

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF THE POPULISTS.

WHEN the Convention assembled at St. Louis on July 22, there was much division of sentiment respecting the wisest policy to be pursued. Many favored endorsing the nominees of the Chicago Democratic Convention, while others, styled the "Middle-of-the-Roaders," were clamorous for a separate party platform and nominees in order to preserve the party as an organization. Another disturbing element was the name of Sewall, the Democratic nominee for Vice-President, who, on account of his connection with moneyed interests and banks, was obnoxious to many of the Populists. At times the proceedings were disorderly, and there were animated contests between rival factions.

When the Convention proceeded to organization, Governor Stone, of Missouri, made an address of welcome, which was responded to by Ignatius Donnelly, of Minnesota. Senator Butler, of North Carolina, was elected temporary chairman, and Senator Allen, of Nebraska, was made permanent chairman.

On the 24th the platform was adopted as follows:

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The People's Party, assembled in National Convention, re-affirms its allegiance to the principles declared by the founders of the Republic, and also to the fundamental principles of just government as enunciated in the platform of the party in 1892.

We recognize that through the connivance of the present and preceding administrations the country has reached a crisis in its national life, as predicted in our declaration four years ago, and that prompt and politic action is the supreme duty of the hour.

We realize that while we have political independence, our financial and industrial independence is yet to be attained by restoring to our country the constitutional control and exercise of the functions necessary to a people's government, which functions have been basely surrendered by our public servants to corporate monopolies. The influence of European money-changers has been more potent in shaping legislation than the voice of the American people. Executive power and patronage have been used to corrupt our Legislatures and defeat the will of the people, and plutocracy has been enthroned upon the ruins of democracy.

To restore the government intended by the fathers, and for the welfare and prosperity of this and future generations, we demand the establishment of an economic and financial system which shall make us masters of our own affairs and independent of European control by the adoption of the following declaration of principles:

Finance.

First: We demand a national money, safe and sound, issued by the General Government only, without the intervention of banks of issue, to be a full legal tender for all debts, public and private; also a just, equitable and efficient means of distribution direct to the people and through the lawful disbursements of the Government.

Second: We demand the free and unrestricted coinage of silver and gold at the present legal ratio of 16 to 1, without waiting for the consent of foreign nations.

Third: We demand the volume of circulating medium be speedily increased to an amount sufficient to meet the demands of the business population of this country, and to restore the just level of prices of labor and production.

Fourth: We denounce the sale of bonds and the increase of the public interest-bearing bond debt made by the present administration as unnecessary and without authority of law, and that no more bonds be issued except by specific Act of Congress.

Fifth: We demand such legal legislation as will prevent the demonetization of the lawful money of the United States by private contract.

Sixth: We demand that the Government, in payment of its obligations, shall use its option as to the kind of lawful money in which they are to be paid, and we denounce the present and preceding administrations for surrendering this option to the holders of Government obligations.

Seventh: We demand a graduated income tax,

to the end that aggregated wealth shall bear its just proportion of taxation; and we denounce the Supreme Court, relative to the income tax, as a misinterpretation of the Constitution and an invasion of the rightful powers of Congress over the subject of taxation.

Eighth: We demand that postal savings banks be established by the Government for the safe deposit of the savings of the people and to facilitate exchange.

Transportation.

Transportation being a means of exchange and public necessity, the Government should own and operate the railroads in the interest of the people and on non-partisan basis, to the end that all may be accorded the same treatment in transportation, and that the tyranny and political power now exercised by the great railroad corporations, which result in the impairment if not the destruction of the political rights and personal liberties of the citizen, may be destroyed. Such ownership is to be accomplished gradually, in a manner consistent with sound public policy.

Second: The interest of the United States in the public highways built with public moneys and the proceeds of extensive grants of land to the Pacific railroads should never be alienated, mortgaged or sold, but guarded and protected for the general welfare as provided by the laws organizing such railroads. The foreclosure of existing liens of the United States on these roads should at once follow default in the payment thereof of the debt of the companies, and at the foreclosure sales of

said roads the Government shall purchase the same if it becomes necessary to protect the interests therein, or if they can be purchased at a reasonable price; and the Government shall operate such railroads as public highways for the benefit of the whole, and not in the interest of the few, under suitable provisions for the protection of life and property, giving to all transportation interests and privileges and equal rates for fares and freight.

