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"IF THE PEOPLE REALLY RULE, WHY DON'T THE
PEOPLE GET WHAT THEY WANT?"

The Election of Senators by Direct Vote of the People
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The Method by Which to Obtain the People's Rule

SPEECH
OF
HON. ROBERT L. OWEN
OF OKLAHOMA
IN THE
SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES



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SPEECH
OF
HON. ROBERT L. OWEN.

The Senate having under consideration the election of Senators by direct vote of the people—

Mr. OWEN said:

Mr. PRESIDENT: On the 21st day of May, 1908, in accordance with the wishes of the Legislature of the State of Oklahoma, expressed by resolution of January 9, 1908, I introduced Senate resolution No. 91, providing for the submission of a constitutional amendment for the election of Senators by direct vote of the people.

Article V of the Constitution provides that Congress, whenever two-thirds of both Houses shall deem it necessary, shall propose amendments to the Constitution or, on the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of the several States, shall call a convention for proposing amendments which, in either case, shall be valid when ratified by the legislatures of three-fourths of the several States or by conventions in three-fourths thereof, as the one or other mode of ratification may be proposed by Congress.

The reasons why the people wish this proposed reform are thoroughly well understood.

First. It will make the Senate of the United States more responsive to the wishes of the people of the United States.

Second. It will prevent the corruption of legislatures.

Third. It will prevent the improper use of money in the campaigns before the electorate by men ambitious to obtain a seat in the Senate of the United States.

Fourth. It will prevent the disturbance and turmoil of State legislatures and the interferences with State legislation by the violent contests of candidates for a position in the United States Senate.

Fifth. It will compel candidates for the United States Senate to be subjected to the severe scrutiny of a campaign before the people and compel the selection of the best-fitted men.

Sixth. It will prevent deadlocks, due to political contests in which various States from time to time have been thus left unrepresented.

Seventh. It will popularize government and tend to increase the confidence of the people of the United States in the Senate of the United States, which has been to some extent impaired in recent years.

Mr. President, as the State of Idaho points out, and as the State of New Jersey points out, in their resolutions herewith submitted *the House of Representatives of the Congress of the United States has on four separate occasions passed by a two-thirds vote* a resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution providing for the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people.

And the Senate has, on each occasion, failed or refused to vote upon such resolution or to submit such constitutional amendment to the several States for their action, as contemplated by the Constitution of the United States.

On July 21, 1894, the House of Representatives, by vote of 141 to 50 (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, vol. 26, p. 7783), and on May 11, 1898, by vote of 185 to 11 (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, vol. 31, p. 4825), and on April 13, 1900, by vote of 242 to 15 (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, vol. 33, p. 4128), and on February 13, 1902, by a viva voce vote, nem. con. (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, vol. 35, p. 1722), has recorded the wishes of every congressional district of the United States, with negligible exceptions, in favor of this reform.

The Speaker of the Fifty-fifth Congress said, and Mr. Corliss, February 19, 1902, repeated the sentiment, "that this was a measure demanded by the American people, and that the Members of this House, representing directly the people, should pass this measure, and continue to pass it, and knock upon the doors of the Senate until it listens to the voice of the people." (CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, vol. 35, p. 1721.)

Is a unanimous vote of the House of Representatives an index to the wishes of the American people or is the will of the people of sufficient importance to persuade the Senate to act and comply with their repeatedly expressed wishes?

On May 23, 1908, I called attention of the Senate to the various resolutions passed by 27 States of the Union praying Congress and the Senate for this reform, and on behalf of my own State of Oklahoma I urged the Senate to act.

Over my protest the Senate referred this joint resolution 91 to the Committee on Privileges and Elections by the following vote:

The result was announced—yeas 33, nays 20, as follows:

YEAS—33.

Aldrich	Clark, Wyo.	Hale	Richardson
Allison	Crane	Heyburn	Smith, Md.
Bacon	Cullom	Hopkins	Stewart
Bankhead	Depew	Kean	Warner
Brandegee	Dick	Knox	Warren
Briggs	Dillingham	Lodge	Wetmore
Burnham	Foraker	Long	
Burrows	Gallinger	Nelson	
Carter	Guggenheim	Penrose	

NAYS—20.

Ankeny	Dixon	Newlands	Piles
Beveridge	Gore	Owen	Simmons
Borah	Johnston	Overman	Smith, Mich.
Brown	La Follette	Paynter	Stephenson
Clapp	McCreary	Perkins	Teller

NOT VOTING—39.

Bailey	Dolliver	Hansbrough	Platt
Bourne	du Pont	Hemenway	Rayner
Bulkeley	Elkins	Kittredge	Scott
Burkett	Flint	McCumber	Smoot
Clarke, Ark.	Foster	McEnery	Stone
Clay	Frazier	McLaurin	Sutherland
Culberson	Frye	Martin	Tallaferro
Curtis	Fulton	Milton	Taylor
Daniel	Gamble	Money	Tillman
Davis	Gary	Nixon	

(Page 7115 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD, May 23, 1908.)

This vote meant the defeat of the proposed constitutional amendment.

The Senator from Michigan [Mr. BURROWS], chairman of the Committee on Privileges and Elections, never gave any hearing on this resolution and never reported it, but allowed the Sixtieth Congress to expire without taking any action in regard to it, notwithstanding the Legislature of the State of Michigan had theretofore by joint resolution expressly favored the submission of an amendment for the election of Senators by direct vote.

On July 7, 1909, I introduced the same resolution again in the present Congress as Senate Joint Resolution No. 41.

I trust I may not be regarded as inconsiderate, too hasty, or too urgent, if after waiting over two years for a report by the Senator from Michigan, I now call upon him to perform his duty to the people and respond to their repeatedly expressed wishes in this matter, or else that he frankly refuse to do so.

Mr. President, the present Committee on Privileges and Elections of the Senate is composed of the following Members, 8 Republicans and 5 Democrats:

JULIUS C. BURROWS of Michigan, CHAUNCEY M. DEPEW of New York, ALBERT J. BEYBRIDGE of Indiana, WILLIAM P. DILLINGHAM of Vermont, JONATHAN P. DOLLIVER of Iowa, ROBERT J. GAMBLE of South Dakota, WELDON B. HEYBURN of Idaho, MORGAN G. BULKELEY of Connecticut, JOSEPH W. BAILEY of Texas, JAMES B. FRAZIER of Tennessee, THOMAS H. PAYNTER of Kentucky, JOSEPH E. JOHNSTON of Alabama, DUNCAN U. FLETCHER of Florida.

