

Publicity for Democratic Campaign Contributions

The new democratic national committee met with Messrs. Bryan and Kern at Fairview, July 14. The national committeemen present were: Hall of Nebraska, Mack of New York, Taggart of Indiana, Sullivan of Illinois, Tucker of Arkansas, Tomlinson of Alabama, Coughlin of Massachusetts, Wood of Michigan, Daniels of North Carolina, Greene of Rhode Island, Brady of Oklahoma, Cummings of Connecticut, Donnelly of Idaho, Wade of Iowa, Osborne of Wyoming, Williams of Mississippi, Talbot of Maryland, Kerr of Pennsylvania, Johnson of Texas, Nebeker of Utah, Jones of New Mexico.

Addressing the committee, Mr. Bryan said:

"Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee: I recognize that the main work of the campaign is done by sub-committees, and yet before entering upon the campaign, I was anxious to have an opportunity to meet personally the full membership of the committee. Upon this committee action directly with other persons selected in accordance with its authority rests the responsibility of carrying on this campaign, and I desire upon this first meeting with you to express my deep appreciation, not merely of the honor that has been paid to me by the party which you, as an organization, represent, but my entire satisfaction with the platform which was adopted by the convention which has recently adjourned, and my gratification, too, that a candidate for vice president has been selected who is not only a political friend and personal friend, but one in whom I have entire confidence.

"I do not know how I can better express my feelings on this subject than to say that if I am elected president and Mr. Kern is elected vice president, I shall not be afraid to die, because I shall feel that the policy outlined in the platform, which I shall endeavor to put into operation, will be just as faithfully carried out by him as it would be by me (applause). I do not know how I can express in stronger language my satisfaction of the nomination that the party has made for vice president.

"Aside from desiring to meet you personally, I thought there were certain things that ought to be decided upon at once, and as I have the honor of having met at this time our candidate for vice president, Mr. Kern, I have conferred with him about two or three matters, and I shall present at this time a request in which he and I join. I have reduced it to writing."

Mr. Bryan then read the following statement:

"Gentlemen of the Committee: The platform recently adopted by the national convention of our party at Denver contains the following pledge:

"We pledge the democratic party to the enactment of a law prohibiting any corporation from contributing to a campaign fund and any individual from contributing an amount above a reasonable amount, and providing for the publication before election of all contributions above a reasonable minimum."

"Mr. Kern and I are in hearty sympathy with this pledge and are gratified at its adoption. With its fulfillment a new era in American politics will begin. Elections will then be regarded as public affairs, and the influence which controls them, instead of being secret, will be known to the voters.

"As an earnest token that our party will make good its pledge, we ask you to construe this plank and put it into immediate operation. This can be done by the adoption of a resolution announcing that in pursuance of the policy outlined in that pledge, your committee will not accept any contribution whatever from any corporation; that it will not accept any contribution from any individual above a reasonable amount, and that it will make publication before election of all contributions above a reasonable minimum.

"We suggest for your approval a maximum of \$10,000 and a minimum of \$100, no contribution to be received above \$10,000 and all contributions above \$100 to be made public before the election.

"We suggest also that on or before October 15, publication shall be made of all contributions above \$100 received up to that date, that after October 15 publication shall be made of such contributions on the day that the same are received, and that no contribution above \$100

shall be accepted within three days of the election."

Mr. Bryan then commented as follows: "We have felt that this is the proper time to make this announcement. At the republican national convention a plan in favor of publicity was turned down by a very large vote. The indignation that has been expressed over that action of the committee has already been felt by the republican leaders, and they are now attempting to avoid all the censure that has been falling upon them by announcing that through their treasurer, a New York man, there would be published the contributions after the election. You will notice that the point made in our plank is that the contributions shall be published before the election. It is not sufficient to learn after the election of the influences that have purchased the election. The public ought to know before the election what influences are at work to secure the success of a party, and our platform makes that distinction and we ask that this committee at this time declare itself in harmony with the plank and that this plank be interpreted so that the public can not fail to see the difference between our position and their position. We say that no contribution shall be accepted from any corporation; a corporation is not created for political purposes, it has no right to contribute to campaign funds, and we want this part of the plank distinct.

