

"Back to the People" is the Cry from All Sections and from All Parties

Ex-Governor Folk and Speaker Clark have joined in asking for a primary for the instruction of the Missouri delegation to the next democratic national convention. This is wise. Give the people a chance and they will settle controversies between candidates—and settle them more satisfactorily than the politicians can. When the people speak, no one can question the verdict.

A number of states, including Nebraska, Oregon, North Dakota, New Jersey and Wisconsin, have primaries for the selection and instruction of delegates, and the state committees of several states have been asked to call a primary. In Alabama and Pennsylvania the delegations were instructed in 1908.

"Back to the people," is the cry from all sections and all parties. Presidential primaries ought to be held in every state in the union.

SENATOR CULBERSON'S STATEMENT

Senator Culberson of Texas has issued a statement in which he advocates such change in the primary election system in Texas, as well as other states, as will enable each individual elector in the primary to express his choice for president. He says:

"In the speech which I made to the legislature of Texas last January when I was honored by re-election to the senate of the United States, I said, in effect, that one of the prime factors in the democratic victory in 1910 was our demand for a larger and more direct share by the people themselves in party and governmental affairs. Not only do I believe this demand greatly influenced the election in our favor, but I believe the demand itself is a proper and just one.

"We have for years in Texas nominated, through primaries, candidates for precinct, county, district and state offices and recently we adopted the policy of nominating candidates for United States senate. This method prevents all the abuses which have heretofore entered into nominations by conventions and mass meetings, where often the choice of the majority was defeated, and gives to each democrat a direct voice in naming the candidates of his party.

"I believe this policy should be extended in each state to the choice of the democrats for positions, for in this way the real choice of the democrats would be made known. At this time there are a number of well known democrats who are active or receptive candidates for the nomination, and all the democrats of Texas should be given an opportunity to express their preference next year in a primary."

PRIMARIES SENTIMENT GROWING

Under the headline "Primary Sentiment Growing," the Nashville Tennessean prints the following editorial:

"Sentiment for a democratic state-wide primary to select candidates for all state offices, congress, United States senator, and to show Tennessee's preference for president in the coming election, is growing rapidly.

"Leading democrats throughout the state, regardless of former factional alignment are talking harmony. Many of them are indorsing the Tennessean and American's suggestion that the short road to democratic harmony is through a state-wide primary for white voters, conducted by democrats of unquestioned integrity, from both factions.

"An overwhelming mass of the democratic party in Tennessee is for prompt and effective harmony and party reorganization.

"They are not discouraged over Chairman Vertrees' snubbing of the peace proposals submitted by Chairman Barton and his committee. Many are of the opinion that Chairman Vertrees made a serious blunder in refusing to bring his committee together. In fact the present indication is that he will be forced to call his committee together soon and show a disposition to meet the desire of the democratic masses, or the rank and file will handle the situation for themselves.

"Chairman Vertrees or no other man in the state can set himself up as the dictator of Tennessee democracy. It is a most encouraging

sign that the people mean to handle their own party affairs."

A PRIMARY FOR EVERY STATE

Following is an Associated Press dispatch: "Washington, D. C., Nov. 10.—Walter Houser, chairman of the progressive republican campaign committee, has appealed, through circular letter to the chairman of every republican state committee in the United States, urging that steps be taken to insure a republican presidential primary in each state by new laws, and in the five states where it is provided by direction of the campaign committee.

"In his letter Chairman Houser calls attention to the resolution adopted at a conference of progressive republicans in Chicago last month favoring state primaries for candidates for president and vice president, and urging state committees to provide that the people be given the right to express their choice for president before the national convention is held.

"The demand for popular selection of candidates for office," says Chairman Houser, "both state and national, has become general. It is obvious that no man despite the wishes of the rank and file of the republican party can inspire the confidence or command the united and enthusiastic support which will be so necessary to republican success in 1912."

"Mr. Houser states in the letter, which was mailed also to the governor, lieutenant governor and speaker of the lower house in each state, that the friends of Senator La Follette are ready to submit his name for nomination to a direct vote of the rank and file of the party."

PROGRESSIVES IN BOTH PARTIES SHOULD ACT

Following is an editorial that appeared in the Denver News:

"Under the convention plan, as conducted at present, the people have absolutely no voice in the selection of presidential nominees. The public service corporations, organized capital, led-captains and camp-following of crooks, all join in the selection of delegates in the various states—the national bosses take charge of the combined output when it is finally gathered together in the convention city—and the best the people get is a choice between two party nominees blandly offered them.

