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GEORGE FRED WILLIAMS

He Wakes up and Bids Defiance to Democratic Plutocrats—Says He was Betrayed and Tricked

That the next triumph for reform is to come from the eastern states no one who has been watching the course of events there can for a moment doubt. The triumph in Rhode Island is only an indication of what can be done there with the right kind of candidates, and platforms that embody the ideals of the great common people. With the right kind of a candidate and the Williams platform, which was printed some time ago in The Independent, Massachusetts would have lined up alongside of Rhode Island. Mr. George Fred Williams has issued a manifesto to the people of Massachusetts and begins the next campaign right now. Conditions in the eastern states are entirely different from what they are in the west. They are experiencing there the full fruition of corporation rule. Ninety-nine men out of every hundred in Massachusetts, so the statisticians say, are wage-workers. In that list what are called "salaried" men are included. There is no difference between them and what are ordinarily termed "wage-workers" except that they receive higher wages. The cost of living has increased more than 50 per cent and wages have increased hardly at all. So, as one of the great dailies there recently remarked, "it is hard times for the most of us." Meantime the privileged few and the trusts laugh and grow fat, which will be the result everywhere in time unless there is a change in governmental policies. The manifesto of Mr. Williams is as follows:

"Permit me to announce my return to active work in politics, and my reasons and purposes.

"Last year at the democratic state convention my temporary withdrawal from political work was joined with a promise that whenever the principles for which the Massachusetts democracy had stood since 1896 seemed to me to be endangered I should return to the defense of those principles. Last summer William A. Gaston and Charles S. Hamlin were contending for the governorship nomination. Neither was loyal to the party in 1896, but to my friends they gave oft-repeated assurances that they did not countenance any change in the management or policy of the party. To me personally, Josiah Quincy gave these assurances from Mr. Gaston, after consultation with him. Believing that I was dealing with honorable men, and that the party principles were in no wise involved, I remained neutral and inactive in the contest for the nomination.

"Mr. Hamlin proved faithful. Mr. Gaston secured a majority of the delegates, and in the first moment of victory proved false. Secure in a majority obtained by misrepresentation,

he refused to allow the national democratic platform to be mentioned in the resolutions, and deliberately repudiated the three cardinal planks of advanced democracy, namely, direct legislation, public ownership of public utilities, and the protest against government by injunction. These cardinal planks have not yet been rejected by the democratic voters of Massachusetts, and I return to active service in order to undo, so far as possible, the mischief to which my faith in faithless men has contributed. Next year will furnish an open contest, in which deceit will not avail.

"It is a serious misfortune, for which I take my full share of responsibility, that at the very time when the people, oppressed by monopoly and extortion, turned to the democracy for relief, the party in Massachusetts should have selected for its chief nomination the one man in the state who ought to have been rejected.

"The West End Railroad company has been the greatest corrupter of legislatures in our state; its successor, the Boston Elevated Railroad company, captained by William A. Gaston, last year held up the legislature of Massachusetts and secured outrageous privileges in the streets of Boston which were only defeated by the veto of a brave republican governor. Mr. Gaston personally solicited legislators and secured even democrats to take from the people of Boston the right to approve or disapprove at the polls a vast expenditure of their own money. Mr. Gaston stands as the chief offender in the state against the democratic principles of local self-government and the direct vote of the people. The selection of such a man as democratic leader was a political farce.

"In his canvass, instead of appealing to the people upon principles, he has, in small rooms, preached registration and naturalization, and poured money into the itching palms of the politicians. He and his methods are representative of all to which true democracy is opposed. The result was not unexpected; indeed, it was foretold. Mr. Gaston has succeeded in doing the one dreaded thing, namely, building up a powerful radical opposition to the democracy, giving to the socialist the balance of power in the state, a vote approaching 10 per cent of the total vote cast. If next year the democracy, with a strong progressive program, can demonstrate that this vote was merely a democratic protest against plutocratic control of the democratic party, we may hope still to stand for ultimate victory. If Mr. Gaston runs again, the socialist vote will be doubled, and the progressive elements will abandon the democracy for good.

"There was an unparalleled opportunity for our party in the late canvass. A powerful feeling of disgust prevailed against trust-breeding republicanism, and there was a strong defection against the candidacy of Mr. Bates. Had not all democratic principles been belied by Mr. Gaston's nomination on a flimsy, hypocritical platform, we might have prevailed this year in the state. It was done in Rhode Island by an alliance with the labor vote, and the nomination of a radical democrat, but we, with our corporation candidate, have succeeded this year in acquiring thousands of republican votes, which came to Mr. Gaston because he was more acceptable to some republicans than their own nominee. Such recruits not only lend no strength to the democratic party, but will desert it at the very moment when our party becomes truly loyal to the people's interests. We

have had enough of treason in late years.

"It is now apparent that Mr. Gaston's candidacy is part of the scheme of reorganization which proposes to restore the democratic party to the control of the tory element, which for so many years, by the purchase of nominations and conventions, made the party a poor second to the republican organization. Mr. Gaston is a type of these forces; by the lavish use of money he believes that the service of the democratic party can be turned from the people to himself and the corporate interests for which he stands. He is of the kind which deems juggling with tariff schedules to constitute democracy. The great social protest which thundered forth from Chicago and Kansas City is as distasteful to him as it is to the republicans. His policy cannot be distinguished from republicanism, except in details.

"It was with such politics that I foolishly attempted to create harmony in the party interests, only to be betrayed at the first available moment. I now ask support for an uncompromising war upon such politics and such politicians.

"In the spring of 1904 it is to be determined whether this sham democracy is to prevail, or whether the sturdy spirit of 1896 is to dominate the national convention. Those who have stood so valiantly in this state for the progressive democracy of Bryan must be in control of the organization in 1904, and must have the honors of victory. I am eager to act again with the loyal democrats of the state to keep the organization out of the hands of the trimmers, hypocrites and boodlers, who would make our party to serve capital and betray the people. We have not yet failed in this state when the issue was squarely made with the voters of the party; nor can we be disarmed by a single act of trickery.

"In our state, the three issues above described, namely, direct legislation, public ownership of public utilities, and restriction upon the power of injunction, are the real democratic issues. To this should be added an effective law against corrupt practices. By what form of organization these principles can best be advanced must be determined after careful consultation among those who are willing to undertake the contest; but I desire herewith to invite all friends of these principles to the formation of an organization designed to advance them, and I herewith announce my purpose of appealing to the democrats of the state to reverse in the caucuses next year the verdict of the last state convention. From those who desire to act

with such an organization, I invite immediate correspondence and co-operation."

As an offset to William's manifesto, Colonel Gaston has invited all the democratic candidates on the state ticket and for congress to dine with him at the swell Algonquin club in Boston. When Gaston and his supporters get together they will lay plans to wreck the democratic party some more.

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