"We want a limit placed upon individual contributions, that no contribution may be received from any individual so large as to indicate that individual's interest of a personal character in the result of the election, and we want all contributions above a reasonable minimum made public, in order that the public may judge what influences are at work and thus be better able to decide on which side those interested only in good government should cast their votes, and we have suggested a minimum of \$100 because people can contribute that amount without suspicion, and those contributing small amounts may be so situated that the publication of their contributions would embarrass them. For instance, an employe of a corporation might earnestly desire to assist in this campaign, and if his contribution was published it might subject him to punishment at the hands of the corporation, and the arguments that have justified the secret ballot justify secrecy in regard to contributions so small that they can not be supposed to represent an interest that is attempting to purchase favors.

"We have simply suggested \$10,000 as a

maximum and \$100 as a minimum; we have suggested the 15th of October as the date upon which all contributions up to that time must be published, and that we can not be accused of desiring to conceal anything, we suggest that where contributions are made after the 15th of October that they be made known on the date that they are made, and that they may not attempt to accuse us of receiving contributions on the last day, too late for publication, we suggest that no contributions over \$100 shall be received within three days of the election. We have tried to cover every point. We want to make an honest campaign; we want the public to understand that it is an honest campaign and we want to appeal to the honest sentiment of the country—that sentiment that I believe demands the return of the government to the hands of the people."

RESOLUTION ADOPTED

The following resolution was thereupon adopted:

"Resolved, That the democratic national committee, in pursuance of the pledge given in the national platform recently adopted at Denver, announces that it will accept no contributions whatever from corporations; that it will accept no individual contributions above \$10,000 and that it will make publication before election of all individual contributions above \$100, contributions received before October 15 being published on or before that date and contributions received after that date being published on the date upon which they are received, and that no contributions above \$100 shall be accepted within three days of the election."

Another resolution requests democrats all over the country to organize themselves immediately into democratic clubs to assist the committee in the work of the coming campaign.

Following is the sub-committee which has full power to act in choosing the permanent officers of the national committee and then appoint such other committees as may be necessary for the management of the campaign: Taggart, Indiana, chairman; Hall, Nebraska; Mack, New York; Osborne, Wyoming; Green, Rhode Island; Ryan, Wisconsin; Daniels, North Carolina; Wade, Iowa; Tomlinson, Alabama; Cole, California; Brady, Oklahoma.

The sub-committee of the national committee adjourned to meet in Chicago July 25, when the chairman of the national committee will be selected. Josephus Daniels was made secretary of the sub-committee.

A FARMERS' CAMPAIGN FUND

To the Farmers of the United States: The first contribution made to the democratic campaign fund this year, so far as we know, was made by an Iowa farmer. Just before the Denver convention met, this man, who modestly prefers not to have his name mentioned, journeyed more than one hundred miles to Lincoln with his contribution of \$100, which he left with Mr. Bryan to be given to the committee when organized for the campaign.

This farmer was born in Sweden and for some time after he was naturalized was a member of the republican party, but he was a student of public questions and in the course of time became a democrat. He has been a reader of The Commoner since its establishment, and to manifest his deep interest in the success of the party and in this triumph of democratic principles, he made this free-will offering to the campaign fund.

It is very appropriate that the first contribution should come from that great body of our population known as agriculturalists, for the farmer has nothing to gain by privilege and favoritism; his hope is in the application of the doctrine of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none." He has been the victim of all special legislation, and has suffered from the control of politics by the great predatory corporations. Now that the democratic party has announced its determination not to accept contributions from corporations, not to accept excessive contributions even from individuals, and to publish all contributions above a reasonable minimum, it ought to be able to secure a suffi-

cient campaign fund from those patriotic citizens who ask from the government nothing but protection to their rights and consideration for the general welfare. There are hundreds of thousands of farmers who are abundantly able to contribute to the campaign fund. There are thousands who could give \$100 apiece without feeling it; there are tens of thousands who could give \$50 apiece without sacrifice, and still more who could give \$25 or \$10 or \$5.

As the national committee has not yet been organized, we will ask The Commoner to call for subscriptions to this farmers' fund. Those giving can indicate whether they are willing to have their names mentioned and, if the contribution is not more than \$100, their wishes will be complied with. All contributions above \$100 must be made known, no matter from whom they come.

The farmers' fund will be turned over to the national committee as soon as its permanent officers have been selected. Who will be the first to respond? The Denver convention was a people's convention; it adopted a strong, clear, honest platform, and its nominations were made with practical unanimity. Our fight is a fight for the whole people. Our aim is equal and exact justice to all; our purpose is to restore the government to the hands of the freely chosen representatives of the voters. How many farmers will join in furnishing the fund necessary to present the issues?

WILLIAM J. BRYAN.
JOHN W. KERN.

(Democratic papers will please copy.)