

## WILD NIGHT AND MANY THRILLS IN STATE CONVENTION

**John Gary Evans' Platform Had Rough Stedding but Came Through With Its Main Features. Gov. Cooper Against the Bonus Plank.**

(By A. M. Carpenter in Spartanburg Herald.)

Columbia, S. C., May 18.—The state democratic convention adjourned sine die at 3:40 o'clock this morning, after more than seven hours of wrangling, most of which was over non-essentials and some of which reached the stage of real bitterness, it was a wild night. Some of the women delegates left about midnight, but more of them stuck it out until the close. An all-night session of a political convention is trying on the best of nerves, but it must be said that most of the women who stuck it out appeared to be in better shape than some of the men, although an experience of the kind is not the best thing in the world for some modern complexions.

### The Trouble Starts

The trouble started at the beginning of the night session, which was called to order at 8 o'clock, when the committee on rules recommended to the convention several changes in the rules for conducting the primaries and in organizing the precinct clubs. The amendments appeared to be unimportant on their face and would have gone through without trouble if Delegate Eugene Blease, of Newberry, had not made the point that the rules governing the primaries had been enacted into the statute law of the state, and that a state democratic convention could not amend or repeal an act of the legislature. The point was made that if the convention should change the rules, and the people should go by the amended rules, they would be guilty of violating a law of the state and would be liable to fine and imprisonment. The proposed amendments were all voted down and the convention adopted a resolution asking the legislature to give the convention more latitude in changing the party rules, but this was not done until after about four hours of debate.

### Charleston Wanted It

The amendments were all proposed by the Charleston delegation, headed by Mayor John P. Grace. One of the amendments provided that a county democratic executive committee in counties having cities of more than 40,000 population could establish additional clubs in precincts of large voting strength. Each club would have a member of the county executive committee, of course. The effect would have been that the Charleston executive committee, which is controlled at present by the Grace faction, could establish additional clubs in wards which give Grace a majority, while refraining from establishing new clubs in the anti-Grace wards, and in this way the Grace faction could have strengthened and perpetuated its hold upon the election machinery in Charleston county. Mayor Grace contended that the convention had the power to amend the rules in spite of the legislative acts, and he demanded a roll call on one amendment, but he was voted down overwhelmingly. Nothing came of the long wrangle, but the incident was interesting as throwing a sidelight on the political game as it is played in Charleston county.

Several of the delegates said they were in favor of the proposed changes, but could not vote for them in view of the law on the subject. Eugene Blease said the legislature had tied the hands of the democratic party in the state, and called attention to the fact that he and other members of the legislature had bitterly opposed the act at the time of its passage and had predicted that trouble of this kind would come up.

### The Platform Row

It was after midnight when the report of the committee on platform and resolutions was called for. The committee had been in session for several hours and rumors as to its action had been in circulation among the delegates and there was keen interest in the report. In order to understand the situation fully several statements ought to be made just here.

It was understood that the platform committee had framed a report embracing the resolutions adopted by the Spartanburg county convention with several minor changes, and that these resolutions had been written by

former Governor John Gary Evans. Mr. Evans had been much talked of as a candidate for governor this year, and while he had not formally announced as a candidate, he had not said that he would not run. There were other candidates for governor, all of whom had friends and supporters in the convention. They were not disposed to allow Mr. Evans to get any undue glory from writing a platform. Then, the platform as presented by the committee, was not very happy in its composition. It did not contain a single kind word about anybody or anything except Woodrow Wilson and his policies during the world war. It covered a good deal of territory and criticized a good many things. It criticized the legislature and the state and county governments. It did not point with pride to anything, but viewed everything with alarm.

### The Fight Begins

The opening paragraph, reaffirming the allegiance of the democracy of South Carolina to the policies of Woodrow Wilson and extending sympathy to the stricken leader in his illness, was adopted without comment or opposition. There were some in the convention who would have been glad to strike out this section, but they did not say anything. The fight started when Congressman Dominick opposed the section commending the course of the agricultural bloc in the United States senate. Mr. Dominick said a majority of the senators composing the bloc were republicans and wanted a high tariff and that he could not endorse any sort of a tariff system and wanted the reference to the agricultural bloc stricken out.

This brought a rise out of J. Skottowe Wannamaker, president of the American Cotton Association, and a delegate from Calhoun county. Mr. Wannamaker said he was familiar with the agricultural bloc and its program, and that he strongly approved of it. Great good is bound to result from this alliance of western and southern senators, he said, who are working together for legislation that will benefit the farmers. The members of the bloc differ on the tariff, and there is no agreement among them on this matter, but they are united on agricultural legislation, and he urged that the convention give them its endorsement. Talks along the same line were made by Governor Cooper and Congressman Fulmer, and the agricultural bloc was endorsed over Congressman Dominick's protest.

### Legislators Sore

One plank of the platform criticized the general assembly for failure to pass all the tax reform bills at the last session. This plank had been warmly discussed in the committee, and had been toned down before being presented to the convention in the hope of avoiding friction with members of the legislature who were delegates, but some of them were still rather sore when the plank was read. Senator Johnstone, of Newberry; Senator Laney, of Chesterfield; Senator Williams, of Aiken, and others made rather spirited talks, in which they resented the criticism of the general assembly and declared that some of the statements contained therein were not in accord with the facts. The plank was finally modified by simply demanding further tax reform.

### The State Government

There was another acrimonious discussion over the plank alleging carelessness and bad management in the state government, particularly with reference to the various boards and commissions. The plank was discussed at length and after the convention adjourned nobody seemed to know whether it had been accepted, amended or rejected entirely. Everybody began to get restless and to lose interest. The notes of the secretaries of the convention did not show just what had happened to this plank, but the general impression was that the convention got tired of discussing it and dropped it without taking any action.

Another row started when the plank referring to the soldier bonus bill was reached. The plank referred to the bonus bill now pending before congress, which was endorsed, and went on to say that the pending tariff bill was so framed that southern ex-service men would pay many times the amount of the bonus they would re-

ceive in the way of excessive tariff duties.

Governor Cooper said he could not vote for any platform that endorsed the bonus bill, and this started the fireworks. There were several young world war veterans in the convention and they seemed to think the governor had reflected on their patriotism.

Frank Ellerbe, of Marion county, made an impassioned speech, resenting what he claimed was an unjust reflection upon the ex-service men by

the governor. Other ex-service men interrupted with remarks of approval and the situation began to grow tense.

In the midst of Mr. Ellerbe's speech an elderly, sweet-faced woman from Florence county interrupted with this: "I am the mother of several sons who saw service in France. I should feel very much ashamed if one of them should speak so disrespectfully of the governor of his native state."

This brought Mr. Ellerbe to his senses, and he made a handsome apology. He declared he meant no disre-

spect to Governor Cooper personally or to his high office, and said that if in the heat of debate he had used unseemly language he wanted to retract it.

Governor Cooper explained his position. He said he yielded to no man in his respect for the ex-service men. He said he believed that the people and the government owed the soldiers a debt that could never be paid, and he felt that if they should accept the bonus it would be saying in effect that the debt had been cancelled—that it

would be putting patriotism on a commercial basis. "The country cannot do too much for its young men who served in time of peril," he said, "and I feel very deeply that the young men cannot afford to accept anything in the way of a bonus or additional compensation that bears the dollar mark." The governor kept his temper in an admirable manner and was roundly applauded, although the convention voted by a substantial majority to

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