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## EXAMINATION OF HON. FRED A. ROBBINS.

The purpose of meeting the numerous demands which have been made by tax payers and voters for information relative to the defeat of Fred A. Robbins for Member of Assembly in the Republican Convention by the Republican Convention held at Belmont Aug. 21st, and because of lack of space in our regular papers we present our readers with the following report.

At the caucuses for the election of delegates to the first Convention held at Belmont, the nomination of Mr. Robbins was conceded by all. In all the towns of the county it was given out at the caucuses that the delegates to the Convention were to be selected; that a nomination was to be given to Mr. Robbins by the Assembly, and to Mr. Hooker by the Convention, both having already served terms. The fitness of this arrangement was everywhere recognized, and Mr. Robbins and Mr. Hooker were elected. There would be no necessity of a personal canvass by them, and they made a canvass. A majority of the delegates to the County Convention were instructed, or pledged, to elect Mr. Robbins. The only duty of the Convention was to ratify the choice of the people, which was done. That Convention elected Mr. Robbins and nominated Mr. Hooker. This was accomplished by ballot in which delegates were instructed and broke pledges. It was known that bribery was used; it was known that at least one Robbins delegate had been drunk and rendered incapable of voting. At all events, a majority of the delegates to that Convention failed to truly represent the people who elected them.

The excuse subsequently given by those who were engaged in this business, is that the county "organization" was ordered by Hon. T. H. Barney to turn Mr. Robbins down. The latter had refused to obey Mr. Barney's commands with reference to certain matters.

A week after the Convention the delegates of the Republican voters in the county had signed petitions requesting Mr. Robbins to accept an independent nomination, and pledging him their support at the election. A new Convention was called by representative delegates from the several towns in the county, several of whom are Supervisors as a Provisional Committee, of which Dr. H. A. Barney of Belmont is president, chairman, and A. Miner is secretary. As evidenced by the character and standing of the officers of the committee, the movement put on foot by the best Republicans of the towns of Amity and Friendship.

A new Convention met at Belmont Aug. 21st. It was composed of delegates from the several towns in the county who represented the bone and marrow of Republicanism, and the people came with the delegates were many that but a small proportion of the number could gain admission to Belmont House. Banners were in abundance. Banners with "McKinley, Robbins second" and "Robbins Honest Legislation" were displayed. On the wall in rear of the platform were mottoes as these: "There is no other man than Fred A. Robbins;" "We elect Fred A. Robbins by 4,000 majority;" "McKinley will have a large majority in the county, but Fred A. Robbins will lead the procession."

The Convention was called to order by Dr. H. A. Barney, chairman of the Provisional Committee. Prayer was read by Rev. A. H. Johnson of Rushford. Dr. Barney, on behalf of the Convention, nominated Frank S. Smith of Allegany as Permanent Chairman of the Convention, and he was chosen by acclamation. Upon taking the chair, Mr. Smith said:

"The man can fail to be sensible who is chosen as the presiding officer at an assemblage like this Convention. It is in Republicanism; a Convention whose members are animated by the same fearless spirit which called the Republican party into being in the cause of freedom, and prompt founders to offer their lives as a

ransom for four million of slaves; a Convention whose members are close to the great, warm, throbbing hearts of the people, whose credentials are petitions signed by a majority of the Republican voters in the county and who have come together to rebuke fraud, to denounce those who betray the people's trust, and to hasten the glad day when there shall no longer obtain in politics:

"The good old rule, the simple plan.  
That they may take who have the power,  
That they may keep who can."

We have assembled not for the purpose of organizing a bolt, but to undo fraud and correct the result of misrepresentation. The people are about to do through this Convention that which their servants faithfully and treacherously failed to do in the last Convention. Fraud vitiates every act; "fraud strikes at the root of everything," and the fraud perpetrated by the late Convention in the nomination of Member of Assembly renders that nomination void and of no binding force upon Republicans. This uprising is not a bolt, it is a revolution. This Convention is not an expression of tame dissent; it is the voice of the people claiming their own, and "The Voice of the People is the Voice of God."

In the words of the martyred Garfield: "The Republican party drew its first inspiration from the fire of liberty which God has lighted in every man's heart, and which all the powers of ignorance and tyranny can never wholly extinguish." And when the "powers of tyranny" in the form of bosses and ringmasters, although wearing the livery of Republicanism, attempt to extinguish the sacred fire of liberty, we shall be recreant to the duty we owe to our party and our country if we do not resist. We have been taught by the fathers that "Resistance to tyrants is obedience to God."

