

If the People Rule Why Don't They Get What They Want?

B. W. Day, Hutchinson, Minn.—I have read with interest and profit most, but not all, of the answers to Senator Owen's pregnant question, and have failed to find the true solution to the problem. Here it is: The great mass of ignorant or indifferent voters, casting their ballots blindly, against their own and public interests, give another kind of "interests"

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a cinch on a vast number of things, which belong to the public. In some states the intelligent, discriminating voters predominate and there the people frequently "get what they want." For instance, Minnesota and North Dakota, strong republican states, elect democratic governors but choose republican presidential electors. The people of Minnesota demand two cent passenger fares and four per cent railway gross earnings tax laws and get them. The legislature of North Dakota has passed laws of like importance to the public and equally objectionable to Big Business. In both of these states the percentage of illiteracy is low and the foreign population is composed largely of intelligent Germans and Scandinavians who received good educations in the fatherland and who are pretty independent in their voting. The time is not far distant when in such states the people will get everything they go after. Give us an educational qualification for voting; prepare for every election a set of questions relating to important issues, which every illiterate or self-evident puddin' head must answer or be barred from the polling place and the residue of alert, intelligent, progressive, citizens, whose votes are now offset by a lot of incompetents less qualified for voting than the average high school boy, will rule; and the rulers, in getting "what they want," will get that which will best promote the well being, not only of the toiler but of him who lives in luxury from profits unjustly wrung from toll. Lincoln said of emancipation that in giving freedom to the slave we ensure freedom to the free. So the true reformer is seeking justice and equal rights for the oppressed seeks to save the oppressor from the penalties which must inevitably find him out.

Oliver Shanks, Bowen, Ill.—In reply to Senator Owen's question, will say. Each class is against the other class; if you make laws good for one class the other will cry don't do that, that would ruin my business. Each class wants things all their way. That is one reason another money shark and gamblers make the people believe that if honest men were at the head of the government everything would go to the dogs. If honest men get in they know they would have to take their hands out of the peoples' pockets; that is the reason they fear Bryan. Another reason the people have is they put the dollar above the man and above truth and justice and the teachings of the Bible. They care not for the cries of little hungry children just so long as they can fill their pockets with the almighty dollar. They preach Jesus but don't do anything He taught; they forget the golden rule and the sermon on the mount. Another reason they are party blind; they would vote for a yellow dog if he ran on their ticket—anything to get my man in, even if he does rob me. How long, oh Lord, how long, will the people be fooled? Just as long as human selfishness rules the world.

L. N. Burnett, Gentry, Ark.—In reply to the query of Senator Owen, I will say that the people, while clothed with the authority of rulers, and while exercising that authority to some extent, in the small concerns of life, are so engrossed in their local affairs that they are disposed to leave the government of state and nation to self-seeking politicians and

special interests who, while loudly claiming to be the champions of the people's interests, are only seeking advantages for themselves. They make a great noise about party loyalty and party regularity in order to keep the people blinded to their own interests, and to cause them to lose sight of the principles they are fighting for. The great body of democratic voters believe in a tariff for revenue only; but all men have a selfish streak in them, and the politicians, supported by the special interests, find it an easy matter to persuade the democrats of a particular locality to favor a tariff on certain local products, and thereby forsake the principle of tariff reform. The democrats of other localities, influenced by the same considerations, lay aside their principles and contend for a tariff on local products, thereby giving the lie to their professions of faith in state and national platforms, and losing the confidence of all intelligent independent voters who after all are the controlling factors in elections. It is the same way in other reforms in which the people are interested. They are divided among themselves. The special interests are not fighting for principles, hence their appeal is to local prejudice, to personal avarice and to party spirit. But what the people are supposed to be interested in are certain great principles, the enactment of which into law will be for the greatest good to the people at large; and as long as they lose sight of those reforms, which are for the betterment of their condition, and listen to local, personal and party appeals, so long will the people fail to get what they want. Party spirit is all right as long as the party is contending for the rights of the people, but is all wrong when it degenerates into the idea of regularity alone, without thought of those principles which serve to distinguish it from those who are opposed to, and whose interests are antagonistic to the rights of the great common people.

Frank L. Wood, Vallery, Colo.—The people don't rule, they do not get what they want. They get what a majority of the Aldrich-Cannon republican machine dictated by the interests give them. Bryan's idea—Education is the keynote. The people need reforms, and will get them sooner or later, if not through either of the two old parties, a new party will spring up and will give perhaps only a partial relief. Why not educate the masses upon all the economic questions. Paramount at present are the following: Money, or circulating medium—If the government to make money good has to stand behind it, even to the extent of shouldering the musket to protect it, then why should not the government handle it and govern the volume of it, instead of private individuals and so-called financiers hitched up to the Aldrich-Cannon band wagon and democratic go as you please gold brick assistant. Second, Government ownership of all public utilities—The people pay the bills. Why should a few men be allowed to carry off the surplus; give the people these necessities at cost. Where there are at present fifty employed by corporation methods, seventy-five would be employed if controlled by the government at only eight hours instead of twelve; this additional money paid employers would be left in circulation, instead it is now taken to Europe. The Gould heirs and many others married to foreign titles tell the story of millions taken out of circulation in this country by heirs of these private corporations and that mentioned is only a small item of the saving to this people. Third, The initiative and referendum, the recall of public servants, thus any public servant must either serve his

people or get down and out for all time, that would make them consider well before they accepted tainted money, then the people would get a voice in steering the good old ship of state. Fourth, Tariff for Revenue only. Bryan is correct, Jefferson democracy. This is an old one and one that both the democrats and republicans have held up to the public very much as the Mexicans did a red garment in a Mexican bull fight, to create enthusiasm, every presidential election, and all the time the tariff goes higher and higher, the people pay the debt in costlier garments, higher building materials and leather goods, a few individuals get rich at the expense of the many. And all this time Mr. Bryan is almost alone in this fight for education of the people. If all the democrats that are not hanging on the republican band wagon, and all the republican insurgents that believe in reforms, would take hold of these few paramount questions and educate the public so they could vote intelligently upon them the people would in a very short time be able to get what they want. As it now is private corporations endeavor to keep the people divided so as to continue to reach their pocketbooks as they have for years past; for thirty years, although raised a good republican, I have voted for these reforms whenever I

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