

IMPORTANCE OF THEORY

The situation at Washington emphasizes the fact that a theory is, after all, absolutely necessary if we are going to make any progress in the discussion of public questions. Some say that a thing may be theoretically good and yet bad in practice. That is the objection which the advocates of the high tariff make to arguments attacking the protective principle, but that is a fallacy. That which is theoretically good can not be bad in practice, for if a thing were bad in practice, it could not be good in theory. The trouble is that people sometimes want to do things inconsistent with any principle which they dare to advance or any argument that they dare to present. The tariff discussions give many illustrations of this. Some of the democrats oppose the principle of protection but seek to invoke that principle for the benefit of a few protected interests in their districts, while many republicans on the other hand ardently champion the principle of protection but are anxious to part from it when they come to the schedules which especially burden their constituents. The result is that the speeches and votes of protectionist democrats are used to prove the insincerity of the democratic party in demanding tariff reform, and the speeches and votes of the tariff reform republicans bring confusion into the republican ranks.

Our senators and members of congress ought to believe either in a revenue tariff or in a protective tariff. If they believe in a revenue tariff they ought to apply the principle to industries in their own districts as well as to industries in other districts; and so republicans, if they expect to remain republicans ought to stand for the protective principle and stand for it when the burden falls upon their own district as when their own district receives special benefit from it. There can be no moral or legal justification for the framing of a bill upon the theory that a majority of the members of congress will get what they want and then pass the bill without regard to the protests of the minority.

If the revenue theory is adopted, a just tariff law can be drawn, for then the schedules will be so made as to collect the necessary revenue, and the bill will stop when the necessary revenue is secured, but when the protective principle is adopted the question of revenue is lost sight of and the schedules may be so fixed as to impose a heavy burden without collecting the necessary revenue, and the protectionists never know when to stop.

The arguments in favor of a revenue tariff are unanswerable, and it would not take long to bring a majority of the voters to the support of this position if we had newspapers to bring the arguments to the attention of the voters, but with a large majority of the papers in the contested states supporting the favor-seeking corporations, it is difficult to get the facts known.

"SPOTTED PROTECTIONISTS"

Senator Elkins has invented a new phrase which is likely to be used quite frequently in the next campaign. He applies the name "spotted protectionists" to those who want a high tariff on things sold by their constituents and a low tariff on things bought by their constituents. His criticism is entirely justified—a man who wants protection must give protection. It can not be on-sided. The "spotted protectionist" is as inconsistent as the "spotted tariff reformer." The spots are, as in the case of deer, a sign of youth. They will come off after a while. A man must be all protection or all reformer—he can not be half and half.

PLATFORM PLEDGES

A Texas paper takes exception to Mr. Bryan's speech before the legislature of that state urging the legislature to carry out the pledges of the platform upon which the members were elected. It says:

"The Texas democratic platform is always slung together in a few hours on a hot summer's day by a handful of perspiring politicians, working in hot haste, without any responsibility to the people for their acts, and three days after the convention not one man in one thousand in the state could even recall the personnel of one-half of its membership. Its report to the convention is always adopted with a whoop, as a matter of course. Does Mr. Bryan seriously contend that the actual potential lawmaking of Texas should be intrusted to this anonymous, irresponsible and hasty bunch of men, and that the constitutional functions of the Texas legislature should be laid down in deference to them and that the legislature should merely register the decrees of the platform committee? It should seem so. Well, in this, as in many things, he

goes too far. Texas demands more of conscientious personal service from her legislative servants than does Mr. Bryan. Each member of the legislature is selected because of some supposed personal fitness on his part, and takes an oath to perform his duty, not as Mr. Bryan or some one else sees it, but as he himself perceives it. The conscientious discharge of this duty in a conscientious manner often has been all that has saved the state from headlong and precipitate measures, born, too often, amidst noise, confusion and perfervid oratory, and launched by men having little concern with the consequences except as their candidacies for office may be affected."

This is not so much a criticism of Mr. Bryan as it is a denunciation of the doctrine that platforms are binding upon those who secure office upon them. There are just two theories of representative government; the democratic theory is that the representative is in duty bound to give expression to the wishes of his constituents, and the other is that the representative is free to do as he pleases regardless of the wishes of his constituents. The paper above referred to seems to take the latter position, or, at least, it insists that the representative is free to interpret as he pleases the wishes of his constituents. If this theory is correct, then we ought to have no platforms at all, for a platform that is not obeyed simply assists the representative in perpetrating a fraud upon his constituents.

In the case at bar, that is, in the matter before the Texas legislature when Mr. Bryan spoke, the platform promised legislation making bank depositors secure. The governor and a large majority of the house of representatives have tried to fulfill this platform pledge, but a bare majority of the senate opposed the measure. The large financial interests are fighting all and every kind of protection to depositors, and the papers that take their cue from the financial interests are praising the Texas senators as a group of patriots because they refuse to listen to the "demagogues" who are attempting to protect the rights of depositors.

