

# The Commoner.

WILLIAM J. BRYAN, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

Vol. 2. No. 51.

Lincoln, Nebraska, Jan. 9, 1903.

Whole No. 103.

## "LITTLE JOKERS" IN THE TARIFF LAW

The tariff on coal is not the only "little joker" in the Dingley act. The New York Press recently printed an editorial in which it insisted that "there is no tariff on petroleum." The Chicago Chronicle reproduced this editorial and, perhaps inadvertently, gave assent to this as a correct statement.

But Mr. William Ritchie, a reader of the Chronicle, makes an interesting statement by way of correction. Mr. Ritchie says that while it is true the Dingley act purported to include "petroleum, crude or refined," in the free list, in the very next line of the same clause appears the following:

"Provided, that if there be imported into the United States crude petroleum or the products of crude petroleum produced in any country which imposes a duty on petroleum or its products exported from the United States there shall in such cases be levied, paid and collected a duty on said crude petroleum or its products so imported equal to the duty imposed by such country."

It is pointed out by this writer that for some months after the passage of the Dingley act our customs officers (or some of them) construed the act as really meaning that petroleum and the Standard Oil company were not entitled to its protection, but that company soon took measures to undeceive them. It appealed to Secretary Gage, who, on April 21, 1893, issued a circular of instructions to all collectors.

In this circular the secretary of the treasury directed attention to the paragraph referred to and then stated that every country that produces a gallon of petroleum imposes a heavy duty on all imports of that commodity or its products. Mr. Ritchie says: "These duties vary all the way from 91 cents to over \$10 per barrel, practically prohibitive except against such a competitor as the Standard Oil company. As to the beneficent effect of monopoly on prices, see the report on 'Petroleum Refining' in census reports, twelfth census, vol. 10, manufacturers, pt. 4, pp. 681-688. In 1880 crude petroleum cost less than \$1 per barrel, in 1889 the figure was \$1.46, in 1899 it had risen to \$1.55, the total product meanwhile enormously increasing also. The same authority says: Out of the 42,234,664 barrels of petroleum products in 1899, 16,666,809 barrels (of fifty gallons), or nearly 40 per cent, were exported (despite the heavy import duties encountered abroad). In addition there were exported 2,801,999 barrels of crude petroleum. The total value of petroleum exports at ports of shipment in 1899 was \$64,982,249. This was the largest value of export petroleum ever reported, although the quantity exported in 1899 was less than in either 1897 or 1898."

## A Fraudulent Cry.

In one of his Washington letters, William E. Curtis says: "There is no hope for any of the reciprocity treaties now pending in the senate. The republican party is not in favor of reciprocity or else it is not represented in that body."

Commenting upon this statement, the Chicago

Record-Herald, a republican paper, says: "The truth is that if this session of congress goes by and the treaties are still ignored the party will be duly convicted of using reciprocity as a fraudulent campaign cry."

But what do the republican leaders care if the party is fully convicted of using reciprocity as a fraudulent campaign cry? Has not that party been convicted time and time again of using fraudulent campaign cries?

The Record-Herald points out that twelve years ago reciprocity was employed with dramatic effect by Mr. Blaine during a debate on the McKinley bill, and that "since then, the party has converted that promise into political capital many times over."

The republican national convention that met at St. Louis in 1896 declared:

"We believe the repeal of the reciprocity arrangements negotiated by the last republican administration was a national calamity, and we demand their renewal and extension on such terms as will equalize our trade with other nations, remove the restrictions which now obstruct the sale of American products in the ports of other countries, and secure enlarged markets for the products of our farms, forests and factories."

Then, referring to this promise, the Record-Herald, a republican paper, draws this indictment against its party leaders: "The calamity, it will be recognized, is now perpetuated by those who bemoaned it, and the very organization which demanded the renewal and extension is incapable of enforcing the demand though it is in possession of all branches of the government. Five years after the passage of the Dingley bill, with its enabling clause, there is still no progress beyond the executive, and the prospect is that the treaties will fall and reciprocity remain a dead letter, though it was applauded by the late president, is indorsed by his successor and was used to placate tariff reform republicans so late as the campaign of last fall."

## Roosevelt and the Negro

On another page will be found President Roosevelt's letter on the negro's right to hold office. He has taken advantage of an extreme statement against the negro to make an eloquent plea for the black man, but he has not met the real issue. No party advocates the exclusion of the colored man from all official positions. Mr. Cleveland appointed negroes to office and these appointments were confirmed by a democratic senate. The question is, why does the president refuse to apply the same rule in the north that he does in the south? He respects the prejudices of white republicans in the north, but he takes occasion to lecture white democrats in the south for entertaining the same prejudices where the conditions are such as to make those prejudices stronger. There are enough positions which the colored man could hold without raising a race question. As the president is a candidate for reelection and may need the votes of the colored delegates, his letter will not be viewed as a disinterested statement of his views.

## JACKSON AND SPECIAL INTERESTS

At this time when the American people are confronted with a money trust, beside whose power the influence exerted by a similar trust in the days of Andrew Jackson was insignificant, it would have been well if every American citizen could have spent Jackson's day in the study of Jackson's history.

Although in recent years the thing that is popularly known as the "money trust" has obtained new and ever increasing privileges, it is now proposed to increase its power and influence by such extraordinary legislation that even republican congressmen, accustomed as they are to doing the bidding of the representatives of special interests, deem it necessary to at least go through the form of hesitation before giving to these special interests all that their representatives ask.

Perhaps it is not at all significant, but it is at least interesting, that the present comptroller of the currency is a descendant of one of the officers of the great banking institution whose power over the people was destroyed by Andrew Jackson; and in his annual reports and his public speeches this comptroller of the currency advocates a banking and currency system that must have for its result the re-establishment of Nick Biddleism in a most aggravated form.

The only difference between the Nick Biddleism of Jackson's time and the Nick Biddleism of Roosevelt's day is that the latter represents schemes which Nick Biddle himself would not have had the hardihood to plan even though he were not confronted by a Jackson.

If one would refresh himself as to the incidents of Jackson's service in the White house, he would be reminded that while there may be a difference in degree between the wicked schemes of the present time and Jackson's day, there is marked similarity in the methods employed in both instances in the effort to fasten the shackles upon the people.

In his address to the cabinet, September 13, 1833, Jackson described some of the methods adopted by the representatives of the bank in order to bring public sentiment to its side or at least to control the majority of votes in the election. That this bank had made extensions of loans so as to bring as large a portion of the people as possible under its power and influence was a fact pointed out in this address; and it was also said that "it has been disclosed that some of the largest loans were granted on very unusual terms to the conductors of the public press."

According to Jackson:

"Having taken these preliminary steps to obtain control over public opinion, the bank came into congress and asked a new charter. The object avowed by many of the advocates of the bank was to put the president to the test, that the country might know his final determination relative to the bank prior to the ensuing election. Many documents and articles were printed and circulated at the expense of the bank to bring the people to a favorable decision upon its pretensions. Those whom the bank appears to have made its debtors for the special occasion were warned of the ruin which awaited them should the president be sustained, and attempts were