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## THE NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY

In considering the new party, just organized at Chicago under the leadership of ex-President Roosevelt, the subject naturally divides itself into three heads; first, the reasons which call the new party into existence; second, its platform of principles and, third, its candidate.

Time alone can tell whether the new organization created for and led by Colonel Roosevelt is to become a permanent and influential factor in American politics or merely a temporary protest against the republican party and its present leadership and a means of forcing that party to accept the leadership of the progressives. It may be assumed at the start that to be permanent it must be more than a one man party. However influential a leader may be, he is hardly large enough to form the foundation of a great party. The mere fact that every man must some time die precludes the idea of permanence unless the party has something more enduring to build upon than a personality. Several questions arise and the answers to them will enable us to form some opinion as to the importance of the new party.

First—Would a new party have been organized at this time if Mr. Roosevelt were not a candidate for president? If not, then his ambition to hold the office for a third term is the controlling factor and no man's ambition is important enough to the public at large to lead to the formation of a new party merely to gratify it. Unless the conditions are such as to create a necessity for a new party, regardless of the wishes or influence of any one or a few persons, the organization is likely to be ephemeral. When a real necessity exists for a new party that necessity will of itself bring forth a new party and its sponsors will be sufficiently numerous to insure its existence and growth, no matter what may happen to any individual factor in its organization.

Second—Would Mr. Roosevelt have favored the organization of a new party had any one besides himself suffered the mortification of defeat at Chicago by President Taft? If he had stayed out of the race and left the field to Senator La Follette and Senator Cummins, would the defeat of either at the hands of "the bosses" furnished him a sufficient reason for leaving the republican party and enlisting under the banner of another man? The fact that he refused to take sides between Senator La Follette and President Taft might justify a negative answer to the above question. The members of the new party may not accept this fact as controlling, but has the character of the republican party changed materially within the last eight months?

Third—In view of Mr. Roosevelt's denunciation of the republican party as so boss-ridden as to destroy its usefulness it may be asked with

propriety whether Mr. Roosevelt would have regarded the republican bosses as an insuperable objection to the party, if he had succeeded in seating enough of his contesting delegates to give him a majority in the convention? If he had controlled the national committee by one vote and it had seated enough of his southern delegates to dominate the convention, would he not now regard the republican party as a people's party and the only organization to be trusted? We see how obnoxious those bosses are now—how absolutely destructive of the party's usefulness under Mr. Taft's leadership. Would Mr. Roosevelt have been able to entirely neutralize their influence and render them harmless had he succeeded in securing the nomination? Mr. Root's selection as temporary chairman was, of course, made in the interest of the predatory classes but even after his elevation to that position Mr. Roosevelt continued his efforts to obtain control of the convention. If he had succeeded, would his success have purged the convention of the evil influence that Mr. Root carried about with him? And why, except for partisan and personal reasons, does Mr. Roosevelt put the Baltimore convention, which routed the bosses in the same class with the Chicago convention which was controlled by the bosses?

These questions are asked because they are pertinent. There is no doubt that the republican party had done enough to merit defeat—the people have been very lenient with it—but has it forfeited its right to exist? The old republican party can not hope to continue long upon the stage if a majority of its members rally to the standard of Mr. Roosevelt's organization, but if a majority of the rank and file of the republican party are reformers, could they not have reorganized and rejuvenated the republican party from within. Would not a much larger percentage engage in the work of reorganization than will be willing to leave the party and cast in their lot with a new party? Party ties are strong and the desertions from Mr. Roosevelt both in the regular convention and since, show how much easier it is to lead a reform movement within a party than from without.

The platform adopted by the new party may be divided into three parts. One part indorses reforms for which the democratic party has been laboring for years, and, until recently, without much support from those who now hold themselves out as the only ones to be trusted with the securing of remedial legislation. The labor bureau, for instance, with a seat in the cabinet, is a thing for which the democratic party has been contending, also, the election of senators by direct vote of the people and the direct primaries. Our Baltimore platform was the first national platform to demand presidential primaries, and it went beyond the platform of the new party in demanding the popular election of national committeemen and a change in the system whereby a national committeeman will begin to serve as soon as elected, thus creating a new committee for the preliminary work of each convention. A considerable part of the labor plank is taken from previous democratic platforms. It is ungrateful in the new party to accuse our party of "total incapacity" while using our material.

