

REASONS WHY U. S. SENATORS SHOULD BE ELECTED BY THE DIRECT VOTE OF THE PEOPLE

Argument of E. Hofer, Republican Candidate for Representative in Marion County

I take statement No. 1, because I believe it is right and in accordance with the teachings and principles of the Republican party. The Federalist party, founded by Hamilton, did not stand for the people very much and was succeeded by the Democracy of Jefferson and Jackson. Democracy came to stand for sectionalism and special privileges, the slave power and was in turn displaced by the Republicanism of Lincoln, under whom the rights of the people were extended. From Lincoln to the present the Republican party has steadily advanced as the champion of civil rights, and the battles of the general advancement of the interests of the people are sustained by nine-tenths of the people, regardless of party, and are represented in Oregon in this struggle to establish direct primary and the direct election of senators by the vote of the people. To this principle the Republican party of this state and nation is irreversibly committed.

Too Far to Retreat.

Republican legislatures have repeatedly demanded that the people be given control of electing senators. That principle has been endorsed by the platforms and conventions in Oregon and many other Republican states, and is now pending before the national congress and senate, introduced by Republican representatives of the people. Direct election of senators is more firmly imbedded in Republican policies than state legislation. Republicans have gone too far to retreat on this question with safety, and can take the position that they believe giving the people a direct vote on this provided they will elect only able men.

Forty Days Too Short.

While I have only good will for

those who do not take Statement No. 1, and expect to support the Republican legislative ticket regardless of whether candidates on the Republican ticket take that pledge or not, speaking for myself only, I do not care to go to the legislature unpledged, or with any uncertainty or ambiguity as to my position on this matter. I wish the entire legislature might be relieved of the duty of choosing a senator and thus be more free to pay attention to important and necessary reforms, with which they could occupy their whole time to good advantage. Forty days is too short a time to attend properly to the public business that accumulates in two years. When more than half of that time is taken over electing a senator, with all the attendant jobbery in federal positions, appropriations and efforts to buy votes in other ways with promises of offices and sometimes cash, that destroys party organizations and debauches public sentiment.

Pledge Two an Evasion.

"I do not question the honesty or sincerity or well-meaning of those who argue for a qualification of pledge No. 1. The law provides a qualified pledge for those who do not want to take pledge No. 1, and it also permits a candidate to run without any pledge whatever, upon his own general reputation of doing right. Exact compliance with the law on this matter, as the people understood it when it was adopted, requires a man to take pledge No. 1, or to take no pledge whatever, as pledge No. 2 is plainly a legalized evasion, whipping the devil around the stump, saying, 'I want to vote for the choice of the people unless I get a chance to sell my vote to some other candidate.' To the honor of the cause of pure politics, so far no candidate

has had the temerity to take pledge No. 2.

Political Joke.

"It is a political joke and the candidate better put Vanderbilt's celebrated expression into his declaration. The people adopted this law in good faith with the evident intention of putting it out of the power of the legislature to elect the senators and to put the members of the general assembly in the position of not being compelled to submit to dictation from a minority or being compelled to resist improper influences of any class or character.

"When the voter casts his ballot for a man to represent him in the legislature he at the same time expresses by making a cross his choice of a man for the United States senate. That choice should be final, and if fairly and fully expressed for men who have the nerve and character to go before the people for this high office, it will be final and conclusive upon the next general assembly. It would be hard to draw the line where the representative ceases to be a representative and goes into business on his own hook, unless it be when he begins to unfasten the clasp of his pocketbook. If men are chosen to the legislature who carry out the spirit and the letter of the primary law, and I believe men are running for representatives who at present intend to fulfill it because they honestly believe it is right, the senatorship will be disposed of on the first ballot in the legislature because the senators will have been chosen by the direct vote of the people in June, as they should be according to the direct primary law."

