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STATE PLATFORM OF 1898.

The Peoples Party of Minnesota, assembled in its fourth state convention, points with pride to the progressive and courageous stand which it has ever taken on the great economic and political questions forced upon the nation by social progress, and reaffirms the national and state platforms of 1892, 1894 and 1896 as the embodiment of the highest ideals of political faith, hope, justice and progress of the time, resting, as they do, upon the cardinal principle of the federal constitution that it is the prime function of the government to promote the general welfare, and upon the fundamental doctrine of the Declaration of Independence, that to secure to all the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.

I.

We specially emphasize the demand of the party for that fundamental principle of self-government, direct legislation, as embodied in the initiative and referendum; and as showing its value and practicability we point to the recent notable victory of the people of Minnesota under the operations of the one referendum of the state provided for in Article 4, section 32, of the State Constitution, whereby the people at the last election by a vote of ten to one placed upon the tax rolls of the state over 3,000,000 acres of hitherto tax exempt railway lands. We point to the fact that the position thus taken by the voters of Minnesota was sustained by the supreme court as valid, in spite of the opposite position held by the corporation attorneys of three republican legislatures; and we further point to the fact that, without the solid vote of every populist legislator present and voting, this righteous measure would never have been submitted to the voters of the state.

II.

We further emphasize as one of the great needs of the hour, the recognition of the principle of government ownership and operation, and we specially commend it to the municipalities of Minnesota as a highway out of the system of corruption and corporate control which recently has so demoralized and retarded the prosperity of our cities.

III.

We heartily sympathize with the oppressed people of Cuba in their struggle for self-government and with gratitude and pride we commend and rejoice in the patriotism of our young men who have volunteered in the battle of freedom for Cuba.

IV.

We earnestly call the attention of the people of Minnesota to the fact that the state is confronted with one of the most serious conditions in the history of this or any other commonwealth. Bled by nature with one of the richest and most extensive tracts of fertile soil, timber and iron ore in the world, a vast domain of this natural wealth being given to the state for the support of its government and public schools, the state now awakes to the startling fact that, after forty years of uninterrupted republican mis-rule, one-half of its tillable area has been given to favored railway companies, its state pine lands have been plundered or frittered away for a trifle of their value, the vast stores of ore in its two great iron ranges have passed into the hands of two gigantic foreign syndicates, and that a political combination of these favored railroads, pine-land thieves and iron ore syndicates owns, controls and operates the state government in nearly every branch and today defies the people to regain possession of their own.

V.

We demand the dethronement of this corrupt and powerful political machine operating within the republican party of Minnesota, and we call upon every patriotic citizen, regardless of party, to join in the common battle to this end, as a civic duty in the interests of the state's industry, trade, labor, its common schools, its ballot, and its future stability and greatness.

VI.

We demand the restoration to the state of all the valuable lands and other resources taken from it by deeds of fraud and crime.

VII.

We demand the just and equal taxation of all mining, railway, timber and all state and municipal franchise corporations, and we demand that any private corporation enjoying a public franchise should pay to the people granting such franchise a fair percentage of its earnings as a rental for the use of it.

VIII.

We call to the attention of the people of Minnesota that the railroad companies derive a larger annual aggregate income from the charges levied upon the state's industry and trade, than the total income of the farms from the sales of the state's entire grain product. We charge that these excessive railway earnings are due to unjust and exorbitant charges for the transportation of freight, and that they both oppress industry and trade

and retard the state's development. And we pledge our utmost efforts in every department of state government to regulate and reduce these oppressive charges by practical legislation of the nature of that defeated by the last republican legislature. We make this demand for the salvation and prosperity of the great wheat-producing industry of the Minnesota and Red River Valleys, of the iron industry of our northern ranges, and of the general shipping interests of the state as against the aggrandizement of favored centers to the east.

Extortionate rates on grain in northern and western Minnesota, nearly double those charged in neighboring states, have driven away settlers, retarded development, and produced bankruptcy where nature promised prosperity. We demand that the rates charged by the railroads operated by the two great iron companies in St. Louis county shall be reduced to a figure which will allow shipment by independent mine owners. Thousands of acres of rich iron lands have been made worthless because of extortionate rates charged by these syndicates and all competitors of the two great iron companies have been driven from the field through the indifference or instrumentality of Republican administration.

IX.

We condemn the railway and warehouse commission appointed by republican governors as the subservient instrument of interested railway and elevator companies, and demand the election of such commission by the people. We denounce the combined railway and elevator ring of this state which controls the location and building of private elevators and prevents the free erection of competitive elevators whenever it chooses so to do.

X.

We condemn the state labor commissioner for the prostitution of his office to partisan purposes and the issuance of political reports on "the purchase power of gold" at the expense of the taxpayers of the state without authority of law, and to the neglect of the labor interests of the state, which he is sworn to subserve.

XI.

We condemn the public examiner for permitting the operation of banking and trust companies in flagrant violation of law, and the governor for withholding the reports on such institutions from the courts and the public; and we charge upon said executive officials through such protection of unlawful financiering no small responsibility for the era of bank-wrecking which has robbed the people of the state during the past five years of so many millions of dollars of hard earnings deposited in these institutions.

XII.

We condemn the state auditor for refusing to place upon the tax rolls of the state the deed of 260,000 acres of swamp lands selected by his predecessor and deeded to the Great Northern railway, and we denounce the attempts of republican officials to annul said deed and give this powerful railway corporation the power to select for itself from the state's public domain.

XIII.

