

# BRYAN ACCEPTS

## In Hearty Accord With Platform.

### SHALL THE PEOPLE RULE

#### That Is the Overshadowing Question.

#### REPUBLICANS RESPONSIBLE.

#### All Present Abuses a Result of Their Acts, and They Are Impotent to Correct Them.

Mr. Clayton and Gentlemen of the Notification Committee: I can not accept the nomination which you officially tender, without first acknowledging my deep indebtedness to the Democratic party for the extraordinary honor which it has conferred upon me. Having twice before been a candidate for the presidency, in campaigns which ended in defeat, a third nomination, the result of the free and voluntary act of the voters of the party, can only be explained by a substantial and undisturbed growth in the principles and policies for which I, with a multitude of others, have contended. As these principles and policies have given me whatever political strength I possess, the action of the convention not only renews my faith in them, but strengthens my attachment to them.

#### A Platform is Binding.

I shall, in the near future, prepare a more formal reply to your notification, and, in that letter of acceptance, will deal with the platform in detail. It is sufficient, at this time, to assure you that I am in hearty accord with both the letter and the spirit of the platform. I endorse it in whole and in part, and should, if elected, regard its declarations as binding upon me. And, I may add, a platform is binding as to what it omits as well as to what it contains. According to the democratic idea, the people think for themselves and elect officials to carry out their wishes. The voters are the sovereigns; the officials are the servants, employed for a fixed time and at a stated salary to do what the sovereigns want done, and to do it in the way the sovereigns want it done. Platforms are entirely in harmony with this democratic idea. A platform announces the party's position on the questions which are at issue; and an official is not at liberty to use the authority vested in him to urge personal views which have not been submitted to the voters for their approval. If one is nominated upon a platform which is not satisfactory to him, he must, if candid, either decline the nomination, or, in accepting it, propose an amended platform in lieu of the one adopted by the convention. No such situation, however, confronts your candidate, for the platform upon which I was nominated not only contains nothing from which I dissent, but it specifically outlines all the remedial legislation which we can hope to secure during the next four years.

#### Republican Challenge Accepted.

The distinguished statesman who received the Republican nomination for president said, in his notification speech: "The strength of the Republican cause in the campaign at hand is the fact that we represent the policies essential to the reform of known abuses to the confidence of liberty and truthfulness, and that we are determined, as our platform unequivocally declares, to maintain them and carry them on."

In the name of the Democratic party, I accept the challenge, and charge that the Republican party is responsible for all the abuses which now exist in the federal government, and that it is impotent to accomplish the reforms which are imperatively needed. Further, I can not concur in the statement that the Republican platform unequivocally declares for the reforms that are necessary; on the contrary, I affirm that it openly and notoriously disappoints the hopes and expectations of reformers, whether those reformers be Republicans or Democrats. So far did the Republican convention fall short of its duty that the Republican candidate felt it necessary to add to his platform in several important particulars, thus rebuking the leaders of the party, upon whose co-operation he must rely for the enactment of remedial legislation.

As I shall, in separate speeches, discuss the leading questions at issue, I shall at this time confine myself to the paramount question, and to the far-reaching purpose of our party, as that purpose is set forth in the platform.

#### Shall the People Rule?

Our platform declares that the over-

shadowing issue which manifests itself in all the questions now under discussion is "Shall the people rule?" No matter which way we turn; no matter what subject we address ourselves, the same question confronts us: Shall the people control their own government, and use that government for the protection of their rights and for the promotion of their welfare? or shall the representatives of predatory wealth prey upon a defenseless public, while the offenders secure immunity from subservient officials whom they raise to power by unscrupulous methods? This is the issue raised by the "known abuses" to which Mr. Taft refers.

#### President's Indictment Against the Party.

In a message sent to congress last January, President Roosevelt said: "The attacks by these great corporations on the administration's actions have been given a wide circulation throughout the country, in the newspapers and otherwise, by those writers and speakers who, consciously or unconsciously, act as the representatives of predatory wealth—the wealth accumulated on a giant scale by all forms of iniquity, ranging from the oppression of wage earners to unfair and unwholesome methods of crushing out competition, and to defrauding the public by stock-jobbing and the manipulation of securities. Certain wealthy men of this stamp, whose conduct should be abhorrent to every man of ordinarily decent conscience, and who commit the hideous crime of teaching our young men that phenomenal business success must ordinarily be based on dishonesty, have, during the last few months, made it apparent that they have limited together to work for a revolution. Their endeavor is to overthrow and discredit all who honestly administer the law, to prevent any additional legislation which would check and restrain them, and to secure, if possible, a freedom from all restraint which will permit every unscrupulous wrongdoer to do what he wishes uncheckered, provided he has enough money—What an arraignment of the predatory interests!"

Is the president's indictment true? And, if true, against whom was the indictment directed? Not against the Democratic party.

