

PEOPLES FORUM.

SYSTEMS FOR SELECTING CANDIDATES—PAST AND PRESENT.

To the Editor of The Observer:

There is much being written and said now as to the manner of nominating candidates for office, and it seems to me that much of it is wild and unreasonable. Permit me to cast a look backward on this question, to ascertain how these matters were arranged in the early days when such men as Jefferson, Madison, Jackson, Clay and others were dominant in politics. Prior to 1824 candidates for state officers were nominated by caucuses composed of members of the state legislatures and many of the people had no sort of representation at these caucuses and caucuses of members of congress nominated candidates for the presidency. Conventions such as we have had for three quarters of a century were not known at all until about the second decade of the last century. The present convention system originated in New York and was first suggested by the Tammany society as early as 1813, but this system was not fully adopted even in New York until 1824, and it was generally adopted throughout the country by 1826, and it has been in general use ever since. It is easy to see that the convention system was a great improvement on the caucuses of the state legislatures and of congress. That system permitted these elected to the state legislatures to select the candidates to be voted for state offices and the Congressional caucuses was the "boss" who determined who should be voted for in the regular way for the presidency.

To my mind the convention system is not only a great improvement on the systems that preceded it, but it is a better system than the much vaunted primary system now in vogue in Oregon and many other states. Under the convention system a state convention was held to nominate state and district candidates, and this convention was composed of delegates elected by the county conventions of the various counties of the state, each county having the number of delegates apportioned to it, according to the strength of the party in the county as shown by the vote at the last preceding election. Each county had its convention, composed of delegates from each precinct in the county and these delegates to the county convention were elected at a primary in each precinct at which every voter of the party had a right to attend and vote. Notice of the conventions and primaries was given and every voter had the right to attend the primary of his party in his precinct and vote in the selection of delegates. I contend that this system was in all respects fair and that every man had a right to vote at the primaries, and if he did not attend and vote, it was his own fault. He had a fair opportunity.

Now what was wrong in this system? Can any one show any defect in it. It is said that "rings" and "bosses" controlled politics under this system, and in many instances this is true, but this was due to the neglect of the voters to do their duty in attending at the primaries and in not sending the right men to the conventions. This was not a defect in the system. It was a fault of the voters. The present primary system affords bosses the same opportunity that the old system did. Only a part of the voters attend the primaries under the present system. I believe it is a fact that Senator Bourne had paid agents in about every county of this state for weeks prior to the primary that nominated him for United States senator and he published statements after he was nominated to the effect that he spent about \$32,000.00 to obtain the nomination for U. S. Senator. Just think of that! He spent to obtain the nomination a sum nearly equal to what his salary will be for his whole term. If it cost \$32,000.00 to get the nomination, how much did it cost him to be elected? That information has never been given to the public, I believe. It is certain that Bourne, with all his money, could not have been elected U. S. Senator under the old system. He was the first fruits of the new plan in Oregon. "By their fruits ye shall know them."

Now, I contend that our present primary system without any convention is a political disorganizer, and for proof of this I ask that citizens will look all-around them in this state.

What is the condition of things in the republican party? We find that a lot of self-seeking politicians are now traversing the state and making personal appeals for votes to nominate them, and that they have nobody back of them. They jumped into the arena because they wanted the offices—not because they possess any special fitness for the offices they seek, and not because there was any call from the people of the state for them to run. They are self-constituted candidates and they are tearing their party to pieces in their efforts for self exploitation. Every republican seems to recognize that, although his party comprises two thirds of the voters in the state, it is in imminent danger of losing some of the state offices. Why is this? That party is going to pieces largely because of the fact that the present primary system has wrecked all organization and has converted an organized party into a mob of politicians, each seeking his own advancement and disregarding the interests of the public. Personal politics is in the saddle now and everything is subordinated to individual greed and ambition. What will be the result? Can good results be reasonably expected from such a system? Can such a system bring forth good fruit? It used to be that the office was supposed to seek the man who was qualified to discharge its duties, but under this system the political roustabouts of the state are on the road in a wild hunt for office, and qualification for office is little considered. Audacity and push are the passports to success in this wild scramble for office, and modesty and the public interests are relegated to the rear. It is everybody for himself.

How is it with the democratic party in Oregon? This party has been in a state of rapid decay the last eight years, and this is largely due to personal politics. But what is its actual state under this new system? Here in Union county, what is its condition? I understand that when a democrat goes into the booth to vote at the approaching primary, and scans the space for the candidates for nomination for county officers, he will find it all blank, excepting for the office of sheriff! Just think of such a system as this. Mr. F. P. Childers is the only man who wants any space on the democratic county ticket. In Vermont where democratic success is as remote as in Oregon the democrats at their conventions put up a ticket and make a fight. Their ticket is not a blank. It is not improbable that, with good selection of candidates in this county this year, several offices could be elected, but all is left to individuals and the places will be blank unless individuals write names of persons on the ticket at the primary.

