

**RUSSELL CO. KANSAS**

**Chairman Ruppenthal Gives Interesting Account of Political Conditions as He Views Them**

Editor Independent: Yours of June 8 duly received. I am still chairman of P. P. of Russell county, as I have been for 7 or 8 years except for a few months. I am county attorney of this county, elected last fall on the fusion ticket under democratic name. Our people's party secretary for county is F J Smith, who has been publisher of the Russell Reformer since Jan 1, 1897. He is now county clerk, elected same time and ticket that I was.

I have received and read your single tax, and other recent issues, and have been much interested in the views presented. I do not yet see that the reorganizing element will control the next democratic national convention and platform, tho they may have such influence as to discourage completely the populists, and all genuine reformers now in the democratic party. Your idea of consultation will do good. I agree that "political conditions next year will demand independent action on our part or abandonment of the people's party organization." I also believe that the abandonment will be made. Indeed, I see but one useful purpose in keeping up an organization, and that is, that we who think alike—populists who are successors of the anti-monopoly, greenback, union labor, etc., movements, may go in a body where our principles are most advanced, and where we will count most in promoting what we believe in.

This county always has been republican, and is likely to so continue, except that very rarely we elect a man or two on an opposing ticket. Last fall we elected four, which was unprecedented in the county's history. This year there is no election of any kind, and there will not hereafter be in odd years in Kansas. Last year we fused with the democrats on a democratic candidate for congress in this Sixth district, and got beaten just as we did when we had two candidates—dem. and pop. I had not thought that possible till it occurred. Our old time populists are such still, and are likely so to remain, tho many who came from the republican ranks originally are distrustful of the democracy and its sincerity in reform movements, and by their very distrust, they aid the reorganizing democrats. I have no idea what will be done in district or state next year. But to me it appears that the dissolution of the people's party under that name is at hand—indeed is already accomplished. If the democrats next year take an honest advanced stand as reformers nationally, as well as state, etc., and put honest representative reform leaders on their tickets, the populists may as well meet and resolve to disband and permanently join the reform democrats and strive to make that party a radical reform party permanently and to keep it so, standing foremost for public ownership without definite limits, other than that money, transportation, mines, oil wells, public utilities of all kinds, etc., should one after another, as rapidly as possible, be made public; or it may be that instead of so joining the reform democrats, the populists would do well to join the socialists in a body, and tone down the socialistic platforms to what advanced populists think best to stand for at the present time.

If the reorganizers get full or large control of the democracy, the only alternative for the populists is to join the socialists. In either case, the way to do will be to hold conventions, and carefully consider and argue the matter, and then vote to dissolve and become democrats or socialists, as the one or other mode seems best calculated to secure speedy government ownership of money freed from all banking intervention, public ownership of all railroad and steamship lines, as well as telegraphs, telephones, electric lighting, gas, water, oil, etc., mines, with lands, and others means of production and distribution to follow just as fast as their acquisition for the public shall be feasible and shall seem advisable.

This matter in its details is an untried one, and we might find it well to have public ownership of one thing and not of another, and the limit will have to be established not by theories now, but by slow and painful experimentation in the years to come. Of course, we want more democratic government whatever be our political party status in the future. There is the initiative, the referendum, the imperative mandate, preferential ballot, proportional representation, direct nomination by public primaries for all parties, direct election of all federal officers, as well as state, etc.—these things we believe in as we believe in self-government. We have no reason to favor a tariff per-

manently for any purpose, and should welcome all movements for taxation more nearly just than any so far in practice. I incline to think that the single tax on land values would be a great and useful reform, but we should certainly favor all possible opportunities for experimentation to permit an actual test in the United States. We always opposed land-holding for speculation.

Our continuous fusion in the past has ended our party existence. I have stood by the fusion movement and supported it strongly, having full faith in Bryan, Williams, Altgeld, Johnson, and such men. But it seems that Cleveland's betrayal of the people in 1893 as well as many other obnoxious records of the democratic party in the past (which the people do not seem to forget as readily as they do republican dishonesty, duplicity, etc.) is so ground into many reformers that it is impossible to allay suspicion that the democracy will not be true to its trust if in power again. After a party has once disintegrated it is not wise to try to get it together again. The nation has the democratic party and the socialist party, each well organized in almost every part. As between the two extremes of human society—anarchy and socialism—the populists have always been strongly socialistic and constantly tending away from anarchy, and this spirit has grown steadily since the populists first promulgated their views in the early '90s. One or the other of these parties will be the place for all populists next year. If they must become of the socialist party, they are numerous enough to write present needs into the platform, and not rely upon glittering generalities as to what may be advisable half a century hence. But if the democrats remain in Chicago and Kansas City platform lines, making them more advanced to meet present needs, probably the majority will prefer to use that name in attaining their ends. But principles will be unchanged.

