

# The Commoner.

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## A Brave Governor

Governor Shafroth of Colorado has called a special session of the legislature to carry out the pledges of the democratic platform. The first one is the submission of the initiative and referendum and the others are equally democratic. Governor Shafroth is a conscientious and consistent democrat; he believes that platforms are binding and is brave enough to insist upon the keeping of the pledges made in the platform. Success to him; he is making a record that will give him national prominence and make him an important figure in the counsels of the party. Governor Shafroth's proclamation follows:

"The purposes for which it is to assemble are specially named in the proclamation as follows:

"First—To enact a law providing for the submission to the qualified voters of the state of Colorado amendments to sections one (1) and eighteen (18) of article five (5) of the constitution of the state of Colorado, providing for the initiative and referendum, so that the legislative authority of the state shall be vested in the general assembly, consisting of a senate and a house of representatives, both to be elected by the people, but the people reserving to themselves power to propose amendments to the constitution and power to propose laws, and to enact or reject the same at the polls independent of the general assembly, and also reserving power to the people at their own option to approve or reject at the polls any act of the general assembly.

"Second—To enact a law providing for the official ballot and the method of voting at elections in this state by the headless ballot, and prohibiting the use of any emblem, device or political party or organization designation on such ballot by which a voter can vote for more than one candidate by placing a single mark on the ballot, or by writing thereon any political party or organization name or other name or designation, or if a voting machine is permitted it must not enable the voter to vote a straight party ticket, or for more than one person by the operation of one movement or device.

"Third—To enact a direct primary election law, or laws, for the nomination of candidates for political office, and for political party positions, and concerning and regulating the government of political parties and political organizations, and a law, or laws, concerning the nomination, expression of choice for, by the people pledging of legislators for, and election of United States senators for the state of Colorado, and a law or laws, concerning the registration of voters and concerning elections in the state of Colorado.

"Fourth—To enact a law, or laws, relating to banks and banking, and requiring the guaranty of deposits therein.

"Fifth—To enact a law or laws, establishing a public service commission, and prescribing its powers and duties, and to provide for the regulation and control of public service corporations.

"Sixth—To enact a law, or laws, to define, regulate and control common carriers in this state; to create a state railroad commission; to prescribe and define its powers and duties;

to give to such state railway commission power to fix rates and enforce its orders; and to enact a law forbidding the issuing of railroad passes and the acceptance thereof, and prescribing penalties for the violation of such laws. Also to enact a law prohibiting the ownership or control of the capital stock of any corporation by another.

"Seventh—To enact a law, or laws, authorizing the transfer of funds not needed in any branch, department, bureau or institution of the state to the general fund and to make an appropriation to defray the expenses of this special session."

### Public Ownership of Public Government

As a people, we of Colorado are set on the road to the better things in public life.

It has been easy in the demanding hurry of business, in the struggle for material progress, in the duty and aspiration of personal life and its responsibilities, to leave politics to the politicians and government to the "governing classes." And the result has been the inevitable, which history has again and again recorded: The politicians have conducted politics for their gain; the "governing classes" have directed government—its legislative, its executive and its judicial functions, solely for the enhancement and protection of their special privilege, until politicians and "governing classes," by their long usage and the people's default, have assumed a possessory right and a claim of irrefragable title.

By happy circumstances, by courage and wisdom among publicists, and, most of all, by the reawakened purpose of the electorate, we have been "set on that road to better things"—the public ownership of public government.

That is the whole issue of these uprising times: A renewed public ownership of public government against the long prevailing private ownership of public government.

It is strange that the political prognosticators for the parties have failed to see in "insurgency"—as it is variously manifested—the new revolution of the whole people against conditions which oppressed the whole people. This revolution can not be called by any existing party name; it is not bounded by any particular party lines; it is not against one's party tyranny any more than the other party's corruption, and it can not be stayed by any piteous demand for loyalty to regular party organization.

The News welcomes, from whatever quarter and under any worthy leadership, every movement of the new revolution. We have no partisanship to be wounded by the defeat of private ownership of public government, and no purpose which is not to be fulfilled by a restoration of authority to the hands of a free people. And in this respect The News is but holding its place in the ever-growing ranks of a patriotic citizenship, which has determined that parties may be useful agencies, but are dangerous commanders.