We who have left farm and workshop and office to come here to-day are but common soldiers in the great army of Republicanism. We are not seeking promotion. Our only ambition is to do our duty. We have not come here for reward or in the hope of reward. We are neither door-keepers in the House of Representatives nor dwell in the tents of office holders. We are ready to be led by leaders but we refuse to be driven by bosses.

The people are so long suffering and slow to anger that reckless politicians from time to time undertake by stealth and fraud to thwart the will of the people. But, as we are reminded by one of the mottoes displayed upon the walls of this room, that great man of the people, Abraham Lincoln, said: "You can fool all of the people some of the time, and some of the people all of the time, but you can't fool all of the people all of the time." Nor can the self-styled county "organization," that being a fairer name than "ring," longer fool the people of this county. They now perceive that the "organization" is

"But the gilded shore to the most dangerous sea,  
and that unless they themselves take the helm, the good ship will soon be among the breakers."

For six consecutive years the delegates to the State Convention have persistently been named by one man who has just as persistently, and withal as modestly, always named himself as chairman of the delegations. During this period, and by this means, this man has maintained himself as the representative of this Congressional District upon the Republican State Committee. He has given to the State organization such obedience as they render who seek reward. He has succeeded in keeping the nomination for Congress away from Allegany county in order to further his own ends, although our county has had no nominee for sixteen years. As a reward for this obedience and as a recompense for this manipulation, his indorsement has become the only qualification necessary to obtain appointment to office. To-day he is as full of promises of secretaryships, clerkships and post offices as "the cedars of Lebanon are full of sap." Not content with naming all the present incumbents of office in the county, it is an open secret that he has already designated those who are to take office during the remainder of the century.

The "organization" came into power at the beginning of the present decade, and the Board of Supervisors soon became subject to its control.

And with what result to the taxpayers of the county? In 1891, the sheriff's and jailer's accounts, as audited and allowed by the Board of Supervisors, was \$4,315.12; in 1895, the sheriff and jailer's account, as audited and allowed, was \$7,696.07, an increase of \$3,380.95. In 1891, the amount of miscellaneous account, audited and allowed, was \$5,886.61, an increase of \$3,660.16. The "organization" is doubtless an ornament to the county from an aesthetic point of view, but it is expensive. During the year 1895 the cost of the administration of justice in the county may be safely estimated at not less than \$15,000, while the amount of fines collected was but \$25. The ratio of 16 to 1 has for once been made respectable. What became of the pending indictments for violation of the excise law, and why were they not prosecuted? Was the "organization" thereby made stronger and people poorer? Is this the explanation of the increase in the amounts of audits by the Board of Supervisors?

One member of the "organization" as a member of the Board of Supervisors, had the salary of a public office increased immediately before taking the office himself, although the amount of work required had decreased. The last Board of Supervisors allowed this officer half the amount of his annual salary as additional compensation for civil service performed for the county.

Members of the "organization" hold positions at Washington and Albany, whose annual salaries aggregate many thousands of dollars. This county pays to other members of the "organization" in salaries, fees, and allowances annually, not less than from \$20,000 to \$25,000. Is there not reason enough for the existence of the "organization"? It is a time to remember that "when bad men combine, good men should confederate."

The "organization" annually distributes among its newspapers in the county the sum of \$3,000 of the people's money. When a member of the Board of Supervisors, Mr. Robbins successfully resisted the payment of an illegal amount for printing claimed by two of those who are now chief beneficiaries of the "organization," although of opposite political parties. Why should the "organization" love him? Is there not reason enough that the "organization" newspapers should be with the "organization" and against the people?

There is but one explanation of the people's complacency in so long and so patiently submitting to ring rule so high handed and so tyrannous. They were permitted, by the grace of the "organization," to have as their representative at Albany a man who was faithful to their interests; a man who was brave enough to pass bills for the protection of the poor against the rapacity of the coal barons; a man who refused to yield even when a too pliant Governor had yielded in advance and asked the withdrawal of the Anti Coal Trust Bill; a man who was jealous of the rights of the rural portions of the state against the aggressions of the Greater New York; a man who would bend to no will but the will of the people. That man was Hon. Fred A. Robbins. But Mr. Robbins must give way to one who would serve the bosses more and the people less. Such is the fate of a public servant who serves the people well, unless the people wake to defend him.

