

cases were fought through all the courts until the court of last resort determined the issue against the counties. But the bondholders were generous, as they could well afford to be, and some of the counties compromised, refunding their bonds at a liberal discount. Others refused to compromise on any terms, and among them was St. Clair county. The judgments rendered against that county were so large that at this time they amount, with accrued interest, to as much as the assessed valuation of all the property in the county—\$1,500,000. It is as impossible to pay the judgments, or a considerable portion of them, as it is for St. Clair county to pick itself up and take position in some other state. Had the railroads been built as expected, the county would have had exact value for its indebtedness. It would have had an equivalent in railroad stock to show for every dollar of debt, and the one could have been made to pay the other.

When judgment was rendered, the county court in charge at that time refused to levy a tax whereby to pay it. A writ of mandamus was issued from the court which had rendered the judgments to compel such levy. The three members of the county court promptly declined to obey the writ and were as promptly committed to jail for contempt. They served their term of office, two years, in jail. The next county court was tried with the same medicine, and likewise failed to yield to the treatment. The judgments were renewed from time to time, and it became understood that a candidate for election to the county court was a candidate for imprisonment, and contests for the office were not spirited. It is strictly a case where the office seeks the man. For many years the citizens have selected their victims, those who had the time, the patriotic fortitude and the constitution to endure two years of incarceration. Sometimes they have escaped the United States marshal by hiding in the hills and meeting to transact county business at some secret place by night; some terms have passed without a mandamus, but never have three members been selected who would obey the order to levy a tax.

The recent case shows no abatement of the resolution to hold out.

If one takes pains to understand the people of St. Clair county, one sees a plausible explanation of their conduct without referring it to lawlessness. They voted the subscription in honest expectation of a railroad whose value to the county would have been beyond calculation, besides the equivalent of the debt in railroad stock, and got nothing for their pains except a debt which they can never pay. The outrage is more than they will submit to, and they say they will resist as long as the county contains within its borders three men who can endure two years in jail.

It is no use to point out to them that they are beating innocent parties—widows and orphans it may be who have inherited those bonds. Their ready response is, that there could be no innocent purchasers of those bonds.

And that is certainly true.

While the holders of those bonds when suit was instituted were held to be innocent purchasers in a technical sense (the supreme court of Missouri held the bonds invalid and it was the federal supreme court which determined it), they could not have been innocent in any real sense. Investors do not buy bonds without some inquiry about how, by whom, and for what purpose they are authorized. The slightest inquiry would have shown the fraudulent manner in which those bonds were put in circulation, would have shown that they were not exchanged for railroad stocks as was intended, nor for anything of value to the county.

So, while the people of St. Clair county may possibly be charged with bad judgment in dealing with the matter, it cannot be said that they are dishonest. The term "repudiation" does not apply to the case.

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## NEWS

Notwithstanding the confident predictions to the contrary, Tom L. Johnson carried all his points at the Ohio democratic convention. He was himself unable to attend, being detained in New York, partly on ac-

count of the recent death of his brother, but also because his own illness made attendance impossible—as he telephoned his associates on the Cuyahoga delegation, of which he was chairman—even if the adoption of his tax proposals depended upon his personal presence. The convention met at Columbus on the 10th. Charles P. Salen was both temporary and permanent chairman. The platform, adopted on the 10th, opens with a declaration for "equality of taxation and other public burdens," and for "the equal rights of all the people and special privileges to none." The "monopolization of industry, with its tendency on the one hand to crush out individual enterprise and on the other to promote a socialistic spirit among the people as the only refuge from oppression," is denounced. Charging the republican party with the corruption of municipalities, the platform then "calls upon the people to unite with it in placing the conduct of municipal affairs upon a business basis, that they may be administered by the people in the interest of all the people on the principle of home rule." That is a paraphrase of the demand of the Cuyahoga delegation for a plank favoring home rule in taxation, which was rejected because the committee on resolutions thought it a single tax plank. It is followed by the other Johnson demands as follows:

No franchise, extension or renewal thereof ever to be granted by any city or village without first submitting the same to a vote of the people.

The acceptance of free passes or other favors from railroads by public officers or employes shall be made adequate ground for vacating the offices held by them.

All public service corporations shall be required by law to make sworn public reports, and the power and duty of visitation and public report shall be conferred upon the proper state and local auditing officers to the end that the true value of the privileges held by these corporations shall be made plain to the people.

Steam and electric railroads and other corporations possessing public franchises shall be assessed in the same proportion to their salable value as are farms and city real estate.

On the tariff question the platform reads:

Tariff reform, never more urgently demanded than now, when the production of the country so far ex-

ceeds its power of consumption, that foreign markets are a prime condition of its continued prosperity and when the existence and abuses of trusts have been brought about by the policy of protection of favored industries. The abolition of the so-called protective system and the substitution in its place of the traditional democratic policy of a tariff for revenue so levied as not to burden one industry for the benefit of another.

