

Democratic Opinion Freely Expressed

H. H. Peters, Eureka, Ill.—I appreciate continually the attitude of The Commoner on the questions that are now up in our civic life. The democratic party has struggled for fourteen years to gain a victory over corporate greed and political crookedness. The party should not sell out at this hour. There never has been such an opportunity before the party as today, at least never since the days of Andrew Jackson. But to sell out to Wall Street and the corporations of the country at this time would be equal to Judas betraying the Lord. I hope the west, south and Mississippi valley will continue to be self-assertive and control the policies, make the platform, and nominate the candidate for 1912.

A. H. Stowers, Atlanta, Ga.—I am thoroughly enjoying The Commoner nowadays, even more than usual; am thoroughly in accord with Mr. Bryan, in that we must be careful lest "black sheep" get into the flock. I have voted for Mr. Bryan three times; am for him more today than ever, because his ideas are things of reality, while sixteen years ago they were quite new, and the unthinking could not grasp his ideas—no matter how plainly he laid them down. I have heard Mr. Bryan speak on eight occasions, and indeed, I was glad to hear him when he came to Atlanta in February.

W. Williamson, Pasadena, Cal.—I have been reading The Commoner for some time and am much pleased with the way you are warning the democrats to be on their guard—and hold the reins for the people. Mr. Bryan is a wise leader, far-sighted as to the needs of the people and unwavering in his efforts to make politics better and cleaner. The very principles he advocated on reform and good government the country needed, and are being taken up and will be used for the benefit of the people. It would be well for all democrats to read The Commoner and it will also be instructive to the republicans. I hope as honest and as wise a man as Mr. Bryan will be our president in 1912 and the future give us many more as great.

M. J. Turner, Upland, Neb.—This seems to me to be a very important time to consider whether the democratic party can afford to be committed to a republican policy—the president's tariff commission. To "make good" in regard to that part of the republican platform which states that the tariff should only be high enough to make up the difference in cost of labor, together with "a reasonable profit to the manufacturer," the president is to appoint a commission to revise the tariff. No democrat should go on that committee. If this effort to saddle a protective policy upon the democratic party is successful, we will have to dig a grave deep enough for both parties. We cannot afford to admit the government has the right to arrange for private interests to tax the public.

P. J. Fishel, New Philadelphia, Ohio—May it never come to pass that I should depart from the political teaching that I have received for the last fourteen years. I am not of that number who are looking forward to a victory without regard to the manner in which it is obtained,

or the principles upon which the battle is fought, for it is my firm belief that a victory won fighting in the wrong is worse than a dozen defeats fighting for the right. Why should we fight at all, if we do not array ourselves on the side of right and justice—of "equal rights to all and special privileges to none"—and the moral and political uplift of our citizenship? Why should we defeat the methods of the stand-pat republicans only to replace it with those of this so-called "safe and sane" democracy? Certainly that would be the rankest inconsistency. In 1896 Mr. Bryan gathered the ruins of the democratic party and ever since it has been a truly fighting force for good, except when it wandered after false gods in 1904, the folly of this move being clearly demonstrated. May his life and strength be spared for many years to be a guiding light to those who are looking forward to better things in this fair land of ours. The candidate for 1912 should be a man whose character is founded upon a firm Christian basis and it will naturally follow that his ideas along governmental affairs will be for the good of the masses. Mr. Folk seems to be the right kind of a man, and I hope to see him or some equally as good man nominated.

Russell F. Collins, Spokane, Wash.—We, as a party, are in greater danger today from those who profess to be our friends than our avowed enemies. It would be an empty victory, if it meant a return to those who have betrayed every pledge made to the people. As I see it, the democratic name is once more to be offered upon the scaffold of organized greed. We are to elect a democratic congress, and a democratic president, but none of those that will do the special interests any harm. They are to be conservatives by nature and by training. They are to be chosen by Wall Street. Better ten defeats than such a victory. What could we hope to gain by such elevation to power—nothing but the contempt of the millions in the democratic party—who for years have stood for principle. Such a victory should be held in contempt by every loyal democrat. I believe our country is approaching a crisis greater than has confronted us since the civil war. The people are awake to this condition and are preparing to meet it. The nomination of any Wall Street democrat for the presidency in 1912, would be a great disappointment to them. It must not be done. We must have a candidate that thoroughly understands the meaning of progression. One who will stand for principle. Mr. Bryan is my preference for the presidency, and secondly I look with favor upon Joseph W. Folk, of Missouri. I am with you for a progressive candidate in 1912.

W. J. BRYAN, JR., IN DEBATE

Academic interpretation of the initiative and referendum, reflected largely through printed treatises of various kinds, were presented by four university debaters for the edification of an every-day Tucson audience, which packed the university assembly room and overflowed into the adjoining hall. The debaters were W. J. Bryan, Jr., H. Lowdermilk, S. H. Strong, and H. G. Theroux. The first and third named argued in favor of the "progressive" measures. The second and fourth

opposed them vigorously, but unsuccessfully, for the judges, T. K. Richey, Prof. A. E. Bates and W. J. Galbraith decided in favor of the affirmative.

Though lacking the oratorical cleverness of his father, W. J. Bryan, Jr., debates easily and very convincingly on the theoretical benefits of the initiative and referendum, tracing it from Grecian and Roman origin down to the present day. He quoted the well known exponents of those governmental experiments, and

read extracts from The Commoner in support of his assertions. Mr. Bryan said Arizona is particularly in danger of corporate influence because of the mining, lumber, railroad, cattle, and big agricultural enterprises such as can only be operated by extensive capital. Therefore, he said, Arizona is peculiarly in need of some such provisions as the initiative and referendum as a safeguard to the non-corporate people of the proposed state.—Tucson (Arizona) Citizen.

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