

"IS POPULISM DEAD"

"Is populism dead," is the startling query propounded by John A. Barker, editor of the Franklin (Neb.) Sentinel. Why, bless your soul, no. Populism isn't dead. It couldn't die if it wanted to. But the people's party—as a political organization—is about as nearly dead as its most ardent enemy could wish. It has no organization to speak of outside of Nebraska and Colorado. Down in Kansas, by aid of the ballot law, it died officially last year. To get on the ticket next year it must resort to a petition.

Populism is a revolt against having this country run solely in the interest of manufacturers, bankers, railroad magnates and trusts. It is a protest because some one of the old parties does not fairly and squarely stand for the economic interests of the great common people. When it seemed probable that for once in the history of the democratic party, it was standing squarely for the interests of the people as against the trusts, etc., then the reason for the existence of the people's party seemed gone—and a real fusion was effected in most states by the populists going bodily into the democratic party. In Nebraska alone the populists maintained their party integrity, yet joined hands with the democratic party; this was co-operation, and not "fusion" as it is nearly always called.

"Is fusion at an end?" further queries Mr. Barker. And he answers:

"These questions are susceptible of but one answer—opposites. The last must be answered first and while we are not the only blade of grass on the prairie we give it as our unqualified opinion that the fusion of the populist and democratic parties will never again be accomplished in Franklin country or on the state ticket in Nebraska. There may of course be a few isolated instances where the leaders of the two parties will succeed in combining their forces, but in the main this once popular method of securing democratic control is at an end. But if fusion is persisted in, then populism is dead and there will be no resurrection.

"On the other hand if the populists strike boldly out, giving no quarter and asking none, their success sooner or later is practically assured. So long as corporate evils exist there is work for the masses, and past events show plainly that no relief will ever come from either of the old parties. Populist faith will endure and the principles must and will live on until such time at least that 'equality before the law' is guaranteed to every citizen."

Mr. Barker is correct in his opinion that "fusion" is at an end. There is no continued necessity for two parties advocating substantially the same principles and representing the same class of people. Nothing except the fear that the democratic party would abandon its 1896 and 1900 principles, has kept together what little remains of the people's party. That this fear is not groundless is evidenced by the success of Gorman in Maryland, the defeat of Johnson in Ohio, the gain in Iowa on a "cowardly" platform, etc.

Everything indicates the need for the revival of the people's party. The democratic party has shown its incapacity for dealing with traitors in its own ranks. It cannot win with a true friend of the people like Bryan at the front; and a victory with a Gorman or Parker or Cleveland would be the most galling defeat. Co-operation has accomplished considerable good in a state and national way, but it is only a temporary measure at best. The people's party, by building up its own organization, and pursuing an independent course, can soon become the real balance of power and accomplish more than in any other way.

The immediate work at hand is to secure an enrollment of all populists who believe in maintaining the party organization and keeping a straight ahead course.

HISS HIM OUT

An old worker in the cause of the common people, "of whom God made so many," writes to the editor: "Our pop sheriff says he takes thirteen papers, and therefore can't get time to read The Independent. The deputy sheriff the same. Ex-sheriff and ex-clerk the same. Such things might discourage some, but it makes me feel like putting forth more effort, and I expect to stay with you as long as The Independent continues, as it always has been." The truth is, that in many counties of the state the men who were nominated for office were not and never have been subscribers to the party organ. The management of the paper has long since ceased to look for aid in spreading populist literature from officeholders and can-

didates for office. Of course, there are some conspicuous exceptions, but the workers for the principles of the party have not been those whom we have elected to office. They have worked for office, and office alone. The charge brought against the men we have elected to office made by Hon. M. F. Harrington at the last state convention was true. Their conduct has been enough, as he said, to defeat any party. When some of us who have been putting up from twenty-five to two or three hundred dollars a year, and have never held office and never expect to, think of such action, we feel as if it were enough to make a bishop swear. Hereafter in making nominations let us go back to old alliance principles. Kick every man seeking office, clear down the aisle, then heave him over the transom and nominate some man who has never been an office-seeker. Such men, after their election, would subscribe for and read their state and county papers, keep posted and know something about current events in the economic world. A populist sheriff who is able to take thirteen papers, but who is too poor to take his own party paper, who can read thirteen plutocratic papers, but can't find time to read the organ of the party that elected him, should be hissed out of the first populist gathering in which he shows his face.

EMINENT DOMAIN

Secretary Hay defends the gobbling up of Panama against the protests of Colombia as simply exercising the right of eminent domain. Now here is a great discovery that will clear up a great many shady transactions. The British were simply exercising the right of eminent domain when they took Kruger's country away from him. The Russians are exercising the right of eminent domain in occupying Manchuria. That also settles the conquest of the Philippines. We are simply exercising the right of eminent domain. The only wonder is that the great five-to-four court did not base their imperialistic decisions on that doctrine instead of the round about way they went at it. It now remains only for a strong government when it wants territory belonging to a weak nation to simply exercise the right of eminent domain and the thing is done. If a railroad can take a man's house and lot under the right of eminent domain, why cannot a nation take anything it wants under the same great law?

COLORADO POPULISTS

James Flannigan, editor of the Fort Morgan (Colo.) Herald, commenting upon what The Independent said anent the Colorado election, took occasion to say:

"We hardly agree with our esteemed contemporary that either Wilson or Owers could have been elected this year on a fusion ticket. Judge Owers' increased strength over last year did not come from the democratic party, but from the socialist and dissatisfied republican labor ranks who would not have voted for Wilson in any event, and if Owers had been the fusion candidate enough corporation democrats would have gone against him to have accomplished his defeat. No, populists have nothing to hope for in a fusion deal and had better travel in the middle of the road."

