

The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR

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The Denver Platform

The Denver platform contained the following plank on the publishing of campaign contributions:

"We demand federal legislation, forever terminating the partnership which has existed between corporations of the country and the republican party under the expressed or implied agreement that, in return for the contribution of great sums of money, whereby to purchase elections, they should be allowed to continue, substantially unmolested, in their efforts to encroach upon the rights of the people.

"Any reasonable doubt as to the existence of this relation has been dispelled by the sworn testimony of witnesses examined in the insurance investigation in New York and the open admission of a single individual, unchallenged by the republican national committee that he, himself, at the personal request of the then republican candidate for the presidency raised over a quarter of a million dollars to be used in a single state during the closing hours of the last campaign. In order that this practice shall be stopped for all time we demand the passage of a statute punishing by imprisonment any officer of a corporation who shall either contribute on behalf of or consent to the contribution by a corporation of any money or thing of value to be used in furthering the election of a president or vice president of the United States or of any member of the congress thereof. We denounce the republican party having complete control of the federal government for its failure to pass the bill, introduced in the last congress, to compel the publication of the names of contributors and the amounts contributed toward campaign funds and point to the evidence of the insincerity of republican leaders when they sought, by an absolutely irrelevant and impossible amendment to defeat the passage of the bill, as a further evidence of their intention to conduct their campaign in the coming contest with vast sums of money wrested from favor-seeking corporations. We call attention to the fact that the recent republican national convention at Chicago refused, when the issue was presented to it, to declare against such practices.

"We pledge the democratic party to the enactment of a law prohibiting any corporation from contributing to a campaign fund and any individual from contributing an amount above a reasonable maximum and providing for the publication before election of all such contributions above a reasonable minimum."

The republican platform contained no plank on this subject but the republican candidate declared in favor of publicity AFTER the election. Since the campaign a republican congress has endorsed the democratic position, but it was

compelled by the senate to accept the republican plan in order to secure any law on the subject.

For the first time in the nation's history light has been thrown upon campaign expenditures and the source from which the contributions are drawn. It is a step in advance and the democratic party deserves credit for forcing the issue. The fight will be continued until the publication is made before the election.

PROGRESSIVE REPUBLICANS

A formidable array of republicans have attached their names to the declaration of principles issued by the Progressive Republican League. Read these names carefully. This declaration of war recalls the fight commenced in the democratic party in 1895—sixteen years ago. Will the progressives succeed in obtaining control of the republican party? We shall see. They have an administration to fight, just as the progressive democrats had; they have the special interests to fight, just as the progressive democrats had; they have the big newspapers against them, just as the progressive democrats had. Let us hope that the progressives will control BOTH parties and give the people a chance to win, no matter which party succeeds.

The men who ate and drank and celebrated at Baltimore should give special attention to the Progressive Republican League. If they (the Baltimore crowd) succeed in nominating a Wall Street democrat and the progressives put up a real progressive republican the democratic ticket will come out worse than it did in 1904. Keep your eye on the Progressive Republican League; and, by the way, is it not about time for the progressive democrats to get to work?

WARREN FREED

A Washington dispatch says: "President Taft today commuted the sentence of Fred D. Warren, socialist editor of the Appeal to Reason. Warren was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and fined \$1,500 for sending libelous matter through the mails. Commutation was granted without any appeal by Warren for mercy. The case was presented to the president by Representative Campbell of Kansas. As commuted, the sentence for imprisonment is eliminated and the fine reduced to \$100, to be collected by civil process only."

The president is to be commended for his good sense. They "made a mountain out of a mole hill" in the Warren case and Warren's imprisonment would have made much trouble for the administration. Already men in every section of the country were asking, "Why does not the administration reserve some of its prosecution energy for trust magnates?"

"CONCESSION," INDEED!

The New Orleans Picayune, in criticising the Arizona constitution, attacks the recall, especially as applied to judicial officers. The Picayune says: "An elective judiciary is about the limit of the concessions that it is safe to make to popular opinion." "Concession"—that is good. Who is this superior person who is making such concessions as are safe to "popular opinion?" One might suppose us living under a monarchy and securing such concessions as the king felt it safe to grant. The Picayune uses the language of the aristocratic and plutocratic crowd which fears "popular opinion" and steadfastly believes that unpopular opinion should control. The recall is feared by such because it is democratic and increases the power of the people.

