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Politically Independent

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PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

UNDOUBTEDLY a vast majority of the rank and file of both the democratic and republican parties, today, favor what is termed "progressive politics." This is to say, they favor rescuing the government from the clutches of big business. They have concluded that the influence of the Morgans, the Pratts, the Carnegies, the Aldriches and others, has been too potent in the conduct of government, far too long, and that it is now quite time that the people—the common people, the consumers, should have an inning.

As an evidence of this fact, it is now quite a common feature of press dispatches, to note that bankers, high financiers and other hitherto immune transgressors of the law, are having punishment meted out to them by the courts, with very satisfactory regularity for their misdeeds. Indeed, it is becoming popular with the courts to treat millionaire offenders in about the same manner in which they treat those of the commoner walks of life. And in proportion to which the courts exercise this nonfavoritism, are they restoring themselves to the confidence and respect of the people.

There is an underlying cause for this change of sentiment on the part of the courts and public officials in general. It is attributable to a general pressure for things which come up from the great body of the people—the voters. Undoubtedly, the education of the people by the much abused populist party, the grange, the farmers alliance, the socialists, etc., is responsible for this change. W. J. Bryan and Theodore Roosevelt, later on, popularized the reforms until both old parties were forced to take them up.

The republicans, being the party in power, are responsible for most if not all of these reforms being enacted into law. But that party originated but few of the reforms and adopted none of them until the mighty influence of the people forced it to do so. That party claims parentage of the homestead law, a measure which, in a few years, peopled the great west in an unprecedented manner; yet this law was first proposed by Senator

Andrew Johnson, a democrat. It claims father-ship of our present free rural mail delivery system. The idea originated in the head of Congressman Tom Watson, a populist. Likewise was the idea of a trans continental railway first advocated by democrats, to be, later on, successfully carried out by the republicans of congress. But the majority refused to act in any or all of these measures until an irresistible demand of the people was brought to bear upon them, and this demand was generated by and through agitation among the people.

When Theodore Roosevelt was in Oregon, a short time ago, he unhesitatingly indorsed what has come to be known as "The Oregon System," including Statement No. 1 and the recall. And he stated, also, that Oregon was, among all the states, the leader in the adoption of reform measures. Other states, one after another, have and are adopting the Oregon system, which in other words, is making it possible for the people and not big business to control the political conduct of the country.

Now, it is not the purpose of the people, as a whole, to treat big business unfairly. The people simply want that these big enterprises, which are necessary for the progress and convenience of the country, to bear their just portions of the burdens of government—that they shall no longer be the pets of congress and the legislatures and that the people shall pay tribute (the tariff) to these overgrown infant industries no longer than the time is required to repeal the law granting special favors.

This giving to the people an equitable show in the battle of life with the railroads, with the big monopolistic manufacturing concerns and with big enterprises operating under franchises, is called "progressive politics," because the reform measures coming up from the people and which both old parties are being forced to adopt and enact into law through congress and the state legislatures, is gradually bringing the conduct of government back into the hands of the people, where the spirit of republicanism and democracy contemplates that it shall rest. Why should not every man, if we except such as have been governmental pets and receivers of special favors, stand for progressive politics? Why should not every man, if he is a true patriotic citizen, favor giving to every other man an equal show before the law with himself? Why should not our government, if it must grant favors in a personal or business way, grant them to the poor and needy, the weak minded, instead of to the strong mentally and financially? If a member of a family is weak mentally or physically and, consequently, less able to compete in the battle of life, the parents and other members of the family usually give such unfortunates more care and advantages than to the other members who are abundantly capable, mentally and physically, to care for themselves. The government pursues just a reverse policy to this. Her favors are extended to those who are both mentally and financially strong.

Because of this policy, we have the so-called progressive politics of today. Nor will progression cease until the last trust and interest serving congressman and legislator is driven from the halls of congress and legislatures into private life. The people want and will have what Mr. Roosevelt calls "A Square Deal." They cannot afford to accept less and a square deal will give them no more.

Explanatory

To the Editor:—

As the proposed new city charter seems to be misunderstood upon some points and, we believe, wilfully so in some instances, we interested citizens, deem it expedient to explain, in a brief manner, the points which are being misunderstood and misquoted.

We very much desire that every citizen read carefully the printed copy of the proposed charter. It is copied largely, from the Lebanon and St John charters, both of which have been adopted.

We believe the new charter safeguards the interests of the taxpayer much more effectually than does the old one, and that if Scio is to take up the march of progress, this or some other new charter must be adopted; as the old charter, made in 1896, is obsolete and is a handicap to the city's progress.

The following if the true meaning of the clauses in the new charter, which seem to be those principally objected to:

Who may vote.

All persons who are legal voters under the general laws of Oregon and who reside within the proposed new city of Scio, are duly and legally entitled to vote in the election, next Monday.

Section 26, of the new charter provides that all candidates for a city office must file with the city recorder, 10 days before the day of election, a certificate of nomination, made by a

mass convention, or signed by, at least, 15 electors, together with the acceptance of said nomination by said candidate. By the old charter, a candidate may be nominated in any old way, even on the day of election and he may, even, nominate himself, as has been done many times in the past.

Under the old charter, the city council may grant a perpetual franchise. Under the new, a franchise may not be granted beyond a period of 25 years and for this period the city's interests are fully guarded. Numbers of cities which have unwisely granted perpetual franchises, have been endeavoring for years to annul them. Notably, the gas and Fourth street railway franchises in Portland.

Under the old charter, the city council may order a street improved, a sewer laid, a new street opened, without consulting the property owners interested, whenever it deems it expedient to do so. And there is no provision made by which the council can pay damages for the opening of said street. Under the new, such work can be done only upon the consent of a majority of the property owners interested.

The old charter provides that the city council may incur an indebtedness of \$5000 or under, without consulting property owners. Under the new no indebtedness whatever can be incurred without first obtaining the consent of a majority of the voters. Even city warrants cannot be issued when there is no money in the city treasury with

which to pay them. At present the council can issue any amount of warrants regardless of whether the city has money or not. If there is no money, the treasurer will indorse "not paid for the want of funds." You can then draw 6 per cent. interest on the warrant. If you wish the cash, you can go to the bank and get the money providing you are willing to submit to a shave sufficient to bring the interest up to 8 per cent.

The old charter does not protect the city against suits for damages because of injury sustained because of defective sidewalks. The new charter (Sec. 93, paragraph 4) provides that the property owner, after he has been notified by the city to repair his walk, becomes responsible for any damage which may be incurred, resulting from his neglect.

The power of the legal voter is supreme, so far as the city is concerned under the new charter. No debt can be created without his consent. The council cannot issue warrants when there is no money with which to pay them. Any public utility the city may desire for which bonds are to be issued, must be ordered only when two-thirds of the voters give their consent therefor and the amount, including any previous bonded indebtedness must not exceed 8 per cent. of the assessed value of the property, and the bonds must not bear to exceed 6 per cent interest.

Much has been said relative to the appointment of a city engineer and that

(Continued on page 5)

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