

The River Press.

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PRIMARY ELECTION LAW.

One of the reforms promised in the platforms of the republican and democratic parties is a law providing for the nomination of candidates for public office by the voters themselves. Those familiar with the proceedings of political conventions acknowledge that the nominations made under the present system are sometimes secured by trades and combines among friends of the aspirants, and do not represent the choice of a majority of the voters, and it is proposed to place in the hands of the latter the power to make nominations by ballot at the primaries.

Several states have enacted primary election laws, and the manner in which they operate is described by the Lewistown Argus in these remarks:

"Under this law, referring to the Minnesota law, the primary elections of all parties are held on the same day and in the same place in conjunction with the registration of voters for the general election that is to follow. Primary election days, like regular election days, are made legal holidays and every voter entitled to participate in the succeeding election is given an opportunity to register his name and express his choice of candidates of the party with which he affiliates.

"The plan to have the voters of the different parties express their choice of candidates at the time of registration would seem to be a good one, as it would save time and trouble, but in Montana it would conflict with our registration once in eight years, except in cities of over 1,000 registered electors.

"Under the arrangement in Minnesota the elector first presents himself to the register to answer the various questions pertaining to his qualifications as a voter, and when he makes declaration with what party he affiliates, the registrar hands him a primary election ballot of his party, which he fills out in the registration booth before retiring, and those who have no party affiliations do not vote, although they are registered for the succeeding election.

"The new primary election law which was recently accepted by the voters of Wisconsin does away with the nominating conventions altogether. All the candidates to be voted for at each election must be chosen at a primary held in the preceding September. Candidates for United States senator must run for nomination at a primary election. The candidate who wins at the primaries will be recommended to the legislature as the party's candidate. This latter arrangement practically secures the election of the United States senators of Wisconsin by popular vote, as it is assumed that legislators will not disregard the mandate of their party as expressed at the polls. Of course, if the legislators should see fit to ignore the expressed will of the voters of the party they represent and elect someone else their action would be legal by reason of the constitution of the United States providing for this method of choosing federal senators."

TARIFF REVISION.

It is a significant fact that the mug-wump or free lance advocates of tariff revision offer no definite programme. They deal in nothing but a generalization. Ask them what particular schedules they object to and they have nothing to say. The position of the democratic party as found in its latest platform, is a sweeping charge that protection is a "robbery of the many to enrich the few." What the people thought of that reckless declaration is shown by the overwhelming defeat of the body that made it. There is a class of tariff revisionists outside of the democratic party that do not directly assail protection, but yet insist on the pressing necessity of changes in the existing law. They mention no schedules and it seems impossible to get them beyond the word "revision." If they cannot state the nature, scope and particularized objects of the revision, it cannot be as urgent as they represent, nor is it pushed with the candor and definiteness that the people have a right to expect when so far-reaching and important a change of policy is proposed.

Almost the last noted speech by Senator Vest in congress was delivered at a time when a fuel famine, caused by labor disturbances, threatened widespread suffering. Senator Vest contended that the crisis was primarily and chiefly due to the duty on foreign coal, which was 67 cents a ton. As a measure of possible relief Congress temporarily removed the duty, and for more than a year coal from any outside source could be brought to the United States without the payment of any duty whatever. Not the slightest advantage resulted to the inhabitants of the seaboard cities, nor to anybody in this country. When the duty went off here the price of foreign coal was marked up correspondingly for shipment. But little coal was imported,

and when the duty was resumed no protest was heard from any source. No doubt Senator Vest was sincere in his argument, but actual experience proved that his remedy was null.

