

DAILY PEOPLE

VOL. 11, NO. 167.

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1910.

ONE CENT.

EDITORIAL

SMITH AND MARTINE.

By DANIEL DE LEON

IS it mere accident, or is it fatality that, no sooner is the Democratic party restored to power in New Jersey when it rips up from top to bottom in two violently contending factions, with the Governor-elect Woodrow Wilson leading one of the forces?

The facts are: New Jersey passed a law for a State-wide primary on the Federal senatorship. James E. Martine came out at the top of the polls for the office on the Democratic ticket. The Legislature of the State happening to have been carried by the Democrats, Martine demands from it that it obey the will of the voters, and Governor-elect Wilson sides with him.

Martine's contentions are denied and opposed by the Democratic ex-Senator James Smith, Jr. Smith and his supporters do not deny Martine's allegations of fact, but they do deny his conclusions. They deny that Martine is the favorite of the New Jersey Democracy for the United States Senate, despite the vote he polled. They reason that "nobody expected a Democratic Legislature: had such a contingency been in sight other candidates would have come forth who did not then think it worth their while to do so; had they stood forth as candidates Martine would have cut no figure and Smith would have carried the nomination."

The Smith argument is despicable. If the argument is sound that the 48,000 who voted for Martine did so as a joke never thinking that the Legislature would go Democratic, then it follows that neither should the Democratic candidates who were elected to the Legislature be seated, and their Republican competitors should be declared elected. The vote for the former must also be considered a joke and treated as such. But there is more involved in the Martine-Smith issue than the half stupid half despicable Smith argument indicates. If that were all there is of it, there could be no doubt that Martine would be triumphantly returned by the Legislature,

thereby at once vindicating the law and rebuking its dodgers. The Martine-Smith issue uncovers the broken-bones condition of the Democracy; it thereby looms big with danger for Governor-elect Wilson's presidential boom, and for those in charge thereof.

The argument of the Smith upholders is, of course, a transparent subterfuge. Theirs is another purpose. Ex-Senator Smith is a rank high tariff-man, so peculiarly rank that he was known in Washington as "the Senator from Havemeyer," the sugar schedules passed under Cleveland's administration having been forced and chicaned through Congress by him. The Tariff Interests, endangered by the recent elections, are marshalled around Smith. All else is dust to cover tracks and motives.

Thus the Martine-Smith controversy reveals the rift in the Democratic party, from East to West. And it foreshadows the by far more important sight of the Democratic party going speedily on the rocks, unable to maintain itself in the double role of "loftiness" that the Woodrow Wilson element would raise it to, and of "safety and sanity" that the Smith's wish to keep it in.

Transcribed and edited by Robert Bills for the official website of the Socialist Labor Party of America.
Uploaded November 2011

slpns@slp.org