We condemn the extravagance and looseness which has characterized the administration of the present secretary of state and of many of the state institutions, and we pledge ourselves to do all in our power to give the state an administration of economy and retrenchment such as is forced upon the homes and places of business in this period of financial stress.

XIV.

We condemn the state administration in the appointment of oil inspector and surveyor generals of logs, and we demand that these offices be placed upon a salary basis and that the heavy fees now derived and used as a corruption fund shall be turned into the state treasury.

XV.

We commend the recent decisions of the state supreme court in regard to the fixing of railroad rates and the taxation of railway lands, and we specially approve of that principle laid down by Justice Canty, that the rates charged by public franchise corporations shall be based on the actual cost of reproduction of the plant, instead of upon the watered stocks and bonds of said corporations.

XVI.

We believe in the principle of home rule and self-government and its application to the subject of local taxation and to the drafting of municipal charters; but we demand that the present law creating city charter commissioners shall be amended so as to make said commissioners elective by the people for a reasonable term, instead of appointive for life.

XVII.

We demand the direct election of U. S. senators by the people. We denounce the action of United States senator Cushman K. Davis, who, while holding the position of public servant of this state, acted as the paid retainer of the Rockefeller iron syndicate, the defender of the Great Northern and Northern Pacific railroad consolidation scheme, and the attorney of the Duluth & Iron Range railroad against the State of Minnesota.

XVIII.

As an interesting commentary upon the loud claims of the republican press of this state on the eve of the last election, that a change of administration would plunge the state into financial bankruptcy, we call attention to the wave of bank failures in the cities of the state immediately following republican victory. In connection with recent republican attempts to credit the late wheat boom to republican administration in the nation, we call the attention of the farmers of Minnesota to the recent shrinkage of over fifty cents per bushel in the price of their staple product. From this fraudulent and fake "prosperity" of an appreciating money standard and so-called republican "business" administration, based upon famines in foreign lands and gambling in wheat pits and on stock exchanges, we appeal to a stable just and enduring prosperity resting upon fundamental economic principles and upon the great and tried causes of the world's political, moral and material progress.

ADDITIONAL RESOLUTIONS.

The republican party for over thirty years has intentionally and continuously violated section 2 article 9 of the state constitution, resulting in the squandering of millions of the peoples money.

Whereas, by a gradual course of judicial legislation, the courts of this state, as well as in some other states, have sanctioned and approved the practice of taking cases from juries and directing verdicts in an arbitrary manner, and

Whereas that practice is being carried to a dangerous extreme, and poor suitors are often thereby deprived of their constitutional rights, and a practical denial of justice effective in many cases where powerful corporations are pitted against the poor, now, therefore, be it—

Resolved, that the practice now prevailing in the courts of this state, of taking cases away from juries and directing verdicts, the court itself passing upon the sufficiency of the evidence, meets with our unanimous condemnation and disapproval;

Resolved, further, that we demand such legislation as will compel judges to send cases to juries whenever there is a scintilla of evidence in support of the claims of the parties in the case being tried, and thus return to the salutary doctrine and practice that heretofore pertained in the courts of this country for many years.

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WILLMAR, MINN.

THE CONGRESSIONAL PLATFORM

The following platform of principles were adopted by the people's party at Crookston last Thursday. They have the true ring, and the candidate selected stands squarely on them with both feet. We commend them to the careful attention of every voter:

The people's party in congressional convention assembled do hereby endorse and approve the national people's party platform adopted at St. Louis in 1896.

We believe trusts threaten to permanently destroy the national prosperity and we pledge ourselves to every effort for their abolition.

We are opposed to government by injunction, as we see therein a peril to the liberties of the people.

We are unalterably opposed to gold monometalism and we demand the immediate restoration of bimetalism at the present ratio by the independent action of this country. We are opposed to the retirement of the greenbacks, the issue of paper money by the national banks, and the issue of interest-bearing bonds while millions of public money lie idle in the national treasury.

We demand the establishment of postal savings banks, in order that the common people may have safe and convenient depositories for their earnings.

The transportation of property and persons being necessary to the development of our resources and to the prosperity of the people, we demand such laws, state and national, as will secure to all persons and places equitable and reasonable rates.

We believe in the justice of an income tax as a means of compelling aggregated wealth to bear its just proportion of taxation and if necessary we favor a constitutional amendment legalizing its enactment.

We favor the enactment of a free homestead law and the establishment of a national board of arbitration and we condemn the republican party for the violation of its pledges in regard to these measures.

We believe in direct legislation and the election of the president and U. S. senators by a direct vote of the people.

We heartily sympathize with the oppressed people of Cuba in their struggle for self-government and with gratitude and pride we commend and rejoice in the patriotism of our young men who have volunteered in the battle of freedom for Cuba, and we affirm that the pledge given by our government to leave the island of Cuba to its people be redeemed as the only course compatible with the honor of a great nation.

We appeal to all good citizens of this congressional district to co-operate with us in securing the election of our candidate for congress this day nominated, who stands publicly pledged to promote and support all needful legislation to carry out the principles herein announced.

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Other Contributors:

Prof. T. L. Haecker, Prof. Thos. Shaw, Prof. S. B. Green, Prof. Otto Luggler, Prof. Harry Snyder, Prof. W. M. Hays, Walter L. Brower, Mary B. Keech, Seth H. Kenney and many others.

Sheri Talks Department. A department where all kinds of questions are answered for the benefit of subscribers, is a leading feature of the paper. More questions answered in the course of a year than by any three agricultural journals in the country.

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