A part of the platform deals with state issues, such planks, for instance, as those favoring the initiative, the referendum, the recall, and woman suffrage. These propositions are before the people in a number of states and the indorsement of them will, of course, strengthen them but it has not been customary for national platforms to deal with subjects which were not before congress, or connected with the work of the national administration.

A part of the new section of the platform is commendable. For instance, the demand for a constitutional amendment making easier and more expeditious the amending of the federal

constitution. We need such an amendment and the people will welcome any assistance that the new party may be able to give this movement.

The planks in regard to the conservation of human resources will appeal to the public, especially those prohibiting child labor and excessive hours, together with those demanding a day of rest each week, a living minimum wage, legislation for the prevention of accidents, for the abolition of convict contract labor, and for publicity in regard to labor conditions.

The inheritance tax plank is also good and the plank calling for greater safeguards for the prevention of monopoly of our national resources.

The tariff plank is the same old sham that has been used for a generation to deceive the public. The protective system is held up as a sacred institution and support is given to the tariff commission idea which is always brought forward to delay reduction when the people rise in revolt against high tariff duties.

The plank on the trust question is a restatement of Mr. Roosevelt's position which leads directly to socialism. The doctrine that the trust is a natural development and must be accepted as permanent is the basis of the socialist propaganda. The socialist, however, recognizes that a private monopoly can not be successfully controlled and insists that the government shall own and operate the trust. The new party, on the other hand, clings to the idea that the trust can be left in private hands and yet be effectively controlled through a national bureau. All history is against this theory. Municipalities are taking over municipal plants because city councils are corrupted by municipal corporations. If it is impossible for a municipal plant to be successfully controlled when in private hands, how can we hope to control billion dollar trusts through a national bureau when the trusts will have so large a pecuniary interest in controlling the administration that appoints the members of the bureau? The position of the new party on the trust question is so absolutely untenable as to prevent its indorsement by any large number of the people, when it is fully understood.

The most Rooseveltesque plank of the platform, however, is the one demanding an indefinite extension of the powers of the federal government and the abridgement of the rights of the states. This has for years been the dominant note in Mr. Roosevelt's political creed. The restraints of the constitution are irritating to him. He not only desires to enlarge the authority of the federal government at the expense of the state, but he desires to enlarge the powers of the national executive at the expense of the other departments. Whatever democrats may think of Mr. Roosevelt's attitude on other questions and however highly they may regard the educational work he has done, they can not join him in overturning the constitutional division of authority between the state and the nation. The democratic party believes in the full use of federal authority for the protection of the public, but instead of substituting federal remedies for state remedies it would add federal remedies to state remedies and thus give the people the benefit of both. The Roosevelt plan, however honestly advanced, is not in the interest of popular government but in the interest of a more selfish and sordid exploitation of the people. Every lawyer knows that the big corporations fly to the federal courts in order to escape state courts and now big business is, with Mr. Roosevelt's aid, seeking national incorporation as a means of escape from the restraints and restrictions imposed by the states in the interests of the people.

And now as to the candidates. Governor Johnson, the nominee for vice president, is an excellent man and has made a splendid record as a progressive, but the fact that Mr. Roosevelt was the only one considered in connection with the presidential nomination shows how com-

### CONTENTS

THE NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE PARTY
LIGHT IN THE EAST
CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE DEMOCRATIC
CAMPAIGN FUND
NEW DEMOCRATIC CLUBS
GOVERNOR WILSON'S FIRST CAMPAIGN
SPEECH
A CLEAN CAMPAIGN FUND
HOW TO BEAT MURPHY
"BALLOT NO. 46," AND OTHER THINGS
THE MOST FLAGRANT EXHIBITION
OF BOSSISM
HOME DEPARTMENT
WHETHER COMMON OR NOT
NEWS OF THE WEEK
WASHINGTON NEWS