

Republican News Item

CHAS. LOREN WING, Editor.

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(Special Correspondence.)

Harrisburg, June 12.—Col. M. S. Quay has once more done exactly what his political opponents preferred that he would not do.

COL. QUAY'S STATEMENT.

This is what Senator Quay has to say over his own signature in a statement which he prepared at Mountville, Lancaster county, on the farm of his son, Major A. G. C. Quay:

"The existing ballot law and its amendments were favored by the Ballot Reform association, were supported by all political parties."

"Taking a very low view of it, the Republican party stands for a pure ballot everywhere. In Pennsylvania there would be no motive on the part of the dominant party to encourage or permit any perversion or suppression of the popular will, for the reason that the popular will is overwhelmingly Republican, and its fair and full expression, according to law, is all that can be desired."

RADICAL CHANGE DEMANDED.

"The law has now been tested by experience, and it has been shown that great abuses are possible under it. The disability clause cannot be enforced against a constitutional provision authorizing a voter to take another into the booth to attest his ticket, and this facilitation of vote buying and intimidating, together with our loose registration, constitute an election system which does not commend itself to the people of the state and which has become the subject of general complaint."

"The amendments passed by the last legislature, vetoed by the governor, and which if again passed by the legislature will be submitted to the people, are subject to many chances in the long process required to put them in the constitution, and especially when they are not mandatory, but only permissive, and must depend upon the disposition of future legislatures for proper laws to effect the reforms which they allow, but do not command."

"If this change in the election laws of the state be really desired by the people the sooner it is effected the better."

"If it can be accomplished quickly, surely and radically by a constitutional convention—and by a con-

stitutional convention only—which shall be called and the members chosen for the express purpose. I take it that when a reform—and certainly a reform touching the state in so vital a point—is demanded by a respectable number of citizens, it is the plain duty of the legislature to ascertain whether or not a majority of the whole people demand it, and, if so, to put it in the simplest and speediest way of accomplishment."

A CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION.

"In the legislature to be elected in November will frame a fair, non-partisan constitutional convention bill, like that of 1872, early in the session and then submit the question of convention or no convention under that act, to be voted upon at the spring elections, the whole matter would be put in course of immediate and proper determination according to the public will. The delegates would be elected at the spring election or at a special election. This appears to be not only right, but eminently just and conservative. There would be no danger of revolutionary innovations. The people would decide whether or not there should be a convention; they would elect the members and they would accept or reject the amended instrument at the polls. The delegates being elected—should the people resolve upon a convention, primarily to consider election reforms—would proceed to put the reforms required into the constitution itself, and, if any part of the new machinery, should be left to the legislature, the language would be, unlike that of pending amendments, mandatory, and leave no room for evasion."

"The difficulty of securing reforms in the legislature, where any discretion is allowed that body, is well-known. The variety of interests represented in that body, and the existence of two houses, to occur, with the executive in the background, make the passage of any given measure, in acceptable shape, exceedingly problematical."

"The Republican party has suffered more than once from its inability to promptly execute promised reforms by legislative action. A convention being a single body elected for specific purposes, and, naturally embodying the highest learning and integrity of the commonwealth, would doubtless perform promptly and well the duty devolved upon it."

REEDER AND COOPER SPEAK.

Not only has Col. Quay taken this stand, but influential leaders of the Republican organization throughout the state have come out for the most advanced method of accomplishing the desired reforms in connection with the ballot. Gen. Frank Reeder, chairman of the Republican state committee, has asserted that the Republican organization will lead in the movement for such changes in existing laws as shall be deemed desirable, and that throughout the commonwealth the active Republicans will work shoulder to shoulder to fulfill any pledges that may be made by the state organization intended to stop abuses at elections. The state chairman holds that the Republican party has always been the champion of a pure ballot and a secret one, and that in a great majority of the election precincts throughout the state the intent of the framers of the present law is faithfully carried out. He admits that there has been objections found to the operation of the law in some of the cities, and says the Republican party can be counted upon to meet the demands of the people in remedying existing evils."

Former State Chairman Thomas V. Cooper, who is a nominee for the legislature in Delaware county, and who was nominated without opposition, although he is an avowed supporter of Col. Quay, has gone on record as one of the leaders of the ballot reform movement. Among other things he said, in a recent statement:

"It is a public duty to make it more and constantly more difficult to violate the election law. In the evolution of law seeking something better, both will come if our vote can determine the matter. It can be truthfully said that we believe in and act with the party organization. We do; we shall. It is only through organization that anything worth doing for the people can be done. It is not always enough, nowadays, and where masses are concerned, to be right; we must be in the best possible position to aid the right. The best position is within an organization, within the largest and best organization. There we can battle for the right to some purpose; outside, we are useless as a rule. There are revolutionary exceptions, but they are rare for our brief lives. As part of the great Republican organization we will strive for better election laws, for the amendments proposed, for laws to enforce them, and if possible to improve them. If these can be reached we will be thankful for the opportunity to favor their application to all our elections—general, spring, special and the primaries of all parties."

"The Municipal League is justly proud of its triumph in securing the opportunity to vote upon two amendments looking to better things. We are not of that organization, but we must share its pride and will try to help it in this work. Our only regret is that the state must wait five years for other amendments. We have no fear but that the Republican organization will also join in the work. It has no interest otherwise, and only foolish factionists will try to change what is a general purpose for the public good. Of course false counters will oppose, but these are after all only a few hirelings of varied interests. The Municipal League is preparing to question candidates for the legislature. It has our answer in advance. We are for better things, for constant advancement to higher and better forms of government, and these can best be secured through good primary and general election laws, and they can best be secured by the co-operation of all who have good purposes in view, without regard to faction or party."

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