

The Commoner.

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Three Questions

The eastern papers are already beginning to discuss the relative availability of those whose names are likely to go before the democratic national convention. It is too early to pick a candidate, because the candidate must fit the platform, the platform must fit the issues, and the issues will be largely shaped by the congress to meet next fall. But in considering candidates there are three questions which should be asked and answered. If any one of the three can not be answered satisfactorily, the candidate is not available, no matter who he is or from what section he comes.

First, Does he represent the special interests or the people?

If he represents the special interests he can not be an available candidate for the democratic party. There are several special interests: First, the trust interests—they want to be let alone. Second, the railroad interests—they want to control the interstate commerce commission. Third, the protected interests—they want to write the tariff laws. Fourth, The liquor interests—they want to prevent hostile federal legislation. There are other special interests, but these are the most important—and they all act together. A candidate who is satisfactory to them can not be satisfactory to the people, for these interests would not support him if they did not know him to be with them and against the people.

Second, Did he support the ticket in 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1908?

Of course he supported it in 1904—the eastern papers would not think of suggesting a candidate who bolted that year, but how about 1896, 1900 and 1908? A man who was old enough to vote in any one of those years must have understood the issues and must have known the nature of the opposition to the democratic party. If, knowing the situation, he either voted with the republicans or stood neutral, will the more than six million who voted the ticket take kindly to his candidacy? The same fundamental division exists today that existed then between plutocracy and democracy—between government by the special interests and government by the people. A man who went wrong in any of those campaigns is still wrong unless he has undergone a revolutionary change of sentiment, and if he has undergone such a change he is now so radical—made so in his zeal to undo the wrong done—that he would be more objectionable to the "conservative" element than one who left the party.

Third, Who are the chief supporters of the candidate?

A man is known by the company he keeps; and the character of a candidate can generally be guessed by the character of those who appear as his chief sponsors. When a candidate is offered, watch the papers. If he is praised by the papers which are representing the plunder-

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DEPEND UPON IT

Some of the Wall Street organs are insisting that Mr. Bryan should not be allowed to dictate to the democratic party. They need not be afraid of his trying to dictate; what they really fear is that he will use his knowledge of men and political history to prevent the playing of a bunco game on the voters—and there is good ground for the fear; they can count on it as a certainty.

It can be set down as certain that the man is secretly with the special interests, no matter how fair he may be in outward appearance; they have to pick out a man who looks well because they could not fool the public with a man who was openly allied to the special interests. The democrat who wants to know what candidate would be satisfactory to the special interests and, therefore, unsatisfactory to the people generally should watch the editorials in such papers as the New York Sun, the New York Times, Harper's Weekly and the Cincinnati Enquirer. Other papers might be mentioned, but these are samples and they are enough at present. Any man praised by these papers can safely be set down as unsafe. It is proof that they think he can be trusted to throw his influence against democratic policies. There are other questions to be asked and answered but these deserve special consideration just now.

MISREPRESENTATION

The Chronicle, acting upon a San Antonio press dispatch, expressed regret some days ago that the Hon. William J. Bryan had declared that none of the candidates mentioned for the democratic presidential nomination, except Governor Folk, were big enough. We are glad to learn that Mr. Bryan was misquoted. He also denies the criticism of Mayor Gaynor. This denial was hardly necessary, for Mr. Bryan is known to be a personal and political friend of the mayor. As Mr. Bryan has a paper of his own, The Commoner, in which he discusses public men and measures with frankness, there is no reason why his views should be misrepresented in press dispatches emanating from Texas.—Houston (Texas) Chronicle.

WHY NOT POPULAR SUBSCRIPTION?

The secretary of the treasury is preparing to issue a block of three per cent Panama bonds. The rate is made three per cent on the theory that they will not sell for a lower rate if, as is planned, they are denied the note issuing privilege accorded to other government bonds. Why not issue them in small denominations so that they can be sold at popular subscription? Why give them to a syndicate and then allow the syndicate to exact a premium from investors? The treasury ought to profit by the experience of 1893-7 when the Morgan-Rothschild syndicate made large sums by underwriting bond issues.

THE OHIO MUDDLE

If the democratic state convention in Ohio had nominated a candidate for the United States senate as the democratic convention of Indiana did the skies would be clear, but Ohio's governor did not take the view of the subject that Indiana's governor did. It is Kern in Indiana—who is it in Ohio?

WHY?

Kansas gained fifteen per cent in population between 1900 and 1910 while Missouri on the east gained but six, and Nebraska on the north gained a little less than 12. Will the brewers please explain why Kansas is growing?

The Plutocratic Press

The plutocratic press is now busily engaged in its quadrennial task of selecting the presidential tickets of the two leading parties. Its advice may be taken by the republicans but it cannot speak for the democrats—the campaign of 1904 is too fresh in the minds of the rank and file of the party.

A brief review of the past fourteen years may be helpful just now. Until the state conventions of 1896 began to meet, the plutocratic papers never knew that there was any sentiment in favor of the restoration of bimetalism or, if they did know it they kept their readers in ignorance. When the platform was written (and it was written before Mr. Bryan became a member of the resolutions committee—the money plank which he wrote about two weeks before the convention being almost his only contribution to it, and this was in the language of the platform adopted by a majority of the conventions) the plutocratic papers at once bolted and supported the republican ticket. After the election they began to "reorganize" the democratic party and they kept it up with seeming confidence of success until the state conventions of 1900 began to instruct for Mr. Bryan. After his nomination nearly all the plutocratic papers bolted again, in spite of the fact that the money question was no longer the paramount issue.

When the election was over they again started out to reorganize the democratic party. This time they succeeded; two defeats had discouraged many democrats and Wall Street's offer to finance the campaign and insure a victory was accepted. In 1904 our party had the distinguished honor of receiving the encouragement of ALL the plutocratic papers, democratic and republican, until after the convention; then the republican portion began to point out, regretfully but positively, the importance of electing a republican president. The plutocratic papers which use the democratic name for a blind continued to support the democratic ticket, alternately offering suggestions as to how to win and congratulating the party on cutting loose from the voters. The support given by these papers aroused so much suspicion among the rank and file that the party polled a million and a quarter less votes than it had in 1896 and in 1900.

The rebuke in 1904 was so severe that the plutocratic press found it impossible to make much headway in 1908, although it did all the bushwhacking it could. The money question was entirely eliminated in 1908, but the underlying issue was the same as in 1896 and in 1900, democracy vs. plutocracy, and the plutocratic papers lined up with the republicans again. They threatened all kinds of calamity if Wall Street was disturbed. Having contributed to three defeats (1896, 1900 and 1908) by opposing the ticket and to a much worse defeat (1904) by supporting the ticket they come forth and impudently offer advice to the party in the coming campaign. They insist that the party must repudiate the platform of 1908 and make its appeal to the predatory interests. No one is to be considered as a candidate un-

NO RETREAT

For the next eighteen months the chief business of The Commoner will be to assist those who are opposed to a retreat. The so-called "conservative" democrats are already organized and are at work—they are always organized; the progressive democrats must organize if they successfully oppose the reactionary movement. How many are ready to assist? The Commoner will be pleased to hear from those who are willing to enroll themselves in the Army of Advance.