carry that pledge to its logical conclusion.

V. L. Terrott of Oswego, N. Y., sends his pledge and hearty endorsement of the plan. Mr. Terrott says:

How, though, is a democrat to use his influence to secure a clear, honest, straight forward declaration on every "question on which the voters desire to speak" when a few men in each city hold dominion over the party machinery the voters merely registering the will of the party's local boss, powerless to secure even the entertainment of a motion by the caucus chairman, unless that motion is approved by the party boss. It is this un-American and undemocratic method of conducting the party primaries that induces hundreds of democrats to remain away from them, and is driving not a few to enlist in the cause of socialism, a dangerous doctrine that loyal and non-office hunting democrats hope never to see prevail in our glorious and loved country.

If every democrat will participate in the primary councils of his party, conditions such as those described by Mr. Terrott will not exist. The purpose of the primary pledge is to make the voice of the rank and file felt in its party councils so that the candidates chosen and the platform adopted will not have been chosen and adopted at the dictation of one man or of a coterie of men.

Attention is particularly invited to a letter written by Ed F. Poorman of Humboldt, Ill., who says:

Enclosed you will find a sheet of legal cap paper to which I have pasted The Commoner's primary pledge blank. I have signed the same and secured fifteen other signatures. It took only a short time to secure these signatures and it was a pleasure to me to take advantage of the opportunity to do something for the cause of good government. It was only necessary for me to show the pledge to democrats when they gladly signed it, saying that attendance of the primaries represented true democracy. One man said he thought if a man had to miss the primaries or the election he should miss the election and attend the primaries by all means and see that good platforms are made and good men nominated.

If every democrat will adopt Mr. Poorman's method he will contribute materially to the movement. Undoubtedly democrats will gladly sign the primary pledge plan when their attention is called to it. No man can render the party better service

than by circulating this pledge among his democratic neighbors. Request them to attach their names to the primary pledge and formally announce their determination to co-operate with their fellow democrats in the effort to make the party worthy of the support of men who, having grown weary of the impositions of special interests, are willing to strive for the public welfare, along democratic lines.



THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

(From the Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, O. T.)

The plan of organization suggested by Mr. Bryan a few weeks ago, the object of which is to secure a pledge on the part of all democrats who are interested in securing an honest expression of democratic sentiment in the next national democratic platform, appears elsewhere in today's Oklahoman. It is printed for the benefit of the thousands of Oklahoma democrats who are doubtless interested in the object of the undertaking but who may not be readers of Mr. Bryan's Commoner, or other democratic papers in which it has appeared.

The plan is so simple, and its purpose so easy, that it should appeal strongly to every democrat who is interested in securing a straightforward declaration of the party's position on vital questions in the next national platform and enlist his immediate support. We can imagine of no condition which would induce any democrat, unless unavoidably prevented, from attending the primaries of his party and making his influence felt in giving it a platform embodying the best democratic sentiment on all propositions.

In this connection it may be asked, why is it necessary for a democrat to pledge himself to attend the primaries and assist in securing an expression of the best democratic sentiment in the next national platform? The question can be answered by pointing to the shortcomings of the last democratic platform and enquiring if it is not desired by the rank and file to profit by past mistakes.

While there was much in the last democratic national platform to commend it to democrats everywhere, it was not an ideal party declaration of faith in many respects. It ignored both the income tax and money questions which were not of paramount consideration then or now but which are, of necessity, live public questions and which should be dealt with frankly and honestly.

In the hope of obviating the mistakes of the past and bringing the party back as closely to the people as possible, the organization plan is put forward. The pledge involves no obligation which any genuine democrat can not willingly assume and indicates nothing more than a desire to have a platform made at the next national convention which embodies the real democratic sentiment of the country, uncontaminated by the so-called "re-organizer" influence. The Oklahoman would like to see every democrat in Oklahoma sign it, not only because of the prime object, but in the hope that obligation assumed will stimulate him to more active efforts in the future in behalf of keeping the party close to the people to the end that it may ever remain a champion of their rights and interests.



A MIGHTY POOR GUESS

A writer in the Cincinnati Enquirer presents an interesting explanation of Mr. Garfield's beef trust report. This writer says:

"In the report made by Commissioner Garfield upon the profits and methods of the so-called Beef Combine there is a brief line which nevertheless, in the opinion of those who are best informed, contains the true explanation of the higher prices for beef. As with wheat so with beef, the United States is beginning to consume more than the farmers or the ranches can produce. Not many years ago the great body of the plain people were content if they had beef once a day, and many of them did not buy it more than three times a week. Now beef consumption is no longer a luxury, but a daily necessity of life. One of the foremost men of the Beef Combine went to the Argentine Republic last fall prepared to spend within five years as much as \$50,000,000, if that were necessary, in the purchase of ranches or the rental of them, and in the raising of beef for importation. He said to friends in this city just before he sailed that within five years, in his opinion, the United States would be found importing heavily of beef, and that our exports of beef carcasses or cattle on the hoof would be stopped. Mr. Garfield intimates that one of the reasons for the high price of beef has been the very great demand for it, a demand that began in this excessive way just after the new era of prosperity set in, that is to say, early in the second year of McKinley's first administration."

If "under-production" or "over-consumption" contains the true explanation of the higher prices for beef, how does it happen that while prices required by the trust of the consumers have been going up, the prices paid by the trust to the cattle raisers have been going down?

If there is the scarcity as described by the Enquirer writer, how does it happen that the cattle raiser has not profited by "the very great demand, a demand that began in this excessive way just after the new era of prosperity set in, that is to say, early in the second year of McKinley's administration?"

It will occur to a great many people that the Enquirer writer has made a mighty poor guess.



FOR YOUNG AMERICANS

The editor of Young Americans asks for an article on the subject, "Why Young Americans of Today Should Interest Themselves in Politics?" The reasons are so numerous that it would be difficult to furnish a complete answer.

The young Americans of today will be the acting, governing force of tomorrow, and only by interesting themselves in politics—not only before maturity, but all their lives—can American citizens hope to do their full duty to their country. Free government is a responsibility as well as a privilege—a grave responsibility—for when one has the privilege of participating in the government he must share in the responsibility for bad government as well as in the credit for good government.

Whether one ever becomes a candidate for office may depend upon circumstances, but everyone—regardless of his occupation—should study the science of government, acquaint himself with public questions and give to his country his conscience and his best judgment on every question that arises.

In the study of public questions the most important thing is to get hold of the controlling principle. Only when one understands the principles which govern a subject does he understand the subject, and the fundamental principles applicable to politics are really every-day principles with which all are familiar. "Thou shalt not bear false witness," "Thou shalt not steal" and "Thou shalt not kill"—these will be found to cover most of the questions, and of the three the second "Thou shalt not steal" is probably the broadest in its application, for every pecuniary injustice done by one man to another—whether directly or indirectly, whether in violation of law or in the absence of law, partakes of that character of larceny.

One is never too young to begin to interest himself in the principles of government, and there is no age however advanced at which one can afford to be indifferent.