

WHEREAS, Conditions in the electric utility industry have so greatly changed in recent years that it is very doubtful whether the wide spread in rates to the disadvantage of the domestic and farm consumers is longer justified; therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Senate, the Assembly concurring,* That the railroad commission is requested and instructed to make every possible effort to bring about uniformity in the rate schedules or rate bases for electric light, heat and power, in this state; and that to this end it invites the cooperation of the several municipal and private utilities, through the appointment of a cooperating committee or committees, and otherwise. Be it further

*Resolved,* That the railroad commission is requested and instructed to make a thorough investigation of the reasonableness of the spread now existing in the rates charged different classes of consumers, in the light of present day conditions, and that in such investigation it give particular attention to the possibility of reducing rates to domestic lighting and farm users. Be it further

*Resolved,* That the railroad commission shall make a report to the next legislature at the opening of the regular session of 1931, upon the progress made in the discharge of its duties under this resolution. Be it further

*Resolved,* That a copy of this resolution be sent to the railroad commission by the chief clerk of the senate.

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[Jt. Res. No. 120, S.]

[Deposited Aug. 22, 1929.]

No. 76, 1929.

### JOINT RESOLUTION

Relating to the death of Victor L. Berger.

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Victor L. Berger, internationally famed Socialist leader and editor, and one of Wisconsin's most distinguished citizens, died today, August 7, 1929, as the result of an accidental injury sustained some weeks ago.

Victor Berger was born sixty-nine years ago in Austria-Hungary. Coming to this country in early manhood, after having

been educated in a gymnasium and in the Universities of Vienna and Budapest, he settled at Milwaukee and lived there during the rest of his life. He began life here by working at several different trades; then became a teacher, and finally, an editor and publisher. He was editor, successively, of the *Milwaukee Daily Vorwaerts*, the *Wahrheit*, the *Social Democratic Herald*, and the *Milwaukee Leader*. Of the last named paper, which is one of the few successful Socialist dailies of the country, he was the founder, and until his death, the publisher as well as the editor.

Politically, he was throughout life a confirmed believer in and advocate of the principles of Socialism. In this country, however, he first became identified with the People's Party. Finding that it did not stand for his principles, he became one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party, now known as the Socialist Party. Throughout the history of this party, except for short intervals, he has been a member of its executive committee and at all times has been one of the most effective workers in its ranks. Victor Berger converted Eugene V. Debs to socialism and had more to do with determining the policies and mapping out the course to be pursued by the Socialist Party than any other man. It is no exaggeration to say that he was the guiding genius of this great party, which nationally has commanded the support of above one million voters and in this state has strongly influenced legislation and public life for a quarter of a century. Attesting Berger's ability as a leader perhaps more than anything else is the fact that the Socialist Party in this state, where his influence was greatest, never has suffered from the splits which have weakened it nationally, but has maintained its strength unimpaired by internal dissension.

Victor Berger was elected to the House of Representatives in 1910, being the first Socialist who ever served in Congress. In the special senatorial election of April, 1918, he received the largest vote ever cast for any Socialist for any office in this state. In November, 1918, he was again elected to Congress, but, due to wartime prejudices, was not seated, although clearly elected. Unseated, he was reelected by an increased majority, but again refused admission to Congress. In 1922, however, and again in 1924 and 1926, he was reelected and seated, and from 1923 to 1929, served as the only Socialist member of Congress.

Victor Berger was a man beloved by all his associates, and had many warm friends among those opposed to him politically. He

was warm-hearted and kindly, and even in debate and heated controversy, ever courteous. He radiated optimism and an enthusiastic enjoyment of life. Even when falsely accused and convicted under the espionage act in wartime, he did not turn bitter or lose hope. Confident that the right would prevail, he yielded not an inch of his convictions, but fought on, fearless of the consequences. In the end he was cleared, and the people of Milwaukee who knew him best gave him in each election thereafter a far larger vote than any other Socialist.

His life was one of useful service for his fellowmen, particularly those in the humbler walks of life. Had he chosen to follow a different path, his talents as an organizer, a writer and a speaker doubtless would have made him a wealthy man. Instead, by choice, he took up the burdens of the poor and the handicapped. Himself a member of the typographical union, he steered the Socialist Party away from the hostility to trade unionism which had wrecked all prior Socialist organizations, and instead made the Socialist Party the staunchest supporter of the trade unions and labor legislation. An idealist, he was yet intensely practical, interested in every measure of amelioration, as well as in fundamental changes.

He loved his country with the intense devotion of an educated man who became an American citizen by choice. He believed in democracy and devoted his life to its advancement. Not a single reproach mars the record of either his public or his private life. A singularly sincere man, even his enemies paid him the tribute of being honest and ever a fair fighter.

His death represents a great loss to the Socialist movement throughout the world and to the Socialist Party of the United States, of which he was the recognized leader. His death comes as a shock to the people of this state and particularly to those of his city, Milwaukee, with which nearly all of his mature life was identified. But most of all, his death will be mourned by the countless thousands of common laborers and other working people to whose advancement he devoted all his energies and his entire life. In tribute to the memory of Victor L. Berger, be it

*Resolved by the Senate, the Assembly concurring,* That this resolution be spread upon the journals of both houses and that a suitably attested copy thereof be sent to Mrs. Berger and the Berger family.