"The whole plan is outrageous and absurd, but what with the stupidities of partisanship and the perfection of 'machine' control, it is not until now that the people are arousing to rebellion. Oregon, as usual, has led the way. In 1910 that state provided, by statute, for presidential primaries at which every individual voter, democrat, republican, et al., would have the right to express his preference for party nominees for president and vice president.

"What more simple or more just? The delegates are supposed to represent the wishes of the people, and by means of the presidential primaries, the people are permitted to express these wishes for the instruction of their representatives.

"Since 1910 four other states have followed Oregon's example, so that on these dates, in 1912, these states will send delegates to the democratic and republican national convention with orders: North Dakota, March 19; Wisconsin, April 2; Nebraska, April 17; Oregon, April 19, and New Jersey, May 28.

"California will also fall in line shortly. The Johnson administration, now in control of the republican machinery, could easily secure a La Follette delegation, but, judging from report, it is not the progressive intention to take advantage of the power. A presidential primary will be ordered, and unless La Follette gets the votes he will not get the delegation. This is 'mobocracy' as distinguished from 'practical politics.'

"Mark Sullivan, writing in Collier's declares that 'there is no escaping the logic of the presidential primary. If it is right for the individual to vote at the election, why is it not right for him to vote at the primary also? If the individual is capable of choosing between Taft and Harmon—assuming that they are the candidates at the election—why is he not also capable of choosing between Taft and La Follette, between Wilson and Harmon?'

"Senator Bourne, in a strong letter to the republican national committee, urges that when the call for the national convention is issued, 'it shall contain a strong recommendation that in all states, wherever practicable, the state committee call presidential primaries at least thirty days prior to the republican national convention, thus giving every member of the party an opportunity to express his preference for party candidates for president and vice president. . . ."

"I urge this action upon you because I believe it is right in principle and expedient as a party measure. . . . It is right in principle because the members of the party are entitled to an effective voice in the selection of candidates they are expected to support for election. It is expedient as a party measure, for no party candidate could go before the country with a stronger argument than that he had been selected by a direct vote of the members of his party and not by a convention dominated by operators of a steam roller. . . ."

"The power of popular selection of candidates is of utmost importance to good government, for the ballot is of little value to the voter if he must cast it for one or two candidates, both selected by federal officeholders or professional politicians. Let us make this in fact, as well as in name, a truly representative government."

"The Colorado legislature does not meet this year, so there is no chance of securing a presidential primary by legislative enactment. Even did the legislature meet, there would be no chance, so regret is eliminated.

"There is a way, however, by which the voters of the state can be given the right to express their preference in the matter of party nominees. The state committees of the two parties can order presidential primaries.

"This, of course, will not be done unless powerful pressure is brought to bear on them. The 'federal officeholders and professional politicians,' noted by Senator Bourne, are largely in control of the two party organizations, and the names written on their slates are Taft and Harmon. If left to themselves—unless brought under the domination of public opinion—Taft and Harmon delegations will go from this state.

"Yet where is the man—free and unfettered—who will say that these men are the choices of the people of Colorado? Wilson and La Follette sentiment washes the state in a tidal wave. Under the present convention system, however, there is no chance for its expression.

"The progressive of both parties should instantly commence the agitation for presidential primaries. There is not a single honest argument that can be brought against them. We now have direct primaries for the nomination of state and municipal officers and United States senators, and surely the selection of a president is every whit as important.

"Let the party managers be made to come to a 'showdown.' The demand must be made upon them. If they refuse it can only be on the ground that they do not wish to be guided by the preferences and instructions of the people—that they do not care even to know them.

"Is it not conceivable that the 'leaders' will think twice before making this answer? Even in the old days it was not wise to openly defy the people, and in this time of growing popular power, it is not only unwise but exceedingly unsafe.

"The agitation can not commence too soon. Let every honest newspaper in the state put this matter of presidential primaries up to the state chairman and the members of the state committees. Let every individual voter communicate his wishes in this respect to these eminent and honorable gentlemen.

"The thing can be done, and it should be done."

MUST BE PROGRESSIVE

Editorial in Denver News: There is every reason for cheerfulness in the camps of the progressives—both democrat and republican—but not the slightest ground for over-confidence. The fight is still on, and while every indication points to final victory, there is still many a trench to be carried, many a citadel to be captured.