

# The Commoner.

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## A CLEAR-CUT ISSUE

The democrats of Nebraska will have an opportunity to decide the issue raised by Mr. Hitchcock against Mr. Bryan. Mr. Hitchcock announces that his **FIRST CHOICE** for the presidential nomination is Governor Harmon of Ohio, but that he will support either Mr. Wilson or Mr. Clark if so instructed by the democratic voters at the primaries. Mr. Bryan has stated, as between Mr. Wilson and Mr. Clark he does not care to express a preference, regarding them both as progressive, and that he will be glad to vote in the convention for either if instructed to do so by the democrats at the primaries, but that, believing that Mr. Harmon is a reactionary whose nomination, if secured at all, will be secured by Wall street influences, he is not willing to be a party to his nomination. Mr. Bryan announces that, if elected a delegate, he will resign his commission and refuse to serve if Mr. Harmon receives a plurality at the primaries. If the question of instructions were determined before the election of delegates and determined in favor of Mr. Harmon, Mr. Bryan would not be a candidate for delegate, but he has no way of knowing, until the delegates are elected, what the wishes of the Nebraska democrats may be in regard to the candidate.

Mr. Hitchcock, in an editorial which will be found on another page, criticises the position taken by Mr. Bryan, his conclusion being summed up in the following sentence: "If Mr. Bryan is not willing to promise to abide by the instructions of the democrats of Nebraska, he ought not to be a candidate." Mr. Bryan's answer is that he believes in keeping the spirit of the law as well as the letter. No man ought to attempt to speak for the democracy of Nebraska unless he can carry out the spirit as well as the letter of their instructions. If the democracy of Nebraska favors Mr. Harmon, it ought to be represented by delegates who can support Mr. Harmon not only conscientiously but with enthusiasm. Mr. Bryan can not support him in the convention on any conditions or under any circumstances and he would forfeit the confidence and respect of the friends with whom he has labored for nearly two decades if, believing as he does, that Mr. Harmon is a reactionary and the choice of the predatory interests of the country for the democratic nomination—if, believing this, he were willing to surrender his convictions for the honor of being a delegate to the national convention. This is Mr. Bryan's position, and he contends that he is showing more respect for the democracy of Nebraska than Mr. Hitchcock is.

Mr. Hitchcock knows as well as Mr. Bryan does that the democracy of Nebraska is progressive, but he is not only willing, but

anxious, to misrepresent the democracy of this state in the matter of the presidential nomination. He is endeavoring to prevent any cooperation between the two progressive candidates—Mr. Wilson and Mr. Clark—with a view to securing, not a majority, but a plurality for Mr. Harmon, and if he can do this, he will go to Baltimore and ally himself with the plutocratic influences that are attempting to force Mr. Harmon upon the party.

The democracy of Nebraska can not instruct Mr. Hitchcock as to a platform; if Mr. Hitchcock is elected a delegate and can secure the election of men like himself, he can help to write a platform which will assassinate our party in advance and make it impossible for even a progressive to win. Not only that, but if the person instructed for, however progressive he may be, can not be nominated, Mr. Hitchcock will be released from further instructions and can then use his influence as a delegate to foist upon the party any reactionary who may be nominated, with his aid, regardless of the wishes of the democrats of Nebraska. In other words, he asks to be permitted to misrepresent the democracy of the state and to help surrender the party to the interests that have defeated the party in three campaigns by opposing the democratic ticket and, in a fourth campaign, defeated the party still more disastrously by controlling the organization and leading the fight.

Mr. Bryan invites the democrats of the state to decide between his position and the position taken by Mr. Hitchcock. Mr. Bryan will, if the democrats wish it, represent them as a delegate, **PROVIDED** he can carry out their instructions in spirit as well as in letter. If he can not do so—not being able to know in advance of his election—he will resign his commission and leave the representation to others who can give voice to the party's wishes as expressed at the primaries.

Mr. Hitchcock, on the contrary, has so little interest in the democracy of Nebraska and such a contempt for its wishes that in order to enjoy the distinction of being a delegate he is willing to betray them into the hands of their enemies. If the democrats instruct for a progressive, they are entitled to progressives to represent them. If the rule of the people means anything, it means that those who speak for the people should say what the people want said and do what the people want done. Mr. Hitchcock does not deny the right of a representative in any legislative body to resign rather than act against his conscience and his judgment, and he would not take the absurd position that he now does if he could act upon this subject as an abstract proposition without bias or personal feeling.

### PROGRESSIVES SHOULD ACT TOGETHER

Mr. Bryan is in no way responsible for the resolution adopted by Nebraska progressive democrats indorsing the candidacy of Governor Wilson. He does not know in what proportion the progressives of Nebraska are divided between Wilson and Clark. He is in favor of cooperation between progressives against the reactionaries, not only in Nebraska but in every state. The division of delegates should be in proportion to the relative strength of the candidates—neither candidate can ask more—but no progressive should allow friendship for any particular candidate to lead him to jeopardize the party's welfare. We have a primary in Nebraska and a **PLURALITY** elects delegates. Suppose sixty thousand votes are cast and Governor Harmon has twenty-one thousand,

while Wilson and Clark have nineteen each—a reactionary vote of a little more than one-third would defeat a progressive majority of nearly two-thirds. Why should progressives permit this? If Harmon and one progressive are near together a small vote for another might give a minority an advantage over the progressive majority. This should not be permitted.

Mr. Bryan is not, he repeats, prepared to say at this time which progressive has the largest following in Nebraska. If, before the primary, he is convinced that either Mr. Wilson or Mr. Clark is menacing progressive success he will favor the stronger as against the weaker as the means of defeating the reactionaries. And he will pursue the same course in other states, whether it requires him to oppose Wilson or Clark. Just in proportion as Wilson and Clark are progressive they will prefer each the other, to any one standing for Wall street. Progressives should act together everywhere.

### THE ILLINOIS SITUATION

Illinois is about to elect delegates to the democratic national convention and these delegates will select a new national committeeman. The state of Illinois has been unfortunate for some years in having as her representative on the national committee a man whose connection with the committee does the party more harm than any labor of his can overcome. Roger Sullivan stands for a kind of democracy that is passing—he represents the old regime under which the predatory interests supplied the campaign funds and got the money back out of the pockets of the people through special privilege. He can not adjust himself to the new order of things, any more than a leopard can change its spots. No matter how well meaning his democratic friends may think him, his presence on the