

The Wisconsin Progressive Platform

Those who believe in the orderly constitutional and peaceable restoration of the government to the people and making it at all times responsive to the real sovereign power of a democratic republic, will find in the recent platform adopted by the Republican party of Wisconsin one of the best political manifestoes for immediate practical advance that has been given to the public. The principle demands of this platform are as follows:

The initiative, referendum and recall, second choice primaries, anti-lobby law; graduated income tax, employers liability law, ad valorem taxation of corporations; physical valuation of railways, and more stringent regulation of them, national conservation of national resources; regulation of work hours for women and children.

The platform also denounces the Payne-Aldrich tariff act and opposes ship subsidies. It points out the important fact that the railway bill was changed by the progress from a menace to a benefit, but that it should be further amended.

The trust plan is highly significant as it really creates new classification of combination. The Sherman act was never intended to operate against labor unions and farmers co-operative associations. It is framed to meet a widespread demand of the people to reach abuses on the part of public utilities, and great industrial combinations of capital. It has been seized upon by reactionaries for the purpose of destroying labor unions.

The platform contains an admirable demand that the postal savings bank law shall be amended in order to prevent concentration of postal savings in large centres, and they are used by the great corporations and banking interests of Wall Street. This is a most important demand as every patriot who calls to mind the insurance exposures which came to light at the time of the Armstrong committee's investigations must admit. It further rightly holds that: "Exceptional conditions in Alaska require that the Federal government should construct, own and operate the railroads, docks and steamship lines necessary to the opening up of Alaskan coal fields and other natural resources."

Wisconsin to-day is in the very van of the States in demanding legislation that will meet the people in reality as well as in theory, the sovereign power, and in which the governments concern for the well-being of the people is a paramount consideration of the dominant parties.

This enviable position is chiefly due to the disinterested and lofty patriotism, the courage and ability of one man, Robert M. LaFollette. He has stood for the people like a stone wall. He has won their battles against odds that would have crushed and overwhelmed a man not strong in the courage inspired by moral enthusiasm and loyalty to duty. When he came upon the political stage he found his State government the bondslave of public service corporations and other privileged interests. The people's supposed representatives were the truckling servitors of corporate wealth. He opened war against corrupt privilege and was admonished by those in power that if he continued his attacks on entrenched and lawless wealth he would be relegated to private life and be kept there. He refused to bow down to the political mentors and he good. Therefore he was banished from public life and kept for years in retirement. The machine determined that he should never again enter public life, unless he was willing to "be reasonable." He appealed year after year to the people and systematically educated the intellectual and conscience side of the Wisconsin electorate, until he became more powerful than the money-controlled machine and the experienced bosses who manipulated it. He was elected Governor, in spite of the opposition of the United States senators, the corporations and the machine politicians. Later he was sent to the United States senate, but not until he had inaugurated his great reform program looking to the overthrow of corrupt corporate wealth and its political machine.

When he arrived at Washington it was expected that he would become less radical, but here again he stood invincible for honest government and the people's rights. The administration was too beholden to the interests to show him any

favours. Ten thousands of people imagined that Mr. Roosevelt would make him a cabinet official if he would accept a portfolio, and if not, that he would certainly make him one of his close counsellors; but in this way they were disappointed. Mr. Roosevelt was a "practical man." He chose for his official family Root and Cortelyou, Knox, Bonaparte and men of their ilk, who were high in the favor of Wall Street, and the great public service corporations. When he wanted to consult a Wisconsin senator, he sent for Mr. Spooner, the arch-enemy of Senator LaFollette, a man who stood as high in the favor of the corporations as did Senators Lodge, Aldrich or Knox. This treatment by Mr. Roosevelt greatly heartened the representatives of the corrupt regime in Wisconsin.

Mr. Taft followed Roosevelt's example in his treatment of Senator LaFollette.

The enemies of popular sovereignty soon came to see that their hope lay in destroying the corruptible tribune of the people, and a deep laid plan was made by the corporate interests to end the political career of this formidable and incorruptible statesman. Money was literally poured into the state, to be spent like water in order to defeat him in the late primaries. The administration lent aid and comfort to his enemies and no stone was left unturned to compass his overthrow. It is estimated that not less than two hundred thousand dollars was spent against him. In spite of the fact that the direct primaries had done away with party conventions, a make-believe convention was held in June by the machine politicians. President Taft sent a telegram of felicitation to the Wisconsin Republicans assembled in convention, and Vice-president Sherman who was present, stated that he was sent there by President Taft. This fake convention endorsed the tariff and the Taft administration, but entirely ignored Senator LaFollette.

Meanwhile the senator's long and faithful service in the people's behalf had undermined his health, and when the campaign opened he was not able to make a single speech. His entire expenses for the campaign was \$5,500; yet when the people registered their votes on September sixth, the result amazed friends and foes alike. Senator LaFollette received 102,000 majority, carried every one of the seventy-one counties of the state and winning a majority of 40,000 over the combined votes of the administration Republicans, the Democrats and the Socialists.

The power of the corruptionists and the machine was broken and the splendid progressive platform adopted the last week in September was the natural outcome of this long, often discouraging, but finally victorious struggle of the intrepid leader whose example should be a perpetual inspiration to genuine patriots and lovers of justice and popular sovereignty everywhere. He has been one of the principal John the Baptists of the new democratic renaissance.—Twentieth Century.

CANADA'S GROWTH

A Washington, D. C., dispatch of Nov. 23 said: "Contemplating the adoption of some of this government's improved census-taking methods in connection with its next census, the Canadian government has sent to Washington E. S. MacPhail, of the census bureau of Canada, to consult with Director Durand regarding the operations of the American census bureau. The two officials have been in conference during the past two days. Mr. MacPhail said today that according to the official estimates the next Canadian census, which will be taken in June, 1911, will show a population of about 8,000,000. This would be an increase of 2,700,000 or about 50 per cent. over the figures for 1901. 'We hope,' said Mr. MacPhail, 'that a large percentage of the increase will be shown to be on account of American immigration.'"

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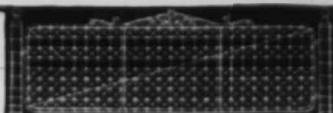
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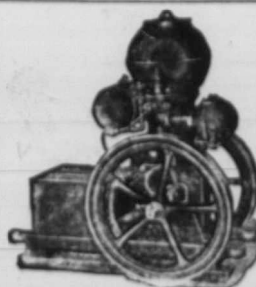
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