Ten of these 13 States favor the choice of Senators by the vote of the people, but I fear the Senators from Vermont, New York, and Connecticut, whose States are not officially committed, may unduly influence the committee, paralyze its activities, and prevent a favorable answer to the petition or wishes of the 37 other States.

Eight Republican Senators, as a practical matter, control the policy of this committee, and 4 of these can prevent action under the present very enlightened system of organized party management of the majority party, which is under an influence that is almost occult, and a management that seems excellently well devised to control all committee action by a majority of a majority plan that enables 4 to defeat 13 on the Committee on Privileges and Elections. This is an example of what is called "machine politics."

* * * * *

The fuller details relative to primary elections will be found in the work *Primary Elections, a Study of the History and Tendencies of Primary Election Legislation*, by C. Edward Merriam, associate professor of political science in the University of Chicago, 1908.

Only nine States—New England, New York, Delaware, and West Virginia—have failed to definitely act in favor of the election or selection of Senators by direct vote of the people, and even in these States the tendency of the people is strongly manifested toward such selection of Senators.

In West Virginia they have primaries in almost all of the counties, instructing members of the legislature as to the election of Senators.

In Delaware the election of the members of the legislature carries with it an understanding as to the vote of the member on the Senatorship.

In Massachusetts the legislature, through the house of representatives, has just passed a resolution favorable to this constitutional amendment and is now considering the initiative and referendum.

Maine has recently adopted the initiative and referendum—the people's rule.

It is obvious that in Maine the question of who shall be Senator is entering vigorously into the question of the election of members of the legislature, and commitments are demanded of candidates for the legislature; and so in greater or less degree even in some other Northeastern States, which are not definitely committed to the election of Senators by direct vote of the people, a similar method is followed, which, in effect, operates as an instruction, more or less pronounced, in favor of a candidate for the Senate.

In the five remaining States, New York, New Hampshire, Vermont, Connecticut, and Rhode Island, a majority of the people unquestionably favor the election of Senators by direct vote of the people, which is demonstrated by the approval of the Democrats of these States of this policy and in addition by the various nonpartisan organizations, the National Grange, American Federation of Labor, and so forth, and by the attitude of many individual Republicans, who are not sufficiently strong, however, to control the party management.

In the effort I made to have the amendment to the Constitution submitted to the various States on May 23, 1908 (S. J. Res. 91), it was obvious that I had not the sympathy of those who control the Senate and no vote from a Northeastern State.

I had, in fact, the active opposition of the Senator from Rhode Island [Mr. ALDRICH], the Senator from Massachusetts [Mr. LODGE], the Senator from New Jersey [Mr. KEAN], the Senator from Maine [Mr. HALE], the Senator from Pennsylvania [Mr. PENROSE], the Senator from New York [Mr. DEFEW]—the leaders of the Republican Party in the Senate. The Senator from Massachusetts and the Senator from Rhode Island and the Senator from New Jersey actually tried to prevent my obtaining a vote, resorting to the small parliamentary device of asserting or suggesting that I was asking unanimous consent for a vote after I had moved the Senate to take the vote. If I had acceded to this untrue assertion consent would have been denied and a vote thus prevented. What does this fear of a record mean?

I do not in the least complain of such parliamentary tactics, nor of the opposition. I merely think it my duty to call the attention of the country to it, that it may not be doubted that the Republican leaders of the Senate are opposed to giving the people of the United States the power to choose their own Senators.

The right of the people to elect Senators ought not to be denied, and the party leaders who are unwilling to trust the people to elect Members of the Senate ought not to be trusted with power, because the Senate can block and actually does block every reform the people desire.

The Senate has frequently been used to obstruct the will of the people, and especially the will of the people to elect Senators by direct vote.

I had then and I will have to-day the efficient opposition of the Republican managers of the Senate, who do not listen to the voice of the people, even if they believe in it. The Senator from Rhode Island, for example, the acknowledged leader, has an environment that unfits him to believe in the wisdom of popular government, because in Rhode Island, under an unwise and archaic mechanism the government of the State is said to be controlled by about 11 per cent of its voters and what might fairly be called a party machine, which is under the powerful domination of commercial interests. I do not say this in any sense as a reproof, because I believe each State must determine its own management, but as an historical observation, which I think is accurately made, and as showing the important need of improvement in our system of government.

The Senator from Rhode Island, in answer to my presentation of the resolutions passed by the various 27 States, asked the following illuminating question of me:

Mr. ALDRICH. Does the Senator from Oklahoma understand that a Senator is bound to vote according to the instructions of his legislature?

While I answered in the negative, as a mere legal proposition, nevertheless I do think that when the opinion of the people of a State is thoroughly well made up a Senator ought not only to be bound by it, but that he ought to feel glad to carry into effect the will of the people whom he represents, and ought not to set up for himself a knowledge or an understanding greater than that of the people of the entire State who have sent him as their representative. I believe that the will of the people is far more nearly right, in the main, than the will of any individual statesman who is apt to be honored by them with a transitory seat in the Senate; that the whole people are more apt to be safe and sane, more apt to be sound and honest than a single individual. At all events, I feel not only willing, but I really desire to make effective the will of the people of my State. I believe in popular government, and I believe that the people are more conservative, more "safe and sane," and more nearly apt to do right in the long run than ambitious statesmen temporarily trusted with power.

I will submit, Mr. President, the direct evidence and record of the public opinion of the people of the United States as expressed through their legislatures, or by the voluntary act of party regulations in instructing candidates for the legislature on the question of the election of United States Senators, or by primary laws as far as they apply.

It will be thus seen that Democratic States and Republican States alike, west of the Hudson River, have acted favorably in this matter practically without exception. Only eight or nine States have failed to act, and I do not doubt that if the voice of the people of these States of New England, of New York, Maryland, and Delaware could find convenient expression, free from machine politics, every one of them would favor the election of Senators by direct vote, and would favor the right of the people to instruct their Representatives in Congress and in the Senate, a right which they enjoyed from the beginning of the American Republic down to the days when this right was smothered and destroyed by the convention system of party management.

