

THE DEMOCRAT.

WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY

Published by the Democratic National Executive Committee of the student-body.

MONDAY, APRIL 27, 1908

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Commercial Printing Company, Inc.
Publishers
Lynchburg, Virginia

Our Convention.

Some Points Regarding Its Organization.

The Democratic National Convention of the student-body will be held in the gymnasium of Washington and Lee University, beginning at 8 p. m., May 4, and continuing till a Presidential candidate for the Democratic party is nominated. The entire student-body is enrolled in the State delegations. An official list of these delegations appeared in the DEMOCRAT last week.

In recent meetings the Executive Committee has made some important decisions. Regarding the matter of the four standing committees of the Convention, which are announced on the first day, it was voted by the Executive Committee that the Committee on Resolutions and Platform be composed of one member from each delegation, chosen by the delegation and announced at special roll call of States and Territories on the first day of the Convention. The other committees of the Convention, those on Rules and Order of Business, Credentials, and Permanent Organization, are to be appointed by the Temporary Chairman, with the limitation that the various sections of the country be as equally represented as possible on each of these three committees. It was also decided that the proceedings should be reported, and Mr. C. I. Carey was appointed reporter for the Convention.

The temporary officers of the Convention are to be chosen for nomination to the Convention at a meeting of the Executive Committee on April 23. This list of nominees will be read to the Convention shortly after it convenes; their election rests with the Convention.

The matter of the Unit Rule for the delegations has been left by the Executive Committee to

the delegations for decision, so this will not be a part of the report of the Committee on Rules. The main reason for this arrangement is obvious; the Committee on Rules is not sufficiently representative for it to consider this matter, as it consists of but twenty men. The two-thirds rule is, however, left to this Committee for report to the Convention, as it concerns the Convention as a whole rather than the individual delegations. Chairmen are urged to hold meetings of their delegations and to attend promptly to these two matters, (1) the election of a representative on the Committee on Resolutions and Platform, and (2) the adoption or rejection of the Unit Rule for the delegation. It is hardly necessary to state that under the Unit Rule the entire vote of the delegation is cast by the majority.

The Committee on Arrangements for the Convention is the Sub-Committee of seven, appointed at the first meeting of the Executive Committee. Mr. J. H. Price is chairman of this Committee.

Any further information as to the method of procedure in the Convention can be readily secured from the Chairman of the Executive Committee or from any member of the Editorial Board of the DEMOCRAT. It is

hoped that this statement of the organization of the Convention will be a satisfactory answer to some of the queries in circulation.

Why Johnson?

Because Governor John A. Johnson, of Minnesota, a man who has risen from the bottom to the top and is thus acquainted with the conditions of all classes, is the logical candidate for the Presidency in the next election. Of course, it must be conceded by all that of all mentioned for the Democratic nomination, Mr. Bryan and Mr. Johnson are by far the most prominent so far. As between these two there should be no hesitation. Mr. Bryan has already twice led the party—to defeat—and with all due deference to Mr. Bryan's attractive personality, unsurpassed eloquence and widespread fame as a man of high integrity and intellect, we do not believe that he is the man to lead the party to victory.

There is nothing so destructive of confidence as defeat. Mr. Bryan has twice been defeated. Does it not stand to reason that, regardless of the high regard of the people generally for him as a man, their confidence in him as a leader must be greatly shaken? You have not far to go

to find out that this is true. While many ardent supporters and admirers of the Nebraskan still staunchly uphold him, on the other side numerous Democrats of high standing in the party believe that it will be impossible for the Democratic party to win under the leadership of Mr. Bryan.

There is nothing which so encourages confidence as victory. Governor Johnson is a man of victory. His course in life is marked with signal victories, bringing him steadily up to his now high and honored position from a beginning in poverty, without the means of securing the equivalent of a good high school education. Step by step he climbed over opposition and obstructions and now holds for the second time the governorship of the great State of Minnesota. Elected a Democratic governor in an overwhelmingly Republican state, his administration has been such that from a plurality of barely 7,000 votes at his first election, his plurality jumped in the second election to something over 73,000. There could be no more conclusive evidence of the fact that as a vote-getter he is unexcelled, and as a governor a man after the heart of the people. This record, we must remember, is that of a Democrat in a Republican State. As regards

his executive ability, here too he is still a man of victory. With a legislature where Democrats as members are little more than curiosities, he has carried through a large majority of his radical measures. He has brought to submission railroads, insurance companies and other large corporations. Does this not show that even the Republicans who know him regard him as a leader worthy of confidence and support?