It is from this ground that the people of Colorado will greet the proclamation issued yesterday by Governor John F. Shafroth. It will be long remembered as a call upon this state for enlistment in the army of progress. A fulfillment of its terms will be a compliance with the pledge of patriotism given by a majority of legislators when the people entrusted to them the authority of law-making; a fulfillment will enroll this state as a leader of the new revolution.

The legislature will make a choice between loyalty and toryism.

It will take its stand as a representative body, knowing and expressing a people's purpose.

Or it will be a tory body, coerced and cajoled by old tyrannies and corruptions.

The governor has given his proclamation challengingly. He is with the whole people of this state for public ownership of public government. And the whole people are with their own cause.

And the legislature must meet this issue. Chicanery, evasive promise, multiplication of questions and hair-splitting dalliances are now alike useless. The Colorado legislature will be with the state in the new revolution, or it will brand itself as a tory misrepresentative of this commonwealth.—Editorial in Denver News.

## Porto Rico

The United States is in Porto Rico (and Porto Rico in the United States) as a result of the Spanish war. The acquisition of the island was not contemplated—in fact, although there had in former years been talk of the annexation of Cuba, little Porto Rico seems to have been overlooked. And yet it now turns out that Porto Rico was ripe for annexation, and is the very base needed for the extension of our trade with, and our influence over, the republics of Venezuela, Brazil and Argentina. It is the key to the east coast of South America, as the canal zone is the key to the west coast.

Have you ever seen Porto Rico? If not, you have a picture in your mind and it may be as imperfect a one as I formed before going there. I had learned that the island was, roughly speaking, one hundred miles long and fifty miles wide. I could easily picture such an island. I had heard that a military road crossed the island from San Juan on the north to Ponce on the south, and that in the center of the island the road was about three thousand feet about the level of the sea, and I pictured an island rising gradually from all sides to that height. But when I reached Porto Rico I found a miniature Switzerland. The beauty of the island surpasses anything I had heard or read—our people do not know what a gem they have in Porto Rico. Its mountains, its canyons, its deep gorges, its rivers, its water falls, its fertile plains, its rich valleys, its innumerable hills, its fields of cane and pineapple, its coconut groves, its coffee plantations, its orchards of orange and grape fruit and its quaint old Spanish towns—all combine to make the island one of the most delightful places to visit. To add to its natural attractions they have built hundreds of miles of roads so that one can now travel by automobile some seven hundred miles and see something worth looking at every mile of the way.

When Porto Rico is known, it is certain to become a winter resort for the people of the north Atlantic states. The hotel accommodations at San Juan are not the best at present, but arrangements have been made for a \$400,000 hotel on the beach which will meet the requirement of transient guests, while the more permanent ones will prefer a cottage home surrounded by fruit trees and flowers.

It now takes five days to make the trip from New York, but it is only a question of time when larger and faster boats will bring the island within three days of the mainland.

It is about 1,375 miles from New York, 1,250 from Norfolk, 1,100 from Savannah and 1,000 from Key West. A new line from Savannah and Charleston is already being discussed and it is not improbable that the railroads will one day be advertising a "To Porto Rico by land" trip by way of Florida and Cuba. A regular boat already connects Florida and Cuba and a line from the east end of Cuba to the west end of Porto Rico would reduce the water part of the journey to a minimum.

The effects of American occupation are very apparent. First, in sanitation. Great progress has been made in locating and eradicating disease. Some three hundred thousand cases of hook worm have been treated—all but thirty thousand by the official physicians. An appropriation of \$375,000 is asked for the completion of the work. There is no yellow fever there or bubonic plague. Second, the products of the island have largely increased in quantity and value. The cane crop has risen from 70,000 tons to 300,000 tons and there has been a large increase in the production of grape fruit, oranges and pineapples. The grape fruit and oranges are equal in flavor to any in the market and the pineapples grow to enormous size—some exceeding twenty pounds in weight.

But the most noticeable result of American occupation is the increase in the school attendance. It was less than 25,000 in 1898; it is now more than 100,000, and increasing. While the United States has furnished the initiative and done the directing, the Porto Ricans must

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