Not only the States have acted almost unanimously in favor of this right of the people, but all the great parties of the country have declared in favor of it, except the Republican Party, and this party would have declared for it except for the overwhelming influence and domination of machine politics in the management of that party and the prevalence of so-called boss influence. And this is demonstrated by the fact that the large majority of the Republican States, by the resolutions or acts of their legislatures, have declared in favor of it, and that several times the House of Representatives, when Republican, by a two-thirds vote, passed a resolution to submit such a constitutional amendment.

The trouble is the machine has gotten control of the Republican management of the Senate and can thus block every reform the people want. The insurgents insurg in vain.

If I remember correctly, the Senator from Wisconsin [Mr. LA FOLLETTE], at the last national Republican convention, raised this issue on the floor of the convention, and the proposal to put in the Republican platform the election of Senators by direct vote of the people was defeated by the powerful influence of a political machine, which, on that occasion, manifested itself in the delegates there present—a machine so obviously a machine as to excite the term of derision, "the steam roller." The "steam roller" is not an emblem of representative free government of a free people.

* * * * *

Mr. President, I have great personal respect for very many of the representatives of the great party the control of which by machine methods I am assailing on the floor of this body, and do not wish to appear to say anything that would imply the contrary. I am assailing a bad system of government, which leads to evil, and not assailing individuals, or desiring to do so.

I do not approve machine methods in the Senate, in the House, or in the management of parties, because it leads to absolute bad government and gives peculiar opportunity.

The *Democratic Party*, representing about half of the voters of the United States (6,409,104 voters), in its national platform adopted at Denver, Colo., July 10, 1908, says:

We favor the election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people, and regard this reform as the gateway to other national reforms.

In like manner the Democratic national platform in 1900 had declared for—
Election of United States Senators by the direct vote of the people, and we favor direct legislation wherever practicable.

And in 1904 repeated the doctrine:

We favor the election of United States Senators by the direct vote of the people.

The platform of the *Independence Party*, adopted at Chicago, Ill., July 28, 1908, declared for direct nominations generally, and further made the following declaration:

We advocate the popular election of United States Senators and of judges, both State and Federal, * * * and any constitutional amendment necessary to these ends.

The platform of the *Prohibition Party*, adopted at Columbus, Ohio, July 16, 1908, made the following its chief plank after the prohibition question, to wit:
The election of United States Senators by direct vote of the people.

The platform of the *New York Democratic League*, adopted at Saratoga, N. Y., September 10, 1909, declares for the—

Election of United States Senators by the direct vote of the people.

The platform of the *People's Party* at Sioux Falls (1900) contained the following declaration:

We demand that United States Senators be elected by direct vote of the people.

The *American Federation of Labor*, consisting of 118 national and international unions, representing, approximately, 27,000 local unions, 4 departments, 38 branches, 594 city central unions, and 573 local unions, with an approximately paid membership of 2,000,000 men, representing between eight and ten millions of Americans, with 245 papers, have declared repeatedly in favor of the election of Senators by direct vote of the people.

The *National Grange*, comprising the Association of Farmers in the Northeast and in Central States, including nearly every farmer in Maine and in the New England States, and in Pennsylvania and Ohio and Michigan, the *Society of Equity* and the *Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union* of the West and South, and all together representing the organized farmers of the entire United States, have declared in favor of the election of Senators by direct vote of the people. In this group of people our census of 1900 disclosed 10,438,218 adult workers and probably 45,000,000 people.

The State of Iowa in a joint resolution of April 12, 1909, makes the following statement:

Whereas the failure of Congress to submit such amendment to the States has made it clear that the only practicable method of securing submission of such an amendment to the States is through a constitutional convention to be called by Congress upon the application of the legislatures of two-thirds of all the States—

And the Legislature of Iowa therefore resolved in favor of a constitutional convention, in effect, because of the neglect and refusal of the Senate of the United States to perform its obvious duty in the premises, the lower House having, by a two-thirds vote on four previous occasions, passed a resolution providing for the submission of such a constitutional amendment.

In the speech of the Hon. William H. Taft accepting the Republican nomination for the office of President of the United States at Cincinnati, Ohio, on July 28, 1908, he said:

With respect to the election of Senators by the people, personally I am inclined to favor it, but it is hardly a party question. A resolution in its favor has passed a Republican House of Representatives several times, and has been rejected in a Republican Senate by the votes of Senators from both parties. It has been approved by the legislatures of many Republican States. In a number of States, both Democratic and Republican, substantially such a system now prevails.

The President justly says it is hardly a party question, and that personally he is inclined to favor it; that a resolution in its favor has passed a Republican House of Representatives several times, but has been rejected in a Republican Senate by votes of Senators from both parties; that it has been ap-

proved by the legislatures of many Republican States; nevertheless, it is perfectly obvious to the country that any action by the Senate in favor of complying with the will of the people of the United States in this connection will be rejected. I naturally ask, under the circumstances, since the Democratic Party is fully committed to it, since many Republican States favor it, since a Republican House of Representatives has passed a resolution in its favor several times, since a Republican President is inclined to favor it, *Why can the people get no action?* I naturally ask under the circumstances, Do the people rule, or are they ruled by machine rule unduly influenced by commercial interests?

Mr. President, I now submit the resolutions or abstract of laws of 37 States, over three-fourths of the States of the Union, which have shown themselves as favoring election of Senators by direct vote of the people or by direct nominations, either by these resolutions or by actual practice in primaries.

I know that the leaders of the Republican Party in the United States Senate will refuse to comply with the express desire of over three-fourths of the States in this matter, but they ought not to be understood by the people of the United States to have done this in ignorance, and for that reason I propose to insert in the RECORD the attitude of the 37 States that favor the election of Senators by direct vote of the people, and merely ask the simple question: "Do the people rule?"

As it would take considerable time to read all these resolutions, I ask the consent of the Senate to insert them without reading except in so far as they may be needed.

The VICE-PRESIDENT. Without objection, the request is granted.

