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DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP

The Brooklyn Eagle recently contained an interview with Senator Patrick McCarren, of Brooklyn, in which he says:

"I think that the national situation is one that affords opportunity to the democratic party to make an issue on which it might successfully appeal to the people. We have not been on the right side of any public issue since the civil war. For instance, we were on the wrong side of the civil war issue, because of the fact that so many of the democratic states were opposed to the union. Then, intervening between the period of the war and the time of Tilden, we were on the wrong side of the tariff issue. Everybody knows that the election of Tilden was a protest against the methods of the republican party at that time, and a declaration in favor of a change in the methods of government.

"Since that time we have been on the wrong side of every issue, with the exception of one campaign in which Cleveland was elected. His election was a repetition of the Tilden period. It was an effort on the part of the people to wrest the government from the hands of the republicans, because of the belief that their methods were high handed and detrimental to the interests of the country.

"Then the Bryan period followed, beginning with the declaration in favor of the unlimited coinage of silver at an arbitrary ratio. It is unnecessary to elaborate on recent happenings for the reason that every democrat today, young and old, realizes the disastrous consequences that have followed the attitude of our party on all the questions that presidential contests are decided on. The patriotism of the country was arrayed against us because of our attitude on questions following the Spanish war. Our anti-expansion stand lined up the young American voters against us. While I have never voted anything but a democratic ticket in my life, and have worked for no other than the candidates of democracy, I did so in the belief and with the feeling in many campaigns that I was pursuing a forlorn hope because of the realization of the fact that the position of our party would not be indorsed by a majority of voters.

"It is evident, to my mind, that we must put ourselves on that side of national issues that will be indorsed by the voters, and the sooner we do it the better. The result of the last election, it seems to me, is so pointed that there can be no controverting the statement that the American people will not stand for radical theories in the affairs of our government. To

my mind, Mr. Taft was elected because he was suspected of being conservative."

Before commenting on this interview, The Commoner took occasion to make inquiry and ascertain that Senator McCarren had been correctly quoted, and it is brought to the attention of the readers of The Commoner because it illustrates the embarrassments under which the democratic party has labored. In a war no great hope of victory could be entertained if the armies were officered by men who were opposed to the principles for which the army was fighting. For instance, a man who believed in monarchy would not be a good person to lead an army fighting to establish popular government, and so a man who believes that the democratic party has been on the wrong side of every issue since the civil war is not a good man to lead the democratic party. Assuming that Senator McCarren honestly did the best he could in the late campaign, it must be apparent to every reasonable man that he could not arouse enthusiasm among his followers when he confesses that "in many campaigns" he worked with the "feeling" that he was "pursuing a forlorn hope."

The democratic party is entitled to leaders who are in sympathy with the voters of the party. Someone has defined a leader as one who is going in the same direction as the people, BUT A LITTLE BIT AHEAD, and surely one can not wisely, courageously or successfully lead who is going in an opposite direction from those whom he leads. The men who fight and die in the trenches are entitled to leaders whose hearts are in the fight and who believe that the success of the party will be good for the country.

The democratic party has been very much handicapped for twelve years, first, by a lack of newspapers in the eastern states. But few of the large dailies have supported the democratic party, and the large dailies that have supported the ticket have almost without exception repudiated the platform either during the campaign or immediately afterwards. In like manner many of the men who have been at the head of the organization in the east have promptly repudiated the platform as soon as

the campaign was over, and have, between campaigns, lent their influence to those who have condemned the democratic position on public questions. Most of them have not gone as far as Senator McCarren, and yet their influence has been cast against the party rather than for it. In the face of these continual assaults upon the policy of the party, it is astonishing that the party has polled as large a vote as it has. It is evidence of the incorruptibility of the democratic masses that they continue to fight for democratic principles in spite of the desertion of the party's policies by those who control the organization.

