

In nominating Charles A. Towne for vice president the populists have chosen a most excellent man to stand in the gap of an impossible situation. It is politically out of the question for the democratic party to indorse him. Not alone is this because he is a republican. It is also because his nomination comes to the democrats as an ill-advised challenge. Should the democrats now nominate Bryan and Towne, they would be plausibly chargeable with having quit politics on their own account and merely indorsed the whole populist ticket. Their only way of avoiding this appearance is to nominate some other person than Towne as the democratic candidate to run with Bryan.

Had the circumstances been such as to enable the populists to force their nominations for both offices upon the democrats, the move would have been an excellent bit of tactics. The populists would thereby have placed themselves in the lead. Theirs would have been the opposition party, and the democrats would have had no alternative but to fall in line. But these circumstances do not exist. The democrats not only cannot be forced, but they cannot afford to appear to be forced. So ill-adapted are the circumstances to such tactics that the democrats could not indorse the populist ticket even if both candidates were democratic possibilities. Though the democrats would not fall in line behind the populists by nominating Bryan, since he was not only the democratic candidate four years ago, but his renomination by them was assured long before the populists convened at Sioux Falls, yet if the populists had named with Bryan either Williams or Lentz or Sulzer, or any other democrat whom the party might fairly choose, it would be impossible for the democrats to nominate the same man. To do so would give them the appearance of taking second place to the populists. Much more emphatic would that appearance be were the democrats to nominate a republican at the dictation of the populists.

A very large proportion of the delegates at Sioux Falls evidently foresaw this. Among them were such able and incorruptible men as Gen. Weaver and Jerry Simpson. They advocated a conference with the democrats and the silver republicans, the nomination for vice president to be left open meanwhile. It is not to be inferred, however, that the leading men against them, and who in spite of their advice carried the plan of nominating a vice presidential candidate, were without ability and probity. These men had a problem of their own which they could not ignore. Coming from states where the populists distrust the democrats, it was necessary for them and for the perpetuation of the populist party at home, that a full ticket should be nominated. Not to have nominated would have been, in the estimation of their constituents, equivalent to disbanding in favor of the hated democrats. It was important, moreover, and for similar reasons, that after nominating Bryan for president, their candidate for vice president should not be a democrat. A republican like Towne would be much more acceptable to the populists of those states than a democrat, though equally advanced in the direction of populism. This condition, probably, more than any intention on the part of the populists to get a tactical advantage over the democrats, influenced Towne's nomination.

It is to be regretted that so many populists are attached so much more closely to their party organization than to the principles it professedly espouses. It ought to make very little difference to a populist whether populist candidates are in the field. They would have no chance of election. But it ought to make much difference whether an opportunity to populize the democratic party is allowed to go by default. Within the democratic party at this moment a struggle between plutocracy and the essential principles of populism is going on, and every diversion like

that of the populists counts for the plutocracy in that struggle. Every Jeffersonian democrat drawn away in a wild goose chase for the dubious spoils, the empty honors and the more than doubtful educational advantages of a third party campaign is so much gain for the Whitneys who seek again to climb into the saddles of democratic leadership and dictation. These are times in politics when good sense is quite as important as good motive.

The decision of the federal supreme court in the inheritance tax cases, should it be accepted by that court in subsequent cases as having established the principles upon which it rests, may prove to be little short of revolutionary. For one thing, it holds that the federal government can tax privileges which are created by the states and are peculiarly subject to state jurisdiction. The privilege in question was that of inheritance. This may now be regarded as fully exposed to federal taxation. But other state privileges, too, would be within the principle; and if a populist congress and president were once elected the supreme court would doubtless be afforded an opportunity of saying whether some of them were not constitutionally also within the law.

This decision, furthermore, gives a severe wrench to the income tax decision, which was procured through the intellectual agility of one judge who changed his opinion "over night." But its most important bearing is upon the question of progressive taxation. It holds on this point that congress may tax heirs whose inheritance is larger at a higher rate than those whose inheritance is less. A wide open but rational construction is here made of the first paragraph of section 8, article 1 of the constitution, which requires that taxes of this character shall be "uniform throughout the United States." The court decides that the kind of uniformity thus required is not personal but