The matter referred to is as follows (see CONGRESSIONAL RECORD of May 31, 1910):

Here find resolutions, laws, etc., of 37 States.

* * * * *

In spite of 37 States demanding or adopting the indirect method of selecting Senators by vote of the people, in spite of all the evidence submitted to show universality of opinion, the will of the American people is refused the courtesy of a hearing.

Mr. President, *I ask you, I ask the Senate, I ask the people of the United States, Do the people really rule?*

The refusal of the Senate of the United States to perform its obvious duty in this matter of the submission of a constitutional amendment for the election of Senators by direct vote, while very important as the GATEWAY TO OTHER NEEDED REFORMS, is, however, merely characteristic of the Senate under the control of a party management that is ruled by a machine method unduly influenced by commercial allies and the so-called big interests. I shall presently show that the people can get none of the reforms they want while this unfortunate condition remains.

Mr. President, the unwearied and unconquerable Democracy in the opening declarations of its last national platform laid down the great issue that must next be settled in this country and said:

We rejoice at the increasing signs of an awakening throughout the country. The various investigations have traced graft and political corruption to the representatives of predatory wealth and laid bare the unscrupulous methods by which they have debauched elections and preyed upon a defenseless public through the subservient officials whom they have raised to place and power.

"The conscience of the Nation is now aroused to free the Government from the grip of those who have made it a business asset of the favor-seeking corporations; it must become again a people's government and be administered in all its departments according to the Jeffersonian maxim, Equal rights to all and special privileges to none."

SHALL THE PEOPLE RULE? IS THE OVERSHADOWING ISSUE WHICH MANIFESTS ITSELF IN ALL THE QUESTIONS NOW UNDER DISCUSSION.

THE GREATEST OF ALL ISSUES.

Mr. President, the greatest of all issues, not only in the United States but throughout the civilized world, is the issue of popular government, or the government of the people against delegated government, or government by convention, or government by machine politics.

The vital question is, Shall the people rule? Shall they control the mechanism of party government? Shall they have the direct power to nominate, to instruct, to recall their public servants; to legislate directly and to enact laws they want and to veto laws they do not want, free from corruption, intimidation, or force, as well as elect Senators who claim to represent them on this floor?

The Senator from Oregon well says (May 5, 1910) :

" ABSOLUTE GOVERNMENT BY THE PEOPLE.

" Under the machine and political-boss system the confidence of sincere partisans is often betrayed by recreant leaders in political contests and by public servants who recognize the irresponsible machine instead of the electorate as the source of power to which they are responsible. If the enforcement of the Oregon laws will right these wrongs, then they were conceived in wisdom and born in justice to the people, in justice to the public servant, and in justice to the partisan.

" *Plainly stated, the aim and purpose of the laws are to destroy the irresponsible political machine and to put all elective offices in the State in direct touch with the people as the real source of authority; in short, to give direct and full force to the ballot of every individual elector in Oregon and to eliminate dominance of corporate and corrupt influences in the administration of public affairs. The Oregon laws mark the course that must be pursued before the wrongful use of corporate power can be dethroned, the people restored to power, and lasting reform secured. They insure absolute government by the people.*"

THE SECRET ALLIANCE BETWEEN MACHINE POLITICS AND SPECIAL INTERESTS.

Mr. President, the great evil from which the American people have suffered in recent years has been the secret but well-known alliance between commercial interests and machine politics, by which special interests have endeavored and often succeeded in obtaining legislation giving them special advantages in Nation, State, and in municipalities over the body of the American people and obtained administrative and judicial immunity so that the laws have not been properly enforced against them; by which means they have enriched themselves at the expense of the American people; at the expense of Democrats and Republicans alike; by which private individuals have become enormously and foolishly rich, and many millions of people intellectually, physically, financially, or morally weak have been reduced to poverty and to a condition of relative financial, industrial, and moral degradation.

Mr. President, the mad scramble for unneeded millions, the unrestrained lust for money and power has become a national and a world-wide scandal. How unwise it seems, Mr. President, when a man already has more than enough to gratify every want, every taste, every luxury, every wish that is within the bounds of reason or of common sense that he should still pursue a mad race for sordid wealth, using his great opportunities for good, not for the welfare of his poorer and weaker brothers, but to press them to hard labor through the artificial mechanism of corporate taskmasters like galley slaves sent to twelve hours of labor seven days a week, to degeneracy and ruin, as has been reported to this Senate through the protected iron and steel industries of Pittsburgh (Pittsburgh Survey) and at Bethlehem (Report of Secretary of Commerce and Labor).

What an evil influence over our national life is being exercised by the false social standards of lavish extravagance and wasteful ostentation, standards set by the thoughtless rich and imitated in graduated degrees by their satellites and admirers down through society to those who can not afford extravagance without injury or ruin. Our whole society is being injuriously affected by these false standards of "high living." People have automobiles who have no homesteads.

Mr. President, I regard it as of great importance that the country should understand the manner in which commercial interests are using the powers of government through the mechanism of machine politics.

Many men without the slightest intention of departing from the line of the strictest rectitude nevertheless engage in the political game and use machine politics for their own preferment, recognizing no better method and thinking it to be a fact that purity in politics is an iridescent dream, and content that they are themselves guilty of no criminal or gross immoral act. My comments on these matters are intended to have no application whatever to any individual in the sense of imputing to him a bad or depraved motive. It is the system which I attack.

All men where severely tempted are liable to err, and I believe our Government should be so changed as to protect the individual from temptation of any kind as we would protect a friend from exposure to disease.

Mr. President, I have no desire to seek partisan advantage by pointing out the weaknesses of government under present methods of party management. I should like to see the complete restoration of good government in the United States. It will require the most vigorous efforts of the honest men of both parties to restore the Government to a condition of integrity, where high purposes, honor, and the common good shall exclusively rule.

* * * * *

THE BIPARTISAN ASPECT.