One generalization of the revisionists is that certain protected American products are sold at lower figures abroad than at home. Secretary Shaw took up this point in a recent speech, and referred to the nonpartisan commission appointed by Congress to investigate the subject, with authority to compel the attendance of witnesses, which reported that \$4,000,000 worth of merchandise, the product of American factories, is annually sold abroad cheaper than in the domestic market. Some of these articles are protected in this country by patents, but are not patented elsewhere. By a republican law, an American manufacturer can have the benefit of free raw material for the production of merchandise actually exported, and the drawbacks thus recovered last year amounted to \$5,000,000. The commission reported that only one-thirtieth of 1 per cent of the output of our factories is sold abroad cheaper than at home. Ask the tariff revisionists to be specific. What particular schedules do they propose to rip up? Let them drop vagueness and state their purposes.—Globe-Democrat.

THE Illinois statesman who proposes to tax bachelors should remember that the men outnumber the women in the United States. When the supply of brides is not equal to the demand, it is positively cruel to punish the unfortunates who fail to get married.

COMPLIMENTS CONRAD.

Deserved Tribute to a Pioneer Citizen of Northern Montana.

The following article is taken from the Montana Eagle, published at Helena, Mont.:

Among prominent men of the state who are affiliated with the Fraternal Order of Eagles, none have done more in building up the diversified interests of Montana, than W. G. Conrad. If painted in word pictures, not a book, but volumes could be filled with interesting, unique and historical facts identifying the Conrad brothers with the industries that have created the great state of Montana. A brief synopsis dating from 1868 would show a youth, 18 years old, leaving the old Dominion state, a trip by rail and stage to Cincinnati; down the Ohio to Cairo; up the Mississippi to St. Louis; then 4,000 miles on the old Missouri river to Fort Benton. A clerk; a partner; then proprietor in an enterprise that is now extinct, a general barter and trading store, employing hundreds of men freighting supplies for civilians, the military and Indians, in the United States and Canada. As the years passed by, one industry required that it be connected with others, this developed the Conrad Cattle company, the banking business in Fort Benton which was later removed to Great Falls. The Conrad entire interests in this bank were disposed of by them in 1894 and the year following the doors of the bank were closed. When the news reached Mr. Conrad, then visiting in Virginia, he immediately wired the following: "I want every depositor paid in full." His reason given later proves the inborn greatness of the man. "These people deposited their money on account of my connection with the bank, and although advised by the lawyers of the state that I am not legally liable, I would rather not have a dollar of my own than to see these people lose their money." In public life Mr. Conrad has served the people of Montana in different ways and always to their best interests. The first mayor of Fort Benton; one of the board of Chouteau county commissioners; representative in the upper house of the territorial legislature '78-'80. In 1899 without lobbying or corrupt influences his record and popularity led him within four votes of the United States senate and later in 1901, while not announced as a candidate, he was again given a most flattering vote.

The Cure For Lawlessness.

S. S. McClure in McClure's.

Our governments—city, county and state—are inefficient, and sometimes criminal. Under inefficient government the strong individual oppresses the weak. Take, for example, the extraordinary story of the Standard Oil company, with its years of successfully crushing competition, that practically deprived men of their property and their business, with its control and selfish use of railroads that were given their franchise by the state for the good and equal use of all. A despotic government could do no worse.

There are men and groups of men in every community who realize these truths and who are at work sometimes winning success, like Folk, of Missouri, sometimes working half a lifetime with discouragement, like Blankenburgh and others in Philadelphia, sometimes making slow and sure progress which will be crowned with brilliant success—like the Municipal Voters' league in Chicago. These and thousands of others are the pioneers of a new righteousness which shall become a new passion—the love of country.

MAY CHANGE BOUNTY LAW.

State Legislature Will Be Asked to Amend Present Regulations.

HELENA, Dec. 19.—Stockmen and others conversant with the facts concede that the present status of the law on the subject of bounty on wild animals is unsatisfactory, both by reason of the fact that some uncertainty exists as to which of the numerous amendments that have been adopted, changing the law as it originally stood in the political code as adopted in 1895, is now in force, and the further fact that adequate provision is not made for carrying the law into effect.

The provisions of the act of 1903 creating the office of county bounty inspectors is unsatisfactory in that difficulty is frequently experienced in finding the inspectors when wanted, and no provision is made for furnishing the necessary blanks and stationery for the performance of their duties, and the duty is imposed upon them without compensation.

