

EDUCATIONAL SERIES

"CANNONISM" AND THE REPUBLICAN PARTY

for serious crimes or for grave neglect of official duty and that in every case the accused senator was either found guilty or at least failed to clear himself thoroughly of the charges, there certainly is sufficient indication of the low standard in the senate to warrant the inquiry whether the process by which the senate is constituted is such as is calculated to select men of great ability and high moral character.

"The American senator of today," says Professor Maxey, "does not feel his responsibility to the people of the state to the extent he would if elected by the people. If a senator is unscrupulous it is a matter of indifference to him what the people think of him so long as he can retain his hold upon their legislature. It is a fundamental principle of representative government that power should be coupled with responsibility. While this in theory holds with reference to our United States senators as a matter of fact responsibility becomes considerably attenuated when the body to whom one is responsible is not a permanent body and this is the case with our state legislatures—few members continue in office for more than six years, so that a senator may disregard the wishes of his state legislature with comparative impunity. Not so when the responsibility is to the people; they are a relatively permanent body and the same constituency which elected him once will have an opportunity to elect or defeat him again."

The personnel of the state legislature, as stated by the learned author, is continually changing and few members are called upon to vote for the same man at succeeding senatorial elections. The percentage is so small in some cases that I deem it important to submit as evidence. In 1895 the legislature of Massachusetts which elected George Frisbie Hoar to the United States senate contained 280 men, out of which number only seven survived to re-elect him in 1901, while the 148 members of the legislature of Indiana in 1897 contained 142 new members in 1903.

The proposed system would take away one incentive for the legislative gerrymandering of states and the evils of the present method, which tend to the introduction of national affairs into state politics and lead to the election of members of the state legislatures on national instead of local issues, would be diminished.

Popular election of senators means minimizing the power of state and federal bosses. At the present time the state boss in control of the legislature, can easily dictate the election of the senator. Under the proposed law, it will be much more difficult for him to handle all the people than it would be to control a few members of the legislature in whose election he has been perniciously instrumental. Money can be used to better advantage in lobbying a legislature than in buying an election where money must needs be distributed over a larger surface and the safeguards against corruption are more numerous.

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"EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT"

Washington, August 10.—Twenty minutes after the tariff bill had passed the senate a telegram signed "Nelson W. Aldrich," and addressed "J. Pierpont Morgan, on board yacht Corsair," left the capital. It read:

"Bill passed this afternoon. Everything all right. Following republicans voted against bill: Beveridge, Clapp, Cummins, Bristow, Dolliver, LaFollette, Nelson."

The telegram and the fact that such a telegram was sent tell their own story.

While this telegram was going over the wires Senator LaFollette was saying to the senate:

"Between now and fall I shall speak many times on this tariff bill—to the people."

Aldrich reports to his constituent on board the private yacht Corsair.—Gilson Gardner's dispatch to Grand Rapids, Mich., Evening Press.

CAN NOT UNLOAD

The Washington correspondent for the Philadelphia North American says that Mr. Taft must break with Mr. Aldrich if he would carry out republican party policies, but this correspondent forgets that Mr. Aldrich makes republican party policies, in fact Mr. Aldrich is the real party leader as shown in the proceedings of the extra session of congress. Evidently Mr. Taft recognizes this, and it is an open secret that Mr. Aldrich is to have his way in the revision of monetary laws just as he had his way in tariff revision.

The following open letter was addressed to Speaker Cannon by Representative Charles N. Fowler of New Jersey, former chairman of the house committee on banking and currency:

Elizabeth, N. J., August 23, 1909.—Hon. Joseph G. Cannon, Danville, Ill.—My Dear Sir: During the last two or three months I have observed from time to time in the press of the country certain news items disparaging my ability in certain directions which I have every reason to believe have emanated from you.

I desired the chairmanship of the banking and currency committee and have used all self-respecting and honorable means to retain it, simply because it would enable me to advance right thought and possibly prevent the passage of bad legislation. However, chairmanships do not make men, but men make chairmanships. It was therefore wholly immaterial to me personally whether you appointed me to the chairmanship or another.

The fact, then, has been fairly established that you knew that I would get agreements, but what you were afraid of was that those agreements would not serve your purpose.

Now, what has been your record for the last thirty-six years upon the financial and currency question—that you should assume to dictate the legislation of the United States upon this all important question?

Upon the 14th of April, 1874, you voted for a bill which is described by John Sherman in these words: "It provided for an expansion of the irredeemable currency." When this bill passed both houses, President Grant vetoed it. It was the so-called "greenback bill."

January 17, 1875, the act for the resumption of specie payments passed by the republican house by a vote of 136 to 98, but you did not vote for it.

On October 29, 1877, you introduced a bill, "To repeal the time clause of the resumption act."