Mr. President, I shall not offend the columns of the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD with the multitudes of instances of corruption in municipality, city, or Federal Government with which the public press has been constantly filled. The corruption shown in St. Louis by Mr. Folk; in San Francisco by Heney; in Chicago; in Pittsburgh, where more than 40 members of the city council were indicted for graft; in Albany, N. Y.; in Harrisburg, Pa.; in New York; in Boston; in Philadelphia—the wide prevalence of corruption in government in our great Republic is a deep national disgrace. The number of egregious instances is both shocking and amazing. This nation-wide evil is, however, directly due to the weakness of human nature and the defective mechanism of party government which has unavoidably developed under a system of machine politics, with its corrupt and corrupting methods, which subjects men to temptations that too often prove irresistible. The evil, under such a bad system, would arise under any party in power, and can be absolutely eliminated and eradicated by the laws I propose.

A distinguished statesman once said that the idea of purity in politics was in iridescent dream.

The people retired him, and thereafter he described himself as "a statesman out of a job."

He neglected his opportunity to find a remedy and point it out. Yet he was a well-meaning man, an orator and a scholar of great ability; but he saw no way out.

PURITY IN POLITICS.

It is not true, Mr. President, that purity in politics is an iridescent dream. It can be made a reality through the Oregon system of popular government and by the overthrow of the imperfect mechanism of party government which has evolved the bad system of machine-rule government. The remedy for the evils from which our national, State, and municipal governments have suffered is to restore the rule of the people—to restore the full powers of government to the people by the Oregon system; to pass laws by which the people can directly nominate, directly initiate laws they do want, directly veto laws they do not want, directly recall public servants, by which the people can set aside political mercenaries who often seize upon the reins of party control under color of party enthusiasm with the cold-blooded, criminal purpose of selling government favor of profit or power. I pray the leaders of all parties to promote the rule of the people by the Oregon system.

The people have no sinister purposes. The people will not sell out.

The people are "safe and sane."

The people are conservative and sound.

The people are honest and intelligent.

The people would vote for the public interest alone and would not vote for purely selfish private interests.

The people would not grant 99-year or perpetual corporate franchises or legislative privileges of enormous value without adequate consideration.

The people would not deprive any persons of their just rights.

Under the rule of the people the issue of world-wide peace would be raised and would, by popular vote of all nations, be made a permanent international law.

The people know more than their Representatives do, and are less passionate and less liable to be led into either internal or international complications.

The people are worthier to be confided in than any individuals trusted with temporary power.

The people would be economical in government.

Under the rule of the people, with the right of recall, their public servants would be more upright, more faithful, more diligent, more economical, and more honest; the public service would be purified; the bad example of corruption and

extravagance in high places would be removed and new and better standards of public and private conduct would prevail.

The servants of the people would then concern themselves more in bringing about the reforms which the people desire.

IF THE PEOPLE REALLY RULE, WHY DON'T THE PEOPLE GET WHAT THEY WANT?

Mr. President, "popular distrust of our legislative bodies is undermining the confidence of the people in representative government." It is promoting radical socialism and developing elements of criminal anarchy.

It is developing forces that have in past history overthrown Governments and destroyed the existing order.

The people desire many things which they are entitled to receive, which have been promised to them, and which have been withheld or at least not delivered by their public servants, who in reality make themselves the masters of the people when trusted with power.

The people want lower prices on the necessities of life and the reduction of the tariff. Why do they not get it? They were promised reduction, but they got a higher tariff and higher prices than before.

Why do they not get reciprocity? It has been repeatedly promised in party platforms and on the hustings.

Reciprocity was the policy repeatedly declared by Blaine and McKinley, and it was again proclaimed in the Republican national platform of 1900, upon which McKinley and Roosevelt were elected, confirming the policy upon which the people had previously trusted the Republican Party with power.

But the Republican organization in the Senate on March 5, 1903, finally defeated every reciprocity treaty negotiated under the authority of the "Act to provide revenue for the Government, and to encourage the industries of the United States," approved July 24, 1897, to wit: The convention with France, submitted December 6, 1899, agreement extending time to ratify; submitted March 21, 1900; again March 9, 1901; December 4, 1902, and so forth. Recommitted March 5, 1903. In like manner were smothered and killed the following reciprocity treaties:

The convention with Great Britain, March 5, 1903; the convention for Barbados, March 5, 1903; the convention for British Guiana, March 5, 1903; the convention for Turks and Caicos Islands, March 5, 1903; the convention for Jamaica, March 5, 1903; the convention for Bermuda, March 5, 1903; the convention for Newfoundland, March 5, 1903; the convention with Argentine Republic, March 5, 1903; the convention with Ecuador, March 5, 1903; the convention with Nicaragua, March 5, 1903; the convention with Denmark for St. Croix, March 5, 1903; and so forth, and so forth.

The people want lower prices and the reduction of the tariff. Why don't they get it? They were promised reduction, but they got a higher tariff and higher prices than before, and shameful "retaliation" instead of honorable "reciprocity?"

The people want the control of monopoly and the reduction of the high prices of monopoly. Why don't they get it? All parties promise it, yet Moody's Manual shows that the gigantic monopolies have rapidly grown until their stocks and bonds comprise a third of the national wealth. They aggregate over thirty thousand millions of dollars. Moody's Manual for 1907, page 2330, gives over 1,000 companies absorbed or merged by or into other companies for 1907, and these conditions grow worse each year.

Organized monopoly controls the meat market; controls the selling price of beef, mutton, pork, fowls, and every variety of meat.

Organized monopoly controls the prices of all bakery products and candies and preserves; controls the prices of all canned goods and tropical fruits; controls the price of sugar and salt and spices. Monopolies control everything that goes on the table, as food, as tableware, china and glass ware, and the price of the table itself; controls the price of everything that enters the house, the furniture, the carpets, the draperies; controls the price of everything worn upon the back of man, of woolen goods, of linen goods, of silk goods, of cotton goods, of leather goods. They control the price of all materials of which buildings are constructed—lumber, iron and steel, cement, brick, plaster, marble, granite, stone, tile, slate, and asphalt. They control paper and stationery goods, iron, copper, and steel and metals, and goods made of these materials. They control dairy products; they control railways and steamship lines, telegraph, telephone, and express companies. They control everything needed by man,

from the cradle which receives the baby, and the toys with which a child plays, to the casket and the ceremonies of the grave.

They have raised prices 50 per cent higher than the markets of the world, and their apologists, the political allies of commercial monopoly and their intellectual mercenaries, fill the public press with solemn argument about the quantitative theory of money and the increase of gold as explaining and justifying high prices.

