

of subsequent labor and populist parties, and some of them were bequeathed to the Progressive party of a later date. The convention was thus a forerunner of genuine reform, for its demands were based upon industrial needs. For the moment it made a wide popular appeal. In the state elections of 1878 about a million votes were polled by the party candidates. The bulk of these were farmers' votes cast in the Middle and Far West, though in the East, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New York, Maine, and New Jersey cast a considerable vote for the party.

With high expectations the new party entered the campaign of 1880. It had over a dozen members in Congress, active organizations in nearly every State, and ten thousand local clubs. General James B. Weaver, the presidential nominee of the party, was the first candidate to make extensive campaign journeys into distant sections of the country. His energetic canvass netted him only 308,578 votes, most of which came from the West. The party was distinctly a farmers' party. In 1884, it nominated the lurid Ben Butler who had been, according to report, "ejected from the Democratic party and booted out of the Republican." His demagogic appeals, however, brought him not