

KERN'S LEADERSHIP

Mr. Van Vorhis Expresses the Conviction That John W. Kern Can Whip the Reorganizers

Editor Independent: A meeting was called by an energetic and able young democrat, Edgar L. Maines, of Boone county, to meet in this city on July 4. Who, besides those attending, were invited I do not know. Mr. Maines was made chairman, and upon taking the chair said the meeting had been called after consultation with a number of democrats known to be true and reliable supporters of the platforms of 1896 and 1900 and of Mr. Bryan. The purpose of the meeting was stated, in substance, to be to offset certain influences working with the democratic party to subvert democratic principles and make the democratic party organization but little better than adjunct to the influences now in control of the republican party.

The Hon. John W. Kern, who headed the state ticket in 1900 as the candidate of the party for governor, was present and was called upon first to present his views upon the movement. He deplored the presence in the party of so many men, whose purposes were selfish rather than philanthropic, and commended the effort to prevent such men from securing, by their skill in manipulation, notwithstanding the overwhelming sentiment of the masses of the party, an abandonment by the party organization of the principles of the Kansas City platform. He said in substance that the organization against that platform was, at this time, more complete and powerful in this state than it had ever been; that, notwithstanding 90 per cent of the party in the state were true to the principles, there was great danger that the party would be controlled by a very few, who could get all the money they wanted because the purpose they had in view was almost identical with the purpose of the influences now in control of the republican party. He commended the effort to form the proposed league, but was not disposed to have any rosy views about what it might be able to accomplish. He referred to the campaign of the party in 1900, and said that under these influences there was practically no campaign on the part of the party in this state. Others spoke along the same line, and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution, and the meeting adjourned until the afternoon.

When the meeting had reassembled and the committee reported, pending the question upon adopting the report, Mr. Kern again took the floor and, in a speech of about one hour, gave an outline of the manner in which Samuel E. Morss, Hugh Dougherty, James Murdock and G. V. Menzies were selected as delegates-at-large by the state convention in 1900, and said that the sentiment of the convention was such that, if a minority report from the committee substituting other names for these gentlemen had been made, it would have, without doubt, been adopted. He then proceeded to give an account of the action of the delegates sent to Kansas City, and how under the influence of such men as the delegates-at-large they misrepresented and betrayed the constituency who sent them there. Mr. Kern proceeded to give instances of the baleful influences of such men upon the party, the most notable example being the way in which the passage by the legislature of the railroad consolidation bill was secured; how certain men, regarded as influential democrats in certain localities, had worked with the representatives of special privileges, and had by deception induced democratic members of the legislature to support the measure that was so vicious that it needed only to be read to know it to be so, and which was fortunately vetoed by the governor, when his attention was called to its vile provisions. He deplored the influence of such men upon the party, and called attention to what must be the result unless some such organization as that contemplated could be made. He said the line of division between the people, who had no benefits from special privileges, and those to whom special privileges had been granted must be made specific and distinct or there could be little hope that the democratic party would be or could be successful, or that democratic principles could be preserved.

A committee was appointed to draft a declaration for the league which would make this line of demarcation so plain that it could not be evaded. Others spoke in a similar vein, but Mr. Kern's remarks were, of course, the most notable because of his prominence in the party and known popularity. There is no man in this state today who can exercise the influence

upon the party that he can. It is believed by those, who best know the situation, that he is the only man in the state who can lead a movement against the Morss-Murdock-Dougherty-Menzies crowd to success. Those who heard his remarks were the more impressed by them because it gave them hope that Mr. Kern would take up the gauge of battle in the interests of the people against those who represent special privileges whether out of or in the party.

This meeting, and the proposed organization, is causing Mr. Morss (the Indiana member of the Pierpont Morgan-Standard Oil-Economic League at 13 Astor Place, New York city) no end of uneasiness. The Sentinel has considerable to say about what was said in the meeting. I do not know, or care, from what source it got its information. Language can hardly be made too strong in the characterization of the work of the democratic state headquarters in 1900. The work done there was under the control of men in and out of the committee, who did not do anything to secure the election of Mr. Bryan, and who did not want him elected. The Sentinel may shape up almost anything it pleases that embodies this fact and put the words in my mouth and I will not disown them. But when it attempts to create the impression that silver republicans were the only ones who talked in this meeting about the action, in 1900, of the men who are now the reorganizers in this state, it is knowingly trying to create a false impression. The Sentinel, after printing some things that it had been informed I said, came to me to know what I said. I repeated in substance what Mr. Kern had said, and that I had approved what he said. This is of little importance, and I refer to it only to call attention to the fact that the Sentinel is very careful to cover up Mr. Kern by referring to him as the "previous speaker" whose words I said were true. The Sentinel knows, and I know as well as the Sentinel, that neither I nor any other silver republican can do very much to make such a movement as the Jefferson league successful. Such a movement must come from the inside of the party, from men who have been long identified with it. Samuel E. Morss knows the power and influence of Mr. Kern in this state, and cannot disguise his anxiety and alarm about the name of Mr. Kern appearing in connection with what was said in this particular meeting. This accounts for the substitution, in the Sentinel's report of the short interview with me, of "a previous speaker" for "Hon. John W. Kern."