It was ordered that he should be kept at home. The manner of obeying the command was cunningly devised. It was thought by raising no issue before the caucuses, by conceding the nomination to Mr. Robbins, but at the same time carefully selecting delegates who would do the will of the "organization" instead of the will of the people, the nomination could be filched from him stealthily and by fraud. It was hoped that the people would sleep on in self-satisfied contentment with the empty forms which proclaimed that they are Sovereigns and that all government is by them. Emboldened by this hope, the "organization" saw to it that there should be no fair submission to the people at the caucuses of the question of Mr. Robbins' return. There was no open canvass of rival candidates resulting in a deliberate choice by the majority. The "organization" knew that such a course would lose them the Conven-

tion, nominate Mr. Robbins, and prevent them from controlling the delegation to the State Convention, and put an end to their bosses' rule. Such canvass and such submission of the question to the people were prevented by the assurance of all the members of the "organization" in private and in public, by conversation, by letter and no opposition to Mr. Robbins' return to the Legislature. No effort was put forth by him or by his friends to secure a nomination which was conceded to him. Yet the people in several of the towns, not because of suspicion, but as an expression of their will, instructed their delegations to support him in the Convention. In other towns, instructions were withheld upon the express and repeated assurance by members of the "organization," that Mr. Robbins was to be nominated by acclamation, "sure." But a sufficient number of towns instructed their delegations to render his defeat impossible, if those instructions had been obeyed. Not until the last caucus had been held, and within forty-eight hours of the Convention was it known that the people had been tricked, and it had been the pre-determined design of the "organization" to defeat Mr. Robbins. How the design was accomplished was known to all. Passing over the story of delegates bribed and others made drunk, we know that delegates were induced to violate their instructions. And therein was the crime against the people.

We have been taught to have faith in the people. In the darkest hour of secession's night, when the light of the whole nation had gone out with the life of Abraham Lincoln, Garfield exclaimed, "God lives! the people reign!" If in fact the people do reign the ballot box is their throne and scepter. Their power begins with the caucus and ends with the election. These two are the Holy of Holies, the very Ark of the Tabernacle in the Temple of Liberty that we have believed no man dare profane. It has been frequently asserted with confidence that all the ills of our political system can be cured if the people will attend the caucuses; but how can their presence at the caucus avail if delegates treat instructions with contempt, and disregard and disobey them? A means of detecting this crime against the people should be provided in every convention, by relegating the secret ballot to its proper sphere, the expression of individual choice, and adopting, in accordance with the practice of bodies where the few act as the representative of the many, *via voce* vote.

Those of the organization who committed, or at least sympathize with the commission of the crime against the people, witnessed by the late Convention, justify the act, not by the claim that Mr. Robbins had not served the people well, or that he cannot be longer useful to them, but by the transparent excuse that it is the rule of our party to set a representative aside after three terms of service, however able or faithful to the interests of the people he may have been, and to confer the honor upon another, no matter how unfit he may be. This is "organization" logic, but it has especially limited application to Member of Assembly, and does not apply to Member of Congress.

But the "organization" also plead that this is not a time for an independent ticket, because we are to have a Presidential election, and because this movement may result in the election of a Democrat, the party thereby losing a vote for United States Senator. Our answer is that the "organization" should have weighed these considerations before they forced the majority of loyal Republicans to repudiate their action. We believe, however, that no man will be less willing to vote for McKinley and Prosperity because he has the opportunity to vote at the same time for Robbins and Honesty, and we are confident that the only way to prevent the election of a Democrat to the Assembly is to nominate and elect Fred A. Robbins.

Gentlemen of the Convention, an offense, not only against right but against American liberty has been committed. If such offenses shall remain unrebuked, then the people are no longer Sovereigns, but have become slaves. We have assembled here to-day to begin the battle in defense of the rights and liberties of the people of this county against the "Powers of Tyranny" and corruption under the much vaunted name of the "organization." If we do our duty now we can trust the people to do theirs in November, and to prove by their victory that in truth "The people reign!"

A. Miner Wellman of Friendship was chosen Secretary of the Convention, and J. F. Coak of Cuba, and L. G. Raymond of Angellea additional secretaries. Geo. W. D'Autremont of Hume and F. S. Clark of Andover were appointed Tellers.

A. L. Elliott, Esq., of Friendship, presented the name of Hon. Fred A.

Robbins as candidate for Member of Assembly, in a forcible and appropriate speech. In the course of his remarks Mr. Elliott read the following letter from the widely known and highly honored Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler, prefacing the same with the statement that Dr. Cuyler had never met Mr. Robbins, but had written him because of his admiration for his course as a legislator:

- BROOKLYN, August 13, 1896.

