

Secretary Taft and Some "Suggested Remedies"

In his speech at Greensboro, N. C., Secretary of War Taft said: "I ask you to compare democratic promises with republican actions. It may be noted that while Mr. Bryan has been most emphatic and eloquent in his description and denunciation of trusts and abuses of corporations and wealth, his suggested remedies for their prompt suppression have been very vague, unless, indeed, his proposal that the government buy or condemn all interstate railways with their immense mileage and maintain and operate them is to be regarded as an immediate, ready, practical and feasible remedy."

When it is recalled that the Roosevelt administration has, in its proceedings against the trusts, adopted suggestions long ago and repeatedly made by democrats—these "suggested remedies" being explicit rather than vague—democrats may be pardoned if, in the light of Secretary Taft's big claim, they recall that story of the bank cashier in a western city. He had wrecked the bank, and felt "extremely sorry" for the unfortunate situation of his victims.

A meeting of the bank directory was held for the purpose of devising means of saving something from the wreck.

The bank wrecker addressed the gathering, and said: "Gentlemen, I am indeed very sorry for you. You don't know how sorry I am. If it would do you any good, I would be willing to have my body cut up into little pieces and distributed among you."

One of the directors was a very deaf man, and he leaned over to a colleague who sat beside him, and asked: "What did he say he would do?"

His colleague replied: "He said if it would do any good, he would have his body cut up into little pieces and distributed among us."

The deaf director leaned back in his chair, heaved a sigh, and said: "Well, if that is done, I speak for the gall."

Didn't Secretary Taft really overlook something when he said that with the exception of the government ownership plan, Mr. Bryan's suggested remedies were "very vague?"

The Kansas City platform suggested:

First—Publicity as to affairs of corporations engaged in interstate commerce.

Second—Requiring all corporations that have been doing business outside of the state of their origin to show that they had no water in their

stock and that they have not attempted and are not attempting to monopolize any branch of business or production of any article of merchandise.

Third—The exercise of the whole constitutional power of congress over interstate commerce, mails and all modes of interstate communication.

Fourth—The enactment of tariff laws putting the product of the trusts upon the free list to prevent monopoly under the plea of protection.

For years Mr. Bryan has pleaded in public speech and through The Commoner for the enforcement of the criminal clause of the Sherman anti-trust law.

During his first term in congress, he introduced a bill giving to the president the authority to remove the tariff from any article which was the product of trust agreement whenever such fact should be established in a court of competent jurisdiction.

There is nothing vague about any of these remedies.

The Roosevelt administration has—in an all too feeble way, it must be admitted—undertaken to adopt the suggestion with respect to the criminal clause of the Sherman law. But no effort on this line was made until recently and the effort that was made in that direction was rendered impotent by the "immunity bath" given to the packers by Mr. Roosevelt's commissioner of corporations.

The Roosevelt administration is also on record as endorsing the suggestion with respect to the federal license before a corporation may do business outside of the state of its origin, although that remedy has not been provided for by law.

The suggestion concerning the use of the mails is not at all vague. Indeed, that remedy has been found to be very effective whenever the administration has employed it with respect to other violations. Men who conspire in restraint of trade and persistently defy the laws of the land have no right to use the United States mails in the furtherance of their lawless business.

Neither is Mr. Bryan's proposition that trust products be placed upon the free list in order to prevent monopoly under the plea of protection, at all "vague." This is one of the strongest weapons to be used in attacking the trusts, yet Mr. Roosevelt and his lieutenants, although professing a desire to destroy monopoly, have given their

encouragement to the standpatters, who insist that the tariff privileges enjoyed by the trusts be not interfered with.

Mr. Bryan also suggested the amendment of the Sherman anti-trust law so as to make it a criminal offense for one person or group of persons to attempt to monopolize any product whether the persons are connected with several separate corporations or are stockholders or directors in a single corporation. This suggestion was made because it is always difficult to prove conspiracy, and it would be particularly difficult to prove it when the persons charged with conspiracy are directors of one corporation.

He further advised the abolition of railroad rebates and discriminations and the enlargement of the powers of the interstate commerce law, in order that the public might be protected from these discriminations and the trust system attacked in that direction.

He suggested, in order to determine what constitutes a monopoly, a law to fix the proportion of the product which could be controlled by one man or set of men, this law to declare that the control of more than a stated per cent would prevent the granting of the federal license, or forfeit a license already granted, to give the corporation the privilege of doing business outside the state of its origin.

In his article printed last year in "Public Opinion," Mr. Bryan said: "Corporations are creatures of law and congress has power to control corporations engaged in interstate commerce. If congress can prohibit the carrying of a lottery ticket either by mail or express, when both the vendor and the vendee want the ticket transported, it can certainly prevent the use of the mails, the telegraph lines, and the railroads for transportation of the merchandise of a corporation when the purpose of that corporation is to destroy competition and harm the public. A private monopoly has always been an outlaw, and it requires a stretch of the imagination to suppose that the supreme court would so construe the constitution as to protect a corporation in the doing of a thing regarded through all history as unlawful."