However, this seems to be a necessary part of the work of reform. This sifting goes on continuously and the people gradually find out their friends and punish their enemies. Texas will not be an exception. It is a democratic state and the people will sooner or later have democracy crystallized into law even if to do so they have to bury a few of their misrepresentatives.

BUT THE REPUBLICAN PARTY IS RESPONSIBLE

The Des Moines (Iowa) Register and Leader, a republican paper, says:

"There has never been any intention on the part of Senator Aldrich to have tariff revision excepting in name. And in this he is backed by Speaker Cannon, the monopolists, and the honest reactionaries, joining in a formidable alliance, which, in spite of the efforts of the insurgent forces, and in the face of the president's repeated demands, may be able to carry the day."

Did not the Register and Leader know prior to election that Aldrich and Cannon did not intend to revise the tariff in the public interest? The tariff barons provided campaign funds for the republican party, controlled the republican national convention, dominate the senate and the house, all through the agency of the republican party, yet republican papers like the Des Moines Register and Leader seek to make themselves and their readers believe that two individuals—Aldrich and Cannon by name—are responsible!

Will well meaning republican editors ever get their eyes opened?

"BUT!"

"But" is rapidly becoming the most popular word in Washington. "I am a protectionist, BUT I want free lumber for my constituents. I am a tariff reformer BUT my people insist upon protection on iron ore, etc., etc." BUT wait until they get home and see what their constituents really think.

"UNEQUIVOCALLY"

The republican national platform of last year promised "unequivocally" that the tariff would be "revised" at a session of congress to be called "immediately" after inauguration. This was in response to the urgent demand of the people for a reduction of the tariff. While this promise was in itself so equivocal that it ought not to have deceived anyone, it was seized upon by western republicans as a concession to the reform element in the party. When Mr. Taft's

attention was called to the fact that the word "revise" did not necessarily mean "reduce," he declared that his party stood for an "honest" revision and announced that the revision would "probably" be downward. We now have the interpretation which his party leaders have placed upon the word "revise."

The Payne bill, as reported from the committee RAISED the average 1.56 per cent, while the senate bill raised the rate 1.7 per cent. Does President Taft stand for this glaring repudiation of his platform and of his promises? What explanation will he give a deluded public? Will he excuse himself by saying that he has no influence with congress? Did he not lead the voters to believe that he would be able to carry out his platform? What is a platform for if it does not bind those elected upon it? The republican platform could be used as positive proof against the republican party in a suit brought for obtaining votes under false pretense. If the republicans contemplated an increase in the tariff instead of a reduction why did they promise "unequivocally?" If they intended to make the taxes heavier instead of lowering them why did they take the pains to promise to do it "immediately?" The "grand old party" has been guilty of a great deal of unfairness and double-dealing, but it has never before attempted so open, so transparent and so conscienceless a swindle as it perpetrated last fall when it masqueraded as a tariff reform party and gathered votes from the west while it sold the tariff schedules to the protected interests in return for campaign funds.

The Commoner ventures to predict that it will be many years before the word "unequivocally" finds its way into another republican platform and still longer before the words "unequivocally" and "immediately" will be woven into the same sentence. It ought to be a long while, too, before the voters can be trapped as they were last fall by high-sounding promises. The republican record was sufficient to condemn the party, and that record is being made more odious day by day.

"MADE IN THE HOUR OF THEIR FRIGHT"

Speaking in the senate, May 24, Senator Heyburn made a speech on the tariff, and in that speech he made a confession. The story is told in the following extracts from an Associated Press report:

"A clash between Senators Heyburn and Clapp followed the former's assertion that the promise of tariff revision was made by a few republicans at the Chicago convention 'in the hour of their fright.' Senator Clapp asked if the Idaho senator did not want to withdraw that statement. 'No, I am not afraid of ghosts, wherever I meet them,' replied Mr. Heyburn. 'The people knew the republican party could be trusted to do the right thing although inadvertently a bad promise crept into the platform.'"

"THEM'S AS AIN'T IDIOTS TURNS OFF THE TAP"

The true remedy against our trusts is to seek out the cause of a trust and to remove that cause. This is a perfectly simple and natural remedy, and lies close at hand. It applies to public matters the same rule of wisdom which men apply in their own affairs as to health, business, and every private transaction in the world. If typhoid fever or some other epidemic is sweeping over your community and you find that it results from sewerage or some other physical cause, you will remove the cause and not rely solely upon the skill and remedies of medical practitioners. Some visitors who were being shown over a pauper lunatic asylum inquired of their guide what method was employed to discover when the inmates were sufficiently recovered to leave.

"Well," replied he, "you see, it's this way. We have a big trough of water and we turns on the tap. We leave it running, and tells 'em to bail out the water with pails until they've emptied the trough."

"How does that prove it?" asked one of the visitors.

"Well," said the guide, "them as ain't idiots turns off the tap."—From "The Tariff and the Trusts," by Franklin Pierce, published by MacMillan Co.