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GOVERNOR BECKHAM

Opened His Campaign at Owensboro, Ky., Last Monday.

An Able and Effective Answer To His Opponents.

Clearly Eligible or He Would Not Make the Race.

Gov. Beckham opened his campaign for the democratic nomination for governor at Owensboro on Monday and was greeted by a large and enthusiastic audience. His speech in full was as follows:

I announced myself a candidate for the democratic nomination for governor last December, after receiving a large number of flattering assurances of support from friends all over the state. It was urged by those unfriendly to me that, under the constitution of the state, I was not eligible to succeed myself in the office of governor, even though I was filling only the unexpired term for which Gov. Goebel was elected. I consulted with a great many of the ablest lawyers in the state, and, without exception, they advised me that there was no violation of either the letter or the spirit of the constitution in my being elected for the next term of the office.

GOV. BECKHAM.

... affirmed Judge Cantrill's opinion, and granted the mandamus. I did not fear a decision; I wanted it. But my opponents were afraid of one, and begged that the court say nothing of the matter. If I was not eligible, there is not a member of that court that, in justice to himself, in friendship to me, and in his love for the peace and quiet of our beloved commonwealth, would not oppose my candidacy for this office. But, as a matter of fact, there are several of the democratic judges of that court who are earnestly for me for the nomination.

The mistake made by my opponents is the same made by a host of others who have sought public office. The political highway is strewn with the corpses of men who have not given the people credit for having as much sense as they have. Many a bright career has been suddenly ended, many a brilliant star in the gorgeous firmament of political hope, and many an ambitious statesman on the high tide of success, have sunk into the outer darkness, all because they thought that it was an easy thing to fool the people,—yes, the plain, common people,—whenever it suited their purpose to do so.

I have an abiding and unshaken faith in the intelligence and honesty of the great body of our people. I have never lost confidence in them, and in this matter I know they have sense enough to see the plain proposition,—it does not take a lawyer to see it,—that the court of appeals would never have ordered the name of an ineligible candidate placed upon legal ballots, and that no member of that court would favor the nomination of such a candidate if the court considered him ineligible.

The talk about another contest is merely a bugaboo to frighten children, merely a political trick to alarm the voters. I have borne the brunt of one contest, when our state was in grave danger, and I did not shirk my duty. I would not now, for any office or honor within the gift of the people, put in hazard the peace and welfare of my state. There is not the slightest danger of such a contest, except in the fervid imagination of some of those who are trying to defeat me in this primary.

My opponents charge that I am afraid to meet them in joint debate. I charge that they are afraid to meet me at the polls in the primary on May 9th, and that they are doing every...

... equaled since the desperate and slanderous campaign waged upon my lamented predecessor, William Goebel, who was charged at times even with the crime of beating his wife! I have not myself escaped calumny and misrepresentation from disappointed office seekers, from disappointed pardon-brokers, and from those grafters who met with no cheer in my office, and whose presence in politics is for the purpose of plundering a campaign fund or sandbagging a corporation under some threat of legislative or franchise-tax punishment. They could not control me, and they are therefore fighting me with a malevolence born of hate and despair.

I have no word of criticism for the majority of those who oppose my nomination. If they doubt the wisdom of my election I accord to them every possible respect for their views, and I know that just as a great many good democrats three years ago honestly and sincerely thought it best not to nominate me then, so there are some good democrats who now oppose my candidacy. I have no quarrel with them, and I would not for any consideration utter a harsh word against them. I have respect for the man who honestly differs from me, and all I ask is that he accord me the same respect.

I have always had feelings of kindness and friendship for my two opponents—Judge Breckinridge and Mr. Hendrick. For Judge Breckinridge I must say, that while he seems to have joined in with my other opponent in the general fight on me, his campaign so far has been dignified and courteous towards me, and that he has refrained from any cowardly personal attacks upon me or upon my administration. I have no word of criticism against him whatever, except that I must say I do not think the judge seriously wants the office of governor, except to put himself in line for higher honors. If he should be nominated and elected governor, he would let some fellow come along and take the office away from him and then run as a martyr candidate for the presidency of the United States.

Mr. Hendrick has made personal attacks upon me, which I shall not let pass without showing that he has grossly misrepresented me and shown a reckless disregard for the truth unworthy of any man who aspires to a public office. It has been my desire to let him make his race on his own merits, without ever making the slightest attack on him...

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