

THE EIGHTH DISTRICT.

The Outlook Bright for the Democratic Candidate.

Opposition to Cromer Comes From Leading Republicans All Over the District.

[Staff Correspondence Indianapolis News.]

Muncie, Ind., October 17.—The Eighth congressional district, from a republican point of view, is in a deplorable condition. From a democratic standpoint, everything is as smooth as oil. Unquestionably, the republicans of this district are in much worse shape, publicly speaking, than some of the republican leaders will admit. The republican state chairman has been deceived by the over-confidence of the republicans, who think it impossible to lose their great majority. Following is the vote for 1896:

	John R. Brant	Charles L. Henry
Adams	3,242	1,131
Blackford	9,304	2,128
Delaware	4,230	7,838
Jay	3,057	8,511
Madison	7,644	8,255
Randolph	2,623	4,726
Wells	3,638	2,299
Total	27,413	30,045
Henry's plurality	2,682	

But majorities even greater than this have been lost, and there is a real prospect for the defeat of the republican nominee for congress. It is conceded that this (Delaware) county will either elect or defeat G. W. Cromer, the republican candidate. I have no hesitancy in saying that if the election was tomorrow, Delaware county would defeat Mr. Cromer. Every power of the state central committee must be exerted in his behalf. He will receive what assistance the administration at Washington can give him, or he will go down to defeat.

Every minister in the city of Muncie is against him. Nearly the entire bar is opposing him. The doctors, as individuals, are in many instances waging a secret war against him. The women of the different religious organizations are urging his defeat. Many of the old republican "wheel horses," men who always have taken an active part for the party, are remaining passive, and men that Mr. Cromer believes to be his friends are secretly knifing him. He is being slaughtered in his own home, and when he says, as a friend told me he said, that he will come to Delaware county even with the other candidate and be elected by his own county, he is deceived. He can not depend upon this county alone to pull him through. I care not what the professional politicians tell him. In addition to all these elements against him, he has arrayed in front of him an almost united democracy. The democrats of this county have, for the time being, settled their differences, and united on the one issue of sending Orlando J. Lotz to congress. There are now no "Rumps" and "Anti-Ring" factions in the Delaware county democracy.

One of the most highly esteemed men in Delaware county is Jacob Heath, of this city. He is the father of Perry Heath, first assistant postmaster-general, and is a gentleman of the old school, proud of his boys, proud of his home, and proud of his party.

"No, sir," exclaimed Mr. Heath to me, as I sat with him in his library, "I will not vote for George W. Cromer. My position on that question, I think, is pretty well understood. He is not the kind of a man who should be sent to congress, have always been a republican, and I cast my first republican vote for John C. Fremont, and I have kept on voting republican tickets ever since, but I draw the line at George W. Cromer. I will not vote for Mr. Lotz, because he is a democrat. I will wash my hands of the congressional ticket entirely. I can not vote for a man who is allied to the saloon element; who was friendly to that element when he was mayor, and about whom stories of immorality are told. We have laws made by republicans that we think are pretty good laws. I mean the Moore and Nicholson laws, and Cromer, as mayor, never enforced them. There are other matters concerning him, into which I do not care to go, but the people of Muncie know all about them. In indorsing George Cromer it is simply saying to the boys in school, if you want to prepare yourself for anything in life, you must pay no attention to churches or morality, but take up with the saloon element and the element that is immoral. I can not help to elect such a man as that."

"How is Mr. Lotz's record?"

"He is superior to Cromer in ability

and morality, but he is on the democratic ticket, and I can not vote for him on that account."

"Will Mr. Cromer poll the full republican vote in this county?"

"He will not. He will lose at least one thousand republican votes in Delaware county, and he ought to lose more. Why, think of it! Every minister in the city is opposed to Cromer, unless it is the Catholic priest, who is very friendly to Tuhey, the democratic mayor, whom it is charged Cromer helped to elect, and even he is not giving him much support."

"There seems to be a difference of opinion between yourself and your son Perry on Mr. Cromer?"

"Oh, well; Perry is in politics. He has tried to keep me still, and get me to vote for Cromer, but I won't listen to him when it comes to that. I am sorry that Perry is getting mixed up in this. Cromer has made so many enemies that I am afraid that it will do Perry no good. He is a good boy, and has been a great success, and I hope his efforts to elect Cromer will do him no harm."

To go into the details of the events that have led up to the opposition is a very long story. Months ago it was given in The News. The two factions in the republican party here are known as the McCollough and Cromer factions, and they have been at swords' points for years. Judge Marsh, of Winchester, was the choice of the McCollough faction. He is a man of education, an able jurist, of sterling honesty and an unblemished private character. Meanwhile, it is said that Cromer, in times past, gave aid to the democracy in local affairs. This, however, is denied by his friends. Besides Judge Marsh there were other candidates.