If Secretary Taft would read the article referred to as printed in "Public Opinion," he would learn that Mr. Bryan's "suggested remedies" for the suppression of trusts, instead of being "vague" have been clear and explicit.

THE PRIMARY PLEDGE

As this copy of The Commoner may be read by some one not familiar with the details of the primary pledge plan, it is necessary to say that according to the terms of this plan every democrat is asked to pledge himself to attend all of the primaries of his party to be held between now and the next democratic national convention, unless unavoidably prevented, and to secure a clear, honest and straight-forward declaration of the party's position on every question upon which the voters of the party desire to speak. Those desiring to be enrolled can either write to The Commoner approving the object of the organization and asking to have their names entered on the roll, or they can fill out and mail the blank pledge, which is printed on page 15.

Extracts from letters to The Commoner follow:

William Englebrecht, Scribner, Nebr.—Enclosed I send you list of twenty-six primary pledge signers. These are good and fair democrats. This is the best I can do as I am busy with my farm work. All the signatures are farmers and land owners except two, who are merchants.

P. H. O'Brien, Laurium, Mich.—I herewith enclose primary pledge. I believe the democratic party has the greatest opportunity it has ever had during its great historic career. Every principle for which Mr. Bryan has so consistently and valiantly contended has been amply vindicated by the course of events. I firmly believe that the American people are ready to render their verdict and are only awaiting an opportunity at the polls to endorse democratic policies. The conviction is growing that Mr. Bryan was not honestly defeated in 1896.

G. W. Robles, Tampa, Fla.—Herewith find twenty primary pledge signatures.

John C. Jones, Kanorado, Kan.—Herewith enclosed find primary pledge, which I have had the pleasure of signing. I do not believe the people of the United States can be bought and talked out of voting to their best interests in

1908 as they were in 1896 and 1900. I believe the awakening that is now on among the people of several states, will not abate until the whole United States have been largely, if not wholly, cleansed from present ills in our government. I do not see how even the most party prejudiced voter in the republican party, after noting the great amount of fraudulent work done by the republicans in 1896 and 1900 which has been brought to light in the past few months, could again swallow the false statements of the republican orators. I praise Mr. Roosevelt for his attempt to carry out certain planks as set forth in the democratic platform of 1896 and 1900, but you can not expect a horse to work well in harness that does not fit. Put them on the horse they were made for and fit and see if they do not work better.

IN ABSOLUTE CONTROL—BUT NO RELIEF

Every American citizen, whatever his present day party affiliations may be, should give thoughtful consideration to the reminder set forth in one plank of the platform recently adopted by the Indiana democrats. That plank follows:

"For nearly ten years the republican party has been in absolute control in all departments in the national government, with power to change unjust conditions and to rectify evils. Yet during that time colossal combinations of capital have dominated the people and have stifled competition and unfairly limited the opportunity of the individual citizen. Wealth thereby illegally obtained has been unsparingly used to control legislation and corrupt elections. No honest effort has been made or is being made by republican legislation to cure or eradicate these evils. We denounce the hypocrisy of the republican party, which, while pretending to legislate against these conditions, deals only with the symptoms and not with the disease. The unfair, tyrannical features of the so-called 'protective tariff' have made those things possible, and no permanent relief can be secured until its obnoxious features are

removed. We demand that this be done by a tariff for revenue only. The growth of the trusts and other inordinate and dangerous combinations of capital, the tremendous and rapidly increasing absorption and centralization of the wealth of the country in the hands of a chosen few, all due to premeditated and systematic legislation in behalf of special interests by the republican party, demand a change in the policies imposed upon the country by that party and make the passage of restrictive laws an imperative necessity."

THE UNFOOLABLE YOU

When you've settled down at night,
Locked your door, put out the light,
When you've shut the world from out your little room;

When you've stopped your daily work
At the coming of the mirk,
Then you're face to face with truth, amid the gloom.

For there's no one there to fool,
And your judgment dares be cool,
While the thoughts you face are merciless and true;

You may hoax the world, my boy,
With the tactics you employ,
But you've not succeeded yet in fooling you.

In the daily grist of toil,
In the treadmill and the mill,
In vicissitudes of traffic, you are wont
To be tempted to cajole,
Coaxed to jeopardize your soul—
Life is battle; we must smile and bear the brunt.

But at night when all is still,
When the tension's off your will,
Comes the truth that must be recognized as true,
You can fool some people, boy,
With the methods men employ,
But you'll never find it easy fooling you.

—Chicago News.