A permanent democratic club ought to be organized in every county of the United States—a club committed unqualifiedly not merely to the name but to the policies of the party. Such a club is needed more in the east than in the west, but there ought to be such a club in every county, even in the west. Its members ought to devote themselves to the propagation of democratic doctrine; they ought to establish in every county a local paper that will preach democratic doctrine all the time, and in every primary contest they ought to labor to put the democratic organization in the hands of those who will make the fight with earnestness and with a confidence in final victory. The democratic party has been a "house divided against itself," and this has been and is its greatest weakness. It would not strengthen the party for the reform element to cease to fight, for without the reform element the democratic party would soon be a thing of the past. Will the reform element take up the fight and secure for the next campaign not only a democratic ticket and democratic candidates, but an organization which believes in the policies of the party and which will fight for those policies because it believes in them?

The national organization made a splendid fight last year, but in some cases it had to work through local organizations that were lukewarm and through some which were unfriendly to the general purpose of the party. This ought not to be the case again, and it must not be the case if the party is going to make a successful fight.

THE STEEL TRUST

The evidence brought out before the investigation committee at Washington shows that the steel trust did not deal candidly with the president; it used the panic to force the president to allow the steel trust to swallow up its largest competitor. The steel trust controlled about 44 per cent of the supply of iron ore; the Tennessee Coal and Iron company owned about 18½ per cent. When the steel trust secured the holdings of the Tennessee Coal and Iron company, it brought its proportion of the entire iron ore of the country up to 62½ per cent. Controlling the raw material it is able to dictate terms to those who attempt to compete with it in the manufacture of steel and iron.

From the data secured by the industry commission from the Age of Iron and the Age of Steel, and other trade journals, it has been ascertained that the steel trust controls 54 per cent of the coke; 49 per cent of the pig iron; 60 per cent of the steel; 70 per cent of the steel rails; 60 per cent of finished iron and steel products; 63 per cent of wire rods; 94 per cent of wire; 95 per cent of wire and nails; 94 per cent of tubes and pipes; 95 per cent of tin plate; 85 per cent of bridges and 66 per cent of coppers.

This is the steel trust as we have it now. The republican party has permitted this gigantic corporation to increase its hold upon the iron business of the country until it is now in a position to dictate terms to its competitors. If a competitor dares to cross its track or to

interfere with its plans, the competitor is in danger of being annihilated. The power of the steel trust is so great that no small corporation has any chance whatever in competition, and in many cases it controls so large a proportion of the total supply that no large corporation could be formed to compete with it.

The steel trust by its contributions to the campaign fund, and by the prominence of its officials has succeeded in escaping prosecution heretofore, but it can not escape much longer, and when the facts are known it will be found that it is as great a menace to the iron industry of the country as the oil trust is to the oil business.



MR. ROOT'S FIRST

Senator Elihu Root began his senatorial career by condemnation of the popular election of senators. This was unnecessary. The public might have known from Mr. Root's professional connections that he was opposed to anything that would give the people control of the United States senate. Mr. Root's clients are too deeply interested in preventing remedial legislation to risk the popular election of senators. When the incoming president announces to the legislature that he is personally inclined to favor the election of senators by the people, Senator Root can prepare the senate's response and point to the rejection of the proposition in the last national republican convention as reason for refusing to carry out the president's suggestion.

CONTENTS

| |
|---------------------------------|
| DEMOCRATIC LEADERSHIP |
| MR. TAFT'S CABINET |
| EDUCATIONAL SERIES — GUARANTEED |
| BANK DEPOSITS |
| NEBRASKA'S NEW BANKING LAW |
| THE STEEL TRUST |
| MR. ROOT'S FIRST |
| EPIGRAMS |
| A TRIBUTE TO THE COMMONER |
| A BANK PRESIDENT ON THE ALDICH- |
| VREELAND BILL |
| LETTERS FROM THE PEOPLE |
| COMMENT ON CURRENT TOPICS |
| HOME DEPARTMENT |
| WHETHER COMMON OR NOT |
| NEWS OF THE WEEK |