

## SUGGESTIONS FOR PLATFORM USE,

FOR THE OVERTHROW OF MACHINE RULE AND CORRUPTION IN GOVERNMENT  
AND FOR THE CONTROL OF THE "SPECIAL INTERESTS."

[By ROBERT L. OWEN.]

We have the honor to present suggestions which we trust may be useful to those charged with the duty of drawing Democratic platforms.

We the representatives of the Democratic party of ———, in convention assembled, declare the following principles:

We emphasize again the declaration of our Democratic national platform of 1908:

"The conscience of the nation is now aroused and will 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 departments according to the Jeffersonian maxim, 'equal rights to all, special privileges to none.'

" ' **Shall the people rule?** ' is the overwhelming issue which manifests itself in all the questions now under discussion."

That such is the primary issue has become perfectly clear. Only where there is a properly framed system of direct primaries and other up-to-date governmental mechanism do the people rule or can the people rule.

During the past two years the gross abuses of power by the Republican national and state organizations, usually termed the "machine," have emphasized the fact that you, the people, do not rule. The Payne-Aldrich tariff law **has not removed the tariff shelter from the trusts**, and there is no pretense that it has done so. It has not lowered in the least the cost of living. **Monopolies are not controlled**, but multiply, and with insolent power have seized every American market place. The monopolists are rapidly acquiring all the wealth produced by the people and reducing millions of the weaker citizens to abject poverty. **The physical property of the interstate railroads is still without valuation**, all

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of which demonstrates the completeness with which these and other special-privilege corporations are in power.

Back of this rule of privilege is the coercion of impoverished employees and the secret and corrupt use of millions of dollars of campaign funds for the nomination and election of the Republican regulars. The Republican congressional committee has refused to publish the names of its campaign contributors, while the Democratic congressional committee and the Democratic national committee both did so, and before the election. This attitude of the committees and the subsequent continuation of legal privileges by the Republican machine is conclusive proof of its corrupt alliance with the special interests; and this proof is supplemented by the continued refusal of the Republican machine to establish a system whereby there shall be publicity of campaign funds before the election. The Democratic Representatives in Congress continue to stand for the people's-rule system. The National Democracy declared it the chief national issue; and thus the underlying issue continues to be, Shall you, the people, reestablish a system of government in which you will rule? Shall you cast off your masters and become self-governing men?

Your immediate master in government is the Republican machine, financed by the holders of privilege and owned by them.

So long as machine-rule system of government is permitted to continue the sinister alliance will exist.

**You can not control the trusts by the Government when the Government is controlled by the trusts.**

The indecent and injurious alliance between the trusts and the Government has been denounced openly by the most prominent Republicans in Congress—by Senator Dolliver, of Iowa; by Senator La Follette, of Wisconsin; by Congressman Norris, of Nebraska, and others—and recognized by many leading Republicans who are utterly disgusted with the rule of corrupt privilege.

But the Aldrich-Cannon machine insists that the people do rule; that they rule through the Republican machine organization. The organization is glorified by Cannon and Aldrich.

**If the people rule, why don't the people get what they want?**

Why has there been no reduction of the tariff?

Why has there been no reciprocity, but a law authorizing retaliation instead?

Why has there been no effective control of monopoly?

Why has there been no lowering of prices on the necessities of life?

Why no genuine control of railroad freight and passenger rates?

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Why no control of railway discriminations between cities?  
 Why no control of overcapitalization of stocks and bonds of railways and of industrial monopolies?

Why no physical valuation of railways as a basis of fair rates as urged for years by your Interstate Commerce Commission?

Why does the United States Senate block the election of Senators by direct vote of the people?

Why should one man control the Senate and one man control the House of Representatives?

Why should there be machine rule at all?

Why no control of the telegraph and telephone monopolies?

Why no control of the express companies?

Why no parcels post?

Why no progressive inheritance tax on gigantic estates, which all civilized countries except ours enjoy?

Why no control of the gigantic gambling in stocks and bonds and in agricultural products?

Why no development of national good roads?

Why no development of our national waterways system?

Why no national law for publicity for campaign funds before elections and a sound corrupt-practices act?

Why are the publications of fraternal orders, of educational societies, and the magazines denied reasonable rights and threatened with higher rates? They are talking too much of the evil of machine rule.

Why no department of labor?

Why no department of education?

Why no department of health?

Why are the labor unions and farmer unions classed as conspiracies in restraint of trade and their prayers denied?

What does forty-five thousand millions of corporate wealth, listed by Moody, mean, with 10,000,000 sweat-shop workers and desperately poor struggling for bare maintenance? What does a thousand million dollars in one man's hands mean, when white women are bought and sold like cattle because of helpless poverty?

**The reason is plain: Gigantic fortunes built on monopoly, protected from competition abroad, are absorbing the national wealth and are in alliance with the Republican machine, to which they secretly contribute millions of money, to be repaid in the legislation and immunity which the machine controls.**

The industrial monopolies oppose a lower tariff and lower prices, and in vain the people petition the political machine for relief.



