WANTING BALLOT REFORM: EFFORTS MAKING TO SECURE PURITY OF ELECTIONS. ..

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EFFORTS MAKING TO SECURE ELECTIONS. PURITY OF THE WORK WHICH THE LEAGUE HAS

UNDERTAKEN AND IN WHICH IT APPEALS FOR EVERY VOTER'S AID. Tt is now well established that during the coming session of the Legislature at Albany every effort will be made by the politicians to kill the Saxton bill by substituting for it some measure which, while it does not materially interfore with the corrupt practices of the politicians, will appear on its face to meet the universal demand for electoral reform. The Demooratic politicians did not understand how deep-seated the dissatisfaction with the existing system was when they denounced the Saxton bill and sustained the Governor's veto at the Spring convention in this city. It is a fact that Gov. Hill up to the time he gave his hearing on The measure was rather predisposed in its favor, believing that it was popular with the workingmen throughout the State. It is an open secret that he withheld his signature because of the emphasic demand of the County Democracy, in the person of Judge Water-bury, and Tammany Hall, in the person of President of the Board of Aldermen Forster.

Democracy, in the person of Judge Waterbury, and Tammany Hall, in the person of President of the Board of Addermen Forster. On the hearing the latter declared that the bill would destroy the "machines," and it is known, as a matter of fact, that Gov. Hill was made to see that the defeat of this measure was a sine qua-non of his re-election. During the Summer the Governor said that, even though he should get the nomination, his course with regard to electoral reform might possibly cost him his election, and it is well known that during his ampaign he went so far as to say to several people that this was the one matter of which he had the greatest fear.

Feeling in this way and wishing to play the demagogue and stay the current of opposition on this score, the Governor sought to commit the Buffalo Convention to some sort of a ballot reform. His Secretary, Col. William G. Rice, sitended the convention and took with him a ready-made piatform, which was the joint work of Gov. Hill and D. Cady Herrick of Albany. This platform was printed on large paper, and a copy given to each member of the Platform Committee as well as to some of the Important leaders. Its article, as copied from a duplicate of the original, read as follows:

"The Democratle Party now, as always, earnestly favors the preservation of the purity of elections, the protection of the ballot, and the certainty of honest returns, and believes that these condition are seenful to the permanence of our free institutions, and that all good citizons should unite in promoting such conditions and in preventing all adverse and fraudulent influences.

We favor all reasonable and practical measures which may conduce to these desirable results, and to that end we favor, under properly-guarded regulations, the furnishing of necessary bullots by the State, county, multipality, and town for all elections therein, and we approve a clamace in our present election laws whereby the secrecy of the ballot shall be more certainly preserved, absolute independence in voting sec

It will be observed that no declaration was made as to how the ballots were to be furnished by the State, in what form they were to be printed, nor how they were to be distributed. Neither was any definite suggestion made as to the way in which the party would secure secrecy of the ballot or secure "absolute independence in voting." It dwelt on the evils of coercion and proposed the health system, which made the

of the ballot or secure "absolute independence in voting." It dwelt on the evils of coercion and proposed the booth system, which made the suggestion bear some physical resemblance to the Australian plan. This was calculated to mislead by giving the appearance of a desire for genuino reform, although there was no tangible or definite suggestion made, and although such hints as the resolution contained entirely disregard in every essential and fundamental feature the Australian system.

Nevertheless, vague and uncertain as the resolution was, Col. Rice and his friend, Judge Muller, were told by Mr. Croker and the representatives of the Brooklyn machine that they would not stand it, and the result was that only so much of it as approved of the Governer's yete was approved by the committee and adopted by the convention.

During the last election both parties used money in unheard-of sums. The Democratic Party having been defeated by the "fat" which had been fried out of Mr. Wanamaker and Mr. Foster, there arose all along the line a cry for the passage of some measure to put an end to bribery in elections.

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the passage of some measure to put an end to bribery in elections.

During the past month it is understood that a half dozen different organizations have drawn up bills with reference to the use of money, printing of ballots, and the prevention of corrupt practices. Tammany Hall will soon send out a Corrupt Practice act and possibly a Ballot Reform bill. It is knewn that some members of the County Democracy have also been preparing a bill. A committee of the Union League Club has also been at work on the matter, as has a committee of the Young Men's Democratic Club. Mr. Saxton has declared his purpose of reintroducing his measure of last year, with such amendments as may be necessary to make it conform to the views of the Governor, so far as it can be done without intrenching on the essential features of the bill. The friends of the Saxton bill early foresaw that an effort would be made by Gov. Hill and his friends to secure the passage of some bill which would have the appearance but not the reality of reform, and have been continually organizing the electoral reform sentiments of the State. Enrollment lists were sent out in the following form, and upward of 10,000 of them have been signed and returned to the committee having this work in charge:

"I authorize you to enroll my name among those in tavor of electoral reform, and of the remassage

"I authorize you to enroll my name among those in favor of electoral reform, and of the repassage by the next Legislature of the so-called Saxton only which was passed by the last Legislature and vetoed by Gov. Hill." In addition to this the following call for the organization of the Ballot Reform League has been signed and issued:

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In addition to this the following call for the organization of the Ballot Roform League has been signed and issued:

The undersigned believe that the public interests imperatively demand the prompt enactment of a law which will guarantee an unbribed and secret ballot, and the abolition of trading and dening at the polls.