#### Mr. Taft Endorses the Indictment.

Mr. Taft says that these evils have crept in during the last ten years. He declares that, during this time, some "prominent and influential members of the community, spurred by financial greed and in their hurry for greater wealth, became mindful of the common rules of business honesty and fidelity, and of the limitations imposed by law upon their actions," and that "the revelations of the breaches of trusts, the disclosures as to rebates and discriminations by railroads, the accumulating evidence of the violation of the anti-trust laws, by a number of corporations, and the oppression of stocks and bonds of interstate railroads for the unlawful enrichment of directors and for the purpose of concentrating the control of the railroads under one management," and the complaint is well founded. But, with a president to point out the evil, and a Republican congress to correct it, we find nothing done for the protection of the public. Why? My honorable opponent has, by his confession, relieved me of the necessity of furnishing proof, he admits the condition and he can not avoid the logical conclusion that there is doubt whatever that a large majority of the voters of the Republican party recognize the deplorable situation which Mr. Taft describes; they recognize that the abuses have had but little influence upon legislation or upon the administration of the government, and they are beginning to understand the cause. For a generation the Republican party has drawn its campaign funds from the beneficiaries of special legislation. Privileges have been granted and granted in return for money contributed to defame elections. What can be expected when official authority is turned over to the representatives of those who first furnish the sinews of war and then reimburse themselves out of the pockets of the taxpayers?

**Fasting in Wilderness Necessary.**  
So long as the Republican party remains in power, it is powerless to regenerate itself. It can not attack wrongdoing in high places without discrediting many of its prominent members, and it, therefore, uses quibbles instead of the surgeon's knife. Its misdeeds constitute each Republican victory as an endorsement of their conduct and threaten the party with defeat if they are interfered with. Not until that party passes through a period of fasting in the wilderness, will the Republican leaders learn to study public questions from the standpoint of the masses. Just as with individuals, "the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the truth," so in parties, when party leaders serve far away from home and are not in constant contact with the voters, continued party success blinds their eyes to the needs of the people and makes them deaf to the cry of distress.

#### Publicity as to Campaign Contributions.

An effort has been made to secure legislation requiring publicity as to campaign contributions and expenditures; but the Republican leaders, even in the face of an indignant public, refused to consent to a law which would compel honesty in elections. When the matter was brought up in the recent Republican national convention, the plank was repudiated by a vote of 880 to 94. Here, too, Mr. Taft has been driven to apologize for his convention and to declare himself in favor of a publicity law; and yet, if you will read what he says upon this subject, you will find that his promise fails far short of the requirements of the situation. He says:

"If I am elected president, I shall urge upon congress, with every hope of success, that a law be passed requiring the filing, in a federal office, of a statement of the contributions received by committees and candidates in elections for members of congress, and in such other elections as are constitutionally within the control of congress."

I shall not embarrass him by asking upon what he bases his hope of success; it is certainly not on any encouragement he has received from Republican leaders. It is sufficient to say that if his hopes are realized—if, in spite of the adverse action of his convention, he should succeed in securing the enactment of the very law which he favors, it would give but partial relief. He has read the Democratic platform; not only his language, but his

actions from the beneficiaries of protection, as to make that party powerless to bring to the country any material relief from the present tariff burdens.

#### Why No Anti-trust Legislation?

A few years ago the Republican leaders in the house of representatives were coerced by public opinion into the support of an anti-trust law which had the endorsement of the president, but the senate refused even to consider the measure, and since that time no effort has been made by the dominant party to secure remedial legislation upon this subject.

#### Why No Railroad Legislation?

For ten years the Interstate Commerce Commission has been asking for an enlargement of its powers, that it might prevent rebates and discriminations, but a Republican senate and a Republican house of representatives were unmoved by its entreaties. In 1900 the Republican national convention was urged to endorse the demand for railway legislation, but its platform was silent on the subject. Even in that the convention gave no pledge to remedy these abuses. When the president finally asked for legislation he drew his inspiration from three Democratic national platforms and he received more cordial support from the Democrats than from the Republicans. The Republicans in the senate deliberately defeated several amendments offered by Senator La Follette and supported by the Democrats—amendments embodying legislation asked by the Interstate Commerce Commission. One of these amendments authorized the ascertainment of the value of railroads. This amendment was not only defeated by the senate, but it was over-ruled by the recent Republican national convention, and the Republican candidate has sought to resolve the party from the disastrous results of this act by expressing himself, in a qualified way, in favor of ascertaining the value of the railroads.

#### Over-issue of Stocks and Bonds.

Mr. Taft complains of the over-issue of stocks and bonds of railroads, "for the unlawful holding of directors and for the purpose of concentrating the control of the railroads under one management," and the complaint is well founded. But, with a president to point out the evil, and a Republican congress to correct it, we find nothing done for the protection of the public. Why? My honorable opponent has, by his confession, relieved me of the necessity of furnishing proof, he admits the condition and he can not avoid the logical conclusion that there is doubt whatever that a large majority of the voters of the Republican party recognize the deplorable situation which Mr. Taft describes; they recognize that the abuses have had but little influence upon legislation or upon the administration of the government, and they are beginning to understand the cause. For a generation the Republican party has drawn its campaign funds from the beneficiaries of special legislation. Privileges have been granted and granted in return for money contributed to defame elections. What can be expected when official authority is turned over to the representatives of those who first furnish the sinews of war and then reimburse themselves out of the pockets of the taxpayers?

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