The nomination of delegates to the district convention in this county was held by primary election, and Cromer got in a resolution that only candidates living in Delaware county should be voted for, and thus shut out the others. Of course, this caused considerable ill-feeling in the other counties. Another resolution was passed, giving Cromer the same number of votes as the highest candidate on the ticket, the object being to show that he was popular in his own county. Some of the committeemen refused to do this, and returned the actual Cromer vote, showing that he had run behind some other candidates materially. It is said that he was aided in this scheme by the democrats. Vernon Davis, the democratic district chairman, is the smartest politician in Delaware county, barring none. He told me a month before the primary election what would occur, and his prediction came true to the better. He said then that he proposed to help Cromer get the nomination for congress, and now he says that he was largely instrumental in bringing it about.

A short time before the convention met a circular was issued by the opponents of Mr. Cromer and freely distributed throughout the district, reciting the grounds of complaint, and among other things accused him of a lack of party fealty, having special reference to his alleged collusion with democrats at Muncie, through which the regular party ticket was overthrown and almost a full line of democratic officials were elected, despite the fact that the normal republican majority in that city and county had heretofore been practically overwhelming. This circular served notice on Mr. Cromer that the instructions governing the election of delegates to the congressional convention must be withdrawn by a stated hour, and the party left free to select according to the wishes of the majority, the inference following that if the request was denied, Mr. Cromer would be opposed by the adherents of his own party. The instructions were not withdrawn, and notice was served that the signers thereto, which embraced many of the best known working republicans in Delaware county, were opposed to his nomination under the belief that Mr. Cromer was not a fitting representative.

The nominating convention was held at Decatur, in Adams county. The candidates were Cromer, of Delaware; Stillwell, of Madison; Marsh, of Randolph, and Sharpe, of Wells. Once during the convention Cromer

was about to withdraw, but was persuaded to remain in the contest, and on the seventyninth ballot he was nominated. This took place in May, and since that time the anti-Cromer republicans and the democrats have been laying plans to defeat him.

The first movement was to array the moral element of the district against him, and this succeeded beyond expectation, for, as stated before, an almost united clergy is opposing him.

The next movement was to bring mind an affair of years and, when it was asserted that Cromer was instrumental in losing for Delaware county the congressman. Ralph Gregory, of this city, then a republican, was a candidate for congress against Henry U. Johnson, of Richmond, in the old burnt district. Two conventions instructed the Delaware county delegates to vote for Gregory. The convention was held at Newcastle, and Perry Heath was the presiding officer. It is asserted that Cromer was instrumental in setting aside the instructions for Gregory, and Delaware county, by his efforts, it is asserted, helped nominate Johnson, and Delaware county lost the opportunity to get the congressman. As the result of that deal, Frank Ellis, who was with Cromer, got the Muncie post-office. In the present campaign it is pointed out that in the defeat of Cromer Delaware county will not lose the congressman, as Judge Lotz lives in this city.

The charge is made against Cromer that beside his breaks from morality, he has not always kept his political promises, and that he has not always been a loyal republican. He is accused of assisting democrats in times past, and with getting the help of democrats in his nomination, to the detriment of loyal republicans.

There is no fight here on the state and county ticket, though the latter may be injured by the dissatisfaction against Cromer. The entire fight is on the congressional ticket. The anti-Cromer men assert that his losses will be about like this:

Delaware county..... 1,000
Jay county..... 200
Madison county..... 400
Randolph county..... 400

Total..... 2,000

In addition to this republican loss, there is a democratic majority of about 1,600 against him in Adams, 80 in Blackford, and about 1,300 in Wells, making 4,980. Congressman Henry's majority was 2,632, and this is considered abnormal. The claim of the democrats that Lotz will be elected by 2,000 is, in my opinion, extravagant. My opinion, based on what reliable republicans tell me, is that if the election was held today, Lotz would be elected by from 300 to 500. In my next I will tell of the postoffice trouble here, and the effect it is having on Cromer's race.

W. H. BLODGETT.

Winchester, Ind., October 19.—The republicans here are making a special effort to get the voters in line for the republican congressional ticket, for several reasons.

First, because this is the home of Union B. Hunt, republican nominee for secretary of state (and his name is Basil and not Banner); second, because it is the home of Judge Marsh, who was defeated by Cromer for the nomination, and third, because it is of old a reliable republican county.

There is no denying that Randolph county is aroused against Cromer, and it is an opposition that can not be appeased. I have seen enough of politics and politicians not to be astonished at anything political that may occur, but I was startled by men, who told me plainly that they wouldn't vote for Mr. Cromer. I did not suppose that there was anything that would cause them to scratch a republican ticket.