To this end we urge the formation of a Ballot Reform League, to inform and educate the public, and secure the passage by the Legislature of an actembodying the following principles:

First—The ballots should be printed and distributed at the public expense. (This takes away the excuss for assessing candidates).

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First—The maines of all candidates for the same of action of the candidates of the same of an expense. (This takes away the excuss for assessing candidates).

First—The ballot should be delivered to the voter within the polling place on election day by sworn public officials. (This abolishes the paid political worker.)

Fourth—Only ballots so delivered should be voted worker.

Fourth—Only ballots so delivered about by two remaining the political worker.

Fourth—Only ballots so delivered about by worker.

Fourth—Only ballots so delivered about by two votes wither and the secrecy of the ballot and the secrecy of the ballot and destroys bribery at the polls.)

If you agree with these sentiments and are willing to aid, either by your inducace, by your personal effort, or by contribution, you are requested to join the formation of the Ballot Reform League.

Your membership will entitle you to receive documents published by the League, in explanation and advocacy of the legislation sought. Signed: Henry Darling. Hamilton College.

**M. B. Anderson, University of Hoodnester.

On and advocacy of the legislation sought. Signed: Henry Harry, New-York.

Henry Harry, Mar

contained in the call, is now being circulated, with the following letter, which letter shows the progress that has already been made in behalf of this particular reform.

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EALLOT REFORM LEAGUE, 33 LIBRETY-STREET, NEW-YORK CITY.

DEAR SIR: I inclose herowith an enrollment blank of the Ballot Reform League for your attention and signature. It is already signed, as you will see, by a number of representative citizens of all parties. The principles of the league are set forth therein and also on the inclosed ships. If you approve of them, you are cordially invited to join and to enlist others who may be in sympathy with the purposes of the league.

The recent national and State elections have emphasized the importance of such a change in our election laws as shall guarantee the secrecy of the ballot and the personal independence of the voters. The agitation in favor of the passage of laws embodying the principles set forth in the accompanying documents is widespread. In Indiana, New-York, and Michigan, popular sentiment is now thoroughly aroused, and, if properly organized, can compet the passage of such laws at the coming session of the Legislatures in these States.

Massachusetts has already enacted such a law. A similar law is in successful operation in the city of Louisville and in the State of Wisconsin. The principles of the league have stood the test of actual operation in Australia, in the different provinces of Canada, and in Great Britain. In each instance the law has worked smoothly and has attained the desired end—the secrecy of the ballot and the discouragement of bribery and corruption.

It is hoped that you will sign your name to the inclosed silp, and secure the signatures of others who may be willing to co-operate in the cause of ballot reform. These silps should be promptly returned to the undersigned, addressed 33 Liberty-street, New-York City, so that complete organization may be rapidly effected. If the numerous triends of this cause will in this way exert themselves to increase the membership of the Ballot Reform League such a strong demons

A. C. BERNHEIM,
JAMES W. PRYOR,
Temporary Secretaries.

The committee alroady has more than 1,000 signatures to a new enrollment, in addition to the 10,000 on the old enrollment, so that the Ballot Reform League starts the year with a large membership. The committee in charge has complete canvass lists of the entire Republican and Democratic vote in every school district in the State, which, together with the lists of independents, high license lists, and single tax lists, make a canvass of about 300,000 names, representing every election district in the State. The work of correspondence is already well in hand and the committee expects, by the middle of January, to have placed its documents in the hands of every elector on its lists, and confidently believes that it will have an enrolled membership of 50,000 before the end of the month.

The rapidity with which the committee is pusning its work will depend in some measure upon its success in raising funds; but it reports its Treasury is already in a condition to warrant it in beginning the work and pushing it with vigor.

The enrollment signed by each voter contains among others this declaration: "We hereby authorize the enrollment of our names as members of the Ballot Reform League, and the use of our names in petition to the Legislature or otherwise in furtherance of these objects." Any person desiring to petition the Logislatute for the passage of a law embodying the principles of the Ballot Reform League has only, to sign the enrollment ship, and the League will be in a position during the coming session of the Legislature to authorizatively appear before that body and contend for the principles which it believes to be fundamental to true reform.

The League has not declared itself in favor of any particular bill. After all the bills are intro-

principles which it believes to be fundamental to true reform.

The League has not declared itself in favor of any particular bill. After all the bills are introduced it will be in a position to say which conforms most thoroughly to the principles it advocates and then give that particular measure its endorsement. It will use its entire strength to defeat any bill which does not embody all the principles for which it contends.

Independent of the Ballot Reform League above referred to, a number of other organizations, with like object in view, have sprung up during the mast two or three months. There are several Assembly District leagues already organized in this city in addition to the Commonwealth Club and the Reform Club, both of which are devoting themselves to this work.

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