The railroad monopolists oppose lower and fairer freight rates, physical valuation, control of capitalization, and control of speculation in stocks and bonds, so the people appeal to the machine in vain.

The express companies oppose a parcels post, so the people are denied relief by the machine.

The railroad monopolists do not want improved waterways, fearing competition, nor improved public roads, and the machine takes no interest in the people's wishes.

The big interests oppose a progressive inheritance tax and an income tax, so, after much talk, the machine gives no substantial relief.

Publicity for campaign contributions before elections and a thorough going corrupt-practices act would ruin the alliance, so there is no action.

The whole system of government has become one of special favoritism and special privilege, and members of the machine openly barter with each other for them.

The United States Senate opposes the direct election of Senators because the people, voting directly, would overthrow the machine and machine-made Senators.

The honest Republican citizen and voter is as badly injured and oppressed by the operations of the machine as other citizens and worse, because his confiding belief in the integrity of his party's leaders is betrayed.

The denial of the great essentials the people want is all the proof the people need that the machine rules and that the people do not.

The question is, Will the people throw off the rule of special privilege and become self-governing men in fact as well as in theory?

**Do not the great holders of legitimate wealth realize that the overthrow of corrupt government is essential to the stability of society and the safety of their fortunes? Will they wait for a revolution?**

In behalf of the Democratic party of —— we pledge to you, the entire people of the State, that the Democratic nominees for the legislature will each be invited to make to you the following pledge in writing:

*To the people of the —— district, State of ——:*

I pledge to you that if you elect me to represent you in the legislature I will vigorously work and vote for the needed mechanism whereby you can actually exercise your sovereignty. To that end I will stand for the passage of the following laws in their most thoroughgoing and perfected form:

First. An honest registration law and a really secret ballot.



Second. A thoroughgoing direct-primary system covering local, state, and congressional offices, direct election of delegates to national party conventions, direct election of party committeemen, and a means whereby the voters in each party can directly instruct delegates (as in Texas).

Third. A vigorous corrupt-practices act, with limitation of the use of money by candidates and all others to the absolute necessities of the campaign, with publicity of such funds immediately before the nominating primaries and before the elections, with publicity pamphlets setting forth the argument for and against men and measures, delivered to each voter free by the secretary of state before the nominating primaries and before the elections.

Fourth. An authorization to the people to install the Des Moines plan of municipal government, a notable success, already adopted in a large number of cities during the last two years.

Fifth. An improved form of the Illinois public-opinion law, whereby the people can vote directly on public questions, the will of the majority becoming an instruction to legislative representatives—national, state, and local.

Sixth. And especially will I stand for the initiative and the referendum, by which the people can initiate laws they do want if the legislature fails to act, and can veto laws they do not want if the legislature should enact obnoxious laws.

Seventh. The right of recall, by which any state or municipal official can be retired if he proves to be dishonest or inefficient.

Eighth. A law establishing in the voters at the primaries and at the elections a right to indicate a second choice and a third choice, thereby resulting in majority nominations and majority elections and enabling the progressives to get together without fusion. [See S. Doc. 603, 61st Cong., 2d sess.]

Thus the Democratic nominees will be made an agency whereby the needed laws shall be installed and do away forever with successful political corruption in this country.

When you, the people, vote for Democratic nominees who are pledged to this platform you will in reality vote for yourselves, for your own power, the actual establishment of your own sovereignty, and for the overthrow of the corrupt political machine that has seized the powers of government and is subjecting you to the unendurable pilfering of its commercial allies.

When the proposed system of party government is established you can secure whatever other reforms are needed.



## THE REFORMER.

[Benton Bradley, in La Follette's.]

Does it make you mad when you read about  
 Some poor, starved devil who flickered eut  
 Because he had never a decent chance  
 In the tangled meshes of circumstance?  
 If it makes you burn like the fires of sin,  
 Brother, you're fit for the ranks—fall in!

Does it make you rage when you come to learn  
 Of a clean-souled woman who could not earn  
 Enough to live, and who fought, but fell  
 In the cruel struggle and went to hell?  
 Does it make you seethe with anger within?  
 Brother, we welcome you—come, fall in!

Whoever has blood that will flood his face  
 At the sight of the beast in the holy place;  
 Whoever has rage for the tyrant's might,  
 For the powers that prey in the day and night;  
 Whoever has hate for the ravening brute  
 That strips the tree of its goodly fruit;  
 Whoever knows wrath at the sight of pain,  
 Of needless sorrow and heedless gain;  
 Whoever knows bitterness, shame, and gall  
 At the thought of the trampled ones doomed to fall,  
 He is a brother in blood, we know;  
 With brain afire and with heart aglow,  
 By the light in his eyes we sense our kin—  
 Brother, you battle with us—fall in!

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