Ed E. Hender, of Madison county, who was secretary of the convention that nominated Mr. Cromer, made a speech here a few days ago. In the course of his remarks he admonished the republicans to stand by the nominee for congress. The admonition fell with a thud.

Mr. Hender told a friend afterwards that he saw that he had taken the wrong track, and he beat back out of the way as soon as possible.

He discovered that his audience did not take kindly to any advice to vote for Mr. Cromer, and speakers who come here now, do not offer the kind of advice given by Mr. Hender.

In this connection, however, it is only just to Mr. Cromer to say that his friends assert that he has harvested his crop of wild oats; that he has settled down and thrown off the habits that have brought on him the bitterest fight ever made against a republican nominee in this county. They say that credit should be given him for his reformation, and he should be assisted in carrying out his pledges of reform.

I think there is a good deal of truth in what Cromer's friends say about his reformation, for in the last year or two he has been a man whose manner of life no exception could be taken by the most exacting. But those here who are fighting him the hardest say that a leopard can not change his spots, and they have no confidence in him, particularly as a very large part of the saloon element in the district is supporting him. It is George Cromer's past is confronting him. The friends of Judge Marsh want to show that he is loyal to the nominee, but they can not stand Cromer.

The moral element will not support a candidate for congress whose habits are such as his have been. Stories about Cromer have been spread all through the county. There are a great many Quakers in this county, and on them have been impressed the stories of the republican nominee's failings. The story goes that on one occasion Cromer and a number of friends of both sexes were camping below this city. The people living in that locality complained, and the evidence was worked up detective "Buck" Fletcher.

The Randolph county grand jury made an investigation, but found that most of the offenses charged occurred in Delaware county. It is said, however, that an indictment for intoxication was returned against Cromer in the Randolph circuit court. But no arrests have ever been made on it, and it is probable that none will be until after the election.

Cromer's friends assert that this proceeding was the result of party spite work, and that he could clear himself of the charge. Mr. Cromer

was arrested at Martinsville for disorderly conduct, and his actions the night he was elected mayor of Muncie were not seemly.

These stories are not circulated by democrats, but by republicans. The argument is made that the republican party has always stood as the party of morality and education, but that it could not truthfully make claims of this kind with Cromer on its ticket. It is urged that this is an off year; that there is no great issue at stake; that congress will be republican, anyhow, and that now is the time for the moral element of Randolph county to serve notice on republican conventions that they must not nominate men of the Cromer stripe, and elect them.

The Winchester democrat, last week, printed under the title, "Men and Brethren, What Shall We Do?" a two-column editorial, attacking Cromer. The article is too long to be printed in full. Here is an extract from it:

What must the honest, moral republican do? Shall immorality continue to triumph over morality? suppose you elect George Cromer; can you look your neighbor, your wife and children in the face and rejoice as over a victory? Will it not be defeat to the republican party to elect Cromer? Can you ever afterwards in this district claim to be a moral party or claim to stand for everything that is decent and right? If you make any such claims will not the opposition be justified in classifying such pretensions as cant and hypocrisy? Purge yourself like men: there can be no legislation within the next two years hostile to the republican party as Mr. McKinley is president, the times are auspicious for you to purge yourself.

The charge is made against Cromer that beside his breaks from morality, he has not always kept his political promises, and that he has not always been a loyal republican. He is accused of assisting democrats in times past, and with getting the help of democrats in his nomination, to the detriment of loyal republicans.

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against Cromer will be cast in this county. There is no labor vote here of consequence.

As Mr. Cromer has not a full realization of the condition of his political affairs in Delaware county, he is in the same position here. Assistance he expects here will be found wanting. He is being misled by people who either have not the heart to tell him the true condition of affairs, or whose zeal for party blinds them to the real situation.

There are some populous places in Randolph county. In 1896 the vote was in Winchester: Bryan, 471; McKinley, 979; republican plurality, 468.

Lynn, Bryan, 78; McKinley, 219; republican plurality, 41. Union City; Bryan, 340; McKinley, 517; republican plurality, 177. In the county Bryan received 2,623; McKinley, 4,674; prohibition, 37; populist, 54; gold democrats, 10; national, 47, giving McKinley a plurality of 2,050. Mount's plurality was 2,057 Henry's plurality, 2,100.

With such pluralities as these, Cromer's friends say that there is no need for alarm over the result. As far as the state and county ticket is concerned, there is no cause for alarm on the part of republicans. But they must do a great amount of hard work to keep Randolph county from giving republican votes to the democratic nominee for congress.

W. H