La Crosse Convention Platform – 1886.


“WHEREAS, The alarming development and aggressiveness of great capitalists and corporations unless checked, will inevitably lead to the pauperization and hopeless degradation of the toiling masses; and

WHEREAS, It is imperative, if we desire to enjoy the full blessings of life, that a check be placed upon unjust accumulation, and the power for evil of accumulated wealth; and inasmuch as the two old political parties, namely, the Democratic and Republican, have failed to enact laws for the best good of the greatest number, therefore be it

Resolved, That we censure their past and present course, and as the first step in that direction we have assembled in the city of La Crosse, Wisconsin, for the purpose of organizing a political party of the people, whose aim it will be to effect the following reforms:

1. The re-organization of our state bureau of labor and industrial statistics and a placing of a man at the head of it who will see that the laws for its government are properly executed.

2. That the public lands be reserved for actual settlers, and that all lands now held for speculative purposes be taxed at their full value, and the forfeiture of all lands now held by grant where the contract has not been faithfully fulfilled.

3. The repeal of all laws that do not bear equally upon capital and labor, and the removal of unjust technicalities, delays and discrimination in the administration of justice.
4. The enactment of laws to compel corporations to pay their employees weekly, in lawful money, for the labor of the preceding week, and giving mechanics and laborers a first lien upon the product of their labor, to the extent of their full wages.

5. The abolition of the contract system on national, state and municipal works.

6. The enactment of laws providing for arbitration between employees and employed, and to enforce the decision of the arbitrators.

7. The prohibition by law of the employment of children under fifteen years of age in workshops, mines and factories.

8. To prohibit the hiring out of convict labor.

9. The enactment of a law for the levy of a graduated income tax.

10. The enactment of a law which will confer equal privileges upon all worthy persons who desire to exercise the rights of citizenship.

11. The establishment of a national monetary system, and annulment of the so-called national banking charters.

12. The enforcement of the law against the importation of foreign labor under contract.

Resolved, [13.] That we favor law and order and condemn all officials, anarchists and communists who seek to advance their interests or theories in violation of the rights of man to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness. ¹

¹ La Crosse News, La Crosse, Wisconsin, 17 July 1886, p2; La Crosse County Record, Onalaska, Wisconsin, 16 July 1886, p2.