J. C. RUPPENTHAL.

Russell, Kas.

(Mr. Ruppenthal's advanced orthography will delight the heart of Dr. C. F. Taylor, of the Medical Record, Philadelphia—both believe in spelling reform as well as that of a political or economic character. Mr. Ruppenthal's views as to what populists should do in the future are worthy of careful consideration, even if we may not agree with them.—Associate Editor.)

**Is It So?**

Editor Independent: When I read in The Independent of July 3 last year that editorial quoted by me in my letter to The Independent of June 25, it seemed to me then, last year, as it does now, clear that by that editorial you threw away all the most effective arguments available for the campaign then opening.

That was what made me feel so bad about it. But to avoid all appearance of distraction among us in time of campaign I said nothing about it.

This year I thought I would begin in good time and inform you and the party against that enormous error that the Omaha platform demand for more money circulation had been accomplished by republican rule, and especially against that palpable error often repeated by you, that silver since the Omaha platform adoption was being coined in greater amounts than ever before known.

I did prove most clearly that since the adoption of that platform silver had not been coined in near half as great amounts as before; that up to the time of your said editorial the highest point attained in per capita money circulation was only \$28.40 instead of \$50, and that all the increase of per capita money circulation in the ten years from the adoption of the Omaha platform to the time of your said editorial was only \$3.96, which you said was 16 per cent. What did you mean by that? There is no 16 per cent about it.

All my showings were made in the most respectful manner, and I expected a respectful recognition for the very valuable evidences that I furnished at my own expense. But, no. In your paper of June 25 I have no such recognition, but instead of it, nearly a column of denunciation as for ignorance without any proof of it, but only to cover up your own long continued ignorance that I was under necessity of laying open so bare.

You explained what you meant by reaffirming the principles of the platform. How vicious that is, to reaffirm the preamble and destroy the platform provisions necessary to give life to the preamble and keep it from becoming a dead letter.

You speak of money on deposit. You must mean that spurious substitution for money, bank checks, whereby

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bankers draw interest not only on what is owing to them, but also on what they owe, and every dollar of which in circulation is proof of the need of that much more real money to take its place.

All you say about the superiority of that spurious money for swiftness is error.

I have long thought that you and I belonged to one and the same party. But a close comparison of beliefs shows to the contrary. And if you are a fair exponent of a large majority of those calling themselves populists, as I believe you are, I have no standing ground with them, and think I will never again vote or take part in politics.

MARVIN WARREN.  
Fairbury, Neb.

(Mr. Warren certainly deserves the palm for distorting the language of others. Not a syllable was said asking "to reaffirm the preamble and destroy the platform provisions necessary to give life to the preamble and keep it from becoming a dead letter." The reforms demanded by the Omaha platform were inspired by a desire to make "a dead letter" of the conditions mentioned in the preamble—and not to keep them alive. The expressions of fundamental principles enunciated at Omaha are now and always will be true; but the statements in the preamble, true enough in 1892, were not all strictly true in 1902—and we hope

the time will come when none of them will be true.

Nothing was said in the editorial about "money on deposit." Depositors generally have no "money on deposit"—they have a credit at the bank. Nothing was said which by any reasonable construction of language could be tortured into boasting "about the superiority of that spurious money for swiftness." Nothing was said about swiftness. What was said, and Mr. Warren cannot deny it, is that "bank deposits constitute a device to make each dollar of coin travel faster." They do not obviate the necessity of coin, because coin is the only thing which can cancel tax levies and judgments. Mr. Warren can certainly have small room for complain against The Independent's treatment of his article—it was printed in full.

The Independent is not responsible for Mr. Warren's inability to compute percentages—there was a time when he knew well how to calculate at 18 per cent on chattel security. Isn't \$3.96 about 16 per cent of \$24.44?—Ed. Ind.)

If troubled with cancer write to Dr. T. O'Connor, whose ad. appears in The Independent. He is a specialist of a "lity and has cured many of the most virulent cases. Mention The Independent.