Third: We denounce the present infamous schemes for refunding these debts, and demand that the laws now applicable thereto be executed and administered according to their true intent and spirit.

Fourth: The telegraph, like the post-office system, being a necessity for the transmission of news, should be owned and operated by the Government in the interest of the people.

Land Monopolies.

First: The true policy demands that the National and State legislation shall be such as will ultimately enable every prudent and industrious citizen to secure a home, and, therefore, the land should not be monopolized for speculative purposes.

All lands now held by railroads and other corporations in excess of their actual needs should, by lawful means, be reclaimed by the Government and held for actual settlers only; and private land monopoly, as well as alien ownership, should be prohibited.

Second: We condemn the frauds by which the land grant to the Pacific railroad companies have,

through the connivance of the Interior Department, robbed multitudes of equal bona fide settlers of their homes and miners of their claims, and we demand legislation by Congress which will enforce the exemption of mineral land from such grants after as well as before patent.

Third: We demand that bona fide settlers on all public lands be granted free homes, as provided in the national homestead law, and that no exception be made in the case of Indian reservations when opened for settlement, and that all lands not now patented come under this demand.

We favor a system of direct legislation through the initiative and referendum, under proper constitutional safeguards.

General Propositions.

First: We demand the election of President, Vice-President and United States Senators by a direct vote of the people.

Second: We tender to the patriotic people of Cuba our deepest sympathy in their heroic struggle for political freedom and independence, and we believe the time has come when the United States, the great republic of the world, should recognize that Cuba is and of right ought to be a free and independent State.

Third: We favor home rule in the Territories and the District of Columbia, and the early admission of the Territories as States.

Fourth: All public salaries should be made to correspond to the price of labor and its products.

Fifth: In times of great industrial depression,

idle labor should be employed on public works as far as practicable.

Sixth: The arbitrary course of the courts in assuming to imprison citizens for indirect contempt and ruling that by injunction should be prevented by proper legislation.

Seventh: We favor just pensions for our disabled Union soldiers.

Eighth: Believing that the elective franchise and untrammelled ballot are essential to a Government of, for, and by the people, the People's Party condemn the wholesale system of disfranchisement adopted in some States as unrepblican and undemocratic, and we declare it to be the duty of the several State Legislatures to take such action as will secure a full, free and fair ballot, and an honest count.

Ninth: While the foregoing propositions constitute the platform upon which our party stands, and for the vindication of which its organization will be maintained, we recognize that the great and pressing issue of the pending campaign upon which the present Presidential election will turn, is the financial question, and upon this great and specific issue between the parties, we cordially invite the aid and co-operation of all organizations and citizens agreeing with us upon this vital question.

Nominations.

A strong feeling was developed in the Convention in favor of William J. Bryan, the Democratic nominee of the Chicago Convention, for the first place on the ticket, and there appeared at the same

time much opposition to Arthur Sewall, the Democratic nominee for Vice-President. The Convention decided to nominate a candidate for Vice-President first. After a long and tumultuous session, early on the morning of July 25th, Thomas E. Watson, of Georgia, was declared the nominee for the Vice-Presidency. It was understood that Mr. Bryan wished to retain the name of Sewall on the ticket in the event of his own nomination for first place.

The impending defeat of Sewall led Chairman Jones, of the Democratic National Committee, who had been closely watching the Populists' proceedings, to telegraph to candidate Bryan, who made a definite declaration in reply, that he would not accept the nomination if Sewall was not also named.

The opposition to Sewall practically swamped the Bryan forces at the day session. The leaders were powerless to check the strong feeling against the Bath shipbuilder and banker.

For the first time the "middle-of-the-road" element showed generalship worthy of the name. Recognizing the fact that all hope of defeating Bryan's nomination was lost, they concentrated all their efforts against Sewall. They devised a cunning scheme by which the Convention was forced to nominate the Vice-President before the President.

When the proposition was made to change the

regular order of the nominations, the Bryan men strained every nerve to prevent it. Congressman Skinner, chairman of the North Carolina delegation, cast the solid vote of the State against the change. When the vote was figured up, however, and he ascertained that there was a majority of 26 in favor of the proposition, the vote of the delegation was cast for the proposition, and the antis emerged from the contest with a majority of 170.

This made the defeat of Sewall and the nomination of a Populist for Vice-President practically certain.

William Jennings Bryan was nominated for the Presidency by a vote of 1042 to 321.