The whole world is staggering under the high prices of monopoly, and the people of the United States are afflicted with prices 50 per cent higher than those paid by the balance of mankind. The people ask for bread and they get a stone. They ask for lower prices and they get a senatorial investigation as to the causes of high prices, and the causes of high prices when ascertained by this unnecessary and absurd research will unquestionably be used as a special plea and as an apology and pretext for denying the reasonable demand of the American people for the restraint of monopoly and the lowering of prices.

These high prices mean that it takes \$150 to buy what \$100 bought before and ought to buy. It is very hard on domestic servants, all of whom are asking higher wages. It is very hard on people with fixed salaries or of small fixed incomes and annuities and with pensions. These artificial high prices make the few, the monopolists, very rich, but they sorely, painfully tax the living of the poor.

This policy is justified neither by common sense nor by patriotism.

The people demand a fair price for their crude products, for their cattle and hogs and sheep and the corn and hay and grass fed into these domestic animals and marketed. The Beef Trust artificially fixes the price of what they produce, without competition, at an unfair price, and no remedy is afforded. The Tobacco Trust fixes the price of their tobacco, and is stirring up the night riders' rebellion, with its ignorant, criminal, and pitiful protests, by stealing the value of the labor of the tobacco raiser by artificial prices, and no relief is given.

The thief uses the sword of the State to punish the protest of its victim who in blind passion violates the law of the Government that does not protect him. It is a sorrowful sight.

Gamblers in the market places undertake to force prices of wheat, corn, oats, and cotton back and forth for gambling purposes, and no relief.

Is it any wonder the people abandon the farm and find a worse condition in the grinding competition of labor in our great cities, where monopoly again fixes the price of labor? Is it any wonder labor makes violent efforts to protect itself and to protect the wives and children who look to them for protection?

IF THE PEOPLE RULE, WHY DO THEY NOT GET WHAT THEY WANT?

The people have been promised the control of monopoly. Why do they not get it? Are the people in control of Government, or are the trusts in control? Do the people really rule?

The people do not approve blacklisting of employees by the tariff-protected monopolies, yet they get no relief.

The people do not approve the grinding down of wages by the protected monopolies, from which brutal policy poverty, crime, inefficiency, sickness, and death must unavoidably follow.

WHY DO THEY GET NO RELIEF?

The people desire an employers' liability act—eight hours of labor and one day of rest in seven and sanitary housing for labor. Why do they not get it? Is the demand unreasonable? Has not the condition at Pittsburgh, the center of the great system of American protection, been fully set forth by the highest authority, by the trained experts of the Russell Sage Foundation?

Did they not point out 12 hours of labor 7 days in the week as the usual rule, impure water, impure food, insanitary housing, sick women and children? Does not the recent report of the Department of Commerce and Labor of the Bethlehem Co. confirm it? Why is there no relief from these hideous conditions of American life?

The people do not approve 12 hours of labor for 7 days in the week that makes of man a pitiful beast of burden and destroys his efficiency and life. The Sage Foundation pointed out these tragical conditions at Pittsburgh, as I have heretofore pointed out to the Senate; the Department of Commerce and Labor has

reported to the Senate a like condition at the Bethlehem Steel Works, in answer to a resolution of the Senate offered by me.

Why is there no relief or attempt at relief?

The part which the United States Steel Corporation has played in promoting political campaigns is an open secret and furnishes one of the obvious reasons why relief is not afforded.

The people would like publicity of campaign contributions, and a thorough-going corrupt-practices act. Why do they not get it?

Who is interested in maintaining the corrupt practices? Do not the people desire corrupt practices stopped?

Who opposes publicity of campaign contributions? Do not the people wish publicity of campaign contributions and effective control of the use of money in campaigns?

The people desire to control gambling in agricultural products. Who is concerned in maintaining this evil system of gambling in wheat and corn and oats and rye and cotton? Do the people desire this gambling to continue, and would it continue under the rule of the people?

The people despise the legislative treachery of the so-called "joker" in their laws which defeats the implied promise of relief in the law. When the people rule, this legislative trickery will cease.

Oh, it is said, Mr. President, that the people do not know what they want nor how to govern themselves directly, but only by representatives.

I emphatically deny it. *The demonstration in Oregon is a final answer to such shallow pretenses.* I confess for the most part they are an unorganized mob in politics; that for many years they have trusted political parties, managed by machine methods; that they do not select candidates or issues; but Oregon and Oklahoma point a new and safe way to correct this deficiency.

The people wish the gambling in stocks and bonds to be terminated. Why does the Senate not act? Why does not the Congress act and forbid the mails to the most gigantic and wicked gambling scheme the world has ever known—a gigantic sponge which absorbs by stealth and craft hundreds of millions annually from foolish trusting citizens, misled by false appeals to their avarice, cupidity, and speculative weaknesses, derisively called "the lambs," who pass in an unbroken stream to slaughter on the fascinating altars of mammon.

Why are the reserves of the national banks not used exclusively for commerce, but used instead as an agency of stock gambling and overcertification of checks as a chief auxiliary? I tried my best in the Senate when the financial bill was pending in 1908 to amend this evil condition, but the Senate will remember the denial of that relief.

Why is there no control of *overcapitalization* of the *overissue of stocks and bonds of corporations*, another means by which the people are defrauded?

Why is there no *effective control of railroad, passenger, and freight rates* after 40 years agitation? Do the people want reasonable railroad rates, or do the people conduct the Government of the United States?

The present discussion of railroad freight rates on the floor of the Senate and on the floor of the House is almost entirely in vain, because the jury is not a jury in sympathy with the people, but a jury that, most unfortunately, *under machine rule*, can not be free from the influence of the enormous power of the railroads in politics. The debate is well-nigh useless, and for this reason will amount to nothing in the way of substantial relief to the American people, except to defeat a skillful raid planned against the people under color of serving them.

Why is there *no adequate control of the discrimination of railways* against individuals, or discriminations in favor of one community against another?

The people are opposed to these discriminations, but their representatives—the party leaders who are in power—do not adequately represent the reasonable desires of the people.

Why is there no physical valuation of railways—giving the railway companies generous consideration of every value they are entitled to—as a basis of honest freight and passenger rates? The Interstate Commerce Commission has repeatedly advised us that it was essential and necessary, but yet there has been no response from the authorized representatives of the people.

