Topeka, Kan., Jan. 24.- The leaders of the African contingent in politics claim to hold a mortgage on the office of State Auditor since the days of E.P. McCabe, who occupied that position four years and filled it fully as well as all the Caucasians who preceded him. But with that one exception the negroes do not seem to have been very successful in their efforts to foreclose.

They come up to the Republican Conventions every two years with their stereotyped demand for recognition, but somehow, with the one exception, when a negro was named to humiliate St. John, they have never had their demands acceded to. There have been threats of a bolt, but in the end very few went off.

The situation this year is very different. The independence shown by the voters during the last three years has had a very demoralizing effect upon party organization. There is a feeling prevalent that the duty of the citizen is to the man and not to the party. As the Republican Party is now in close quarters, and the negro vote is not less than 12,000, the leading men of that race feel that they have it in their power to dictate terms, especially as there is danger of a coalition between the Democrats and the People’s Party.

The defeat of the negro candidate in the Republican Convention two years ago, and the nomination of another negro by the People’s Party the same year, has produced a wavering in the colored ranks that bids fair to be dangerous to the present dominant party. The negroes insist that they are entitled to recognition, not as a matter of fairness, but as a matter of right. With this feeling they now ask for the nomination for Secretary of State of Blanch K. Bruce of Leavenworth, a negro of ability, but at the same time afflicted with the office-seeking mania.

It is now reasonably certain that there will be a combination between the Democrats and the People’s Party. This being the case, the demand of the negroes for the office of Secretary of State, which they will not get, is not such a wild one as it at first appears. They are better organized than ever before, and have been feeling ugly for some time. In fact, every time a convention, County or State, is held that feeling has increased, as they have been on hand for recognition because of their race. They have drawn the color line, and take good care that it shall not be wiped out.

The Republicans are to blame for this, as they have coddled and petted these men ever since the exodus in 1880, when the larger portion of them came from the Southern States. The Democrats once, and only once, tried the experiment, and placed the name of a colored man on their ticket, concealing him as much as possible under the name of Kelley. They never desired to try it again, as the results were not satisfactory.

The negroes now say that “it is to them more than to any other element that the Republican Party owes its continuance in power in this State.” As the party had only about 8,000 margin, their claims are not altogether shadowy. The leading negro in the State said in a recent paper: “This faithfulness to the party, this dogmatic advocacy of the principles of the party, and the unflattering and unflinching courage
that has ever actuated and prompted the Afro-American voters in all campaigns, entitle them to a fair and just consideration at the hands of the Republican Party of Kansas."

The colored population of Leavenworth, Lawrence, Topeka, and Wichita, where they are most numerous, congregating as they do in the larger cities, threaten to revolt because they have not been properly recognized. A few of them went with the People’s Party, and they have discovered that they have not committed such a terrible crime. They have not been rewarded there as yet, but they have plenty of promises, and like the average Kansan who builds largely upon his hopes, they expect to force the proper recognition.

They have some educated men as leaders, such as Drs. Hudson of Atchison, Montes of Leavenworth, and Jamison and Shields of Topeka, while the legal profession is represented by Thomas, Jamison, and Guy of Topeka, Townsend and Bruce of Leavenworth, and Bradley of Kansas City. Then, too, they have a considerable number of preachers and school teachers, all of whom are politicians by nature and by long education in Republican ranks.

Some of the better-educated negroes profess to despise the Rev. B.F. Foster, the colored preacher who was so nearly elected to a State office on the People’s Party ticket, and who now occupies a subordinate place in the corridors of the National Capitol. And yet there is not a negro in the State, outside of four or five wealthy ones, who would not trade positions with him. He has a good salary and not more to do than the average Government employee, and can always be in a warm place—a boon highly prized by the average uncultivated negro.

The negro vote elected county officers in Douglas County, and getting nothing they now openly declare their purpose to defeat the Republican ticket next year. The same feeling prevails in many other counties. They are in a state of revolt, and can no longer be held by the traditions of the war. The majority of them new but little, personally, about the evils of slavery, and the old story of Republicans freeing them does not seem to have the weight it formerly did.

Then, too, Republican Kansas is beginning to adopt the treatment in vogue in the more Southern States. The schools are not open to them as formerly, which they resent in the courts as well as personally. The hotels, open to every one else, have never a vacant room, and they are forced to seek negro hosterlies, much to their disgust. The railroads have not adopted the “Jim Crow” cars used in the South, but it would not require much urging to secure the passage of a law bringing about that policy.

All in all, their party loyalty is, generally speaking, not very strong, and if they thought they could “get something” it would not take much to cause a stampede, and their 12,000 votes will be worth bidding for this year.

It must not be inferred that Kansas has adopted a shotgun policy, for such is not the case. But it is rapidly adopting and putting into practice a “taboo” system fully as effectual, and if this system is kept up, as it bids fair to be, the negroes will surely drift away from all their old party affiliations. The Republican Party in Kansas cannot stand this defection.