POPULAR GOVERNMENT

Henry Wade Rodgers, dean of the Yale law school, speaking at a dinner given at Providence recently said: "I was saying to one of the members here this evening that I had been told that a few years ago eight per cent of the voters of Rhode Island ruled the other ninety-two per cent. He replied that I was misinformed, for at the present time it was four per cent." And this is "popular government!"

Arizona at the Door

To President Taft: Arizona stands at the door and knocks—will you admit her to the sisterhood of states? She deserves well at the nation's hands. Her people are the bravest of the brave, and they are as intelligent as they are brave, and as industrious as they are intelligent. They have forced the mountains to give up their wealth of mineral treasure; they have converted vast stretches of desert into gardens and fields; and, they are patient, too. They have desired statehood for years and they have deserved it, too, but hope has been deferred. At last, an enabling act was passed, and a constitutional convention was elected. That convention prepared a constitution and that constitution has been ratified by an overwhelming majority. Will you extend the hand of welcome or will you use your position to deny them the recognition that they crave? A corporation-controlled press and some ambitious office holders seemed to speak for you and threaten the people of Arizona if they dared to adopt such a constitution as they desired, but they did you honor to believe that you would have spoken to them directly, rather than through such agents, if you had desired to warn them. It ought to be gratifying to you to know that they have shown an independence which proves their capacity for self-government. If their constitution contains anything repugnant to the constitution of the United States, the supreme court can be trusted to nullify it. Can you ask more? If, however, there is any provision which, while not a violation of the federal constitution, is so objectionable to you that you wish it submitted separately, ask congress to authorize a vote upon it where state officers are elected. If there is any provision so objectionable as in your judgment to justify you in rejecting the constitution unless amended, do not put the people to the delay and trouble of writing a new constitution, ask congress to make the elimination of such provision a condition precedent to admission. They can eliminate it when they hold their state election. Make any conditions you please, but do not reject their constitution. Let them come in, and the career of the state will be such that you will find increasing pleasure in the fact that you proclaimed Arizona a state.

W. J. BRYAN.

THE ARIZONA CONSTITUTION

Abstract of address delivered by Mr. Bryan, at Tucson, Arizona, February 7, 1911, in favor of the ratification of the Arizona constitution:

The Constitution should be ratified, first, because it is good and deserving of approval, and, second, because it contains provisions by which any defects found in it may easily be corrected.

It is good because it contains all the safeguards which experience suggests. It keeps pace with the progress of the time. Government, like all other institutions, grows. Our government is the most perfect form yet devised, because it most nearly reflects the sentiments of the people. That government is the most perfect which can most easily be made to reflect the virtue and intelligence of the people—it improves, as the people improve.

Progress is evident all over the world. There is not a country with any degree of civilization in which the government does not show signs of growth, and everywhere the growth is in the same direction, namely, in the direction of bringing the government nearer to the people, and making it more responsive to the will of the people. Our nation is no exception to the rule. We have, within the last two years, submitted an amendment to the federal constitution, specifically authorizing an income tax, and this amendment is being ratified by the states. We are just about to submit an amendment providing for the election of United States senators by direct vote of the people. This will be submitted by the next congress, if not by this, and is sure to be ratified by the people. The change will mark an epoch in our nation's

CONTENTS

THE DENVER PLATFORM
ARIZONA AT THE DOOR
THE RUSSELL SAGE FOUNDATION
DEMOCRATS PASS CANADIAN
RECIPROCITY BILL
GOVERNOR HARMON AND THE
OREGON PLAN
WHO HIT McLEAN?
SHIP SUBSIDY AND WATSON
DEMOCRATIC WAYS AND MEANS
COMMITTEE
TIMELY QUOTATIONS
THE OREGON PRIMARY LAW, BY
SENATOR BOURNE
CURRENT TOPICS
HOME DEPARTMENT
WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
WASHINGTON NEWS
NEWS OF THE WEEK