In this connection trusts and subsidies are made subjects of condemnation:

The enactment and rigorous enforcement of measures which shall prevent all monopolies and combinations in restraint of trade and commerce—the matter of first importance being to prevent the use of the government as an instrumentality for the creation and increase of the wealth of the few while preserving intact the right of private property and the fullest measure of individual liberty of contract and assuring to every man the just reward of superior industry and skill. We demand the suppression of all trusts and a return to industrial freedom. As a means to that end all trust products should be placed on the free list and the government should exercise a more rigid supervision of transportation lines and abolish, in fact, all discrimination in rates.

Our merchant marine to be restored to its former greatness and made the ally of the people against monopoly by the repeal of antiquated and restricted navigation laws. But no subsidies for favored shipowners. On imperialism the convention declares that—

The powers granted the federal government were not meant to be used to conquer or hold in subjection the people of other countries. Their use for such purposes not only belies our declaration of the rights of men, but also unbalances our system by increasing the centralization of power at Washington to the ultimate overthrow of home rule. The democratic party has never favored and now opposes any extension of the national boundaries not meant to carry speedily to all inhabitants full equal rights with ourselves. If these are unfitted by location, race or character to be formed into self-governing territories and then incorporated into the union of states in accordance with the historic policy of the republic they should be permitted to work out their own destiny. Only territorial expansion demanded by the national welfare and the national safety to be at any time favored—the objection which should have prevented certain of our recent acces-

sions being that they imperil the national safety without promoting the national welfare; that they devolve upon us enormous responsibilities we have no call to assume; that they are certain to be unremunerative drain upon our resources; that they tend to embroil us with European powers; that they weaken our claim to supremacy on the American continent, at the same time that they lessen our ability to make the claim good; and that they furnish a dangerous opportunity and temptation for the disregard of "the self-evident truth of universal application that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The remainder of the platform consists of condemnations of the republican party for aiding and sympathizing with the British against the Boers and for class legislation and public corruption; of promises to improve conditions; of a reaffirmation of the Monroe doctrine, and a demand for a sufficient navy; of pledges of devotion to civil service reform; of a plank on the labor question; and of the following clause with reference to the election of United States senators, taken from the Cuyahoga county or Johnson platform (p. 137-38), and only slightly changed in verbiage:

A constitutional amendment requiring the election of United States senators by the direct vote of the people. Hereafter, until this is passed, whenever a senator is to be elected it shall be the duty of the state committee to give notice in its call that the nomination of a senator will be made at the state convention.

The platform carefully excludes all reference to the Chicago and the Kansas City national platforms and also to Mr. Bryan.

Upon the adoption of the foregoing platform, the convention made the following nominations:

Governor, James Kilbourne; lieutenant governor, Anthony Howells; judge of supreme court, Joseph Hidy; clerk of supreme court, Harry R. Young; attorney general, M. B. McCarthy; treasurer of state, R. P. Alshire; member of board of public works, James B. Holman.

The second National Social and Political conference, in session at Detroit, as reported last week, closed its deliberations on the 3d with the adoption of an address and a brief platform, none of the delegates or those they may represent being bound thereby except as they themselves

may elect to be. The platform is as follows:

We declare for direct legislation and proportional representation, direct nomination of candidates for offices, equal suffrage for all, regardless of sex or color; honest elections, free from all partisan manipulation or control; direct taxation through progressive land values, inheritance and income taxes; public ownership of public utilities, an eight-hour day, sole control of the medium of exchange by the government, home rule, postal savings banks, state insurance and workmen's compensation for industrial injuries, opposition to militarism and conquest and advocacy of peaceful arbitration; demand the same rights and liberties for others as for ourselves.

A series of socialist resolutions, though adopted one by one, was laid upon the table as a whole.

British politics referred to last week on page 182, is marked by a further step in connection with the imperialist defection in the liberal party. A meeting of liberal members of parliament was held at the Reform club, in London, on the 9th, which had been officially summoned by Herbert Gladstone, the chief liberal "whip." It was a large gathering, 159 liberal members of parliament being present. The object of the meeting was to ascertain whether the Asquith "imperial liberal" speech (p. 182-83) had seriously affected party cohesion. Mr. Asquith was present and spoke, as did other "imperialist liberals;" but the "imperialist liberal" movement was not strong enough to raise an issue. Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, the liberal leader, took prompt advantage of its weakness. He boldly tendered the party the alternative of accepting his resignation as leader or giving him a vote of confidence. This put the "imperialist liberals" in a dilemma. Not being prepared to name a leader in Bannerman's place, they were forced to support the vote of confidence. While doing this, however, they declared their opposition to him on the South African question. The vote of confidence in Bannerman was accordingly adopted unanimously.

The South African war, which has caused this uneasiness in the British liberal party, is more deeply hidden in mystery as to its progress than ever. The British reports are censored, though to what extent can only be inferred. The Boers are evidently active, and the British are evidently