In view of the conditions, it is believed that a general revision of the bounty law is advisable, and to this end a bill has been proposed which, it is hoped, will cure the defects now existing, and this is to be introduced at the coming session of the legislative assembly.

The proposed bill repeals all existing statutes bearing on the subject of bounties, and provides for the appointment by the governor of a state bounty inspector, at a salary to be fixed by the legislature. It provides for the presentation of skins for the bounty thereon to the clerk in substantially the same manner as provided in the former acts, the clerk, however, merely issuing a receipt showing that the skins are held for inspection by the state inspector.

Section 6 of the act provides that the inspector shall visit each county not often than once in 60 days for the inspection of skins that have been presented.

The proposed bill fixes the bounty at the figures named in the act of 1903: Wolves, \$5; coyote pups and wolf pups, \$3; bears and mountain lions, \$7 each.

A Counterfeit Money Factory.

NEW YORK, Dec. 19.—Secret service men are reported to have succeeded in locating in this city the materials and printing presses used in counterfeiting "Indian head" \$5 bills which have been extensively floated all over the eastern states. A long campaign against the gang culminated last week in the arrest of Charles Adamson, who is now in jail at New Haven, Conn.

Quantities of paper and ink enough to print \$1,000,000 worth were found in many hiding places about the city. There was a press and photographer's outfit, together with many delicate instruments and the coloring material of the skilled counterfeiters. Adamson was taken to Connecticut for hearing because a case had already been worked up there, in which two of his alleged pals are under indictment.

Japanese Capture Fort.

TOKIO, Dec. 19.—The Japanese fired an immense mine under portions of the north fort of East Keekwan mountain at 2 o'clock yesterday (Sunday afternoon). The infantry immediately afterward charged and occupied the fort. It is reported that the Japanese seized a strong position about a thousand yards southeast of 203-Metre hill, preparatory to assaulting the new town and pushing between Liao Ti mountain and the Russian headquarters at Port Arthur.

The capture of the North Keekwan mountain fort was a brilliant spectacle. For weeks the Japanese had been tunneling two shafts 40 feet in length with four branches. They laid seven mines which were exploded on the 18th. The two attacking parties were composed of volunteers and those participating in the first attempt vowed to capture the fort or die. Many of the soldiers of the first attacking force were killed by the debris from the explosion. The explosion made two huge rents on the north walls through which the assaulters charged the enemy, winning the trenches in front of the wall and killing the remainder of the garrison in the rear.

Another Dowle Boast.

CHICAGO, Dec. 19.—Before a congregation of nearly 5,000 people, Alexander John Dowle has declared that the assets of Zion were \$30,000,000, and of this sum \$21,000,000 was in Zion City. He said the total indebtedness was less than \$500,000, and most of that was due members of the church.

HELENA, Dec. 20.—In the case of W. B. Pomeroy against the state, in which the plaintiff sued to recover \$14,873.75, the amount of the proceeds of the estate of Thomas M. Pomeroy, deceased, which was sometime ago turned in to the state treasury, Judge H. C. Smith today made an order directing the payment of this amount to the plaintiff. The state attempted to show that the plaintiff's claim was barred by the statute of limitations, but failed.

SHERIFF BENNER ARRESTED.

Cascade County Officer Went a Swift Pace And Is Unable to Settle.

BUTTE, Dec. 20.—It is not often that one sheriff finds himself in the toils of another, but that is the predicament Sheriff H. E. Benner, of Cascade county, found himself when he arrived in Butte yesterday. Jerry Clifford, a saloon man, swore to a complaint charging Mr. Benner with obtaining \$50 by means of a worthless check.

The check was drawn on the First National bank of Great Falls on Sept. 27, when Mr. Benner was in Butte. When the check was presented for payment it was found that Mr. Benner had no funds in the bank. When told of the condition of affairs, Mr. Benner promised to make the check good by Nov. 1, but failed to do so. When he arrived in Butte yesterday the matter was placed in the hands of the officers.