The espousers of the causes of other candidates can find only one point to urge against the nomination of Mr. Johnson. This argument—that he is not known widely enough—strikes us a weak one. The Governor of Minnesota is a man busy with his position of trust and confidence. He has never had leisure to "stump" the country. Thus it is true that he is not as widely known as Mr. Bryan, but how long will it take to make him widely known at the present rate? Compare what is known of him today with what was known of him two—may even one—month ago, and the relative extent of the knowledge at these two times. Then consider that should Mr. Johnson be nominated he would of course give up his office and throw himself wholly into the fight. This would more than

double the present ever increasing rate at which knowledge of the Great Governor is spreading. Then consider too, that in his own section of the country he is already widely known as a man of action, a man of integrity and a man of victory. Does it not seem in view of these facts that if no other objection could be raised he should be nominated without question?

The chances for a Democratic victory are better now than they have been since the last election of Mr. Cleveland. It will be a great disaster for the party to lose the opportunity by nominating the wrong man. We need a victory to keep the party on its feet. We can scarcely afford another defeat. As in the case of Mr. Bryan, defeat tends to destroy confidence, and a destruction of confidence means a desertion by large numbers or at least a half-hearted interest. Now is the time and every one should cast aside personal prejudice, and other things being equal, try to aid the party by helping the man who can probably poll the largest vote. It will hardly be disputed that the Southern States will go solid for any competent and able Democratic candidate. We may leave these out of our count at present. Thus it narrows down to the question of who can poll the largest vote in the Northern and Western States. We feel justified in saying that Governor Johnson is the man. It is in these sections of the country that he is most widely known. His action in suggesting a conference of the Governors and Attorney-Generals of all the states to consider the insurance problem and the ability shown as chairman of that conference, whose recommendations have been embodied in legislation in at least ten states, gave him a reputation to be envied. The New York delegation is going unopposed to the Convention and it is known that the purpose of thus sending the delegates is to defeat Mr. Bryan. This shows conclusively that New York is against Bryan. With New York whose large electoral vote has such influence, the Democrats may almost feel assured of success. Without New York the chance of winning would be certainly greatly diminished. *Now should we risk losing New York by nominating Bryan?* Would it not be almost suicidal?

There is another important factor which should cause the party to nominate Johnson. It seems probable that there will be a split in the Republican party. In this case Democrats

should get a good many of the Republican votes, provided a candidate in whom they had confidence was put up by the Democratic party. Governor Johnson is highly regarded by the Republicans of his own section, and the regard of prominent Republicans there would greatly influence others. In case of a split large numbers would take up the slogan of "Johnson." *How many Republicans would vote for Mr. Bryan?* Even Mr. Bryan's own adherents could hardly claim he would draw many Republican votes under any circumstances.

Let us cast aside all preconceived ideas and prejudices and look the situation squarely and fairly in the face. Let us consider that, while Mr. Bryan must be admired as a man, large numbers of Democrats have lost faith in him as a leader, and were he nominated would go into the fight expecting defeat. Let us consider that New York, that great factor in presidential elections, is going to send unopposed delegates to the convention in order to defeat Mr. Bryan. Let us consider that Mr. Bryan could draw very few Republican votes even in case of a split in that party. Then let us consider the question—*would it be safe to nominate Mr. Bryan?*—knowing all the above.

Now let us consider that as a man of victory Mr. Johnson would inspire confidence. Let us consider that the most available man to defeat the nomination of Bryan, the New York delegation will probably support Johnson, and the State will stand by the decision of its delegates. Let us consider that Mr. Johnson will in any event probably draw great numbers of Republican votes, at least in his own section, and in case of a split they would flock to his standard if that of any Democrat. Then let us consider another question—*would it be safe, in view of the success of the party, not to nominate Governor John A. Johnson, of Minnesota?*

The Main Issue

Whatever else may be under discussion during the coming campaign—the trusts, imperialism, separate statehood for New Mexico—these subjects must take a back seat before the burning question of reducing the Republican high-protective tariff. It is vain for the Republican party to try to avoid this issue by inserting a tariff-revision plank in its platform. The country knows that the G. O. P. is firmly committed to a policy of extreme protection, and it can make a pretty shrewd guess as to what tariff revision by the Republicans would amount to. It is prone to recall that for years of extortion by the tariff-protected trusts the party in power has not stirred a hand to take from them their great weapon of oppression. We hardly dare to make such a sacrilegious suggestion; but it is certain that without the tariff the thunder of our great Trust-buster would not have been half so loud, because one-half the cause of their rumblings would never have existed.—*Harvard Democrat.*

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