IF THE PEOPLE RULE, WHY DO THEY NOT GET WHAT THEY ARE ENTITLED TO?

Why is there no parcel post? Would it serve the interest of the people and protect the deficit of the Post Office Department? Undoubtedly. But the

great express companies have such political power with the dominant representatives of the people that the dominant representatives do not justly represent the people, but represent instead those who contribute money and influence secretly to campaign funds.

Why do we not have a *national development of good roads*, cooperating with every State and county in the Union?

The people undoubtedly want it and undoubtedly need it.

Why do we not have a *systematic development of our national waterways*? The people want that, but the recent rivers and harbors will, appropriating fifty-two millions, spent many millions on local projects with political prestige, but without a thoroughgoing national design.

The people desired a *pure food and drug act*, and it took a long time to get it, and *its administration now is made almost impossible by the influences over government of self-promoting commercial interests*.

Why is *equality of opportunity* being rapidly destroyed and absorbed by corporate growth and power without any protection of the young men and of the young women and people of the land? Do the people want equality of opportunity? Was it not promised in the Republican platform?

The people *universally desire an income tax*. It was defeated in the Supreme Court by a fallacious argument, which I have heretofore pointed out, and will probably be defeated as a constitutional amendment because of machine rule and the influence of private interest with machine rule, which is more potential than the public welfare.

Why do the people not get a *progressive inheritance tax* on the gigantic fortunes of America? The people want it. Every nation in Europe has it, even under monarchies, as I have heretofore shown, with the most exact particulars.

Common honesty and fairness demands it, its constitutionality is affirmed by the highest courts, and it would not offend the feelings of the most avaricious multimillionaire at the time of its enforcement—after he was dead.

Why do we wait so long for the admission of Arizona and New Mexico? For years it has been promised; for years those people have waited upon the administration of justice by the Congress of the United States.

Finally, Mr. President, *why do we not have election of Senators by direct vote of the people*? The elected representatives of the people in four preceding Congresses have, by a vote substantially unanimous, favored and passed resolutions for this purpose. Did they represent the people of the United States? Thirty-seven States now stand for it. Do they represent the people of the United States? All the great nonpartisan organizations of the country, the American Federation of Labor, the Society of Equity, the National Grange, the Farmers' Educational and Cooperative Union, and every one of the great political parties with the exception of the dominant party, in its national platform, and even here a majority, a great majority, of Republican States favor it and have so expressed themselves, and yet no action. Nine-tenths of the people want it, and the Senate of the United States defeats it, and the Senator from Idaho [Mr. HEYBURN] amuses the Senate by calling this mature judgment of the American people "popular clamor." It is enough to make the Senate laugh, this mirth-provoking "popular clamor," evidenced by the insane legislatures of Idaho and Kentucky.

It is wrong to inquire—

DO THE PEOPLE RULE?

Everything that they stand for and desire is defeated. All of the great doctrines that they have been urging forward are obstructed. Some of the Republican leaders say, "Yes; the people rule through the Republican Party." My answer is, Mr. President, that *if the people ruled through the Republican Party, they would have long since answered their own prayers and demands favorably and not denied themselves their own petitions*.

Mr. President, the evils which have crept into our Government have grown up naturally under the convention system, not through the faults of any particular man or any particular party. I believe in the integrity of the great body of the Republican citizens of this country, but I have little patience with pure machine politics guided by selfish interests in either party. The system of delegated government affords too open and abundant opportunity for commercialism and for mere self-seeking political ambition.

It has seized upon the party in power, as it always seeks to do with the party that *can deliver*, and it will be a task of enormous difficulty to purge the party

in power of these dangerous and sinister forces, if, indeed, it do not prove utterly impossible except by its retirement from power.

In some cases delegated government, even under a machine form, is perfectly upright, perfectly honest, and serves the cause of the people excellently well, but the mechanism of government by the delegate plan affords too great opportunity for the alliance of commercialism and political ambition. An ordinary State convention, under the machine-rule plan, is composed of delegates delegated from county conventions; the county conventions consist of delegates delegated from the ward primary; the ward primary consists of a ward boss, a bouncer or two, and a crowd of strikers who do not represent the actual membership of the party voters of that ward, so that when a Senator is nominated by a State convention he is often three degrees removed from the people, and is the choice of a machine and does not really feel fully his duty to the inarticulate mass.

It will be better for this country when Senators and Members of Congress and State legislators and municipal legislators are chosen by the direct vote of the people and when the people have the right of recall by the nomination of a successor to their public servants. The people will never abuse their power.

The great political need in the United States is the establishment of the direct rule of the people, the overthrow of machine politics, the overthrow of corrupt or unwise use of money, intimidation, coercion, bribery; the overthrow of the various crafty corporate and political devices which have heretofore succeeded in nullifying the will of the people.

The great issue is to restore the direct rule of the people as members of parties and within both parties, and to abate the malign influence of machine methods.

The great issue is to enable the members of the Republican Party to control it, to provide a mechanism by which the members of the Republican Party, for example, can really nominate their own candidates for public office and for party office, and then require their elected representatives to represent the people who elect them and make effective the will of the party members who have nominated and elected them.

The great issue is to enable the members of the Democratic Party to directly nominate their own candidates, both in the party itself and for public office, and then require such public servants so nominated and elected to represent the people who nominated and elected them under penalty of the recall or under the safeguards of the initiative and referendum.

All the people now have is the power to defeat on election day a bad candidate, and thus they exercise some influence over nominations. The people do not in reality rule.

The people appear to rule through the present machinery of party government, but they do not rule in fact, because the party machinery is so largely in the hands of machine men, is so largely controlled in the interest of the few and against the interest of the many; because the present mechanism of party management is so contrived as to largely exclude automatically the cooperation of the great body of the members of the party, and is so contrived as to cause the party power to fall by gravity into the hands of professional managers.

The remedy for these evils is to restore the government of the people and to modify the present mechanism of party government, so the party members may conveniently control their own party.

In order to accomplish this there must be—

First. *An honest and effective registration law.*

Second. *An honest and effective ballot law.*

Third. *A direct primary law*, properly safeguarded, by which candidates for public office and for party office may be directly and safely nominated.