Whatever may be truthfully said against bossism in conventions, under the old system there was some effort to put up persons that the conventions though would have some chance of success. Bosses did not usually want to put up men that the voters would repudiate. It is my judgment that the old system was much better than this. I believe that Gov. Chamberlain was right, when he wrote, some years ago, that "an assembly is the best and only sensible means of selecting candidates for office." That was true when he wrote that statement and it is true now. But the people seem to want the new system, and I am entirely willing that they shall have it. But it will place material out of the best sort.

W. M. RAMSEY.

Political Announcements

This column is open to any candidate regardless of Faction or Party and is paid advertising.

S. F. WILSON, Athena, Oregon, candidate for joint senator for Umatilla, Union and Morrow counties subject to decision of republican primaries. "I firmly believe in the direct primary law, economy in the use of public funds, good roads, better schools, strict and prompt enforcement of law, the square deal and eternal progress of man and his institutions."

C. A. BARRETT, Athena, Oregon.—I hereby announce myself as a candidate for the nomination for joint senator for the district embracing Union, Umatilla and Morrow counties, subject to the choice of republican voters at the primary nominating election to be held on

THERE IS A REASON



CORSETS

The American Lady, perfection in every detail. The line is complete.

The Fair

why our store is the popular store with the ladies nowadays. There are reasons all over the house; in every department are found those dainty feminine creations that delight the eye and appeal to the judgment as well as the artistic sense of the ladies.

Of Special Interest Today

Advance showing of ladies' TAILORED WAISTS. A sigh of satisfaction in every garment. GEISHA WAISTS are better waists.

Those dainty creations in NECKWEAR just arrived—the kind your friends write you, are the rage in the large cities.



CORSETS

The American Lady, perfect in every detail. The line is complete.

The Fair



NEW BUILDING SLIGHTLY ONE

REAR WALL TO BE 36 FEET HIGH; FRONT 27.

Excellent Fire Exits Will Make Building Modern and Safe.

Workmen are excavating with considerable progress for the new Gardiner theatre building. The store room which is to be an adjunct to the theatre building will not be constructed until the theatre is finished. Consequently the walls which are to separate them will be built first.

The building is to have considerable height. The plans call for a brick structure 36 feet high in the rear and 27 in front. The main entrance will be through a huge arch, almost as wide as the entire building and twenty-seven feet high. The dressing rooms are to be underground, and the excavation for this department of the building is now under way.

The building will have splendid fire exits.

If Our Wagon Does Not Call

Please Phone

We started with a business much larger than expected, and our driver was unable to reach everyone.

In order to more promptly handle the business, we will add another new wagon to our delivery service on Monday.

Monday we will again start our REPAIRING DEPARTMENT for single men.

CHERRY'S NEW LAUNDRY

DR. CLYDE T. HOCKETT, Enterprise, Oregon.—I wish to announce my candidacy for joint representative for the 24th representative district subject to the voters of the republican party at the primary nominating election to be held in said representative district, September 24, 1910. CLYDE T. HOCKETT.

An Open Letter—Rusk to Hockett. Joseph, Oregon, Sept. 1, 1910. To Dr. C. T. Hockett, Enterprise, Ore. Dear Sir:

Inasmuch as you were a delegate to the late republican assembly at Portland, and as you state in your announcement for the republican nomination for joint representative, Union and Wallowa counties, that you favor holding assemblies in this state, I as a candidate against you and pledged to uphold the Primary Law, Statement No. 1, and opposed to assemblies, do hereby challenge you to publicly discuss the assembly proposition before the voters of our district, you may fix the times and places during the primary campaign and defend while I shall oppose the assembly scheme.

I also invite you to discuss adversely, if you please, my record last session or any part of it.

No "pussy footed" campaign for me. Let us see if the people deem

themselves capable of choosing their own officials.

Respectfully, JOHN P. RUSK.

Republican candidate for renomination joint-representative Union and Wallowa counties. Paid advertisement.

W. W. RANDALL, LA GRANDE.—I wish to announce that I am a candidate for the republican nomination to the office of sheriff, subject to the decision of the primary held September 24th.

T. B. KAY, Anti-Assembly candidate for State Treasurer has had wide experience in business and public life. He is president of the Salem Board of Trade, is manager of the Salem and Eugene Woolen Mills. Has been a member of the Oregon legislature for the past eight years and has a good record. He always supported measures in the interest of eastern Oregon. Such as the Portage Railway bill, the Sheep Inspection law, the Experimental station, the bill to establish a branch insane asylum in eastern Oregon and many others, and is in sympathy with the eastern Oregon counties. He is well qualified to fill the position of State Treasurer. Vote for T. B. KAY.



W. S. DUNIWAY Direct Primary Candidate for State Printer

Asks a second term on his record of ECONOMY and EFFICIENCY. By cutting out grafts has made the printing department the cheapest department of the State government.