

The Commoner.

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The Lorimer Vote

Mr. Lorimer holds his seat by a vote that damns him. If he had any sensitiveness on the subject of official honor, he would not be content to associate daily with men who have voted to expel him. Membership in the senate ought to require higher credentials than a verdict of not guilty by a divided court. When it is remembered that the senate is strongly republican; when it is remembered that Lorimer is a republican of long service in the house and of great influence in his state, it is conclusive proof of his guilt that so many of his own party and some of its strongest men should vote to unseat him. It must be remembered, too, that the speeches in condemnation of him were delivered in his presence and by men who must associate with him if shame does not drive him to resign. Surely senatorial courtesy is put to the test when members of that body feel constrained to utter such condemnation as was spoken against him as he heard unblushingly.

The democratic party is to be congratulated that a considerable majority of its representatives in the senate voted against Mr. Lorimer in spite of the fact that all but one of the democratic members of the committee joined in report favorable to him. The party has reason to be proud of senators who recorded their votes against Lorimer, and it has reason to mourn that the votes of senators who voted for Mr. Lorimer have placed upon the democratic party a part of the odium for his retention in what ought to be the highest legislative body of the world. The republican party comes out of the contest in better position than our party, notwithstanding the fact that a majority of the democrats voted to unseat, while a majority of the republican party voted to seat him. The republicans deserve the more credit for it required more courage for them to vote against one of their own party than it required for a democrat to cast a similar vote.

But the fight has not been without good results. The election of senators by the people has received an impetus and fraud has received a rebuke even if that rebuke falls short of the severity which it deserves. The day of corruption is passing; the victory for popular elections is near at hand. Before two years have elapsed the states will be voting for the ratification of an amendment substituting election by the people for election by legislature. Mr. Lorimer is one of the last of his class unless the states in which the senatorial deadlocks continue furnish him company.

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POPULAR ELECTION POSTPONED

The resolution submitting an amendment to the constitution providing for the election of senators by the people failed of passage by four votes, but the friends of this reform need not feel discouraged. It was really a great victory when it is remembered that this is the first time it has been possible to get the resolution out of the hands of the committee. It is the first time that a majority of the senate has been recorded in favor of the resolution. The constitution requires a two-thirds majority for a submission of a constitutional amendment, and the resolution had a considerable majority but fell a little short of the constitutional two-thirds. But the case is even stronger still, for more than two-thirds of the senators actually favored popular elections but a division was created among them by the introduction of what was known as the Sutherland amendment. However honestly intended this was, it served to furnish a number of democrats with an excuse for not voting for the amended resolution while many of the republicans who voted for the amendment also voted against the resolution in its amended form.

Senator Borah charged that the Sutherland amendment was being pushed for the purpose of defeating the entire proposition, and there is good ground to believe that with a number of senators at least, the support of this amendment was not an honest and sincere one, but be that as it may, enough has been accomplished to make sure the submission of the necessary amendment by the next congress and then the gate will be open for remedial legislation. Victory is near; let the people rejoice.

DENVER PLATFORM

The following is the income tax plank of the Denver platform: "We favor an income tax as part of our revenue system and we urge the submission of a constitutional amendment specifically authorizing congress to levy and collect a tax upon individual and corporate incomes to the end that wealth may bear its proportionate share of the burdens of the federal government."

It has already been carried out. No republican national platform ever declared for an income tax law or for an amendment to the constitution authorizing such a law. It is something to be proud of that a republican president had to come to a democratic platform to secure a plank declaring for so important an amendment to the constitution. The democratic party began its fight for an income tax sixteen years ago and it rejoices at the prospect of an early triumph on this proposition.

BRAVO, PENNSYLVANIA!

The democratic state committee of Pennsylvania has, by a vote of forty to thirty-nine, decided to reorganize the party in that state. Good! It needs it. Its sins are so rank they smell to heaven. Fortunately, reorganization will be easy; all that is necessary is that those members of the organization who are on the pay roll of the predatory corporations which have controlled both parties, be removed and their places filled by men who are free to be democrats.

AS TO LEADERS

Eleven democratic senators wired the governor of Texas that Senator Bailey was the undisputed leader of his party in the senate. Six of these senators had followed him in his fight for Lorimer when a majority refused to follow, but only two followed him in his fight against Arizona. Leadership is measured by followers, and Mr. Bailey seems likely to have less following in the next senate than in this.

SENATOR STONE'S SPEECH

Senator Stone's speech against Lorimer was a masterpiece. How mortifying it must have been to Lorimer to hear the sophistries of his supporters overthrown; and, how mortifying it must have been to the democrats who voted for Lorimer, to hear their reasons for so voting explained.

The Birth of a Soul

Have you ever heard the story that Rudolph Spreckles tells of his initiation into the study of public affairs? It ought to be heard by every citizen who desires to live up to his civic responsibilities. It is especially important that young men shall hear it. Mr. Spreckles has been speaking before clubs, colleges and legislatures. At Lincoln, Neb., he first addressed the Commercial club, and the members crowding every foot of space in the banquet hall, listened with breathless interest to the plain and simple story of the way in which his own heart was reached and his manhood stirred by the knowledge he acquired of crookedness in business and municipal government. He was then invited to speak before the state senate of Nebraska, and in the evening addressed a body of students at the university. Everyone who listened to him went away stronger for what he said.

Spreckles began business as a young man—as a boy, in fact—under his father's tutelage. His first recollections were of the lawless conduct of rivals who were attempting to prevent competition. Machinery was damaged by persons obtaining admission to the works, and a trusted employe was bribed to furnish information. Later as a director in a local gas company in San Francisco he became aware of the indefensible methods that were being employed by the company. He appealed to the stockholders, reorganized the company and started out to put the corporation upon an honest business basis. Then he came into contact with the grafters in municipal life, chief among whom at that time was Abe Ruef. He had been gradually becoming conscious of a work that needed to be done, but the final fact necessary to arouse his moral nature was an offer made by Abe Ruef that involved consequences so fiendish that young Spreckles burst forth into a reformer. It was the birth of a soul, to borrow a phrase that has been used many times before. He dates his political career from that date. Since then he has not only spent his money but what is even more noteworthy, he has risked the social ostracism which the predatory interests are able to visit upon those who hold virtue above might. He is largely responsible for the shaking up in California politics—a shaking that will do the state more good than the earthquake did harm.

One of the best tests of the political wisdom and moral courage of Spreckles is that he recognizes the premiership of LaFollette among the progressive republicans; he appreciates the long and unflinching fight that the Wisconsin senator has made.

The Commoner rejoices that a man like Spreckles has thrown the weight of his influence in favor of reforms. Instead of using his wealth to pamper the flesh and to chloroform his intellectual energy, he is contributing to the advancement of political measures which he believes to be right. Instead of fearing the masses, he has wisely determined to be their friend. He is willing to trust his fortune to laws made by the people. The initiative and referendum and the recall have no terrors for him. He has confidence in the patriotism and the intelligence of the average man, and that confidence is not misplaced. Nebraska is better for the visit paid it by Rudolph Spreckles. May his life be spared and his zeal be unabated until his dollars will be forgotten in the public's admiration of those qualities of head and heart that outshine money metals.

EXTRA SESSION APRIL 4

President Taft will call congress in extra session for April 4th. Democratic members will caucus April 3rd. In the meantime the new ways and means committee of the house will be at work preparing for tariff revision. The special session is called particularly for the approval of Canadian reciprocity.