Fourth. *Constitutional and statutory laws providing the initiative and referendum*, by which the people may directly legislate, if the legislature fail, and may directly exercise the veto power over an act of their representatives in the legislature if a law is passed they do not want.

Fifth. *A thoroughgoing corrupt-practices act*, forbidding election rascalities, prohibiting the use of money, and providing full publicity.

Sixth. *An act providing for the publicity pamphlet*, giving the arguments for and against every measure, the argument for and against every candidate, and putting this pamphlet in the hands of every citizen before each election for his information and guidance.

Seventh. *The right of recall.*

In order to get relief from the evils, a few of which I have tried to point out, these important statutes must be written on the statute books of every State, and the machine must not be allowed to fill them full of "jokers." *The machine must not be allowed to change a word of these laws that does not stand the approval of the friends of the rule of the people.*

In order to have these laws passed by the State legislatures, *every candidate for membership in the legislature should be questioned* and his written answer demanded by authorized committees of the people—committees partisan and nonpartisan, committees Republican and Democratic, committees of all parties, committees of the American Federation of Labor, of the Farmers' Union, of the Grange, and of other organizations of free men, operating together whenever convenient.

The candidates for the legislature who refuse to agree to support cordially the legislative program of the people's rule deserve to be defeated as they were defeated in Oklahoma in the campaign for the constitutional convention in 1906. Question the candidates on the people's rule.

No candidate can expect, or ought to expect, the vote of the people when he defies the right of the people to rule.

The Democratic Party inscribed on its banners in the last national platform the doctrine of the people's rule, and I do hope all Democrats will do what they can to make effective the platform declaration by concrete laws.

The enemies of the people's rule obscurely discourse about destroying representative government. Nobody should be deceived for a moment by this illogical, unreasonable, unfounded, and utterly absurd pretension. It is the argument of the machine and should brand the proponent as an enemy of popular government.

My representative represents me best when he receives my instruction and when I retain the right to instruct him and to recall him and to act independently of him if necessary.

I firmly believe in representative government.

Those who stand for the people's rule program believe in representative government.

It is representative government they want.

It is representative government they demand.

It is representative government they insist on.

The end of misrepresentative, corrupt machine government is the corollary of this demand and its necessary complement.

I trust to see the time come, Mr. President, when the citizen can vote with full knowledge and by secret postal ballot, to be counted at State headquarters and registered with the same certainty, secrecy, and security that his check would be registered in a bank office, without cost, without inconvenience, and at his leisure.

Only by the overthrow of corruption in politics and by the elimination of the sinister influences of commercialism will the people of the country ever be able to consider dispassionately the great matters of public policy which are so essential to their future development and welfare. When we shall have purged our Government of dishonest methods and have provided a means by which the people can intelligently and honestly rule; *when we shall have provided a mechanism by which the people can authoritatively express themselves, they will vote for universal peace. The people of the United States to-day, if they could vote on the question of international peace, on the question of limiting the armament of nations, would heartily be in favor of it. The people of Germany would vote the same way. The people of Great Britain would vote the same way.*

The danger of war arises not from the people, but from ambitious leaders, anxious for activity, anxious for service, anxious for promotion. The dogs of war in every nation are anxious to fight, and commercial interests engaged in furnishing the muniments of war, in furnishing material for building battle-ships, fill the press with rumors of war when the naval appropriation is before Congress, and these things tend to irritate nations with each other.

The international mischief-makers, who prate too much about the excessive delicacies of questions of national honor that can only be settled by the arbitrament of war, should be sternly suppressed and would be rendered powerless for harm under the rule of the people.

If the people could express themselves, they would immediately vote for good roads, improved waterways, wholesale education, eight hours of labor, improved

protection of the public health, lower prices, reasonable control of public-utility corporations, reasonable freight rates, reasonable rates by express, telephone, and telegraph, the right of direct legislation, and to control their public servants.

Mr. President, the citizens of the great Republic wait in vain for substantial relief, while machine politicians in State and municipalities growl at each other; but the Democrats and Republicans at home and men of all opinions are robbed with perfect impartiality by the organized monopolies and trade conspiracies of this country. I am unwilling to see the people wait any longer.

Mr. President, the people's rule is the only way to end political corruption, and I am rejoiced to see the great American press giving the question of the new system of government vigorous attention. With the active help of the newspaper men of the United States this system will be in control of the United States in two and a half years.

The newspaper men who appreciate the gradual closing of the doors of opportunity for young men by the gigantic growth of monopoly will stand for the rule of the people, as the doctrine of organized righteousness and as *the soundest safeguard of property rights* as well as of human rights.

Unrestrained organized greed can not oppress human beings too far without explosive consequences of far-reaching danger to property rights.

The compilation of laws, with explanatory notes, which I have submitted as a Senate document, looks to the restoration of the rule of the people of the United States; and when I say people, I mean the rule of the Republican people, the Democratic people, the independent people, the Socialist people, and the Populist people. And, Mr. President, I ask that it be printed as a Senate document. [S. Doc. No. 603.]

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. KEAN in the chair). The Chair hears no objection to the request of the Senator from Oklahoma.

Mr. OWEN. At present these people do not rule; they only think they rule. They are, in fact, ruled by an alliance between special commercial interests, at the head of which is the great political trade combination known as the Protective Tariff League and a great political machine whose name I need not mention in this presence.

Mr. President, the Senator from Oregon has heretofore set up in the clearest possible manner, in his most notable and valuable speech of May the 5th, the system of the people's rule of Oregon. I wish to give it my cordial approval and to say with the adoption of this method the people of the United States can relieve themselves in very great measure, if not entirely, of the sinister influences to which bad government in this country is directly due.

PROGRESS OF SYSTEM.

Mr. President, as one of the steps to the restoration of the people's rule I call to the attention of the Senate Senate joint resolution No. 41, providing for the submission to the States of the Union of a constitutional amendment providing for the election of Senators by direct vote of the people, and move that the Committee on Privileges and Elections be instructed to report the same at the first day of the next session of this Congress, which will give the committee abundant time; and on this motion I call for the yeas and nays. (My motion talked to death. R. L. O.)