

**THE LACLEDE BLADE**

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A. J. CAYWOOD.

Friday, August 20, 1915.

**A State-Wide Protest**

The proposal to divert \$514,503.22 from the state public school fund to the general revenue fund, in conformity with a novel opinion of the attorney general, is bringing a state-wide protest. It is reported that several of the counties and cities of the state have employed attorneys to file briefs attacking the opinion of the attorney general. Every county and nearly every district would be immediately affected by the reduction. When certificates of indebtedness were substituted for the principal of the old school fund the distribution of the "income" was not discontinued or interrupted. Later, after the principal was gone, the voters "ratified" the irregularity and perpetuated the deficit, on which "interest" is paid by a direct tax. But the present attempted manipulation cannot be disguised, nor can its effects be postponed. If the opinion is upheld, the public schools of the state will be deprived of \$514,503.22 this year and perhaps a greater sum next year, before the General Assembly can alter the law.

Owing to the new method of apportionment of the public school fund, which combines daily attendance, number and salaries of teachers and educational needs, naturally permitting the exercise of some discretion, it is impossible for anybody except the state superintendent of public schools exactly to estimate the loss of each county. It is possible that under the new method of apportionment districts that have made the constitutional maximum levy and still have not funds enough to support good school may be aided, but this will be at the expense of all other schools in the state. Even the richest cities will be seriously affected, for, as we have shown in the case of St. Louis, they have exhausted the school moneys in fulfilling the increasing requirements of modern education. Every school which has been conducted without "special aid" will be injured. The state administration must have understood this situation. That it chose such a course, in spite of the easily foreseen protest, is ample proof of the plight of the treasury. The fact that the transfer has already been made and that there would otherwise be over a \$400,000 deficit in the general fund is not surprising. Only desperate need of money would have nerved the administration to try such a daring experiment.—Globe-Democrat.

**Hypocritical Appeals To Patriotism**

Endeavoring to evade an accounting to the American people for bad legislation and worse administration, democratic leaders are putting up a pitiful plea of "Stand by the president." So far as foreign complications are concerned, the plea is entirely unnecessary. American citizens, regardless of nativity, color, sex or political affiliation, will support the president in every effort to maintain the honor and dignity of the United States.

But that has absolutely nothing whatever to do with discussion of domestic affairs. Because of a split in the republican party, the democrats were lifted into power by a minority vote representing principles in which the majority do not believe. This is a government of, by and for the people, and the

people propose to have their laws made and administered according to their own desire. They propose to discuss and expose the results of democratic rule. They propose to make war upon democratic policies and they don't intend to wage battle with stuffed clubs. This is a fight by the people, for the people, and against an incompetent, inefficient, pledge-breaking political aggregation known as the democratic party.

The democrats took charge of this government when the country was prosperous, when high standards of efficiency ruled in government service, when public money was being spent economically, when there was a surplus in the treasury, and when men everywhere had employment at wages that enabled them to pay their bills.

By the enactment of a democratic tariff law, American industry was paralyzed. By the overthrow of the merit system, the diplomatic service and the administrative departments were seriously impaired. A large surplus in the treasury was turned into a deficit. The cost of living increased at the same time that the buying power of the people was reduced. Such is the manner in which public business has been conducted. If these facts are not to be shown to the American people—if it is "lese majesty" to tell the truth about the people's business—if we must close our eyes to government at home and reelect an administration because governments are at war in Europe—then we may as well cease to claim that we have popular government in this country.

The higher the office, the greater the power, the wider the influence and the greater the responsibility—the more important it is that there be full and free discussion and honest criticism of official action. No man can oppose such discussion and such criticism without doing violence to the principles of liberty upon which this government was founded. No man who owns allegiance to the democratic party can protest against the closest scrutiny of the record of that party without tacitly admitting a feeling of guilt and shame. Along with his appeal to patriotism he should point with pride to the achievements of his party, and if he cannot do that he should change his party affiliations or confess himself an intellectual crook.

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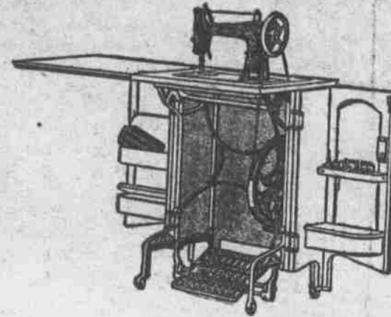
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