

THE OBSERVER

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DIAGNOSING REPUBLICAN REFORM.

If the steps taken toward reform in the matter of choosing delegates to Republican national conventions were meant to hasten the day of party reunion, the prevailing comment of the press must be disappointing to the Republican national committee, remarks the Literary Digest. Moreover, while Progressives remain quite unimpressed, more than one important Republican daily shows open displeasure with the course taken by the party leaders. The abandonment of a plan for a convention in 1914 where differences could be discussed and perhaps settled grieves the loyally Republican New York Tribune and Boston Advertiser. Even the papers which profess the greatest satisfaction with the national committee's action and which believe the way now open for all Progressives to return present no conclusive evidence of a Bull Moose stampede in the Republican direction. The situation does not seem to call for any mourning on the part of Democratic editors. "The failure to call the special convention and there thrash out the human problems that form the basis of Progressive propaganda has," says the observant Democratic journal, "alienated all the progressives in the party, and solidified the Roosevelt 'bolters.'" So that the Republican party, as the Brooklyn Citizen now believes, will probably "go into next year's Congressional campaign still divided and its solidarity further impaired by the dissatisfaction of its own progressive elements with the continued domination of reactionary leaders."

In its Washington meeting the Republican national committee decided to recognize State primary laws regarding the selection of delegates by

primaries and to seat on the temporary convention roll delegates properly accredited by State authorities. It was also decided to reduce Southern representation in the national convention. Under the new arrangement which is to be ratified by State conventions, the Southern States, as the New York Times gives the figures, will have 163 delegates out of a total of 493, whereas they now have 245. The Northern States will lose eight. The plan for a special convention was vigorously debated, Senator Cummins and ex-Governor Hadley speaking in its favor, and Senator Borah, another progressive Republican, taking the floor in opposition, believing that delegates to the convention would be "hobbled." The resolution was lost by a decisive vote.

These reforms mean "Republican unity" to the Philadelphia Inquirer (Rep.), which declares that "the way is now open for all Progressives to return to the Republican party and take a hand in shaping its destinies." For "the action of the national committee means the elimination of all bossism, and that in turn means that the Republican people themselves will nominate the next Republican candidate for President and make the platform." The Topeka Capital (Prog. Rep.) admits that the national committee takes "advanced ground that will be acceptable to progressive Republicans." "The Republican national committee has made at least a part confession of its sins," comments the Chicago Tribune (Prog.) in faint approval; "experience has been painful, but it has not been lost altogether on the governing body which contributed most to the withdrawal of the Republican party from power." Dan Hanna's Cleveland Leader credits the Republican managers with being "clearly awake to the necessity and wisdom of turning from the follies and disasters of the past to the hopes and opportunities of the future." The spirit that seeks "reform in very vital conditions of party representation and government," it adds, "will go far toward bringing about the union with the Progressives which is essential to complete success." The New York Press (Prog.), which has so earnestly advocated amalgamation, is very glad that the national committee is so far responsive to party sentiment as to see that "there will be some reforming," yet it adds: "That isn't the question. The question is whether those who remained in the party will take reform or anything else from those who ruined it; whether it will do any good; whether it isn't better to begin all over again."

Most of the regular Republicans who care to comment, as, for example,

Senators Penrose and Smoot, and Congressman Serebo E. Payne, speak hopefully of the effects of the new reforms. But progressive Republicans like Senator Norris (Neb.), Progressives like Senator Poindexter, Congressman Murdock, and George W. Perkins, declare that the "old guard" is still in the saddle, and "harmony is just as far away as before." The Milwaukee Journal, (Ind.) objects to the new apportionment plan as "based on expediency and compromise and not on principle," and does not see how a plan "so founded is to gain much for the party in removing this cause of disagreement and strife." Both "near-Progressives" and "stand-patters" feared the issue in a convention, observes William Allen White's Emporia Gazette, (Prog.). And, "in this state of affairs the adoption of resolutions changing the southern representation just enough to fool those who desire to be fooled, and consenting to primaries which are sure to be nationalized by law in spite of conservative protests—the adoption of the resolutions of respect and condolence, was about all the leaders could do for the near-progressives who were clamoring for some tangible evidence of things hoped for." With its leaders "in deadly fear of progressive ideas in their own party and the progressive party outside," these are sorry days "for the once G. O. P.," comments the Indianapolis Star (Prog.). The "fundamental difference between Republicanism and Progressivism" is forgotten, it adds, when "Progressives are asked to abandon their plans for social justice, for industrial reform, for the protection of labor, for the obliteration of artificial class distinctions built up by preferential treatment, for the correction of monopolistic abuses, for the simplification of the system of nominations and elections, and for the making of them an accurate expression of the people's choice." The most militant Progressive daily in the east, the Philadelphia North American, finds it "difficult to treat seriously" the action taken by the national committee:

"After a full year's agitation, during which the nation has been afflicted with endless arguments, pleas, and pledges for a complete progressive rehabilitation of a once great institution, the outcome is an anticlimax so absurd that the public and the press hardly waste comment upon it. Even the organs of special privilege derive but the feeblest hopes from the pitiable result.

"The national committee, which represents about all that remains of the dying party, held a three-day resurrection conference in Washington. After taking counsel, these bosses conceived that they would atone for their past deeds and insure future success by solemnly decorating the southern delegation evil as a sacrificial goat and sending it forth into the wilderness of disapproval. . . .

"If any good can come out of the fantastic procedure at Washington last week, it will be the final elimination of the last pretense that union between the progressive and republican parties is possible."

And the progressive Chicago Evening Post comes to a similar conclusion:

"The republican national committee has not had the courage to muddy the waters sufficiently to endanger the progressive movement in this country. . . .

"At any rate, the net result of the long-heralded conference is to make it much more probable than it ever has been; that the republican party is to place its hopes for future existence upon its establishment as a reactionary or conservative party.

"We are sorry for this result for the sake of the progressive minded

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men who may yet hope to do something within the republican ranks. We are glad of it for the sake of progressives like Roosevelt, Beveridge, Johnson, Dixon and others who had the courage to 'come through' into the new party when the hour of trial came.

"But aside from this we believe that the best interests of the country have been served by this neglect of a great opportunity. The party situation has become cleaner instead of more confused. And the great progressive movement has a less complicated path before it."

In the ranks of the old party we find the New York Tribune deploring the national committee's surrender "to counsel of timidity and self-interest." The new plan of representation it calls "only a sop," under which there will still be flagrant inequality of representative power. But "the chief grievance republicans interested in restoring an adequate measure of popular rule within the party" have against the committee is, we gather from The Tribune, the closing of the door "against a free and full discussion of all reorganization plans." So that "instead of allaying the popular suspicion that the committee already wields an excessive influence in party affairs, the reform from the top which it is now going to engage in will only aggravate the distrust of those who have become dissatisfied with the national organization's management."

EXCURSION BOOSTERS HERE

Southern California Trip Plans Mating—Big Trains Hoped For.

J. H. Manderfield, assistant general freight and passenger agent for the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake railroad, together with C. H. Cutting,

traveling passenger agent for the same road, and Seth C. Rhodes of the O. S. L. with headquarters at Salt Lake, were in the city this morning making arrangements for the mid winter excursion to Los Angeles over the San Pedro, Los Angeles & Salt Lake road. Arrangements have been made whereby citizens of Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Wyoming will be enabled to make the trip for a greatly reduced price, with a stop-over privilege of two months or more. This will enable the traveler to make the trip to Los Angeles for \$63.50 from La Grande by way of Salt Lake, with the privilege of returning by way of San Francisco and Portland, as late as April 30. Reservations will be made for the Salt Lake train from La Grande. There will be but one day namely, January 30, on which

this excursion rate will be good. The excursion leaves on the morning of the 31st of January from Salt Lake. Mr. Manderfield announced that there would be eight pullmans out of Butte alone and that four or five sections of the train would take the excursionists to California. It will be a solid pullman train and will have all the luxuries of the most elaborate service. Stopovers will be allowed to passengers on application to the conductor.

Sheppard to Run.

New York, Jan. 22.—New indoor records are looked for tonight at the field and track games to be held under the auspices of the Paterson Elks. Melvin Sheppard in the middle distances is to be the star attraction.

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