The Independent did not mean that fusion this year could have accomplished anything. What it did mean was that if the democrats of Colorado, from the very beginning of fusion there, had accorded the populists decent treatment, the state need not now be in the hands of the republicans. In this view The Independent is supported by the Ridgway (Colo.) Populist as follows:

"Had not Charlie Thomas and his following laid claim to the political earth in 1901 and given the populists to understand that they would have none of them as populists, democracy would not be in its present predicament today. 'Whosoever soweth the wind shall reap the whirlwind.'"

Of course, the Herald is correct as to the future course. Fusion is a dead letter. The populists of Colorado will pursue the even tenor of their way, put up strong men like Judge Owers, and make more real gain in the way of educating the people to understand populism, than they ever did in the palmy days of fusion. There are too many corporation democrats in Colorado to hope for any reform coming from that party. And Colorado is not the only state where this is true.

A number of our exchanges had a "birthday" last week. The Cedar Rapids (Neb.) Outlook began Vol. XIX., the Trenton (Neb.) Register completed its eighteenth year, and the Erie (Pa.) Echo began its ninth.

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- 21-INCH AIR TIGHT WOOD HEATER **\$1 59**
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HUMAN BEASTS

Things keep happening all the time that make a man feel disgusted when the conviction comes over him that he lives in a country where republican newspapers have special privileges not granted to reform papers, and that there is a fund somewhere which is expended in putting those sheets into the hands of millions of people every day in the year. Think of one of those papers, when occasion requires it, printing such matter as the following and then when an election comes around denouncing every reform paper as wild-eyed and anarchistic that says the same things. The following sentences are taken from the editorial columns of the Lincoln News of last Saturday:

"The belief that the coal in the ground belongs to the people and should not be subject to the greedy conspiracies of composite coal miners and railroad presidents, is not socialistic. The mine owners have shown their unfitness to have charge of the coal deposits. Their greed and love of money far outweighs their sense of the responsibilities of guardianship.

If the grafters can be cleared out of congress there is a chance that the rights of outsiders in a coal, street railway or overland railroad strike may be recognized and considered in its settlement."

Let one think how that sheet and its morning edition has for ten years denounced the populists for advocating such sentiments, how it has called them every vile name it could invent or find in a dictionary, and that now when an election is far off it prints such things with editorial approval and then say whether he does not feel humiliated when he realizes that he has to live in the same community with such human beasts.

THE OLD, OLD STORY

Everywhere in the United States republican administration is accompanied by extravagance—yet, if we may judge by election results, the people rather like to be robbed. Barnum created a mild sensation when he declared that the American people love to be humbugged; he might have added that they love to have their pockets picked, if the larceny be committed by a republican or a corporation democrat.

Out in Douglas county, Washington, the taxpayers are being given an object lesson in republican extravagance. The state legislature of 1897 created what is known as the 'current expense fund,' out of which all county bills for general expenses must be paid. At that time the populists were in control of Douglas county, we are informed by the Press, published at Waterville. The county was on a cash basis. A levy of 14 mills was sufficient to meet all county expenses.

But McKinley "prosperity" came and a change came over the spirit of

the dreams of Douglas county taxpayers. They yearned to show their appreciation, and did so by turning the county over to the republicans. Today county warrants must be registered, "not paid for lack of funds." The \$10,000 balance which the populists turned over to their successors has evaporated like mist before a tropical sun. A levy of almost 18 mills is now estimated as necessary to keep the wheels turning.

Of course, the farmer taxpayers are getting a trifle uneasy. They are worried. But they are to blame, and ought to take their medicine without making wry faces. They voted 'er straight. It isn't because an individual populist is any better than an individual republican that these things occur; but the power behind the throne in all republican administrations, national, state, or local, will invariably be found to be the big corporations. And the big corporations prefer extravagance, because thus they can pay a large corps of heelers to keep them in power, and, besides, they seldom pay but a fraction of their fair share of the taxes.

The case of Douglas county, Washington, can be duplicated in many counties in Nebraska; and in every state where populists once held power, the return to republican rule has brought with it a return of republican extravagance. But as the "mullet heads" seem to like it, why should anybody worry?

SECESSION VINDICATED

All the south is aglow with the spirit of pride over the action of the president in the Panama affair. They say that the vindication of Jeff Davis and "the right of secession" has come at last. South Carolina is especially jubilant. The Columbia State nearly floats away in seas of bliss as it contemplates the act of secession of South Carolina in December, 1861. It says:

"Now in this year of grace the United States government finds the scales fallen from its eyes. Secession is a divine right. Panama has seceded, and her sovereignty has been recognized by the executive of the United States before it has had time to find an executive of its own. Jefferson Davis is no longer a traitor, but the apostle of truth."

The State wants a statue of Jeff Davis erected in the rotunda of the capitol at Washington right away.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch is almost as much elated as its South Carolina neighbor. After saying that the southern states never contemplated making war upon the north, it adds:

"President Roosevelt and his secretary of state and the members of his cabinet evidently think that secession in Panama is a very beautiful thing and full of righteousness. 'O, noble secessionists,' say they, 'peace be unto you. Have a canal with us.'"