

The Commoner.

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One Democratic County Committee Sends 1274 New Commoner Readers

Marion Webb, Clay Center, Kan.—I am handing you today by this mail, under separate cover, a list of 1,274 campaign subscribers to The Commoner secured by the democratic county central committee of this county. I trust you will get The Commoner to these people at the very earliest possible moment.

MR. ROOSEVELT AS A BORROWER

Solomon says that the borrower is servant unto the lender. If this applies to one who borrows ideas, Mr. Roosevelt does not recognize the obligation, for he has not only borrowed from the democratic party as few public men have borrowed from an opposing party, but he has shown himself strangely ungrateful for the ideas taken. Of course, it will not be contended that an idea can be patented—it is the only thing in fact that is not subject to monopoly. Even Mr. Perkins, with all his fondness for the trust, would not contend that a monopoly in ideas could be formed and made subject to regulation by a bureau appointed by the president. Mr. Roosevelt, however, has won his popularity by the advocacy of things previously advocated by the democrats, and still he is all the while assailing the democrats bitterly and has shown toward them a hostility that is hard to explain.

To show the extent of his borrowing, let me enumerate some of the things which he now advocates that were advocated by the democrats at an earlier date.

Take his paramount issue of the present campaign, namely, the rule of the people. The platform adopted by the democratic national convention at Denver four years ago contained the following:

"'Shall the People Rule' is the overwhelming issue which manifests itself in all the questions now under discussion."

Here is the very phrase which he employs, and it is not only declared to be an issue, but the overwhelming issue. It was dwelt upon by the candidates, and by other speakers during the campaign, so that Mr. Roosevelt, then president, may be assumed to have had notice of it. He not only refused to admit then that it was the paramount issue, but he displayed extraordinary activity in urging upon the country Mr. Taft, whom he has since declared to be the agent of bosses, and the enemy of popular government.

It would seem that he ought to make some slight acknowledgement of his indebtedness to the democratic party for suggesting this issue

to him. At least, he might put the issue in quotation marks.

He is now advocating the direct election of senators, but if he ever expressed himself in favor of this reform earlier than two years ago, the fact has escaped my observation, and I have not only watched carefully, but waited anxiously, for some favorable expression from him.

The democratic party began the fight for the popular election of senators twenty years ago this summer, when a democratic house of representatives at Washington passed, for the first time, a resolution submitting the necessary amendment. Since that time, a similar resolution has been passed by the house in five other congresses, first, in 1894 by another democratic house; then, after two congresses had elapsed, by three republican houses, and last, by the present democratic house. During the twenty years, the reform has been indorsed in three democratic platforms, the platforms of 1900, 1904 and 1908, and it has been indorsed by the legislatures of nearly two-thirds of the states. Mr. Roosevelt must have known of the effort which was being made by the people to secure the popular election of senators, and yet he took no part in the fight. During this time he was president for seven and one-half years, and it is quite certain that a ringing message from him would have brought victory to the people's cause, but no message came. Four years ago the convention which he controlled and which nominated Mr. Taft rejected, by a vote of seven to one, a resolution indorsing this reform. Still Mr. Roosevelt did not say anything; he neither rebuked the republican convention nor indorsed the strong plank which was included in the Denver platform. Even Mr. Taft went so far during the campaign of 1908 as to say that PERSONALLY he was INCLINED to favor the popular election of senators by the people, but Mr. Roosevelt did not even indicate an intention in that direction. Now, when the reform is practically secured—the amendment being before the states for ratification—he declares himself in favor of it. Would it not be fair for him to indicate in some way his appreciation of the long continued fight waged by the democrats in behalf of this reform before he espoused it?

Mr. Roosevelt is in favor of an income tax. How long since? His first indorsement of it was during his second term, and then it was suggested as a means of limiting swollen fortunes and not as a means of raising revenue. The democratic party included an income tax provision in the Wilson law of 1894. When this provision was declared unconstitutional by the supreme court, by a majority of one, the democratic party renewed the fight and has contended for the income tax in three national campaigns. In 1908, the democratic platform demanded the submission of an amendment specifically authorizing an income tax—the very amendment now before the states for ratification. Mr. Roosevelt's candidate, Mr. Taft, declared during the campaign that an amendment was not necessary, and Mr. Roosevelt never made any argument in favor of the amendment or in favor of the principle embodied in it. The amendment has now been ratified by thirty-four states, but, so far as I know, Mr. Roosevelt has never made a speech in favor of its ratification, nor, since the submission of the amendment, made a speech urging an income tax as a part of our fiscal system. It would not require any great stretch of generosity on his part to credit the democratic

party with priority in the advocacy of this reform.

Mr. Roosevelt is now an advocate of railroad regulation. When did he commence? The democratic party in its platforms of 1896, 1900 and 1904, demanded an extension of the powers of the interstate commerce commission. Up to 1904, Mr. Roosevelt never discussed the subject of railroad regulation officially or in public speech, so far as I have been able to find. Although nominated without opposition in the convention of 1904, his platform contained no promise of railroad regulation. By its attitude on the railroad question, the democratic party alienated the support of those railway officials who counted themselves democrats, and Mr. Roosevelt, both in 1900 when he was a candidate for vice president and in 1904, when he was a candidate for president, had the benefit of the support of those ex-democrats. It was in 1904 that he wrote his famous letter to Mr. Harriman, and in the state of New York profited by the campaign fund that Mr. Harriman raised.

When, after 1904, Mr. Roosevelt took up the subject of railroad regulation, he found more hearty support among the democrats in the senate and house than among the republicans, so that he has reason to know that the democratic party has for a long time planted itself boldly upon the people's side on the subject of railroad regulation.

Under the circumstances, we might expect some complimentary reference to our party's attitude instead of anathemas.

On the subject of publicity as to campaign contributions, he has not only adopted the democratic position but he has been compelled to turn a complete somersault in order to do so. In 1908, the democratic platform demanded the publication, before election, of the names of individual contributors and the amounts contributed. Mr. Roosevelt at that time indorsed Mr. Taft's contention that the publication should be deferred until after the election, and even went so far as to give reasons for believing that it would be improper to make the publication before the election. Two years later he declared in favor of publicity, before and after the election, landing on the democratic side shortly before the law was enacted carrying out the democratic platform on this subject. Here, surely, he ought to praise the democratic party for the pioneer work it has done in purifying politics.

Here are a few of the things which bear the democratic brand, and with all of his experience on the plains, he will not be able to "work the brand over" so as to make it look like "T. R."

W. J. BRYAN.

SENATOR HUGHES OF NEW JERSEY

Governor Wilson's brave act, made certain, if it did not secure, the nomination of Congressman Hughes as a candidate for the United States senate. Mr. Hughes is one of the best progressives in congress. His nomination gives New Jersey a chance to elect as a senator a man who will in every way be a worthy representative. Martine and Hughes will make a splendid team.

President Taft and ex-President Roosevelt can find sufficient consolation in the fact that they will defeat each other—and revenge is said to be sweet.

CONTENTS

MR. ROOSEVELT AS A BORROWER
DEFINING THE ISSUE
GOOD TIDINGS
NEW DEMOCRATIC CLUBS AND CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS
GOVERNOR WILSON TO THE WEST AGAIN
PRACTICAL TARIFF TALKS
THE THREE TARIFF PLANKS
THE FIVE PASSIONS OF OLLIE JAMES
HOME DEPARTMENT
WASHINGTON NEWS
NEWS OF THE WEEK