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New Jersey Turns Toward the Light

New Jersey, commonly called the mother of trusts, turned her face toward the light when she elected James E. Martine to the United States senate.

Mr. Martine is one of America's stalwart democrats. For years he has battled in New Jersey and against great odds for democratic principles. He is a man of real ability and public interests will be safe so far as he is concerned.

But beyond the importance of electing to public office such men as Martine a great principle was at stake in the New Jersey senatorial contest. Popular government itself was on trial. Martine had submitted his name to the democratic primary and had received a majority of the votes cast at that primary. James Smith, Jr., supported by the special interests sought to persuade the legislature to refuse to elect Mr. Martine, but Governor-elect Wilson demanded that the members of the legislature do their duty in the light of the results of the primary election. Wilson and Martine fought shoulder to shoulder and the result was one of the most notable victories for popular government yet recorded in the political history of any state.

It required great courage on Governor Wilson's part to take the course he adopted in New

Jersey. He was reminded that Mr. Smith and the influences he represented had helped elect Governor Wilson. Nor was he permitted to forget that certain newspapers and periodicals that are very close to special interests were even then urging Governor Wilson's nomination to the highest office within the people's gift.

But Governor Wilson held resolutely to his course and from every section of the country the thanks of men in all political parties are given to the New Jersey governor for the good work he has accomplished.

Undoubtedly Governor Wilson knows more about practical politics today than he did when James Smith, Jr., and other New Jersey corporationists gave him the gubernatorial nomination and held before his eyes the tempting hope for the presidency. He knows now that many crimes are committed in the name of conservatism and that these special interests often use good men to accomplish their bad purpose. He knows now that the way to preserve popular government in America is to keep the government close to the people and keep special interests away from the machinery of government.

If Governor Wilson had known in 1896 what he knows today he would have fought shoulder to shoulder with the democrats of that year,

rather than with the Palmer and Buckner forces that were working as aides to the republican party.

In the name of every lover of popular government The Commoner thanks Governor Wilson for his patriotic efforts. It congratulates New Jersey upon having sent to the United States senate such a man as James E. Martine and it expresses the hope that from now on the fine effort of which New Jersey's governor is so capable may be given on the side of those democrats who insist that the way to win a democratic victory worth having is to keep the party free from corporation influences and to write its platforms in harmony with the heartbeats of the people who believe in "equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

The first contest will come in the effort of the special interests to control the democratic national convention of 1912. Let us hope that in that great contest Governor Wilson will be found speaking the same language he spoke during the New Jersey senatorial contest and fighting the same battle for the upbuilding of a democratic party that shall be free from the domination of special interests and of real service in the effort to perpetuate popular government in America.

Progressive Republicans

The declaration of principles issued by the progressive republicans ought to serve as a note of warning to those who would have the democratic party reverse itself and take its position upon the very ground where the republican party is now tottering. The republican party has been so well disciplined and has been so signally successful so far as office victories are concerned that it requires considerable courage for one who has been ranked as a loyal republican to rebel against his party's program. In their declaration these progressive republicans say:

"Popular government in America has been thwarted and progressive legislation strangled by the special interests which control caucuses, delegates, conventions and party organizations and through control of the machinery of government dictate nominations and platforms, elect administrations, legislatures, representatives in congress and United States senators and control cabinet officers.

"Under existing conditions legislation in the public interest has been baffled and defeated. This is evidenced by the long struggle to secure laws, but partially effective, for the control of railway rates and services, the revision of the tariff in the interest of the producer and con-

sumer, statutes dealing with trusts and combinations based on sound economic principles as applied to modern industrial and commercial conditions, a wise, comprehensive and impartial reconstruction of the banking and monetary laws, the conservation of coal, oil, gas, timber, water powers and other natural resources belonging to the people and for the enactment of all legislation solely for the common good.

"Just in proportion as popular government has in certain states superseded the delegate convention system and the people have assumed control of the machinery of government, has government become responsive to the popular will and progressive legislation been secured."

The reforms for which they intend to fight are practically the reforms for which democrats have battled for, lo, these many years. Is it not strange, then, that at the very moment when there are on every hand signs that thoughtful republicans are turning toward democratic doctrine it is seriously proposed that democrats surrender their party into the control of the very influences that have wrecked the republican party—the very influences against which LaFollette and his followers are contending?

Does anyone believe that it would be "good politics" for the democratic party to surrender its principles and abandon its high purpose at the very moment when those principles are becoming popular with the rank and file of all parties?

Surely the reorganizers of 1912, like the reorganizers of 1904, are proposing to lead the democratic party into a ditch.

WHAT NEXT?

Will the National Bankers' Association, at its next meeting, denounce the bank guaranty system as it did just before the election of 1908? Or will it read the handwriting on the wall and prepare for a national guaranty system? Every certificate of deposit ought to be as good as a government bond and the bankers ought to have been the first to advocate the plan. Had they joined in this effort two years ago they would not now be worrying about the postal savings banks. With guaranteed banks postal savings banks would be unnecessary.

THE SLEEPER AWAKES

"You're a liar," said the colonel; and then they knew that consciousness had returned.—Louis F. Post's *The Public*.

The Denver Platform

In former issues reference has been made to the planks on Cannonism and the tariff; below will be found the plank on the trusts:

"A private monopoly is indefensible and intolerable; we therefore favor the vigorous enforcement of the criminal law against all guilty trust magnates and officials and demand the enactment of such additional legislation as may be necessary to make it impossible for a private monopoly to exist in the United States. Among the national remedies, we hereby specify three: First, a law preventing a duplication of directors among competing corporations; second, a license system which will, without abridging the right of each state to create corporations, or its right to regulate as it will foreign corporations doing business within its limits, make it necessary for a manufacturing or trading corporation engaged in interstate commerce to take out a federal license before it shall be permitted to control as much as twenty per cent of the product in which it deals, the license to protect the public from watered stock and to prohibit the control by such corporation of more than fifty per cent of the total amount of any product consumed in the United States, and, third, a law compelling such licensed corporations to sell to all purchasers in all parts of the country on the same terms, after making due allowance for cost of transportation."

This plank has the unique distinction of being the first to attack the principle of private monopoly. Other parties have denounced the ABUSES of monopolies and demanded the enforcement of the criminal law but this plank, substantially the same in this respect in three democratic platforms, 1900, 1904 and 1908, declares a private monopoly to be "indefensible and intolerable." The law distinguishes between domestic animals and those which are ferocious by nature; the former can run at large unless shown to be dangerous, while those FEROCIOUS BY NATURE are assumed to be dangerous. The same distinction exists between ordinary corporations, regulated by competition, and monopolies that have destroyed competition. The ordinary corporation is ASSUMED to be harmless; it can run at large unless shown to be dangerous. But the trust is FEROCIOUS BY NATURE; it should be PRESUMED to be dangerous. We do not wait until a lion kills some one before we insist upon its being caged; no more should we wait until we can prove

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