

The Commoner.

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WORKING FOR HONESTY IN ELECTIONS

Representative McVicker, of the Nebraska legislature, has introduced the following bill:

A bill for an act to amend section 5983 of chapter sixteen of Cobbe's Annotated Statutes for the year 1907 entitled elections, and to repeal said section as it now exists.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Nebraska:

Section 1. That section 5983 of chapter XVI. of Cobbe's Annotated Statutes of Nebraska for 1907 be amended to read as follows:

Section 5983. Every treasurer of a political committee as defined in this act, and every other person required by section sixteen of this act to keep an account, shall, fifteen days before each and every election, caucus, convention or primary election in or concerning, or in connection with which he shall have received or disbursed any money for any of the objects or purposes mentioned in section fourteen of this act, prepare and file in the office of clerk of the county in which said treasurer or other person resides, a full, true and detailed statement, subscribed and sworn to by him before an officer authorized to administer oaths, setting forth each and every contribution received by him amounting to more than \$50 from one person, whether the sum be given in one sum or in smaller sums aggregating more than \$50, and such treasurer, or other person, shall after the said publication until election file on the day that such contribution is received, a statement setting forth each and every individual contribution in excess of \$50 that may be received. And such treasurer, or other person, shall not receive, within two days of the election, any single contribution above \$50.

And every treasurer of a political committee as defined in this act, and every other person required by section sixteen of this act to keep an account, shall within twenty days after each

and every election, caucus, convention or primary election in or concerning, or in connection with which he shall have received or disbursed any money for any of the objects or purposes mentioned in section fourteen of this act, prepare and file in the office of the clerk of the county in which such treasurer or person resides, a full, true and detailed account and statement, subscribed and sworn to by him before an officer authorized to administer oaths, setting forth each and every sum of money received or disbursed by him for any of the objects and purposes mentioned in section fourteen of this act, the date of receipt thereof and each disbursement, the name of the person from whom received or to whom paid and the object or purpose for which the same was received and the object or purpose for which disbursed. Such treasurer's statement shall also set forth the unpaid debts and obligations, if any, of such committee, with the nature and amount of each and to whom owing, in detail and if there are no unpaid debts or obligations of such committee, such statement shall state such fact.

No treasurer of a political committee shall receive or accept more than \$1,000 from any one person to be spent in any one campaign, and every person contributing more than \$250 to any campaign fund shall at the time of making such contribution file a statement with the clerk of the county in which said person resides, the same as if he were treasurer of a political committee, and for failure to do so, shall be subjected to the same penalties as are imposed upon such treasurer for failure to comply with the provisions of this section.

Any person not a treasurer of a political committee who shall in his individual capacity receive money from any other person to be used in any campaign in this state, for the election or defeat of any candidate, shall be subject to

the same requirements as to the receiving of said money, both as to the amount received, and as to the publication of same, and shall, upon failure to comply with the provisions of this section, be subjected to the same penalties as are prescribed for the failure of a treasurer to comply with the provisions of this section, and with the other provisions of this act.

Section 2. That section 5983 of chapter sixteen of Cobbe's Annotated Statutes of Nebraska for 1907 be, and the same is hereby repealed.

The purpose of the bill is to carry out the democratic national platform pledge on the subject of campaign contributions. It will be noticed that it provides, first, for publication of campaign contributions (above \$50) before the election. It follows the rule adopted by the democratic national committee, except that it provides for publication of individual contributions above \$50, whereas the national committee published nothing less than \$100, the reduction in amount is made because smaller sums are contributed to state campaigns. Second, the bill prohibits contributions above \$1,000; third, it applies to individuals receiving and disbursing money, as well as to treasurers; fourth, it requires immediate notice when the contribution comes from outside of the state, and fifth, it requires the individual contributor to file notice himself if he gives more than \$250.

There is nothing harsh about the bill, all of its provisions can be easily complied with. It is framed on the theory that an election is a public affair and that the voters have a right to know what influences are at work. The bill ought to become a law in Nebraska and in other states where the legislatures want to purify politics and make a nearer approach to honesty in elections.

NOW FOR THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN PERIOD

The extraordinary interest just now displayed in all sections of America for everything pertaining to the career of Abraham Lincoln can not be explained by the fact that this is the one hundredth anniversary of that great man's birth. One must go deeper than that to learn why, at this moment, in every section of the United States, men, women and children are eagerly seeking for facts connected with Lincoln's life.

In The Commoner's view this tendency amounts to a great awakening. It is a reaching out on the part of the people for things that give inspiration to good citizens, for truths that

help in the rearing of good men. It does not represent, alone, reverence for the memory of a man who, while serving as president during the greatest of civil wars, was enabled to discharge his duty to his country, to the particular section which stood by him, and to the particular section which opposed him in such a manner as to win from parties to the contest and from their descendants enduring respect. It represents a growing interest in matters that make for the perpetuity of popular government. It indicates that the people, grown weary of a period of foolish hero worship, are looking for something genuine upon which to expend their honest and patriotic admiration.

For nearly eight years now we have had the "Teddy Bear" period with all that such a period could bring upon a patient people. Now, plainly, we are to have an Abraham Lincoln period. The inanimate and the inane thing known as the "Teddy Bear" will be replaced by the healthy, wholesome volume describing the hopes, the struggles and the achievements of the Illinois rail splitter who, from poverty and obscurity, rose to fame and honor and whose memory is enshrined in the hearts of a grateful people.

Lincoln's life is full of romance. It is full of the dramatic. From the beginning to the end it is a story book. There are elements within that career to attract the attention of all classes of people and the child as well as the man will be captivated with a well written record of Lincoln's career. He was an intensely human man—a thoroughly real man; yet it was his lot to have crowded into his life more of the tender incidents, the amusing episodes and the dramatic experiences than has entered the life of any other American citizen.

Even aside from his war time experiences the dramatic had full play. The Lincoln-Douglas debates were undoubtedly the most interesting

contests that have ever taken place upon an American platform. They are not stupid, dreary speeches. They are the living words of two of America's greatest men—men who while differing radically in their general characteristics were peculiarly fitted to engage in that particular contest. Whether the story of Lincoln deals with him as a barefoot country boy, a lean, lank rail splitter on the Illinois prairies, a fledgling lawyer at the bar, a one term member of congress, an unsuccessful candidate for United States senator, a twice victorious candidate for the presidency, a martyred chief executive—whether the story of Lincoln relates to love, to politics, or to war it is a story of life. And one of the greatest stories that has ever been reduced to print.

Because this aroused interest in Lincoln literature represents, in The Commoner's opinion, an awakened interest in popular government The Commoner is glad to announce that it is in a position to make it possible for every Commoner reader to have in his library a very complete life of Abraham Lincoln—covering six well bound volumes. The details of The Commoner's offer will be found on page sixteen of this issue. One set of these books goes with ten yearly subscriptions to The Commoner.

This offer makes it possible for every Commoner reader to have the life of Lincoln ready at hand and it will also aid in increasing The Commoner's circulation. If through this plan the circle of Commoner readers may be materially widened and the number of people familiar with Lincoln's career may be materially increased, certainly great progress will have been made in the educational work to which this paper is committed.

ONLY NINETEEN MORE DAYS UNTIL MARCH 4.

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