It appears that the late secretary at headquarters has been trying to help Morss a little, and he has thought he had done so smart a thing, when he originated a story out of his imagination, that he told it on the street before it was published. Now, Hawkins is a real good fellow, and appears to be rather intelligent when he does not branch out too much. He was, I am sure, a friend of Mr. Bryan, but it is doubtful if he knows why, or if he can give any good reason why he took such a dislike, during the campaign of 1900, to George Fred Williams that he designated him a "political yellow dog." Of course, if Hawkins wishes to assist Morss in misrepresenting me on the tariff question, or any other, I shall not allow myself to be disturbed, because those who know him are not likely to ask him to interpret the words of any speaker or the language of any writer. Of course, he thinks the democratic party will be better off without Cheadle and Van Vorhis, but when he adds U. S. Jackson of Greenfield to the number of which he thinks the party ought to be rid, he will find no response except from that kind of democrats who rejoiced when Mr. Bryan was defeated.

What I would like to see is the democratic party place itself squarely on the side of the people who have no special privileges. I am not in an attitude to be able to give much assistance, but my will is good to do all I can to induce it to be true to the issues of 1896 and 1900.

If Mr. Kern will take this burden upon himself, and make the fight that he is capable of making, the end of the Morss-Murdock-Dougherty-Menzies influence in this state is at hand.
FLAVIUS J. VAN VORHIS.
Indianapolis, Ind.

J. F. Parker, Liberty Hill, Tex.: The populist party is not very lively here just now, but the principles are gaining ground daily. It is only a question of time until it will win here. Direct legislation is the key-note of the whole thing, and it is growing more and more in favor as the days go by.

Iowa Crawdads

Taken on the whole the managers of the Iowa democratic convention were a lot of shell-fish. If they were to come to Hutchinson, they would be captured by the small boys and sold at the rate of two for a cent for crawdads. The democratic party had assumed a positive progressive policy. It made two campaigns on that policy, and now these fellows propose to turn tail and run away from it, and abandon the fight. If they do not get licked after such actions there is something strange and not understood in the temper of the people.—Hutchinson (Kas.) Gazette (dem.).

The Iowa democrats are deceiving themselves instead of deceiving the voters. The time has passed when the intelligent, independent voters—the voters that determine the issue of election—are to be caught with such stuff. The party that resorts to meaningless platitudes, dodges issues and attempts to deceive the voters is inviting defeat and is deserving of defeat.—Milwaukee News.

The Iowa democrats at their recent state convention voted down a proposition to indorse their last national platform, and also declined by a decisive vote to declare themselves in favor of government railroads in the event that "government control" should not prove effective. The party is now throwing off its mask, proving that its former protestations against the trusts and in favor of the people were merely to catch the reform vote. The leaders and managers of the democratic party from its early history to the present have favored the exploiters of labor, notwithstanding many of the rank and file have thought and do think differently. The democratic party is sure to split wide open at its next national convention on economic questions, and there will be no other place for the liberal element to go but to the new, conscientious socialist party. Those of all parties who are engaged in some useful avocation, will find a natural home there.—Long Island (Kas.) Leader (soc.).

Louis F. Post of the Chicago Public is of the opinion that the platform adopted by the recent democratic state convention in Iowa is not a victory for the reorganizers. He contends that it breathes the spirit of the Kansas City platform of 1900. About this Iowa platform there is some difference of opinion. But what more could be expected in a state, where even the republicans don't know what their platform means, and both factions are claiming the victory? All this confusion and contention growing out of the senseless verbiage of platforms is a good text for a political lecture to platform makers. Platforms in these days consist chiefly of hot air, exceedingly rarefied, to a point even, where they can't sustain a very low order of political life. All that any political party sincerely believes could be expressed in a dozen or two of well worded lines. The issues could be, but are not, made clear. The party conventions seem to think they will be heard and believed for their much speaking. This is a phool notion, and the sooner political parties get away from it, the better. Long winded platforms are not and ought not to be read. Give us truth in the fewest words.—Kansas Commoner, Wichita, (pop.)

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The Nebraska Press Association

The members were in evidence, and did their part toward the entertainment of the visiting editors. No regular session was held, but all attended the meeting of the national body. F. N. Merwin, who has been secretary-treasurer for the past eight years, handed in his resignation, as he expects to be absent in Washington, as secretary to Congressman Norris for the next two years, which was accepted, and W. G. Purcell of the Chief was elected to the position.—Chief, Broken Bow.

M. B. Riddell, Leigh, Neb.: A socialist is a man that I have no use for. If a man with good health is hard up in this country, it is his own fault. Nine-tenths of the laborers in public works are bums. They don't work half as hard as the farmers.

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