

EDITORIAL

THE SENATE RECONSTRUCTION MANIA

By DANIEL DE LEON

BRYAN has written a letter to Taft, urging that the proposition to have the Senators elected by a popular vote of their respective states, be submitted as an amendment to the Constitution.

Few things betray the level of Bryan's and of Bryanistic mentality more completely than the insistence upon a new method of electing the Senate. A move to abolish the Senate altogether would have some color of sense; the move to alter the method of filling that body as a means to "bring politics nearer to the people," is, on the part of those who take any stock in the plan, just a chunk of senility.

The Senate is, like the appendix in the human body, an atrophied organism, useful enough at a stage of lower development, useful now only to produce social appendicitis.

"But, no!" one hears the objection raised: "That would establish a one-chamber legislature!" What of it? "What of it? In the first place, a two-chamber legislature has ever marked the way of freedom; in the second place, a one-chamber legislature would leave the government exposed to every passing popular whim."

There is nothing in the two objections to make in their favor; there is everything to make against them.

In the first place, two-chamber legislatures have not been markers of progress. There is none of these in existence that is not essentially a parrot-like copy of the British Parliament. The British Parliament existed before even bourgeois freedom. It existed at one time contemporaneous with feudal despotism. Indeed, the two-chamber legislature of Great Britain has its foundation in classes. Where classes exist there can be no freedom. No class need, as against another class need, can be the root of Freedom.

In the second place none but usurpers look upon the will of the people as a

“popular whim,” or feel themselves “exposed” thereto. The will of the people properly ascertained, is the highest good, and should be so looked upon—and respected. A Senate that can veto a House of Representatives; a President who can veto both—lo, flowers that can blossom only on the thorn of class rule.

It is more than likely that Mr. Bryan actually believes that, if the Senators were elected by the people instead of by the State Legislatures, politics would be “brought nearer to the people.” But Mr. Bryan’s belief is only another proof that his party never learns. Upon him, as his party’s representative, the lesson and the fact are lost that the members of the House of Representatives are as far away from the people as the Senators, and that the State Senators, although elected by the people, are indistinguishable from, the members of the lower houses—utterly indistinguishable in point of corruption, of political “you-be-damnedness” toward the people.

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