"The argument is advanced that under the Oregon direct primary law and the Mays act and the Australian ballot act direct nomination and election of

United States senators would be illegal because the constitution of the United States has not yet been amended in that respect. The Oregonian says if you will only wait until the federal constitution is amended you may proceed to elect by the direct vote of the people; the legislature alone can elect senators until that has been accomplished. Did Lincoln wait for the constitution to be amended before he issued the emancipation proclamation? Did the northern states wait for that before they enacted laws freeing the slaves? No, the federal constitution was amended long afterwards.

People Originate Reforms.

"Reforms are originated by the sovereign power of the people acting through the states and the states make and amend the constitution of the United States. The constitution is about the last thing to be brought into harmony with the public sentiment. If Oregon establishes direct election of senators, other states will follow, and when most of the states have acted the constitution will fall in line with popular will. If the people had been compelled to wait for the constitution to be amended by the action of two-thirds of the states of the Union, slavery might never have been abolished. As it was Nevada had to be admitted to ratify the fifteenth amendment. If the people have to wait for the consent of two-thirds of the states in the Union before they get direct election of senators, they may have to wait until several states are admitted, and the senate of the United States as it is now constituted will never admit them for that purpose. Except for the purpose of limiting the states in certain ways the people are above the constitution—in Oregon the people are the constitution. Let Oregon drive this nail in the coffin of special privileges as represented in the United States senate and send the first man to break into the charnelhouse of all reform legislation, and other states will follow our example and create a new senate that is of the people, by the people and for the people."

THE TIME TO ACT AND THE WAY.

(Portland Journal, March 5.)

Colonel Hofer, the Republican editor of the Salem Journal, announces his

candidacy for the legislature, and his hearty adherence to the principle of statement No. 1. Like most men who are not tied to the political machine, he goes back to the source of all power, the people, and concedes to them whatever authority is needed to accomplish the purposes of the direct primary law.

The political organs of the state have largely dropped the discussion of statement No. 1, not that they are any the less determined to abrogate it, but it has been hinted to them that it is unwise on the eve of a political campaign to antagonize the voters and make too plain the purpose of the Republican managers to ignore the bill the moment the people have acted and returned a majority of unpledged members to the legislature. This rule may be relied upon: The old coterie of Republican warhorses do not propose to allow statement No. 1 to govern in the selection of the next United States senator. Pledges or no pledges, they propose that the old legislative method shall be maintained in vogue. This is the citadel to which they have finally retreated to maintain a semblance of the power which the people by successive acts have wrested from them. They have felt the grip tightening for several years, and they realize that once the senatorial election is taken out of their hands, for it has been in their hands and not in the hands of the legislatures, the end has come and their occupation is gone for good. The great contest is, therefore, now on and the people of Oregon may face it with their eyes wide open. They have fought long and hard for the principle of electing United States senators by popular vote. None can better know the dangers that have assailed them through the legislative elections of senators—the injury to and neglect of the state's other business at sessions when senators were to be elected, the bribery and corruption which formed such an open and conspicuous part of it, and the final results as viewed in a United States senate, that is almost literally beyond the power of the people to reach.

A way has been found out of a difficulty that heretofore has been considered insuperable. It is an easy way and the power is literally placed in the hands of the voters themselves to consummate by the ordinary methods. There is nothing standing in the way

of success but a few newspaper organs of the political oligarchy and a bunch of greedy politicians who feel that the power, which they have so rankly abused, will thus be wrenched from them. In such a contest there should be no doubt of the outcome. On one side is strength, on the other cunning. And there should be discrimination used even in the election of some of those who are pledged to uphold statement No. 1. If from their known character it is felt that they will make good their pledges, well and good; but if that pledge is being used simply as a means of sneaking under the canvas to thwart the people's will, then even these should not be elected.

As we have frequently stated, the people have the matter entirely in their own hands in this campaign. If they are united and determined there is no doubt of the ultimate outcome, which will redound so largely to the public credit and open a way for the people of this country to rid themselves of a senatorial incubus which is now the chosen instrument of the privileged classes and the open enemy of the masses of the people.

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