HON. F. A. ROBBINS:

My Dear Sir,—Among all the members of the last Assembly at Albany, there was no man who won a higher reputation for conscientious uprightness and manly independence than yourself. Allegany county would have honored herself by returning you by a rousing majority to the post you filled so nobly. I am amazed and shocked to learn that your experience as a legislator will count for nothing, and that you are to be superseded by a man who is likely to ask for instructions in a New York hotel rather than from the free citizens of Allegany county. For the honor of your district and for the benefit of the whole commonwealth, I earnestly hope that you will consent to accept an independent nomination. We want just such men as you for our legislators; and it will be a reproach and a disgrace to the party of Abraham Lincoln, and Grant, and Seward if they thrust you aside. This is a grand year for honorable bolting. The air is charged with the electricity of independence, and I trust that there are enough independent men of all parties in old Allegany to send you back triumphantly to that position which you filled so nobly. My admiration for your past career prompts this letter; and with high regard, I remain, dear sir,

Yours most sincerely,  
THEODORE L. CUYLER.

The roll of towns was then called, and a delegate from each of the towns seconded the nomination. The speeches of Messrs. Wellman of Friendship, Paul of Amity, Windsor of Burns, Spencer of Wirt, Johnson of Rushford, Vosburg of Canadea, Place of Alfred, Clark of Andover, Richardson of Angellea, Brooks of Hume, and Sibley of Cuba, were especially applauded.

The roll of delegates was called, and such delegates named, *via voce*, Fred A. Robbins as his choice for Member of Assembly. The Tellers reported that Mr. Robbins had received the unanimous vote of the delegates, and Mr. F. S. Clark moved his nomination by acclamation.

The chair appointed Dr. H. A. Barney of Amity and Mr. P. S. Place of Alfred a committee to notify Mr. Robbins of his nomination, and to invite him to come before the Convention.

The appearance of Mr. Robbins was the signal for tremendous cheering. Upon coming before the Convention, Mr. Robbins said:

Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen of the Convention:

The question which you have presented for my decision is of a most weighty and serious character, and imposes grave and solemn responsibilities. Prior to the assembling of the convention held at this place two weeks ago I had expressed an intention not to seek a nomination on another ticket if the nomination then sought was not accorded me. Such were my personal wishes and feelings then, such are my personal wishes and feelings to-day. I did not, however, anticipate, no man could anticipate the extraordinary and unparalleled event which have taken place since that time; that within a week after the assembling of that convention, without solicitation or encouragement on my part, a majority of all the Republican voters of the county should, over their own signatures, ask me to become a candidate and pledge me their support at the coming election, and that a convention composed of leading and representative Republicans of the county should tender me this nomination. These events are so far beyond the forecast of the ordinary observer, and constitute a situation so entirely without precedent that I feel called upon to reconsider the determination previously expressed. It would be unbecomingly to discuss the causes which have led to this movement except to say that it cannot be justly regarded as an effort to redress personal grievances or minister to personal ambition. A movement so wide-spread embraces among its supporters the men whom I see before me as members of this convention, will not admit of such an explanation. After carefully weighing the subject in all its aspects, weighing its possibilities and results, I have reached the conclusion that personal preferences should be set aside, and that as a citizen and as a man, I am not at liberty to decline the nomination which you have this day offered me. Shall it be said that by this action we have forsaken the doctrine or abandoned the principles of the Republican party? No, not one of them.

Standing here in the presence of men who have grown gray in its service, who were present at its birth and for forty years at the primary, in the convention, upon the platform, at the ballot box, and upon the battle field, I can feel that I am a Republican in every sense of the word. I read its history, its principles, its mottoes, and I feel that the party which sprang into existence as the defender of the sacred cause of human liberty, has not yet reached a point in its history when allegiance to its principles and its principles of honest convictions, the abdication of manhood and the suppression of free thought and free speech in the halls of legislation.

If the call signed by thousands of Republican voters, and voiced by their representatives in convention assembled, shall indeed prove to express the will of the people, and I shall be elected, I shall endeavor faithfully to represent the interests of the whole people of the county of Allegany; a Republican always, but not subject to the dictation or domination of any man or combination of men upon the face of the earth.

Realizing fully the gravity of this step, I accept all its possible consequences without malice or resentment toward any man, with the earnest hope that the action this day taken may promote the cause of Republicanism and may commend itself to the better judgment of candid and right thinking men both here and elsewhere, and finally, with sincere thanks for this great honor conferred upon me, I accept this nomination.