On November 16, 1877, you made a speech declaring that it was as much repudiation to pay in gold alone as in irredeemable paper. You had much to say about "gold repudiationists."

On November 23, 1877, you voted for a bill to repeal all that part of the resumption act which authorized the secretary of the treasury to dispose of United States bonds and cancel greenbacks.

On November 5, you voted for a bill for the remonetization of silver (Bland bill) and on February 28 voted to pass it over the veto of President Hayes.

On August 28, 1893, you voted against the repeal of the silver purchase act, and voted against it, as amended in the senate, on November 1, 1893.

Now, I desire to recur to the bill to which I have already alluded as having been prepared by the fifteen bankers, who were appointed by my urgent request, and by myself, in the fall of 1906. After that bill had been reported by the banking and currency committee to the house, I went to you, as was necessary, disgraceful as the necessity may seem, under the circumstances, to ask consideration, telling you we were then facing a financial crisis, and that something should be done to meet it, and that this bill had been drawn for that specific purpose.

You literally hooted the idea of a panic, and inquired: "What in h— does this howling in Wall Street amount to? The country don't care what happens to those d— speculators. Everything is all right out west and around Danville. The country don't need any legislation. Then, I don't take any stock in your d— asset currency." As usual, your ignorance and prejudice were all sufficient then.

But the panic came, as every man who had any intelligence upon this subject knew it would.

Now, sir, mark this—the bill prepared by these representative bankers, which met only with your sneers and contempt, and known as the "bankers' bill," provided for about \$250,000,000 of credit currency, called in that bill "national bank guaranteed credit notes."

If that bill had been upon the statute books when the pressure came, there would have been no general suspension of banks throughout the country, no general breaking down of the ex-

changes, as all the banks could have more than met the demand for currency.

Again, sir, when I became chairman of the banking and currency committee of the sixtieth congress I advertised broadly that the banking and currency committee would hear anyone who wanted to be heard; and, upon closing these general hearings, I caused to be sent out special invitations to many of the leading banking economists, bankers and prominent merchants of the country to come before us and give their views. Having closed these special hearings, our committee proceeded to prepare legislation upon all the best information we could get and reported to the house what is now commonly known as the "Fowler bill."

I appealed to you, as was necessary, for the privilege of bringing the bill up before the house for discussion, only to receive your contemptuous refusal, with the added information: "You will get the Aldrich bill or nothing."

This is your record upon our financial and currency legislation. I challenge you to find a single living man with so rotten a one. It is a record of ignorance or political cowardice, or a disgraceful hybrid of the two. And yet, sir, you assume to dictate the financial and currency legislation of a civilized country.

It was in contemplating the unmeasured losses and terrific consequences to my country, resulting from the crisis of 1907, because of your ignorance, prejudice and absolutely unchallenged power as speaker of the house of representatives that I resolved, that so far as in me lay, never again should such a financial tragedy fall upon the American people because the speaker of the house of representatives absolutely controlled legislation.

Therefore I announced myself as a candidate for speaker at the beginning of the sixty-first congress, but with only one thought, and that was to accentuate the platform upon which I stood, that all political power shall be taken away from the speaker and that he be only a presiding officer, just as the speaker of the house of commons is.

Do you suppose, sir, that I did not appreciate fully the probable consequence of my act when I undertook to play my part in securing this reform? Do you suppose that I was not aware of your ignorance, prejudice, inordinate conceit, favoritism, putrid preferences, and that like all such characters possessing absolute power, malice is the mainspring of your every action under such circumstances? Do not forget that I chose my course in plain sight of your political guillotine and the political carcasses of those you had decapitated; but that it had no terrors for me.

To the membership of the house and to the whole country it is well known, notwithstanding your false pretenses to the contrary, that you were not acting from a sense of duty, nor because I could not secure committee agreements, but because you revel in a glut of brutal power like Nero to terrorize your subjects.

Now, it seems from all that can be learned with reference to the conference upon the Payne bill, that you, with every member's political head in your basket of favors, shuttle-cocked through the "halls" of congress, trying to secure the passage, generally speaking, of the Aldrich bill; and disfiguring so far as you could the Payne bill, with the exception of a few schedules.

It is reported that one of the senate conferees said that you would not appoint a single conferee unless Mr. Aldrich O. K.'d and approved him.

In other words, did you not enter into a conspiracy with Mr. Aldrich to pack the conferees on the part of the house for the express purpose of adopting the senate bill so far as possible instead of the house bill with a few exceptions, when you were honor bound to do everything in your power to secure the adoption of the house bill?

I have gone into these details to lay bare your miserable, contemptible, false pretense and to expose your duplicity, treachery and perfidy to that legislative body over which you preside, whose bill you were bound to defend and not destroy.

Taking all the facts as they appear in the case, from start to finish, a lawyer, an intelligent