The prisoner was not placed in jail, but was escorted around by Deputy Sheriff Frank Pelletier in an effort to raise the money. Benner spent the night in company with the officer, and at last accounts today was still with him, going around town, seeking to raise the required amount.

It appears that Sheriff Benner was also wanted on similar charges elsewhere, a dispatch from Spokane stating that two warrants of arrest have been issued against him in that city. The Great Falls Tribune gives this account of Mr. Benner's troubles in that city:

Two warrants for the arrest of Herman E. Benner, sheriff of Cascade county for the past four years, on charges of having secured cash for worthless checks, are now in the hands of officers, the charge in each case being grand larceny. It is reported that warrants for his arrest on similar charges have been issued elsewhere in the state and in cities outside of the state, and a complaint, accusing him of having passed a worthless check, was filed in this city, in Justice Safford's court, but was withdrawn in consequence of efforts of his friends to protect him.

It is believed that his indebtedness amounts to thousands of dollars, and it is believed he is without resources. All his property has been sold or mortgaged and all moneys due him from the county or state to the date of expiration of his term of office have been assigned to creditors. It is reported also that he is indebted to many in Great Falls, Helena, Havre, Shelby, Spokane, Seattle and Butte, and for several weeks they have been threatening to make trouble for him. For several weeks his checks have been rejected by both banks of the city with which he has done business, and it is known that, about two months ago, representatives of those interested in trust funds that he held began to press him hard, and forced him to make settlements after a considerable sacrifice.

Buried Under Falling Walls.

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 20.—The side wall of the O. H. Peck building, in Fifth street, south, which was left standing after the fire last Tuesday night, early today toppled over in a high gale onto the Drocker hotel, a three-story brick structure adjoining. The tons of brick and mortar crashed completely down through the building, carrying floors and all in a mass of debris into the basement. There was no warning of the disaster, and the 14 persons who were sleeping in the various apartments were caught in the crushed structure. Nine of them were killed.

A passer-by who heard the crash promptly turned in a fire alarm, and the department arrived in time to check an incipient blaze from the wreck, and the firemen and policemen directed their attention to rescuing those still alive and recovering the dead. Mrs. Anna McNeveins had a wonderful escape. She was on the second floor, in bed, when the crash came. The firemen took her out of bed in the basement. The debris had arched over her in such a way as to preserve her from serious injury.

Britt Retains Championship.

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 20.—At the end of the twentieth round tonight, Jimmy Britt of San Francisco, and "Batling" Nelson of Chicago, fighting like a pair of bulldogs, the gong sounded the end of the contest and Referee Billy Roche unhesitatingly placed his hand on the California boy as the winner of the contest. In the closing round, Britt was punching the Chicago boy all over the ring, but his blows lacked sufficient force to put a quietus on his opponent. The fight was on exemplification of how much punishment a human being can endure and not succumb.

The house was one of the largest seen in San Francisco and it is estimated that the fighters will divide nearly \$40,000 between them. There were no visible marks of punishment on Nelson, with the exception of some slight puttings about the eyes, but Britt's face was bleeding in several

places from the forceful blows delivered by Nelson in the clinches.

May Send Potatoes to Ireland

GREELY, Colo., Dec. 20.—Mayor H. C. Watson issued a call today for a mass meeting on Saturday next to consider a proposition to send a large quantity of potatoes to the starving poor of Ireland. Similar meetings will be held at Longmont and Fort Collins. It is believed the farmers of northern Colorado will contribute several hundred carloads of potatoes if transportation can be arranged for. The government will be asked to furnish a transport from Galveston to Ireland.

Enforcing Land Laws.

DENVER, Dec. 19.—Fourteen hundred patents for timber claims in eastern Colorado were canceled today by the land office, and as many more will be cancelled during the week. These cancellations are made because the locators had not complied with the terms of the timber claim act.

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